

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
HISTORICAL COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER
April 14, 2011**

LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER – CITY HALL

Commission Members Present: Thomas Constantine, Chair
Timothy McCann, Vice-Chair
James Crowley
Kevin Provencher

Staff Present: Luba Zhaurova, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services

REGULAR MEETING (5:30 PM)

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Constantine called the meeting to order at 5:36 P.M.

MINUTES:

Ms. Zhaurova stated that the previous minutes will be submitted at a later date.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. 58 Holden Street (HC-2010-007) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Karl Bjork, petitioner, presented the petition. Mr. Bjork stated that he was seeking Building Demolition Delay Waiver approval to make the following change: (a) remove the existing roofing materials on the main residential dwelling and replace them with GAF-ELK Timberline Lifetime shingles. He indicated that the roof had deteriorated significantly and needed to be replaced in order to prevent any further damage to the interior walls of this historic house. Mr. Bjork also stated that the materials selected would preserve and enhance the architectural significance of the building. Commissioner Crowley stated that the proposed project was appropriate for the house. Upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner McCann, the Commission voted 4-0 that the proposed demolition would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester, therefore, the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for this project was approved

Exhibit A: Application submitted by Karl Bjork, dated March 3, 2011 and received March 4, 2011.

2. **21 Dix Street (HC-2010-008) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Erlan Lu, petitioner, presented the petition. Ms. Lu stated that she was seeking Building Demolition Delay Waiver approval to make the following changes: (a) remove and replace the roof shingles with the same materials, (b) remove the slate tiles on the Mansard roof and replace them with architectural shingles, (c) repair the window trim on the 3rd floor windows, and (d), remove the fascia on the upper floor. Ms. Lu stated that she had purchased the property recently, and indicated that the building severely needed repairs due to the fact that the previous owners had neglected maintaining its upkeep. She stated that the roof was leaking and was not original to the house as it had been replaced approximately 30 years ago. She also indicated that the fascia was severely damaged and indicated that the slate in the Mansard roof were not intact due to fact that some sections had been replaced with asphalt shingles during previous roof repairs. Commissioner Crowley expressed concern regarding the proposed removal of the slate tiles on the Mansard roof, and indicated that this was an important architectural feature of the building. Ms. Lu stated that most of the exterior architectural features of the house had been damaged as a result of many years of neglect and disrepair. Commissioner Provencher expressed concern regarding the proposed use of asphalt shingles on the Mansard roof, and indicated it would negatively affect the roof profile and historical nature of the house. He further stated that the house had been designed in the second empire style, and indicated that the Mansard roof profile was one of the most significant architectural characteristics of the style. Susan Ceccacci from Preservation Worcester expressed concern regarding the proposed removal and replacement of the slate tiles. She indicated the slate tiles could be repaired. Ms. Lu indicated that removing tile by tile would be extremely expensive. Commissioner Crowley asked Ms. Lu whether or not she had inspected the condition of the building prior to purchasing it. Ms. Lu responded that she had; however, she said that she had not known that the property was MACRIS-listed and subject to the Building Demolition Delay Waiver ordinance. Upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner Provencher, the Commission voted 2-2 (Commissioner Crowley and Commissioner McCann voted no) that the proposed demolition would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester. The motion failed, and the Commission considered the Building Demolition Delay Waiver based on undue economic hardship. Upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner McCann, the Commission voted 4-0 that the petitioner had demonstrated undue economic hardship; therefore, the Commission approved the following three (3) petition items: (a) remove and replace roof shingles with same materials, (b) remove the slate tiles on the mansard roof and replace them with architectural shingles, and (c), repair the window trim on the 3rd floor windows. Upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner McCann, the Commission voted 0-4 that the petitioner had not demonstrated undue economic hardship with respect to the removal of the fascia on the upper floor; therefore the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for the removal of the fascia on the upper floor was denied.

Exhibit A: Application submitted by Erlan Lu, dated March 7, 2011 and received March 7, 2011.

3. **9 View Street (HC-2010-009) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Peter Milecki, petitioner, presented the petition. Mr. Milecki stated that he was seeking Building Demolition Delay Waiver approval to make the following change: (a) remove and replace the porches on site. He indicated that the porches had deteriorated beyond repair and needed to be replaced for safety reasons and to be useful. Commissioner Provencher asked the petitioner to inform the Commission the cost of the porch replacements. Mr. Milecki responded that the proposed cost estimate was \$16,000.00. Commissioner McCann asked the petitioner if he was proposing to utilize wooden materials or synthetic materials, and he responded that he would utilize both materials. Commissioner Crowley stated that he supported the use of both materials as long as the synthetic materials did not give the appearance of being plastic. Mr. Milecki stated the synthetic material proposed had a wooden texture and indicated that it would be painted to match the existing color of the house. Commissioner Provencher stated that the porches were important architectural features that gave character to the building and indicated that he appreciated the efforts of the applicant to retain them. Commissioner Crowley asked the petitioner if the arch in the porches would be retained and he responded affirmatively. Upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner Provencher, the Commission voted 4-0 that the proposed demolition would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester, therefore, the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for this project was approved.

Exhibit A: Application submitted by Peter Milecki, dated March 15, 2011 and received March 15, 2011.

