

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
HISTORICAL COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER
December 19, 2013**

LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER – CITY HALL

Commission Members Present: Timothy McCann, Chair
Kevin Provencher, Vice-Chair
Karl Bjork
Andrew Shveda
Erika Dunn

Commission Members Absent:

Staff Members Present: Deborah Steele, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services

REGULAR MEETING (5:30 PM)

Chair McCann called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m.

Approval of the Minutes from 12/5/2013 meeting was held

New Business

1. 220 Salisbury Street (HC-2013-070): Certificate of Appropriateness & Building Demolition Delay Waiver

The applicant requested a postponement.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Provencher, and seconded by Commissioner Shveda, the Commission voted 4-0 to postpone this item until the January 9, 2014 meeting.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Provencher, and seconded by Commissioner Shveda, the Commission voted 4-0 to extend the constructive grant deadline to January 26, 2014

Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application & Certificate of Appropriateness dated November 19, 2013 and submitted November 19, 2013.

2. 401-409 Main Street (HC-2013-071): Building Demolition Delay Waiver

Mr. Jeff Shack came before the Commission representing the 401-409 Main Street Condo Association and J&J Holdings LLC which is the applicant for this petition.

The applicant is proposing to remove 19th century era plywood soffits from the building.

Mr. Shack stated that the soffits present a danger and need to be removed. Due to the soffits, the lights have not been changed in 40 years.

Chair McCann stated that the soffit material was not original and that he understood the safety concern. Chair McCann further stated that he had no issue with the proposal to remove the existing soffits.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Provencher, and seconded by Commissioner Dunn, the Commission voted 4-0 that the proposed repairs are not detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City.

The motion passed and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver was approved.

Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated November 15, 2013 and submitted November 15, 2013.

3. 15-17 Blackstone River Road (HC-2013-072): Building Demolition Delay Waiver

Rafael Hernandez and Bob Coughlin gave an overview of the proposed project. Mr. Hernandez is the designer and Mr. Coughlin is with Capstone Realty Trust, the entity that owns the building.

Mr. Hernandez stated that this structure is a former fire station that has been used for storage more recently. He stated that Capstone Construction is proposing to renovate the building to create office space for the business.

The applicant is proposing the following work be done to the building:

- (1) Remove/replace damaged slate shingles with matching as required;
- (2) Repair the cupola;
- (3) Remove/replace copper fascia, soffits, wall flashing, gravel stops, copings, valley flashing, exposed trim and laminated flashing with like materials;
- (4) Repoint/cut back limestone sills & headers, masonry and replace brick as required;
- (5) Remove 2nd floor stud wall/panel board, infill with aluminum window and brick to match;
- (6) Remove all wood and metal windows, reframe as needed and replace with aluminum windows and panning to match existing style;
- (7) Remove 1st floor exterior doors and replace with steel doors;
- (8) Remove wood garage door and replace with aluminum door, transom and sidelite.

Mr. Hernandez stated that a fire escape at the back of the building also needs to be added. He stated that this would not be visible from the street.

Mr. Hernandez presented the Commission with pictures that were shown on his laptop. He also presented the architectural plans to the Commission.

Chair McCann asked how many of the windows are original to the building.

Mr. Hernandez stated that all of the windows are original; however, some of them have been boarded up for security reasons.

Chair McCann asked what the condition of the original windows is, including the ones behind the boards.

Mr. Hernandez stated that many of the windows are rotting, glass is broken, and storm windows are missing and that many of the windows are generally nonfunctional.

Commissioner Provencher stated that he counted 33 windows on the plans. He asked how many of these were beyond repair.

Mr. Hernandez stated that he didn't know specifically how many were beyond repair.

Commissioner Provencher stated that the plan drawings indicated that rectangular replacement windows were being installed in arch top window spaces in the front façade of the building.

Mr. Hernandez stated that he planned to match the arch tops and would change the plans to show this.

Chair McCann stated that removal of the existing original windows would be a detriment to the historic integrity of the building. However, the applicant could seek a waiver based on an economic hardship.

Chair McCann stated that the Commission needs to know the current state of the existing windows and what the cost for repair of these windows would before an economic hardship can be required.

Mr. Hernandez stated that it was his opinion that some of the windows would need to be replaced but that some might be able to be repaired.

Chair McCann stated that the other parts of the petition could be reviewed by the Commission and the portion related to the windows could be revisited once the applicant has the additional information requested by the Commission.

Commissioner Provencher stated that Preservation Worcester has expertise in repairing historic windows and recommended that the applicant contact Preservation Worcester for information and assistance on repairing the windows as opposed to replacing them.

Mr. Hernandez stated that he would get an inventory of the windows and compile a report regarding the condition of each window and which ones can be repaired and which ones need to be replaced.

Chair McCann stated that with regards to the roof, if slate is being proposed, this is generally approvable by the Commission, especially since it appears the roof needs patching and not wholesale replacement.

Mr. Hernandez stated that the roof still needs to undergo a full assessment before the scope of what needs to be repaired is determined.

Commissioner Provencher stated that there is a considerable amount of copper detailing on the roof and asked if this would be kept in place.

Mr. Hernandez stated that the plan was to keep the copper and repair or replace it only where absolutely necessary as copper is an expensive material.

Chair McCann asked if any of the doors were original.

