



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
HISTORICAL COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER**

Thursday, March 9, 2023

Worcester City Hall - Levi Lincoln Chamber,
with remote participation options available via Webex online at
<https://cityofworchester.webex.com/meet/historicalcommissionwebex> and
call-in number 415-655-0001 (Access Code: 1608081191).

Commissioners Present: Diane Long, Chair
Janet Theerman, Vice-Chair
Erika Helnarski (Participated Remotely)
Devon Kurtz
Donald Northway
Tomi Stefani
Vanessa Andre, Alternate

Commissioners Absent:

Staff Present: Michelle Johnstone, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services (DPRS)
Michelle Smith, Diving of Planning & Regulatory Services (DPRS)

Call Commission to Order – 5:30 PM

Approval of Minutes - None

New Business

Certificate of Non-Applicability

1. 64-68 Austin Street, 61-65 & 67-69 Chatham Street, 29-33 & 38-42 Oxford Street (multiple MBLs) – CNA-23-3 – 7

Petition purpose: Replace asphalt shingle roof

Petitioner, participating remotely stated that the purpose of the project is to replace the shingles due to age and time.

Chair Long said that the buildings were built in the 80's and the reason this is before the commission is because it sits on the edge of the Crown Hill Local Historic District.

The Commission did not have any questions for the applicant.

Public comment: None.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed to close public comment. (Commissioner Helnarski did not vote due to audio issues).

Upon a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted seven (7) in favor and zero (0) opposed that the proposed changes are not under the jurisdiction of the Commission. Having gained a unanimous affirmative vote, the request for a Certificate of Non-Applicability was approved.

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Certificate of Non-Applicability Submitted March 7, 2023 by Keri Mosman, contractor, o/b/o Jessica Negron, owner, and received March 7, 2023.

Exhibit B: Slides of current conditions

Certificate of Appropriateness

2. 8 Massachusetts Avenue (20-013-00006) – COA-23-1

Petition purpose: Install a fence

Petitioner, attended the meeting in person and stated that the project is to replace a portion of the existing fence with a steel fence. The fence will go along the side yard and attach to the garage and back to the front of the house.

Chair Long clarified that what is there now is being removed and putting up a new fence.

Petitioner said yes, just that section. What is there now is a wrought iron 3ft fence and would be replaced with a black steel 4ft fence.

Commissioner Theerman asked if in addition to the replacement if there was any additional fence being added to close it off but matches what is already there.

Petitioner answered yes, correct, it will match the new fence. It is similar to what is there, just taller.

Public comment: None.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed to close public comment. (Commissioner Helnarski did not vote due to audio issues)

Upon a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted seven (7) in favor and zero (0) opposed that the proposed changes are appropriate for the Mass Ave Local Historic District. Having gained a unanimous affirmative vote, the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness was approved.

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Certificate of Appropriateness Submitted February 3, 2023 by Deborah Asbridge, owner, and received February 3, 2023.

Exhibit B: Slides of current conditions

Building Demolition Delay Waiver

3. 130 Woodland Street (06-041-11+33) – BDDW-23-1

Replace select windows

Petitioner presented in person to the commission that this building is owned by Clark University and they would like to replace all the windows. There are two windows that are historic that are failing and have been screwed into the wall to hold them in place. The first one to be replaced is the bowed top window on the front of the house. Marvin Windows has designed a true divided light replacement and that window should not look any different. The second window is hard to see from the road and hard to get pictures of as well. This window is much more complicated and much more detailed. The window representative said that it could be matched with no problem. When windows like this have been replaced in the past, they have been very close, but not identical. The sill will be replaced as well as the sill is rotted away, and the window is currently screwed in place.

Chair Long asked if there is any stained glass.

Petitioner responded not in these two windows. There is a stained-glass window on the right side of the building at the top of a stairwell that is not being touched. There will be the addition of a storm window on the inside to protect it.

Commissioner Stefani said that the windows will match the design, but what would be the difference between the proposed and the existing.

Petitioner stated that for the front window there is no difference. On the second window, the wood on the divided lights may be a sixteenth of an inch bigger because of manufacturing tolerances. The shown photo looks different than the proposal because the window is currently broken.

Commissioner Stefani asked who they had spoken with about the repairs or if someone could rebuild this window.

Petitioner responded that the firm they usually use is Tremont Historic and their recommendation was to replace it so there were no further inquiries made. If the direction advised is to rebuild the side window, they will try.

Commissioner Northway clarified that this window being talked about is not visible from the street.

Petitioner stated that the slide being shown is from the street on google maps. Driving down the road, the window is vaguely visible.

Public comment: None.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted seven (7) in favor and zero (0) opposed to close public comment.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted seven (7) in favor and zero (0) opposed that the proposed demolition to replace windows would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester. Having gained a unanimous affirmative vote, the motion passed, and a Building Demolition Delay Waiver was thus approved.

