

MEETING MINUTES
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
September 14, 2022

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Commission meeting was held remotely in a Zoom meeting.

Chairman Rosenberry called the meeting to order at 1:07 pm. On behalf of Secretary Galvin, he welcomed the Commissioners. Chairman Rosenberry next addressed the audience, thanking them for attending. For those individuals who may not have attended commission meetings in the past, Chairman Rosenberry explained the structure of the meeting and when in the process the public could address the commission. Chairman Rosenberry then took attendance to determine that a quorum was met.

The Chairman turned to the first item on the agenda, the **approval of the June 8, 2022 meeting minutes**. He called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the minutes. A MOTION was made by Commissioner McDowell and SECONDED by Commissioner DeWitt. Hearing no questions or comments, the chair moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry then turned to the next item on the agenda, the National Register nominations, and called for any recusals. Hearing none, he turned the meeting over to Ben Haley, National Register Director. Mr. Haley presented the nominations with presentation slides. A copy of the slides is on file with these minutes.

The first nomination presented was for the **Charlotte Street – Esmond Street Historic District** in **Boston**. The applicant is Lena Park Community Development Corporation with VHB as the preservation consultant. Mr. Haley noted there was a virtual public meeting held by the Boston Landmarks Commission about this district on August 23, which he attended.

The Charlotte Street-Esmond Street Historic District is a 12.4-acre, primarily residential development in Dorchester. It is part of the Franklin Field North area, is bounded on the west by Blue Hill Avenue and Franklin Park, on the east by Bradshaw Street and part of the southern extension of Esmond Street, and on the south by Wales Street. The north boundary runs along Glenway and Fowler streets.

Primarily residential, consisting of currently multi-family buildings, two to three stories high, of wood frame construction. These are rounded out by a series of corner and mid-street masonry apartment buildings, a school anchoring the north end, and some commercial buildings fronting Blue Hill Avenue and the former streetcar line.

National Register Significance:

The Charlotte Street – Esmond Street Historic District is eligible for the National Register under Criteria A and C at the local level.

The district meets Criterion A in the Area of Social History for its association with the development of Dorchester as an intact example of a streetcar suburb neighborhood, in this case along the former Blue Hill Avenue streetcar route.

In addition, its history as a robust Jewish community from the 1900s to the 1960s and later a primarily Black neighborhood meets Criterion A in the Areas of Ethnic Heritage: Jewish; and Ethnic Heritage: Black.

As a particularly concentrated and cohesive collection of buildings that reflects a variety of architectural styles and forms from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the district is additionally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture.

The period of significance for the Charlotte Street-Esmond Street Historic District begins in 1889, when the earliest 16 buildings in the district were constructed, and ends in 1972. While the last contributing buildings were constructed in the early 1930s, their adaptation by the community extends into the 1970s.

Criterion A: Social History:

The district is strongly associated with the migration of specific communities through urban decentralization and late 19th- and 20th-century development in Roxbury and Dorchester.

Located approximately five miles south of downtown Boston, the area that developed into the Charlotte Street-Esmond Street neighborhood was considered “the country” for much of the 18th and 19th centuries.

As late as 1889, as evidenced by the Bromley atlas drawn that year, the majority of the Charlotte Street-Esmond Street district was still part of a large estate owned by the trustees of the William Minot, Jr. estate.

In the late 19th century, the West End Street Railway, a horsecar route, traveled down Blue Hill Avenue from Roxbury and terminated just north of Franklin Park.

The horsecar line was electrified by 1900, and it was extended along the full length of Blue Hill Avenue in 1906. By contrasting the 1889 map on the left with the 1918 map on the right and you can see how quickly the balance of the estate was subdivided and built up.

A hallmark example of the “streetcar suburb” detailed in Sam Bass Warner’s eponymous 1978 book, the neighborhood drew urban middle-class families looking to relocate to more suburban environs. As time went on, the district evolved into a self-contained neighborhood with opportunities for habitation, working, and worship.

This neighborhood was largely not built on speculation. It contains suburban houses designed by individual architects as well as properties that were owned, occupied, designed, and built by the same person, showing that personal investments were made in this newly middle-class neighborhood.

Criterion A: Area of Jewish Heritage and the Self-Contained Jewish Community

Many early developers of the Charlotte Street-Esmond Street Historic District were of English or Irish heritage and arrived in the United States from Canada in the last decade of the 19th century.

Within a couple of decades, however, the district became strongly associated with the early 20th-century intercity migration of Boston’s Jewish community to the Blue Hill Avenue corridor of Dorchester and Roxbury. This arrival happened swiftly. The percentage of the Charlotte Street-Esmond Street district population identifying as Jewish in the period between 1906 and 1910 was approximately 15-25%. By 1920 as much as 65% of the neighborhood identified as Jewish.

This transformed the neighborhood from a largely suburban area to an increasingly urbanized and densely populated residential and commercial district. The district is unique in that the Jewish residents of the 1910s and 1920s made it into a self-sufficient community. Census records and directories from the period show many Jewish residents not only living in the neighborhood, but also working there.

At the side streets, brick apartment buildings became common, both at intersections along Blue Hill Avenue (with decorative façades along both the main

corridor and the side streets) and, increasingly, down the side streets themselves. Building permits for some of the area's ca. 1920s brick apartment houses confirm that the developers were predominantly members of the Jewish community.

Limited commercial construction in the district filled in former house lots along Blue Hill Avenue, bringing Jewish-owned retail shops and restaurants within easy walking distance.

A sharp decline in the Jewish population of Roxbury and Dorchester occurred in the 1950s, and the population was nearly halved between 1960 and 1967.

Automobiles extended the ability to commute over longer distances. Census records and directories suggest that far fewer inhabitants of the district were working in or near their homes.

Criterion A: Arrival of the Black Community

While Black residents had begun moving to the Roxbury Highlands and Grove Hall neighborhoods as early as the 1930s, their number increased dramatically throughout Dorchester and Roxbury in the 1950s and 1960s. Once again we see how that community shift helped the built environment to evolve.

Due to a host of institutional racism factors, owners in Dorchester and Roxbury did not have always access to the investment incentives of other residents of the city and region. By the late 1950s, absentee landlords owned one quarter of the housing stock in the area, a number that only continued to rise. City directories show a marked increase in the number of vacancies within the Charlotte Street-Esmond Street area beginning in the mid-1960s.

Building owners who did stay active physically adapted the building interiors to accommodate additional units and often smaller units throughout the entire district. The directories indicate that many residents of these units had lower-paying jobs than the previous inhabitants; for example, mechanics, parking attendants, and hotel housekeepers could be found in the neighborhood into the 1980s.