Mr. Hernandez showed pictures of the various doors and cited examples where some of the doors had been significantly altered over time.

Commissioner Provencher stated that the storefront door is clearly not original and that the Commissioner would not have any issue with this being removed.

The Commission reviewed all the doors on the plan.

Commissioner Provencher stated that was difficult to determine if the doors on the rear and the left side of the building were original.

Commissioner McCann asked if the rear of the building was visible from the street.

Mr. Hernandez presented a picture of the building to the Commission.

Commissioner Provencher, upon inspecting the picture, stated that he was satisfied that these two doors were not original to the building and that he would be willing to approve the plans for the doors.

Chair McCann stated that the applicant could request a postponement on the window portion of the project and the Commission could vote on the remainder of the proposed project.

Mr. Hernandez formally requested a postponement for the window portion of the project.

Mr. Hernandez requested an extension of the constructive grant deadline to January 24, 2014.

Upon a motion by Chair Shveda, and seconded by Commissioner Bjork, the Commission voted 4-0 that item 6 of the application related to the window portion of the proposed project be postponed until the January 24th, 2014 meeting.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Shveda, and seconded by Commissioner Bjork, the Commission voted 4-0 to extend the constructive grant deadline to January 24, 2014 for only the window portion of the project.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Shveda, and seconded by Commissioner Bjork, the Commission voted 4-0 that the proposed repairs are not detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City with the exception of the windows which will be further examined at the January 24th, 2014 meeting.

The petition was partially approved. A decision on the proposed changes to the windows was postponed until the January 24th, 2014 meeting where the applicant will present more information on the condition of the windows and provide information on the cost of repairing versus replacing these windows.

Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated November 18, 2013 and submitted November 20, 2013.

4. 2 Rice Street (HC-2013-073): Building Demolition Delay Waiver:

Mr. William Durgin of Worcester Country Club, Mr. Stephen Airs of Worcester Country Club, and Mr. Jordan O'Connor of Jordan O'Connor Associates Architectural Firm came before the Commission on behalf of the petition.

The Country Club is proposing to remove a portion of the porch railing system and two vertical timber supports to construct a 330 SF addition to the south-facing porch; and to modify the existing patio area.

Mr. Durgan stated that the Country Club wished to extend the back porch area a few feet for a new bar area. The remainder of the porch would continue to be used as a private dining area.

Mr. O'Conner gave an overview of the proposed plans and described that much of the area to be renovated was not original to the building.

Chair McCann stated that, in general, he felt the proposed plans were respectful of the history of the building. He further stated that the porch area was hardly visible from Mountain Street.

Commissioner Provencher stated that he liked the design but wanted to make sure that nothing was done that would be irreversible in terms of the historic integrity of the building. He further stated that the plans presented seemed to take into consideration the historic features of the building.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Provencher, and seconded by Commissioner Shveda, the Commission voted 4-0 that the proposed demolitions are not detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City.

The motion passed and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver was approved.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated November 21, 2013 and submitted November 21, 2013.

5. 425B Salisbury Street (HC-2013-074): Building Demolition Delay Waiver

Mr. Longden, an attorney representing Notre Dame Academy appeared on behalf of the petition as did the architect for the project, Mr. Jordan O'Conner.

This building is being renovated by Notre Dame Academy to be used for educational purposes.

The applicant is proposing to remove an existing stucco chimney and patch the area with roof sheeting and matching tile

Mr. Longden mentioned that the portion of the building being renovated has little to no visibility from Salisbury or any other public street.

Mr. O'Conner stated that the building is currently being renovated and that during renovations it was discovered that the chimney is in very poor condition and no longer has a function. The applicant would like to remove the chimney.

Commissioner Shveda asked if there were any other chimneys on the building.

Mr. O'Conner stated that there was another larger chimney that still functioned.

Commissioner Provencher stated that he would not mind seeing the chimney removed.

Chair McCann stated that removal of the chimney would be addition by subtraction.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Provencher, and seconded by Commissioner Dunn, the Commission voted 4-0 that the proposed demolition is not detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City.

The motion passed and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver was approved.

Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated November 20, 2013 and submitted November 21, 2013.

Other Business:

6. Communication Received:

a. Letter from MHC re: 38 Hancock Hill Drive; dated October 30, 2013 and received November 4, 2013.

Staff provided an update on this communication.

b. Letter from MHC re: Rehabilitation, 5 Jackson Street; dated November 22, 2013 and received November 27, 2013.

This communication has been filed by Staff.

c. Letter from the MHC, re: 230 Park Avenue; dated November 22, 2013 and received November 25, 2013

Staff will follow-up on this matter and report back to the Commission.

d. Letter of Support Requests (dated November 22, 2013; received November 25, 2013)

- **230 Park Avenue, Fire Alarm and Telegraph Headquarters Building.**
- **371-377 Main Street, People's Block**
- **379-385 Main Street, Grout's Block**
- **18 Grafton Street, Osgood Bradley Building**

All Letter of Support Requests were approved.

e. Letter from Attorney Mark Donahue re: Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Kaven Hall/Application for Building Demolition Delay Waiver; dated December 10, 2013 and received December 11, 2013.

This communication has been filed by Staff.

Adjournment:

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bjork and seconded by Chair McCann, the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.