Exhibits

Exhibit A – Slides of current conditions

4. 166 Harding Street (04-021-10+11) – BDDW-23-2

Petition purpose: Remove garage doors & infill to match existing storefronts, install egress doors on side of building

Ed Russo, business owner in the canal district of Worcester, attended the meeting in person. He reviewed the proposal, consisting of breaking the building into two different retail spaces on the first floor and remove the garage doors and infill with a storefront. The interior has already been separated. The idea is to match the store front in the front, and it will be one clean line across the front.

Chair Long clarified that even where the bays are for the cars all the way across will be filled in.

Mr. Russo responded yes. On the slide/photo on the screen of the side of the building, looking to install a manned security door for deliveries in the back alley.

Commissioner Kurtz asked that they will drop the front façade down to the window height.

Mr. Russo responded yes to be consistent straight through. The color will be different as they don't make that color anymore, but will be painted to match.

Public comment: None.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted seven (7) in favor and zero (0) opposed to close public comment.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted seven (7) in favor and zero (0) opposed that the proposed demolition would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester. Having gained a unanimous affirmative vote, the motion passed and a Building Demolition Delay Waiver for 166 Harding Street was thus approved.

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Submitted January 31, 2023, by Edward Russo, owner, and received February 3, 2023.

Exhibit B: Slides of current conditions and proposed changes

5. 20 Harrison Street (04-021-00016) – BDDW-23-5

Petition purpose: Replace windows, replace storefront with a brick façade at lower section and windows to match the upper floors, install awning above storefront.

Ed Russo, business owner in the canal district of Worcester, attended the meeting in person. He reviewed the proposal, consisting of changing out two garage doors with glass doors, infill the side with brick and match the store windows with the windows that are on the upper levels. The upstairs windows are currently covered with a fiberglass panel and the upstairs windows will also be replaced. The same alterations will be made on the far-right garage door.

Commissioner Andre asked if original windows were behind the fiberglass panels.

Mr. Russo responded that there are some old windows, some plywood, there is a mixture of things from over the years.

Commissioner Stefani asked about the windows behind the fiberglass being a part of the project.

Mr. Russo responded they are being replaced as part of the project to an aluminum window. This project may be back in front of you as the store front was on the corner originally and it depends on what the tenant would like to do.

Public comment: None.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted seven (7) in favor and zero (0) opposed to close public comment.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted seven (7) in favor and zero (0) opposed that the proposed demolition would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester. Having gained a unanimous affirmative vote, the motion passed and a Building Demolition Delay Waiver for 20 Harrison Street was thus approved.

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Submitted February 2, 2023, by Edward Russo, owner, and received February 3, 2023.

Exhibit B: Slides of current conditions and proposed changes

6. 18 Chestnut Street (03-032-00001) – BDDW-23-3

Petition purpose: Modify an entryway.

Raymond James, Raymond James Restoration, Petitioner, attended the meeting in person and reviewed the proposal to replace and widen to a double door the door adjacent to the parking lot in the back of the building. They will reuse all the stone/components that are removed to create the new jam to match what is there now.

Commissioner Kurtz asked if it is a stone veneer or natural stone on the building now.

Mr. James responded that it is a natural stone that is six inches thick. Behind the stone is solid concrete that is about twelve inches thick.

Public comment: None.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted seven (7) in favor and zero (0) opposed to close public comment.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted seven (7) in favor and zero (0) opposed that the proposed would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester. Having gained a unanimous affirmative vote, the motion passed and a Building Demolition Delay Waiver for 18 Chestnut Street was thus approved.

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Slides of current conditions

7. 185 West Street (Stratton Hall) (02-044-01+02) – BDDW-23-4

Petition purpose: Construct an addition, remove two fire escape stairs, replace roof.

Nicholas Palumbo, Director of Design and Construction at WPI, Petitioner, and Elizabeth King of Stantec Architects attended the meeting in person and reviewed the proposal, consisting of removing two fire escape stairs and replacing the roof of the building along with a full gut renovation of the building.

Ms. King presented historical background of the building. With this project adding an elevator, it brings the building into code compliance and ADA standards. This is why the fire escapes are proposed to be removed. Also, all windows will be replaced as well. Proposal is for dark charcoal mullions which is in line with the vintage of the building from 1894 with the darker steel. Also proposed is a copper colored finish on the addition to speak to the existing copper cornice on the building and to make it feel like it fits in place with the vintage of the two buildings and the surrounding buildings. Included window replacement drawings with presentation for reference. The roof replacement piece is pulled back from the existing copper cornice to respect the architecture.

Ms. Johnstone added that the window replacement was not included on the agenda as the existing windows are vinyl replacements. Those are not being considered, but it is nice to see the proposal of an appropriate window.

Commissioner Kurtz noted the appreciation for the new design with the inclusion of older techniques – it's a nice bridge between old and new without trying to recreate the past.

Commissioner Stefani inquired as to whether to cladding with be copper or glass.

Ms. King responded that the curtain wall will be surrounded by copper colored cladding, and they are investigating a couple of different material choices. Some is real copper flat seam, and some is metal panel/aluminum painted with a copper finish.

Commissioner Stefanie said great job in the presentation today.

Public comment: None.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted seven (7) in favor and zero (0) opposed to close public comment.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted seven (7) in favor and zero (0) opposed that the proposed would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester. Having gained a unanimous affirmative vote, the motion passed, and a Building Demolition Delay Waiver was thus approved.

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Submitted December 13, 2022, by Nicholas Palumbo, owner, and received February 2, 2023.

Exhibit B: Presentation/slides shown at meeting.

8. 33 Hermon Street (03-003-07+14) – BDDW-23-6

Petition purpose: Replace select windows, install new windows in new openings, install new doors in new openings, replace a portion of the roof, install new siding on portions of the building.

Donald O'Neill, lawyer on behalf of Hermon Street Development, LLC, owner, attended the meeting in person and stated that they had been before the commission about a year ago and received approval to renovate the front part of the building. At that time, they did not include the side/addition to the building in the scope of work as the owner did not have a plan at that time. Now the decision has been made to convert it over to apartment use. There is already approval from the Planning Board for the conversion to 9 apartment units. The structure itself is not of historical significance and is in rough shape. The proposal today is to clean up the masonry, paint the masonry block, replace select windows/install new windows, install new doors, replace a portion of the roof and install new siding on portions of the building.

Chair Long indicated that this appears to be quite an improvement to the property.

Mr. O'Neill stated that there is a lot of work happening at the structure. The new wing is constructed, and the owner has decided to use brick instead of siding, so even though it is not this commissions purview, there is good work happening.

Commissioners all agreed it looks like a nice improvement.

Public comment: None.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted seven (7) in favor and zero (0) opposed to close public comment.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted seven (7) in favor and zero (0) opposed that the proposed would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester. Having gained a unanimous affirmative vote, the motion passed and a Building Demolition Delay Waiver for 33 Hermon Street was thus approved.

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Submitted February 15, 2023 by Donald O'Neill, Attorney, o/b/o Herman Street Development, LLC, owner, and received February 17, 2023.

Exhibit A – Slides of current condition/proposed exteriors shown at meeting.

Old Business

Certificate of Appropriateness & Building Demolition Delay Waiver

9. 114 Austin Street (03-024-00002) – HC-2022-090

Petition purpose: Demolish building and construct a replacement building.

Donald O'Neill, lawyer on behalf of the applicant, attended the meeting in person and asked for a continuance until the March 23rd meeting.

Upon a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted seven (7) in favor and zero (0) to postpone this item until the March 23, 2023 meeting with an extended constructive grant deadline extended until April 21, 2023.

Communications

None

Other Business

- A. Discussion and vote on final study report and assessed condition of additional properties proposed for inclusion in the proposed Elm Park Local Historic District.

Michelle Johnstone reviewed changes that were made to the final study report, went over assigned integrity for 29 buildings included, and then the commission was able to provide additional feedback on the report. The vote on the report, as a whole, will take place at the next meeting and then be referred to city council.

There was an overview of the objection of the Cornerstone Bank at 230 Park Avenue to be a part of the historic district. Michelle Smith gave an overview of the history of how the bank and relationship came to be and the MOA that exists. Legal Counsel, Attorney Raddigan, for the bank was online and spoke that they feel the building is for commercial use and is an outlier of the boundaries. It is part of the deed for the property to make sure it is preserved and feel they have their own agreement with the city for this property.

Ms. Johnstone spoke about why this building should or should not be included in the district and how the MOA binds the bank to certain expectations. Highlighting that if the bank were to ever leave the property, the building would become the property of the city again. The city would be exempt from the purview of the commission but would speculate that the city would look for another for profit partner if the bank were to ever leave. Tonight is just to gauge opinions about including the building in the historic district, there will not be any vote taken. The vote will be taken at the next meeting.

All commissioners gave opinions about this building in the historic district.

Chair Long opened the conversation for public comment.

Jonathan Ostrow of the Save Notre Dame Alliance wanted clarification that if the bank left, the city found another partner, if not demolished the building – if the building was included would that add protections to the building?

Michelle Smith answered that this would be speculation, but we will gain clarification from the law department that if a local historic district were in place and the city took possession, there is not control over what the city chooses to do with the building. The commission would not have that authority.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted seven (7) in favor and zero (0) opposed to close public comment.

B. Worcester Now | Next - public workshops notice.

Michelle Smith gave an overview of the project and process as it stands. Encourage folks to attend public workshops and provide feedback. There are yard signs available for commissioners to take if they live in a place where there is a of foot/driving traffic to be seen.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Commissioner Long, the Commission voted seven (7) to zero (0) to adjourn the meeting at approximately 7:52 p.m.