Several of the brick apartment blocks were adapted into affordable housing units as well, into the late 20th century. For example, Lena Park Community Development Corporation acquired seven apartment buildings located within the district in and the immediately surrounding area in 1985, as part of what was the largest sale of the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) foreclosed multifamily buildings in the City of Boston. The CDC made the apartments affordable housing units, and still owns these buildings today.

The new Black occupants of the district also maintained the strength of the neighborhood institutions that had helped define the area in earlier decades, but the character of those institutions shifted to suit the culture and needs of the residents. The conversion of neighborhood buildings to serve purposes related to the Christian religion was one of the most common signs of demographic change in Dorchester and Roxbury during the 1960s and 1970s. Later these offered additional community services as well.

Criterion C: Architecture - Residential

The Charlotte Street-Esmond Street Historic District is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C as a particularly robust representative sampling of the popular building styles and types prevalent during the late 19th and early 20th centuries in Dorchester.

In comparison with other extant areas of late 19th to early 20th century development located along the Blue Hill Avenue corridor south of the Grove Hall neighborhood, including several National Register-listed residential historic districts, the Charlotte Street-Esmond Street Historic District is larger and more concentrated than its peers. There is a notable lack of infill - the district's lack of intrusive elements allows for its borders to encompass unusually cohesive, intact district of both residential and non-residential development.

This well-preserved collection of single- and multiple-family dwellings exhibits intact forms and decorative details characteristic of the Colonial Revival, Queen Anne, Classical Revival, and Shingle styles. Colonial and Classical Revival are the dominant architectural style within the district.

The architectural forms of the homes are largely intact and devoid of major, style-obscuring additions or alterations, despite their conversions into multi-family housing, and nearly all of the houses and apartment buildings have at least one prominent original feature that contributes to a recognizable style.

Criterion C: Architecture – non-residential

While the buildings within the district are almost entirely residential, the Charlotte Street-Esmond Street Historic District does contain two commercial blocks and one school building, all designed in the Classical Revival style between 1906 and the early 1920s.

Stylistic detailing is especially evident in the William E. Endicott School reflecting the significant financial investment in the development of the Blue Hill Avenue corridor in Roxbury and Dorchester.

James E. McLaughlin was a prolific Boston-based architect who was active in the design of educational, municipal, and institutional buildings in Boston and the surrounding metro area, predominantly during the first quarter of the 20th century. He was also the designer of Fenway Park and the Commonwealth Armory. The armory was demolished in 2002.

Criterion C: Architecture - Selection of Residential Designers and Builders

One of the most active residential architects in the Charlotte Street-Esmond Street district was Alexander B. Pinkham, a prominent Boston-based architect and landscape architect who was responsible for the dwellings at 44, 45, 51, 53, and 56 Charlotte Street. Most of his known portfolio consists of Queen Anne and Colonial Revival two- and three-family residences in Dorchester and Roxbury, so his houses in the district slot nicely into his body of work.

The Silverman Engineering Company (est. 1909), which was responsible for the purpose-built multi-family residences at 16 Charlotte Street and 15-17 Esmond Street, was a partnership between brothers David, Peyser, and Nathan L. Silverman. By 1910 it was one of the most sought-after architectural design firms for Jewish real estate investors in Boston. They worked throughout areas of Jewish settlement in Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan, and their apartment buildings also line the streets of the Fenway, Back Bay, Allston, and Brighton neighborhoods of Boston.

Rehabilitation:

Most recently, Lena Park Community Development Corporation rehabilitated the large brick apartment blocks in the portfolio it acquired in the 1980s, with the use of state and federal historic tax credits.

This included a major effort to repair, clean, and repoint the exterior masonry, replacement of the 80s windows with new sash based on the configuration shown in a 1930s photograph of similar apartment blocks along Blue Hill Avenue, upgrading the mechanical systems, code-related improvements, upgrading the amenities, and installing new flooring where needed.

The next nomination presented was for the **Dudley Terrace – Dudley Street Historic District in Boston (Dorchester)**. The applicant is Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation with Epsilon as preservation consultant. Mr. Haley presented the nomination.

The Dudley Terrace – Dudley Street Historic District is comprised of four multi-family residential buildings—three of which originally featured ground-level commercial space—constructed between 1890 and 1896. The district is situated immediately northwest of the heart of Uphams Corner, the primary commercial section of the northern half of Dorchester, which is centered at the intersection of Columbia Road, the neighborhood’s primary north-south corridor, and Dudley and Stoughton streets, which extend northwest and southeast from Columbia Road, respectively.

Bisected by Dudley Street, the district is partially bound by Dudley Terrace to the northeast, Monadnock Street to the southeast, and Nonquit Street to the southwest. The two larger buildings along south side of Dudley Street, **The Denmark, 713 Dudley Street**, and **The Mt. Monadnock, 715–723 Dudley Street**, were originally constructed as apartment hotels. **The Mt. Monadnock’s** original ground-level commercial space was converted to residential use in 1971. Fronting the north side of Dudley Street are **The Radcliffe, 722–726 Dudley Street**, and the **Fosdick Block, 2–12 Dudley Terrace**. These two buildings were constructed as traditional apartment buildings with three stories of residential units above ground-level retail space. Minor exterior alterations, such as the replacement of windows and doors, and interior were made to the buildings throughout the 20th and early 21st centuries, enabling their continued use as affordable housing, with commercial space retained at **The Radcliffe** and the **Fosdick Block**.

The district meets Criteria A and C at the local level in areas of Social History and Architecture with a period of significance of 1890 – 1965.

Criterion A – Social History

The district is representative of the multi-family residential streetcar suburb development that took hold in Dorchester and other neighborhoods of Boston beginning in the late 19th century. Transportation improvements, including the expansion and electrification of the streetcar system and the influx of public works programs following Boston’s annexation of Dorchester in 1870, led to a period of rapid development as Dorchester transitioned into a streetcar suburb of Boston. As

it urbanized, a wider range of residential options were available other than single-family wood-frame houses, including rental units in masonry single-family rowhouses and multi-family apartment buildings and apartment hotels. The residents of the district were typical of the middle- and lower-middle-class individuals and families of European birth or descent that moved to Boston's growing streetcar suburbs in search of opportunities for social mobility within a cost-effective, flexible, and diverse housing environment that included apartment buildings and apartment hotels, rowhouses, and later triple-deckers. Apartment buildings and apartment hotels were increasingly attractive to renters who elected to avoid homeownership or lacked the financial resources to purchase their own dwelling. Additionally, and in contrast to those who owned or rented in the surrounding residential enclaves of Dorchester, the residents of the Dudley Terrace – Dudley Street Historic District had direct access to the diverse commercial activity that Uphams Corner had to offer, suggesting a conscious effort for a lifestyle set in a denser, more modern, and urban residential setting. Representative of a specific more urban and modern residential lifestyle for Dorchester's middle-class, the district meets Criterion A in the area of Social History.

Criterion C – Architecture

The district also satisfies Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an intact and rare collection of four late 19th-century masonry apartment buildings and apartment hotels in Uphams Corner and Dorchester more broadly. As Uphams Corner urbanized at the end of the 19th century, new forms of housing emerged along and in close proximity to the streetcar lines, adding density to the neighborhood's residential facet, which was largely characterized by uniform two- to three-story wood-frame single- and two-family dwellings. These new housing options including masonry row houses and multi-family apartment buildings and apartment hotels, some of which featured ground-level commercial space. Constructed during this period and architecturally distinguished from earlier residential buildings in regard to material and scale, the district is representative of the initial shift in the neighborhood's residential architecture toward multi-family masonry construction. This late 19th-century period of masonry multi-family residential construction is locally significant as the precursor to a subsequent wave of large-scale apartment construction in Uphams Corner and in other parts of Dorchester during the first three decades of the 20th century. Few larger scale (greater than two-story) masonry apartment buildings and hotels were constructed during the late 19th century in Uphams Corner, making the buildings within the district rare extant examples. Furthermore, such examples are rare within the other commercial

nodes of Dorchester where masonry apartments are generally located on the outskirts of more urban crossroads.

The district's architectural significance is furthered within the broader scope of Dorchester by the buildings' styles. Three of the buildings within the district, **The Denmark (1890-1891)**, **The Radcliffe (1893)**, and the **Fosdick Block (1896)**, were designed in the Queen Anne style and retain character-defining features such as decorative brickwork and masonry, particularly used in belt coursing, fenestration trim, and cornices, and projecting oriels and bay windows. These building are relatively scarce examples of Queen Anne-style masonry apartments in Dorchester. A locally rare and early example of the Renaissance Revival style is **The Mt. Monadnock, pictured here (1895-1896)**. It is the only known apartment building in Dorchester executed in the style and among about 80 such examples citywide. The building exhibits many well-executed characteristics of the style, including its imposing scale and formal design, and its use of classical details derived from the Renaissance including columns, quoining, arches, and balustrades.

Level and Period of Significance

The departure of the European-American presence that transformed Dorchester into a streetcar suburb marks the end of the district's period of significance. New groups of residents moved into Uphams Corner in large numbers beginning in the mid-1960s, brought on by a low housing stock, overcrowding, the construction of postwar highways, the development of federal housing policies, and the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. After the passage of the act, the neighborhood saw in increase in Haitian, Cape Verdean, West Indian, Dominican, and Vietnamese residents, and later Latino and Hispanic residents.

Fosdick Block Rehabilitation

The **Fosdick Block** underwent a certified rehabilitation project completed in 2021 that utilized state and federal historic tax credits. Work included the repointing and repair of exterior masonry, window and roof replacement, and interior upgrades to residential and common spaces. The apartments are affordable housing units.

The next nomination presented was for the **S. Gourse & Sons Block in Fall River**. The applicant is Benjamin & Nathan with Ryan (formerly MacRostie) as preservation consultant. Mr. Haley presented the nomination.

The S. Gourse & Sons Block is a historic commercial block comprised of two four-story brick buildings with restrained Classical Revival-style detailing constructed in 1899 and 1926 in downtown Fall River. The two buildings have been internally connected since the construction of the 1926 building, and both have commercial uses on the first floor and residential apartments on the upper floors.

The Block takes its name from Simon Gourse, who initially rented a small storefront in the older building and eventually purchased the building for use as his flagship clothing store, the S. Gourse & Sons/the Hub Clothing Company.

The Gourse Block, seen here outlined in red, is significant at the local level under National Register Criterion A in the area of Commerce for the prominent role it played in Fall River's commercial development, particularly related to the retail clothing industry, during a period of population growth and economic expansion in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Gourse Block is also locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a rare surviving example, in a city that has lost many buildings that were its contemporaries, of a late 19th and early 20th century, Classical Revival-style brick commercial block designed by two notable local architects.

The older building, built between 1897 and 1899, was designed by Fall River architect Joseph M. Darling, one of the city's most prolific architects during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The 1926 building was designed by local architect Edward M. Corbett.

The period of significance is 1897-1976, reflecting the date construction began on the older building, and extending through the last year that the Gourse Family was associated with the property. The Gourse Block remained in continuous commercial use under the ownership of the Gourse family until 1976.

Early commercial development in downtown Fall River

Fall River's central business district developed between 1880 and 1910, with a number of three- and four-story brick commercial buildings constructed along Main Street (three blocks west of the property) which, in turn, fostered substantial new commercial development at the eastern end of Pleasant Street.

As land on Main Street became increasingly more valuable, many of the older, one- and two-story frame buildings on Pleasant Street were demolished and replaced with larger brick commercial structures with ground-floor retail spaces.

This eastward expansion of the city's downtown commercial sector resulted in a thriving retail industry along Pleasant Street, which became the favored location for smaller retail enterprises catering to the city's working-class population.

Situated on the periphery of the historic downtown core, it was here on lower Pleasant Street that the Gourse Block's original building was built at the height of Fall River's commercial growth just before the turn of the 20th century.

Criterion A: Commerce

The Gourse Block traces its history back to 1897, when Fall River merchant, Edward Barker, purchased a parcel of land at the northeast corner of Pleasant and Troy Streets from the Troy Cotton and Woolen Manufactory, with the intent of building a four-story brick commercial building on the site.

Upon completion of the building in 1899, Simon Gourse opened a new clothing store as one of the first tenants. The S. Gourse & Sons clothing business was one of the Fall River's earliest Jewish-immigrant-owned retail establishments, and a revered local business for more than 75 years. Simon Gourse founded the business in 1885, operating out of several different locations in downtown Fall River before renting this small storefront, eventually purchasing the building in 1922.

The Gourse Block exemplifies the significant impact Jewish immigration had on the commercialization of Fall River's economy during this period. By the early 1920s, S. Gourse & Sons/**The Hub** was one of the largest retail stores of Fall River.

The rapid success of Gourse's store, which at the time was located at the easternmost edge of the city's commercial area, drew people from the central business district on Main Street and was instrumental in the eastward expansion of the city's downtown commercial district.

Shortly after purchasing the 1899 building from Edward Barker in 1922, Gourse purchased the adjacent parcel at 174 Pleasant Street and, in 1926, enlisted local architect Edward M. Corbett to design the four-story building on the site.

Upon its completion, Gourse leased the 1926 building to various furniture companies for the next five decades, while continuing to operate the S. Gourse & Sons/**The Hub** Clothing Co. store out of the 1899 building.

Simon Gourse passed away in 1931 at the age of seventy-four and, following his death, ownership of both the Gourse Block and S. Gourse & Sons/**The Hub**

clothing company passed to Simon's sons, David L. and Harry A. Gourse, who continued to run the store as partners.

S. Gourse & Sons/The Hub Clothiers remained a leading clothing store through the 1970s. After David's death in 1962, Harry A. and his nephew, Samuel M. Gourse, continued to own and operate S. Gourse & Sons/The Hub Clothiers until they sold the property in 1976.

In addition to running one of the most successful men's clothing stores in the city, Gourse also contributed to Fall River's 20th-century commercial development as a commercial landlord, in which he rented space in the portions of his block not occupied by his retail operation to a number of prominent businesses over the decades, including underwear manufacturers in the 1920s and 1930s, and furniture companies beginning in the 1920s, the latter of which occupied the 1926 building almost exclusively until 1973.

The popularity of this location for commercial tenants reflects Gourse's business acumen, capitalizing on a demand for space as downtown Fall River expanded.

Criterion C: Architecture

The Gourse Block exhibits a more restrained use of the Classical Revival style, as was common for commercial buildings built on the periphery of the city's central business district, with most of the architectural ornament applied at the cornice level.

For the first building, Darling utilized a typical tripartite composition for the street-facing façades, consisting of a one-story base of retail storefronts, a generally simple, three-story mid-section of offices and/or manufacturing space, and an ornamental cornice or capital. Classical Revival style detailing on the building is modest and includes a prominent, projecting corbelled and ogee-profiled cornice at the roofline, decorative fluted and paneled cast-iron storefront columns (a 1926 alteration), and a rhythmic fenestration pattern of rectangular window openings with rough-cut granite trim.

Corbett's design for the 1926 building also utilized a tripartite composition, but with polychromatic brick and a higher degree of classical ornamentation on the Pleasant Street façade including decorative, paneled cast-stone pelmets, a projecting, denticulated, cast-stone cornice band, brick piers with cast-stone bases and Doric capitals, and flush, diamond-shaped cast-stone panels centered within the stepped brick parapet.

2019-2021 Historic Tax Credit Rehabilitation

From 2019 to 2021, the S. Gourse & Sons Block was rehabilitated, using State and Federal Historic Tax Credits, for use as twenty-two residential apartment units on the second, third and fourth floors (twelve affordable units and ten market rate units), with updated commercial space on the first floor.

As part of the rehabilitation, the building's significant character-defining exterior and interior features were retained to the greatest extent possible or replicated in-kind with historically appropriate materials. All work meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

The Gourse Block remains one of the few Classical Revival-style brick commercial blocks in downtown Fall River to survive both the Great Fire of 1928 and the construction of the highway artery through the city in the 1960s. The property's rarity is further accentuated by the fact that many of the surrounding late 19th and early 20th century blocks that once shared a similar character have lost significant integrity through fire-destruction, demolition, and infill.

Built at the height of Fall River's commercial growth, the S. Gourse & Sons Block remains an integral part of the Pleasant Street streetscape, a familiar physical feature of downtown Fall River, and home to numerous local businesses and residents. Today, the property defines the first block of Pleasant Street and stands as a sort of informal gateway to what was once one of the busiest retail corridors in downtown Fall River during the city's wealthiest and most expansive era.

The next nomination presented was for the **Sylvester Pierce House in Gardner**. The applicant is Robert Conti, the owner, with PAL as preservation consultant. The Mayor of Gardner, Michael Nicholson, sent a letter of support for the nomination. Mr. Haley presented the nomination.

The Pierce house is on a small, square lot at the west corner of West Broadway and Union Street in south Gardner.

The ornate and prominent house is unusual in the surrounding mixed-use neighborhood of relatively modest mid- to late nineteenth-century single- and multiple-family residences to the south, east, and west, and nineteenth- and twentieth-century mixed-use buildings along East Broadway. Early to mid-twentieth-century industrial buildings are on the former Gardner Chair Company factory site to the north.

The Sylvester K. Pierce House is an imposing and elaborate fully developed, Second Empire-style residence designed by Worcester architect Elbridge Boyden for Sylvester Knowlton Pierce, one of Gardner's leading chair and furniture manufacturers during the town's era of highest prominence in the industry. The house exhibits hallmark characteristics of the Second Empire style, including a mansard roof with gabled dormers, molded cornices, polychromatic trim, and decorative brackets.

It is significant at the local level under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a fine example of a high-style Second Empire building in Gardner, an outstanding architectural expression containing excellent craftsmanship and high-quality materials, and as the only example of this building style in Gardner for which the architect is known.

The period of significance for the Sylvester K. Pierce House begins in 1874, when construction of the building began, and ends in 1888 when Sylvester K. Pierce died. The property remained in Pierce family ownership until 1967.

The interior floor plan of the building retains its original layout consisting of five rooms in the basement and on the first floor and six rooms on the second and third floors, all arranged on an L-shaped, double-loaded corridor. The building retains its original wood trim and the woodwork throughout the house is of exceptionally high quality, consisting of hand-crafted door and window surrounds, as well as cabinets and floors, comprising multiple species of exotic woods used singly and paired with others, including ash, black walnut, bird's eye maple, and butternut burl.

The main staircase has a double-run dogleg configuration with a narrow landing between the first and second floors, terminating at a wide hall in the center of the second floor. The staircase is enclosed with a carved, natural wood banister with turned balusters terminating at a newel post at the southeast corner. The square newel post has chamfered corners with lamb's tongue stops, bas relief diamonds with applied medallions, and incised inverted triangles above the connection with the banister rail. The top of the newel post carries a light fixture of a woman holding a frosted glass globe aloft, surrounded by cherubs climbing on her arms and standing at her feet. The servants' staircase consists of a dogleg staircase with curved treads at the bottom of the run of stairs and enclosed with a simple balustrade. An ornate newel post, similar to the one at the foot of the main staircase, is at the base of the servants' staircase.

The second story consists of five bedrooms and two bathrooms, as well as assorted closets (Figure 5). Number plates designating room numbers were affixed to bedroom doors used by guests and boarders during Edward and Bessie Pierce's ownership of the house and its use as an inn and lodging house starting in 1938.

The original master bedroom has ash floors, plaster ceilings, and plaster crown molding. Windows and doors have black walnut surrounds with ash inlays with projecting bracketed lintels. A fireplace with a painted green faux marble surround is centered in the southwest wall (Photo 20).

The third story, with sloped walls due to the mansard roof, historically had six rooms: two sleeping rooms, a playroom, a clothes-drying room, a store room, and a room enclosing a large water tank. The tower is accessed by a narrow wood spiral staircase with vertical bead-board.

The building has recently been sensitively rehabilitated and restored. It is currently used for tours and will be used also as a bed and breakfast.

The next nomination presented was for the **Main Street & Murray Avenue Historic District in Worcester**. The applicant is HRI Matheson Apartments II LLC with Epsilon as preservation consultant. Mr. Haley presented the nomination.

The Main Street and Murray Avenue Historic District is located in the Piedmont neighborhood of Worcester. Within this mixed-use section of the city, the district is a cohesive group of late-19th-century apartment buildings. Unique as two sets of historically paired apartment buildings, they are representative of Worcester's residential architectural history and retain a high degree of integrity. The buildings are significant at the local level. The period of significance for the district is from 1887, the year that the earliest buildings in the district were completed, until 1898, the year the final buildings in the district were completed.

Criterion C - Architecture

The district satisfies Criterion C as a well-preserved and contiguous group of paired Queen Anne and Classical Revival-style apartment buildings designed by local architects for local developers. The pairs of apartment blocks in the Main Street and Murray Avenue Historic District are significant when comparatively analyzed against the historic apartment buildings of Worcester. Two of the four buildings in the district, **The Boynton, 718 Main Street**, and **The Windsor, 720 Main Street**, comprise The Boynton and The Windsor Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 as part of the Worcester MRA.

These nearly identical Queen Anne-style apartment buildings were built by developer Baker & Ellis in 1887 to the design of the Worcester-based architectural firm Barker and Nourse. **The Boynton** and **The Windsor** are two of the earliest documented apartment blocks in the city, pre-dating the widespread construction of the type in the city, and in the Piedmont neighborhood in particular.

Immediately behind **The Boynton** and **The Windsor** to the north are the other two buildings in the Main Street and Murray Avenue Historic District, **The Kensington, 87 Murray Avenue** and **The Buckingham, 91 Murray Avenue**. These Classical Revival-style apartment buildings were developed by James Miles & Son in 1898 and designed by Johnson and Johnson. **The Kensington** and **The Buckingham** are good examples of the Classical Revival style adapted to an apartment building form; they represent the stylistic evolution of the type in Worcester and serve as a foil to the Queen Anne **Boynton** and **Windsor** buildings.

Criterion A – Community Planning & Development

Increased immigration and industrial employment opportunities at the end of the 19th century resulted in a greater demand for housing in Worcester. In response, local developers constructed apartment houses on lots previously containing smaller frame dwellings, or on newly divided parcels. The latter is the case for the apartments in the Main Street and Murray Avenue Historic District. The land on which the four apartment houses are situated was historically part of the estate of Ethan Allen, a local arms manufacturer. Much of the Allen estate was subdivided and sold in the 1870s and 1880s. The initial wave of development on these new parcels marked the beginning of a construction boom in the area that eased the city's need for multi-family residential buildings. For their association with the planned subdivision and development of the Allen estate in the 1880s and 1890s, the apartment buildings in the Main Street and Murray Avenue Historic District satisfy Criterion A in the Area of Community Planning and Development.

Rehabilitation

Utilizing state and federal historic tax credits, all four buildings within the district underwent rehabilitation projects from 2018 through 2020 to update and repair existing affordable housing. As a result of these projects, the buildings preserve existing affordable housing units and continue to function in their historic use as multi-family housing.

This concluded the presentation of the September National Register nominations. Chairman Rosenberry thanked the presenter, Mr. Haley. He asked whether any

commissioners needed to recuse themselves from voting on any of the nominations. Hearing none, he moved the motion.

Chairman Rosenberry called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the MHC staff recommendation that the nomination for the **Charlotte Street – Esmond Street Historic District** in the city of **Boston** be forwarded to the National Park Service for final review. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Sullivan and SECONDED by Commissioner Kish. The chairman called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he called for questions or comments from the public. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the MHC staff recommendation that the nomination for the **Dudley Terrace – Dudley Street Historic District** in the city of **Boston** be forwarded to the National Park Service for final review. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Wilson and SECONDED by Commissioner Sullivan. The chairman called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he called for questions or comments from the public. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Chairman Rosenberry called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the MHC staff recommendation that the nomination for the **S. Gourse & Sons Block** in the city of **Fall River** be forwarded to the National Park Service for final review. A MOTION was made by Commissioner McDowell and SECONDED by Commissioner Friary. The chairman called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he called for questions or comments from the public. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Chairman Rosenberry called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the MHC staff recommendation that the nomination for the **Sylvester K. Pierce House** in the city of **Gardner** be forwarded to the National Park Service for final review. A MOTION was made by Commissioner DeWitt and SECONDED by Commissioner Wilson. Chairman Rosenberry called for questions or comments from the commission. He recognized Commissioner Ceccacci who said that Section 8 page 18 of the nomination refers to some of the buildings designed by Boyden and mentions the Washburn Machine Shops at the Plunger Elevator Company on Boynton St in Worcester, inventory number WOR.378. It's not mentioned that it's on the campus of Worcester Polytechnic Institute. It makes it sound like it's on the

property of the Plunger Elevator Company, but that was a project of the WPI carried out in that building. She checked the inventory form and it is titled this way, but it should be mentioned that it was actually on the campus of WPI. Mr. Haley said he could insert this information. The Chairman asked for any other questions or comments from the Commission. He recognized Commissioner Friary who said that perhaps Commissioner DeWitt could comment on this, but much of the trim on the building looks like what was being shipped out of northern California in Eureka and surrounding places in the 1870s, and the application seems to indicate it's of local production. He was curious if we know any more about this. Commissioner DeWitt noted this was outside his area of expertise but that perhaps someone else knew. Commissioner Friary noted this was being manufactured in the northern coast of California at this time and being shipped around the world. The Chairman asked for any other questions or comments from the Commission. Hearing none, he called for questions or comments from the public. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Chairman Rosenberry called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the MHC staff recommendation that the nomination for the **Main Street & Murray Avenue Historic District** in the city of **Worcester** be forwarded to the National Park Service for final review. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Ceccacci and SECONDED by Commissioner Pride. The chairman called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he called for questions or comments from the public. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

This concluded the National Register portion of the agenda.

Chairman Rosenberry then turned to the next item on the agenda, the Local Historic District Preliminary Study Reports, first calling for any recusals. Hearing none, he turned the meeting over to Jennifer Doherty, Local Government Programs Coordinator. Ms. Doherty presented the study reports with presentation slides. A copy of the slides is on file with these minutes.

City of Boston, Blessed Sacrament Complex

Ms. Doherty first presented the **Blessed Sacrament Complex of (Jamaica Pain) Boston**. The City of Boston is proposing to landmark the Blessed Sacrament

Complex in Jamaica Plain. The initial petition for landmark status was accepted on February 22, 2005, and the complex has been under accelerated design review status since that time, which means that the BLC reviews and approves proposed changes to the site even though it has not been formally designated as a landmark yet.

The complex is located on the north side of Centre Street in Jamaica Plain, between the Jamaicaway to the west and Columbus Ave. to the east. The boundaries are drawn to focus on the religious complex buildings, excluding new construction in the southwest and northwest corners and residential development along Westerly Street to the east.

Aside from the commercial development of Centre Street, the complex is surrounded by late 19th and early 20th century residential development, primarily multi-family houses in popular styles such as the Queen Anne, Stick, and Shingle styles.

There are no designated properties in the immediate area of the complex. A few streets to the south of Centre Street is an unusual hexagonal house at 17 Cranston Street, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1987. To the east across Columbus Ave. is the recently-designated Roxbury Highlands Architectural Conservation District, which the commission reviewed in March and which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1989. To the west is a portion of Olmsted's Emerald Necklace system of parks, the Jamaicaway and Jamaica Pond, listed on the National Register in 1971 and designated a Boston Landmark in 1989.

The complex is composed of five buildings associated with the Catholic Blessed Sacrament parish – the main church building, the rectory, a convent, and two school buildings. All are in their original locations except for the rectory, which was moved north from the corner of Centre and Creighton streets, at the lower left, in the early 2000s. This occurred under the accelerated design review of the BLC and was approved by the commission. It was replaced by new construction.

The most prominent building in the complex is the church itself, Blessed Sacrament, sited at 361 Centre Street. The church was construed between 1911 and 1917, with a sacristy added during a major renovation in 1948. The original building was designed by architect Charles Reggio Greco, while the sacristy addition was completed by John P. Heffernan. The Italian Renaissance Revival building is constructed of brick with limestone, marble, and terra cotta trim.

The church has been vacant since it was deconsecrated in 2004 and is currently owned by the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation.

To the west of the church is the rectory, now at 21 Creighton Street, moved from its original location about 200 feet south. The three-story Georgian Revival building was constructed in 1894, and is the oldest building in the complex.

Georgian Revival features include the entry door with fanlight and sidelights, the Tuscan columns supporting a flat-roofed portico with a heavy cornice, the Palladian window centered on the second floor, and modillions hanging from the main cornice. The building currently has 16 income-restricted housing units.

In the northwest corner of the complex is the convent, constructed in 1896 with an addition in 1921. More Colonial Revival in style, the three-story building is constructed of brick with limestone keystones and splayed lintels over the windows. The portico over the simple entry door features Ionic columns and pilasters, with paneled posts supporting the balustrade above.

The building is currently used by Pine Street Inn, with 29 single room occupancy units for formerly unhoused individuals.

Facing north onto Sunnyside Street at the rear of the complex is the Cheverus School, named after the first Catholic bishop in Boston and constructed in 1898. There is no known architect or builder for the Gothic Revival building, however the study report speculates that the building was reconstructed from materials salvaged from the Hotel Boylston, designed by Cummings & Sears and demolished two years before the school's construction. The two story sandstone building is rectangular in plan with a hipped roof. Gothic Revival details are present throughout the building, with pointed arched openings used for windows and doors, floral bosses within the arches, and tripartite groups of windows on the second floor capped by rounded arches. The façade features terra cotta modillions of Abraham Lincoln and George Washington.

The building currently houses offices for the Hyde Square Task Force as well as some residential units.

The final building in the complex is St. Norbert School, also designed by Charles Reggio Greco and constructed in 1926. Another revival style building, this one English, the school is constructed of brick with light cast stone details. Used as a school until 2009, in 2014 the building was converted to condominiums.

Catholics began developing a strong presence in Boston in the late 18th century with the arrival of immigrants from France, Ireland, and Italy. The diocese of Boston was established in 1808 and was elevated to an archdiocese in 1874 with the increasing Catholic population.

The site of the Blessed Sacrament complex was the location of Phineas Withington's estate in the 18th and 19th centuries, and it included a popular tavern on the Providence Turnpike that followed present-day Centre Street. After additional intervening owners, the property was acquired by the Redemptorists in 1891. A Catholic mission organization founded in Naples in the mid-18th century, the Redemptorists had been establishing missionary outposts in the United States since the 1830s. Their first church was established in Boston in 1854, on Albany Street, but has since been demolished.

In 1870 the Redemptorists established Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Roxbury, known as the Mission Church and giving name to its location, Mission Hill. As a result of their ministry work, the Blessed Sacrament parish was established by the Redemptorists in 1892, although it was immediately designated a secular parish under control of the local archbishop rather than remaining under the Redemptorist order. That same year, a wooden Queen Anne style chapel was opened on the site to serve the new parish's worship needs and included a school on the ground floor. The chapel stood at the west side of the site until it was destroyed by fire in the 1970s.

The complex grew through the end of the 19th century and into the 20th century. The rectory was established at the southwest corner of the site in 1894. The Withington Tavern was used to house the Sisters of Charity that arrived in 1893, but in 1896 the tavern was razed and the convent was constructed in the northwest corner of the complex, north of the wooden church.

As Jamaica Plain's population flourished and the parish grew, the former school space in the basement of the 1892 chapel was outgrown. The Cheverus School was constructed in 1898 at the north side of the complex. As noted earlier, it is believed to have been constructed using pieces of the Hotel Boylston, demolished two years earlier at the corner of Tremont and Boylston streets downtown. Contemporary newspaper articles noted that pieces from the hotel would be used in the construction of a new private school, and photographs of the hotel appear to show pieces that match what is visible in the Cheverus School building today.

The new Blessed Sacrament church was constructed between 1913 and 1917. The church served varying congregations over the years as the neighborhood transitioned from Irish to Latino residents, but by the 1980s the congregation had shrunk significantly and the church experienced deferred maintenance. In 2004, the archdiocese closed the church, with parishioners moving to the Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Thomas Aquinas parishes further south in Jamaica Plain.

Local neighborhood organizations began to plan for the church's closing before it was announced. The Hyde Square Task Force, Hyde Jackson Main Streets, the Hyde Square Business Association, City Life, and the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation have all been active in the planning, reuse, and redevelopment of the site. The entire complex was ultimately acquired by a development team established by the Jamaica Plan Neighborhood Development Corporation with stipulations by the archdiocese that the church only ever be used for housing and a small community space on the first floor and that at least 40% of the housing on the property be income-restricted.

A landmark petition was submitted to and accepted by the BLC in 2005, and they applied accelerated design review status to the property. The complex underwent review through 2005 and 2006, with the BLC ultimately approving plans for the site's redevelopment. Since that time, nearly all of the site has been redeveloped by the initial partners or sold off to other neighborhood groups such as the Hyde Square Task Force. The redevelopment of the church into housing was hampered by the collapse of the housing market in 2008, although plans are moving forward again with a proposal for housing developed by Pennrose currently under review by the BLC.

Because of its significance as a representation of the Catholic Church in Boston, its social history and role within the Jamaica Plain/Hyde Square neighborhood, the Blessed Sacrament church's Italian Renaissance Revival architecture, and the Cheverus School building's High Victorian Gothic architecture and connection to the demolished Hotel Boylston, BLC staff recommends that the Blessed Sacrament complex be designated as a Boston Landmark.

MHC staff recommends acknowledging receipt of the Landmark Study Report for the Blessed Sacrament complex and providing the following advisory recommendations and comments:

The Massachusetts Historical Commission concurs with the recommendations of the Boston Landmarks Commission staff.

Town of Danvers, James Putnam Jr. House Historic District

Ms. Doherty then presented the **James Putnam Jr. House Historic District in Danvers**. The Danvers Historic District Commission is proposing to designate two single-property local historic districts, both currently under demolition delay. The first is the James Putnam Jr. House, a First Period building.

The Putnam House is located at 42 Summer Street in Danvers. Like many First Period buildings, it faces due south with its façade perpendicular to the street.

The Putnam House is on a main north-south road, Summer Street. Surrounding buildings are a wide mix of dates, from late 19th century farmhouses to postwar and later 20th century subdivisions. Immediately abutting the house to the north is an assisted living facility.

There are no other designated buildings in the immediate area. To the southwest, on Maple Street, is another First Period house, the Prince-Osborne House. The Putnam House and the Prince-Osborne House were two of four First Period houses in Danvers included in the First Period Buildings of Eastern Massachusetts National Register of Historic Places listing from 1990. Further to the southwest is the Salem Village Historic District, designated a local historic district by the Town of Danvers in 1974 and listed on the National Register the following year. Further to the west is the Danvers State Hospital, listed on the National Register in 1984.

As noted, the James Putnam Jr. House is a First Period building believed to have been constructed around 1715. While today the house presents as a five-bay, double-pile, two-story house with a gambrel roof, interior investigation has shown that the First Period portion of the building has been expanded over the years and in a somewhat unusual way. While most First Period houses are expanded to the side or up, here the First Period rooms compose the rear pile of the house and in the 1780s the front rooms were added, bringing the house to its full size. This can be seen on the east and west side elevations, where the paired windows of the rear, older rooms are smaller while the single windows of the front rooms are larger, evidence of the increased height of the later front rooms.

Today the rear rooms retain their characteristic First Period decorated framing with chamfers along main beams as well as posts with a unique jowl/flare combination on the second story. The west rooms also include paneling above their fireplaces. The front rooms display finish of the Georgian period, typical of when they were

added in the 1780s, such as paneling above and around fireplaces and on the walls, and the framing members in these rooms are covered.

Shortly after a house was built on the site, the property was acquired by James Putnam Jr. in the late 1710s. He married Ruth Hathorne of Salem and the couple had six children at the house. He was a bricklayer and also served the community as a Select Board member, highway surveyor, and tithing man.

The Putnam's son Archelaus Putnam was born at the house in 1744 and inherited it from his parents. Archelaus Putnam was a graduate of Harvard, established a medical practice out of the Putnam House, and served as a surgeon in the Revolutionary War.

Following Archelaus Putnam's death, the house was leased to Timothy Pickering from 1802 to 1804. A Federalist, Pickering was a prominent political figure during the Revolutionary and Federal eras serving as Secretary of State, Postmaster General, representative and senator from Massachusetts, and leader of a New England secession movement. He farmed the land of the Putnam House during his time in Danvers, taking an interest in the growing field of scientific farming.

The property then came into the control of Archelaus Putnam's son, James Augustus Putnam, who farmed the property until his death in 1862.

After several intervening owners, the property was acquired by Phoebe Woodman Caliga. She was a niece of the poet John Greenleaf Whittier, and the two met during the poet's stay at Oak Knoll, a home no longer extant but originally located just north of the Putnam House on Summer Street owned by the Johnsons, cousins of Whittier and Caliga. In the 1920s, Phoebe Caliga restored and opened the Putnam House as a tea house and restaurant. A large barn near the house was converted into additional dining and event space, becoming known as the Putnam Lodge. The entire property was acquired by Louis Pedrana and family in 1941 and continued to be operated as an entertainment venue.

The Putnam Lodge barn was destroyed by arson in 1963, but the house was saved. The Pedrana family lived at the house into the 1980s, when it was conveyed to new owners who maintained the historic interior. However, the house has now been vacant for several years.

The property was acquired by an LLC in early 2022, and the owners applied to demolish the house in the spring. The Danvers Preservation Commission imposed a one-year demolition delay which expires May 23, 2023. In July the owners filed

with the Planning Board to subdivide the lot, adding the bulk of it to the neighboring assisted living facility at 44 Summer Street and leaving a small lot with the Putnam House on it. The Danvers Historic District Commission plans to present the proposal for local historic district designation at Town Meeting this fall with the goal of establishing the local historic district before the demolition delay expires in the spring.

MHC staff recommends acknowledging receipt of the Preliminary Study Report for the James Putnam Jr. House Historic District and providing the following advisory recommendations and comments:

The Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the Town of Danvers to establish the James Putnam Jr. House Historic District.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the protection of additional significant historic resources through a larger district or additional local historic districts.

Town of Danvers, Putnam-Learoyd House Historic District

Ms. Doherty then presented the **Putnam-Learoyd House Historic District in Danvers**, which is also under a demolition delay.

The Putnam-Learoyd House is located at 367 Maple Street in Danvers. This section of Maple Street was relocated after the construction of Interstate 95 immediately to the west.

Surrounding buildings in the immediate area date to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but the ends of this stretch of Maple Street include postwar ranches and Capes.

The Putnam-Learoyd House is about half a mile west of the previously discussed Putnam House and is just beyond the edge of the Salem Village Historic District. However, due to the distance from that district and intervening properties, it is being established as a single-building district rather than being added to that existing district.

The Putnam-Learoyd House was constructed in 1841 by owner and builder Calvin Putnam. It is a two-story, double pile, center hall house in the Greek Revival style. Like many mid-19th century farm houses, it is extended at the rear by a series of ells, terminating in a modern two-car garage. Inside, the house retains some transitional Federal-Greek Revival features, such as fireplace surrounds.

Calvin Putnam was a successful builder, said to have built 10 to 12 houses in Danvers and also owned a lumber mill in Danvers port. He and his family lived in the house only a few years before switching residences with his brother, Frances P. Putnam. Following the death of Frances P. Putnam, his widow continued to live at the property with the understanding that it would be conveyed to their grandson, Albert Francis Learoyd, when he came of age. Learoyd married Jessie Sears in 1890 and the couple established a successful farm at the Putnam-Learoyd House.

However, in November of 1896 the Learoyds were the subject of an attempted murder. During dinner, Learoyd, three farmhands, and the family's maid became violently ill after drinking tea; unharmed was a fourth farmhand, who did not drink the tea, and Jessie Learoyd, who was attending to the family's child. All survived and it was discovered they were poisoned by an arsenic-based rat poison. A farmhand who Learoyd had recently fired was ultimately charged and convicted of the attempted murders.