4. **1 College Street (HC-2010-010) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** William Larson, representative for Trustees of the College of the Holy Cross, petitioner, presented the petition. Mr. Larson stated that the petitioner was seeking Building Demolition Delay Waiver approval to make the following changes: (a) repair the existing floor and stairs located on the Commencement Porch, and (b), replace fifteen (15) exterior windows with aluminum-clad wooden windows to match the original windows in size and profile. Mr. Larson indicated that these changes would take place in Fenwick Hall, which was built circa 1840. He also stated that although the existing windows did not appear to be original windows, the petitioner was proposing to install solid wooden windows with aluminum exterior that would match the existing windows in style and profile. In addition, he indicated that the projected cost for the proposed project was \$120,000. Chair Constantine encouraged Mr. Larson to preserve and retain any and all architectural details that may be located in the existing windows. Commissioner Crowley asked Mr. Larson if the petitioner was planning to make any other significant changes to the building and he responded negatively. Commissioner Provencher asked Mr. Larson if the proposed windows would match the existing windows' shape, line and profile and he responded affirmatively. Susan Ceccacci from Preservation Worcester asked Mr. Larson what the condition of the windows was and he responded that they had deteriorated beyond repair and were causing leakage in several locations. Upon a motion by Commissioner McCann and seconded by Commissioner Provencher, the Commission voted 4-0 that the proposed demolition would not be detrimental to the architectural or

Exhibit A: Application submitted by Trustees of College of the Holy Cross, dated March 18, 2010 and received March 21, 2011.

5. **152 Russell Street (HC-2010-011) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Claire Forges, petitioner, presented the petition. Ms. Forges stated that she was seeking Building Demolition Delay Waiver approval to make the following change: (a) install vinyl siding with insulation throughout the entire building. Ms. Forges stated that approximately 35 years ago, the lower half of the original siding was replaced with particle board siding and indicated that such material had deteriorated over the years and as a result, it was not energy efficient which, in turn, was causing high heating costs. She also indicated that she had received the following 3 cost estimates: (a) \$21,000.00 to install vinyl siding, (b) \$29,500.00 to install wood siding in the front and vinyl siding on the remaining three sides of the house, and (c), \$38,000.00 to remove and replace all wood siding with wood siding. Therefore, she stated that after reviewing the cost estimates submitted, she and her husband had decided that proposing to install vinyl siding suited their financial needs more effectively. Commissioner Crowley expressed concern that the installation of vinyl siding would change the overall appearance of the house. Susan Ceccacci from Preservation Worcester indicated that the proposed project would have a negative impact on the surrounding historic structures and neighborhood. Commissioner Provencher expressed concern for the proposed project and indicated that the location of the house was important due to the fact that it was the fourth residential building from Highland Street. He also indicated that installing vinyl siding would alter the appearance of the house and indicated that vinyl siding would not last as long as wooden siding. In addition, he indicated that the siding in place appeared to be repairable. Commissioner Provencher also stated that based on a site visit and observation of the 3 adjacent residential buildings, it was likely that the wooden material in place was original to the structure; therefore, he encouraged the applicant to consider repairing and retaining the wooden siding. Ms. Forges stated that an alternative solution would be to install vinyl siding with a texture that resembles wooden shakes in the front façade and in the upper sections of the house. Commissioner Crowley stated that the rear of the house was not as important as the front façade; therefore, he stated that the petitioner should consider repairing the wooden siding in the front façade instead. Chair Constantine indicated that one half of the house already had vinyl siding. Commissioner McCann stated that to his knowledge, the vinyl siding installation would decrease the value of the property by approximately 5-10 percent. Ms. Ceccacci stated that installing wooden siding in the front façade and vinyl siding on the sides and rear was preferable, as it would provide an appropriate historic look. Chair Constantine indicated that the Commission could not dictate replacing non-original materials such as particle board siding, with natural materials. Ms. Forges stated that the wooden siding in the upper section of the house was very expensive, as it was approximately 3 times less energy efficient. She indicated that, in her opinion, the best solution was to install vinyl siding with added insulation. Commissioner Crowley stated that the applicant had not provided clear cost estimates in order for the Commission to render a decision on the matter; therefore, he indicated that

Exhibit A: Application submitted by Mark and Claire Forges dated March 23, 2010 and received March 25, 2011.

OTHER BUSINESS:

The Commission accepted three (3) letters from Ms. Brona Simon, State Historic Preservation Officer, Massachusetts Historical Commission regarding their acceptance for listing in the National Register of Historic Places of the following sites: (a) 180-184 Main Street, formerly known as the Thule-Plummer Building (b) 651-659 Main Street, formerly known as the Hadley Furniture Co. Building, and (c), Poli's Place Theater at 2 Southbridge Street.

Exhibit A: Letter from Brona Simon, to the Worcester Historical Commission regarding 180-184 Main Street, formerly known as the Thule-Plummer Building, dated March 23, 2011, and received April 8, 2011.

Exhibit B: Letter from Brona Simon, to the Worcester Historical Commission regarding 651-659 Main Street, formerly known as the Hadley Furniture Co. Building, dated March 23, 2011, and received April 8, 2011.

Exhibit C: Letter from Brona Simon, to the Worcester Historical Commission regarding the Poli's Place Theater at 2 Southbridge Street, dated March 23, 2011, and received April 8, 2011.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM.