

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

**July 23, 2020**

**CITY HALL\***

**Commission Members Participating:** Mark Wamback, Chair  
Randolph Bloom  
Diane Long  
Janet Theerman  
Erika Helnarski, Alternate

**Commission Members Not Participating:** Devon Kurtz, Vice-Chair  
Tomi Stefani  
Cathryn E. Jerome-Mezynski, Alternate

**Staff Members Participating:** Stephen Rolle, Division of Planning and Regulatory Services  
Michelle Johnstone, Division of Planning and Regulatory Services

\*Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 23, 2020 Order, as amended, imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting was conducted through remote participation. The meeting was livestreamed from the City of Worcester website and via the local cable access channel and is available for streaming online. Public participation was facilitated through a call-in number, 415-655-0001 (Access Code: 1608081191#), which was publicized on the posted meeting agenda and during the video broadcast.

---

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**July 9, 2020:** Approval of the July 9, 2020 minutes was held until the next meeting (August 6, 2020).

---

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Certificate of Appropriateness & Building Demolition Delay Waiver**

**1. 9 Oxford Street – HC-2019-071 (MBL 03-025-00004)**

Petitioner: Helen & Dom Pham

Year Built: 1891

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; National Register Determination of Eligibility (DOE); National Register District (NRDIS); Local Historic District (LHD); State Register (SR), FKA Salem Griggs House

Petition Purpose:

- Replace windows (retroactive)

---

The item was postponed until the next meeting.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 4-0 to postpone the item to the August 6, 2020 meeting. Commissioner Bloom recused himself.

**2. 220 Salisbury Street – HC-2020-038 (MBL 20-007-0030A)**

Petitioner: Erjona Mehillaj

Year Built: 1952

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; Local Historic District (LHD); State Register (SR)

Petition Purpose:

- Redesign front exterior concrete stairs and front walkway (retroactive)

---

The item was continued until the next meeting.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 to postpone the item to the August 6, 2020 meeting.

### **Building Demolition Delay Waiver**

#### **3. 12 Westland Street – HC-2020-035 (MBL 11-008-00019)**

Petitioner: Jonathan Rigali

Year Built: 1897

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; National Register District (NRDIS); National Register Multiples Resource Area (NRMRA); State Register of Historic Places (SR), FKA C.A. Chandler House

Petition Purpose:

- Remove existing slate roof and replace with architectural shingles

---

The item was continued until the next meeting.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 to postpone the item to the August 6, 2020 meeting.

### **Certificate of Non-Applicability**

#### **4. 12 Crown Street – HC-2020-053 (MBL 03-026-00039)**

Petitioner: Aly Abayazeed

Year Built: ca. 1855

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; National Register District (NRDIS); State Register of Historic Places (SR); Preservation Restriction; Local Historic District (LHD), FKA Horace H. Dayton House

Petition Purpose:

- Replace wood fence with vinyl fence (not visible from public way)

---

Aly Abayazeed, the owner, spoke on behalf of the petition. He gave a brief synopsis of the application, stating that he proposes to replace the wood fence on the side and rear of the property, with a vinyl fence. The section of fence to be replaced is not visible from the street. The front gate and panel will be retained.

Commissioner Bloom stated that he had been concerned that the gate and a part of the fence would be removed. He said that after learning that the homeowner intends to keep that portion of the fence intact that his concern has been mitigated, but hopes that none of the new vinyl fence is visible from the street, as that would not be appropriate for the Local Historic District.

Commissioner Theerman stated that she is concerned that when the time comes that the front portion of the fence and gate to be replaced that it might be replaced with vinyl since the Commission had allowed vinyl in the rear of the property.

Mr. Rolle reminded the Commission that the applicant had specifically applied for a Certificate of Non-Applicability, meaning that the Commission technically does not have purview over the work because it is not visible from a public way. He stated that it is reasonable as part of the Commission's motion to specifically say that the approval of a Certificate of Non-Applicability for the work only applies to the sections that are not visible and that it does not apply to the front gate and panel.

Ms. Johnstone stated that she conducted a site visit, and that besides the front gate and panel, no portion of the fence is visible from the street.

*No public comment.*

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed changes consisting of the replacement of the rear fence only from wood to vinyl, at 12 Crown Street, is not under the jurisdiction of the Commission and is therefore not applicable, due to the fact that it cannot be seen from the street, and approved a Certificate of Non-Applicability.

#### Exhibits

Exhibit A: Certificate of Non-Applicability Application, dated July 6, 2020, received July 6, 2020.

Exhibit B: Staff Review Memorandum concerning the Certificate of Non-Applicability application for 12 Crown Street from Michelle Johnstone, Preservation Planner, to members of the Worcester Historical Commission, dated July 17, 2020.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Certificate of Non-Applicability**

##### **5. 4 Quincy Street – HC-2020-055 (MBL 03-024-00030)**

Petitioner: Rosa Malo, BBS General Construction, Inc.

Year Built: ca. 1867

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; State Register of Historic Places (SR); within the Crown Hill Local Historic District (LHD), FKA Moses Church House

Petition Purpose:

- Replace rear portion of existing rolled rubber roof, not visible from public right-of-way, in-kind

---

Rosa Malo of BBS Construction spoke on behalf of the application. She gave a brief synopsis of the application, stating that the intent of the application is to strip a portion of membrane roofing and replace it with a like material.

The Commission did not have any comment on the petition.

*No public comment.*

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed changes consisting of and in-kind roof replacement, at 4 Quincy Street, is not under the jurisdiction of the Commission and is therefore not applicable, due to the fact that it is not visible from the street, and approved a Certificate of Non-Applicability.

#### Exhibits

Exhibit A: Certificate of Non-Applicability Application, dated July 7, 2020, received July 8, 2020.

Exhibit B: Staff Review Memorandum concerning the Certificate of Non-Applicability application for 4 Quincy Street from Michelle Johnstone, Preservation Planner, to members of the Worcester Historical Commission, dated July 17, 2020.

### **Building Demolition Delay Waiver**

##### **6. 188 Institute Road – HC-2020-045 (MBL 20-020-1A+1B)**

Petitioner: Joel Kroman

Year Built: ca. 1892

Historic Status: MACRIS listed, FKA John M. Russell – Richard Healy House

Petition Purpose:

- Replace wood members on the porch where repair is not feasible
- Remove and replace rotted roof decking and rusted roof flashing

- Remove asphalt shingles and replace with rubber roofing system

---

Joel Kroman, the homeowner, spoke on behalf of the application. He stated that intent of the application, which is to reroof and replace or repair rotted, rusted, or otherwise damaged sections of the west porch with like materials. All original materials are proposed to be retained if at all possible, and if a replacement is required, it will be done with wood.

Commissioner Bloom stated that it sounds as if the owner is sensitive to the integrity of the house. Chair Wamback agreed.

Chair Wamback asked if all elements will be replaced in kind. The applicant stated that everything will be matched to the best extent possible, and that he wants it to look like it does now. Chair Wamback went on to ask why a rubber roof was being installed in favor of asphalt shingles. Mr. Rolle stated that given that the roof is flat, and that it is not visible, he would strongly recommend the installation of a rubber roof.

*No public comment.*

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed demolition at 188 Institute Road would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester and voted to approve a Building Demolition Delay Waiver.

#### Exhibits

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application, dated June 15, 2020, received June 24, 2020.

Exhibit B: Staff Review Memorandum concerning the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application for 188 Institute Road from Michelle Johnstone, Preservation Planner, to members of the Worcester Historical Commission, dated July 17, 2020.

#### **7. 531 Main Street – HC-2020-047 (MBL 03-013-00103)**

Petitioner: Brett Fay o/b/o Federal Square Condominium Association

Year Built: ca. 1860, reconstructed or heavily modified in ca. 1923

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; FKA Sawyer – Holbrook Building

Petition Purpose:

- Demolish Alpha Travel's rear egress concrete precast stairs and wooden structure and install protection for pedestrians over rear Main Street lobby egress and Alpha Travel's rear egress
- Remove 6 pieces of fire escape landings and miscellaneous iron brackets
- Remove existing wood infill in various fenestration openings for preparation of CMU block/brick veneer (exposure will determine what is necessary for water/thermo proofing)
- Install structural reinforcement at the bottom of openings
- Remove and replace brick of thresholds that have failed or are failing to ensure structural integrity
- Install 8X8X16" grouted CMU block, closing out opening with brick veneer that is flush with exterior facade in 9 openings (matching brick and mortar to replicate original color as closely as possible)
- Remove and replace all mortar joints and remove and replace any bricks that are not structurally sound or aesthetically pleasing

---

Brett Fay of Alpine Property Management, the property manager, spoke on behalf of the application. He described the intent of the application, which is to clean up the rear façade of 531 Main Street.

Commissioner Bloom asked why the window openings are not being reopened. Mr. Fay stated that when the Great Wall façade, which is next door, came down, the fire escape was removed. Many of the window openings have been blocked off permanently, as there are condominium units behind them. Commissioner Bloom asked if something else would be put over the spaces. Mr. Fay stated that the installation of false windows was recommended to him [it

was recommended in a staff review memo], but he was unsure about that strategy. Mr. Rolle stated that the Commission could disregard the comment about the installation of false windows, and stated that all existing openings with glass will retain glass. Commissioner Bloom asked whether all work would be an overall improvement. Mr. Fay confirmed that that would be the case, and described some of the other work proposed, including repointing.

Mr. Rolle clarified which openings would be enclosed.

Commissioner Theerman asked what was proposed in place of one of the exterior wood vestibules proposed for removal. Mr. Fay stated that a black awning over the door would be installed.

#### *Public Comment*

Mark Russell of 17 Federal Street asked if the applicant had any plans for some green painted wood panels on the building next to 531 Main Street. Mr. Fay stated that that is not part of this submission. He also asked if anything was being done to the front of 531 Main Street. Mr. Fay stated that this application is only addressing the back.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed demolition at 531 Main Street, rear, would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester and voted to approve a Building Demolition Delay Waiver.

#### Exhibits

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application, dated June 23, 2020, received July 7, 2020.

Exhibit B: Staff Review Memorandum concerning the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application for 531 Main Street from Michelle Johnstone, Preservation Planner, to members of the Worcester Historical Commission, dated July 17, 2020.

### **8. 17 Federal Street – HC-2020-048 (MBL 03-013-0210F)**

Petitioner: Brett Fay o/b/o Federal Square Condominium Association

Year Built: 1916

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; Positive National Register Determination of Eligibility (NRDOE), FKA Worcester Evening Post Building

Petition Purpose:

- Remove existing cornice and replace with metal drip-edge

---

Brett Fay of Alpine Property Management spoke on behalf of the application. He stated that while working on replacing the roof, there was a wind storm that took a good size portion of the metal cornice off. He described the cornice, saying that it is a 3'-4' metal cornice that wraps around the building. He stated that it is not in good shape. He stated that he hoped to duplicate what was done with the on a building nearby, which is to remove the cornice and replace it with a simple metal drip edge with multiple bends.

Commissioner Bloom stated that he thinks that it appears as though the existing cornice is not original, and that the proposed replacement would be far more interesting. Commissioner Long agreed.

Commissioner Theerman stated that it's no high up in the air that she doesn't think it will make much of a difference. Mr. Fay stated that the building in seven stories.

*No Public Comment.*

On a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Long, the Commission voted 5-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed demolition at 17 Federal Square [Street] would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester and voted to approve a Building Demolition Delay Waiver.

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application, dated June 23, 2020, received July 7, 2020.

Exhibit B: Staff Review Memorandum concerning the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application for 531 Main Street from Michelle Johnstone, Preservation Planner, to members of the Worcester Historical Commission, dated July 20, 2020.

**9. 59 William Street – HC-2020-049 (MBL 02-046-00036)**

Petitioner: Russ Haims

Year Built: between 1896 and 1910

Historic Status: National Register District (NRDIS)

Petition Purpose:

- Demolish existing enclosed entry porch
- Install wrought iron railing

---

Russ Haims spoke on behalf of the application. He stated the intent of the application, which is to remove the enclosed porch and return it to its original state of an open porch.

The Commission did not have comment on the item.

*No public comment.*

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed demolition at 59 William Street would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester and voted to approve a Building Demolition Delay Waiver.

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Wavier Application, dated June 30, 2020, received July 6, 2020.

Exhibit B: Staff Review Memorandum concerning the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application for 59 William Street from Michelle Johnstone, Preservation Planner, to members of the Worcester Historical Commission, dated July 20, 2020.

**10. 54 Cedar Street – HC-2020-050 (MBL 02-048-00012)**

Petitioner: Russ Haims

Year Built: 1883

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; State Register of Historic Places (SR); National Register District (NRDIS); National Register Multiple Resource Area (NRMRA), FKA John D. Washburn House

Petition Purpose:

- Remove wood shingle siding and replace with two-tone vinyl/composite shingles with accent color on peaks
- Remove wood window surrounds and replace with metal surrounds in a similar design
- Install gutters

---

Russ Haims spoke on behalf of the application. He described the intent of the application, which is to remove all the exterior shingles. He stated that some of the bottom courses of shingles are rotted and that water has already done significant damage to the foundation. He state that he would be painting the trim, crown moldings, and dentil moldings. Insulation will be blown in; gutters will be installed; and vinyl shingles in different colors will be installed. The trim around the window casings will be antique parchment color aluminum wrapping.

Chair Wamback had connectivity issues, and a one minute recess was called to allow him time to reconnect to the meeting.

Chair Wamback called the meeting back to order.

Chair Wamback asked if there was a picture of the alternate siding material to be used. Mr. Haims stated that they are not presented in the slideshow, but some examples were included in his application.

Commissioner Bloom asked whether the new material would be shake style or clapboard style siding. He stated that shakes are intended on this building. Mr. Haims stated that 100% [imitation] shake would be installed. He also asked if any historical photographs show use of different colors of the building. Mr. Haims stated that he does not have any. Commissioner Bloom stated that he trusts Mr. Haims' judgement in terms of color.

---

*No public comment.*

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed demolition at 54 Cedar Street would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester and voted to approve a Building Demolition Delay Waiver.

### Exhibits

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Wavier Application, dated July 1, 2020, received July 6, 2020.

Exhibit B: Staff Review Memorandum concerning the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application for 54 Cedar Street from Michelle Johnstone, Preservation Planner, to members of the Worcester Historical Commission, dated July 21, 2020.

#### **11. 66 (AKA 64) Cedar Street – HC-2020-051 (MBL 02-048-00002)**

Petitioner: Russ Haims

Year Built: 1890

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; State Register of Historic Places (SR); National Register District (NRDIS); National Register Multiple Resource Area (NRMRA), FKA Daniel Bates House

Petition Purpose:

- Restore chimneys
- Remove original wood windows and replace with vinyl sash with the same grid pattern
- Install gutters
- Connect right, left, and rear dormers to enlarge them
- Install raised panel shutters with S hook hardware at the corners of each

---

Russ Haims spoke on behalf of the application. He gave an overview of the project. He stated that he proposes to replace the existing windows with vinyl windows in a matching grid pattern, with exterior grids on the front windows and to add raised panel shutters. The side and rear dormers will be connected, but the profile from the street will remain the same. The connection of the dormers is to make the interior space more functional. Gutters will also be added.

Commissioner Bloom asked for clarification on the shutters. Mr. Haims stated that he is proposing wood shutters in blue with a cream body and off-white trim, only on the front of the building. He stated that the windows would be almond. He also stated that there may have been operable shutters at one time. Commissioner Bloom asked how that would work on the curved part of the building. He stated that only one width of shutter would be used. Commissioner Bloom stated that shutters were meant to be closed over windows, and that fussy eyes may notice that the shutters are narrower in width than the windows. Mr. Haims stated that they are to be purely decorative, and noted that he understands they will not be historically accurate.

Mr. Haims described some of the other restorations he plans to undertake, including restoring some of the leaded glass.

Commissioner Theerman asked if Mr. Haims plans on replacing the front door. He stated that he will only be doing that if it is in bad shape, but it is currently a metal (non-historic) door.

Commissioner Bloom asked what would be done with the windows in the dormers. Mr. Haims stated that he will probably remove them and install windows that would be complimentary to the rest of the building.

*No public comment.*

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed demolition at 66 Cedar Street would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester and voted to approve a Building Demolition Delay Waiver.

#### Exhibits

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application, dated July 1, 2020, received July 6, 2020.

Exhibit B: Staff Review Memorandum concerning the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application for 66 (AKA 64) Cedar Street from Michelle Johnstone, Preservation Planner, to members of the Worcester Historical Commission, dated July 21, 2020.

### **12. 65 Cedar Street – HC-2020-052 (MBL 02-048-00023)**

Petitioner: Russ Haims

Year Built: 1893

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; State Register of Historic Places (SR); National Register District (NRDIS); National Register Multiple Resource Area (NRMRA), FKA Burns Folly–William H. Burns House Carriage House

Petition Purpose:

- Demolish carriage house

---

Russ Haims spoke on behalf of the application. He stated that it is with some sadness that he has come to the conclusion that there is no way for him to adequately take care of the carriage house. He stated that the cost to try to restore the carriage house makes it an either-or conundrum in the decision to restore the carriage house or the mansion it is associated with. He stated that he acquired an estimate, which came with a lot of caveats, of \$380,000 to restore the carriage house. Just to stage and work in it safely would be approximately \$100,000. He stated that his number one concern in the decision to demolish is safety, given that the carriage house abuts, or potentially encroaches on the abutting property. He went on to state that he hopes that people in the community will reach out to him in helping him salvage some of the elements.

Commissioner Bloom stated that he was frustrated and disappointed to see the condition of the building, although he does not blame the applicant. He stated that he is encouraged to here that some of the elements will be salvaged.

Commissioner Long stated that it seems obvious to her that the Commission could not vote that the loss of the building would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City, and that the only way it could be approved would be through an economic hardship finding. Commissioner Theerman agreed.

#### *Public Comment*

Joel Kroman of 188 Institute Road asked if there was a plan to replace the building with something similar. Mr. Haims stated that no new structure would be added. Some large evergreen trees would be added for privacy. An extensive landscaping plan and parking would be executed. Commissioner Bloom elaborated, stating that any plan to replicate the building would not be successful.

Chair Wamback read a letter from Deb Packard of Preservation Worcester into the record. The letter stated that the demolition of the carriage house would be a big loss to the neighborhood and City. However, she noted that the structure has suffered severe deferred maintenance by no fault of the applicant, and that she understands that its restoration would likely constitute a financial hardship. She encouraged the Commission to discuss the costs associated with restoration with the applicant and to regretfully waive the demolition delay if rehabilitation is found to be cost prohibitive.



On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 0-5 (Commissioner Helnarski first voted yes but later recanted her vote) that the proposed demolition at 65 Cedar Street would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester and voted to deny a Building Demolition Delay Waiver.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 that the issuance of a demolition delay waiver at 65 Cedar Street is necessary to avoid an undue economic hardship for the property owner and voted to approve a Certificate of Hardship.

#### Exhibits

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Wavier Application, dated July 1, 2020, received July 6, 2020.

Exhibit B: Staff Review Memorandum concerning the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application for 65 Cedar Street from Michelle Johnstone, Preservation Planner, to members of the Worcester Historical Commission, dated July 21, 2020.

#### COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Request from Epsilon Associates for updated letters of support for the Kane Building (204 Main Street) and the Taylor Block (526 Main Street)

On a motion by Chair Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 to issue updated letters of support for 204 Main Street and 526 Main Street.

- B. Correspondence from Betsy Friedberg, MHC, to Joy Beasley, Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places, regarding the eligibility for listing of the Printer's Building

The Commission had no comment on this item.

#### ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Chair Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 PM.