The Learoyds continued to live at the house, and Albert Learoyd served five terms as a Select Board member. Both of the Learoyds died in the 1950s, ending over 100 years of Putnam-Learoyd family ownership. Dr. Ernest W. Rivers, a veterinarian, acquired the property in 1960, setting up his practice there. It was acquired by the current owners in the 1980s.

The property is currently owned by the Danvers Animal Hospital, with a 1980s veterinary clinic building sited to the east of the house. A new veterinary organization has an agreement to purchase the property and in March of 2022 applied to demolish the entire house. In May, the Danvers Preservation Commission voted to impose a one-year demolition delay on the property, to expire May 13, 2023. The Danvers Historic District Commission plans to present the proposed local historic district at fall Town Meeting.

The new owner submitted a site plan application to the Danvers Planning Board in August showing plans for an addition on the rear of the clinic, a new parking lot, and proposing to demolish only the garage and the rear portion of the ell, a change to what was originally submitted to the Preservation Commission.

MHC staff recommends acknowledging receipt of the Preliminary Study Report for the Putnam-Learoyd House Historic District and providing the following advisory recommendations and comments:

The Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the Town of Danvers to establish the Putnam-Learoyd House Historic District.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the protection of additional significant historic resources through a larger district or additional local historic districts.

City of Worcester, Elm Park Neighborhood Local Historic District

Ms. Doherty then presented the **Elm Park Neighborhood Local Historic District in Worcester**. The City of Worcester is proposing to designate their fourth local historic district, the Elm Park Neighborhood Local Historic District.

The proposed district is located in the city's former West Side, to the west of its downtown core. If established, it would be Worcester's fourth and largest local historic district. It is roughly bound by Elm Park on the west, Highland Street/Route 9 on the north, West Street on the east, and Elm Street to the south. The district includes 183 parcels, including seven vacant or parking lots, comprising 178 historic buildings over 50 years old, and covers over 50 acres of land.

The proposed district includes two existing National Register of Historic Places districts: the Lincoln Estate-Elm Park district, listed in 1980, and the Elm Street Historic District, listed in 1990. Elm Park itself is a separate National Register district, listed in 1970. There are several other National Register listings nearby, both individual listings and districts.

To the southeast is the Crown Hill Local Historic District, designated in 2013. That district also includes two smaller National Register district within its bounds, listed in 1976 and 1980. Worcester's other two local historic districts, Massachusetts Avenue and Montvale, are located about a mile to the north of this proposed district.

The boundaries for the district were drawn to focus on the late 19th century subdivision of the area. The northeast corner was excluded as it includes some larger residential buildings distinct from the smaller scale of the Elm Park neighborhood, and many of the area's buildings have been heavily altered. To the east, properties are associated more with the development of the city's downtown core. To the south, the character of the buildings changes, with larger multi-family residential buildings.

Elm Park itself was not included in the proposed district as the immediate focus was on protecting the buildings. It is also a natural break point, as the City and Historical Commission felt that if Elm Park was included, they would have to include Newton Hill to the west, as that is an extension of Elm Park, and then there are some other residential areas nearby that might be included. The goal was to keep the focus on the immediately-threatened buildings in the Elm Park neighborhood.

The proposed district includes many of the popular late 19th century residential styles, primarily in the form of single-family houses but there are also a number of two- and three-family buildings. Overall the area retains a high degree of material and form integrity, with minimal maintenance alterations such as vinyl siding or windows and very limited infill construction. There are also a number of historic outbuildings such as small carriage houses and early 20th century garages.

Representative of the area's development beginning in the 1870s, many of the earliest buildings have mansard roofs.

The Queen Anne and Shingle Styles are well represented, especially on larger single-family dwellings.

Early 20th century revival styles were also popular in the area, again on large single-family dwellings.

Two-family dwellings are found in Craftsman and Colonial Revival styles, typical of their construction during the early 20th century.

And there are of course a number of triple-deckers in the neighborhood, particularly at the outer edges along Elm and Highland streets.

Aside from the former Becker College buildings, there is limited commercial development within the district, as well as limited large multi-family residential development. These are both primarily found at the outside edges of the district along Elm and Highland streets.

During the early 19th century, the area was under the ownership of Governor Levi Lincoln, Jr., and largely undeveloped, with Elm Park donated to the city in 1854 as a new common and much of the land to the east of it used as the Worcester Agricultural Society's fairgrounds. Elm Park itself remained largely unimproved until the 1870s, when it was laid out to designs prepared by Frederick Law Olmsted.

While a few houses were constructed in the area in the mid-19th century, it wasn't until later in the century, as development encroached from the edges of the neighborhood, that more housing was constructed. This was primarily larger single family dwellings in popular late 19th century styles. When the agricultural fairgrounds were developed in the mid-1920s, the houses were mostly single family or more modest two-family dwellings.

In 1907 a portion of the former fairgrounds on Sever Street was sold to the newly-formed Worcester Tennis Club. The current clubhouse was constructed in 1923. The club existed into the mid-2010s, when it merged with the Holden Towers Tennis Club and the property was sold to Becker College.

During the late 20th century the area was primarily known as the campus of Becker College. The result of a merger between Leicester Academy, founded in 1784, and Becker's Business College, founded in 1887, Becker College first began moving into the Elm Park neighborhood in the 1930s and 1940s. The college primarily acquired existing buildings and converted them to new uses, such as dormitories and academic buildings, retaining the overall feel of the formerly residential neighborhood. They also made use of the former Bancroft School building located on Sever Street, a private high school that opened in the neighborhood in the 1920s and later moved to the north side of the city.

The impetus for this district was the closure of Becker College in the spring of 2021 and the sale of their campus buildings in the neighborhood. Anticipating the closure, the Worcester Historical Commission began the local historic district study process in March of 2021. At the time of the campus's closure, the college owned 31 parcels in the neighborhood. A local developer who already owned several properties in the area acquired the bulk of the Becker College buildings with plans to convert them back into housing.

The Historical Commission's professional staff reviewed the properties in the area, narrowing down the boundaries to the proposed district. The Historical Commission has been in touch with property owners throughout the process via public meetings, letters, and a survey. The response to the proposed district has been positive, with no negative comments or objections received outside of the survey. The Historical Commission is holding a public hearing later this month and plans to bring the proposed district to the City Council shortly thereafter.

MHC staff recommends acknowledging receipt of the Preliminary Study Report for the Elm Park Neighborhood Local Historic District and providing the following advisory recommendations and comments:

The Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the City of Worcester to establish the Elm Park Neighborhood Local Historic District.

Chairman Rosenberry then called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the MHC staff recommendations on the Landmark Study Report for the **Blessed Sacrament Complex in Boston (Jamaica Plain)**. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Sullivan and SECONDED by Commissioner DeWitt. The Chair called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he called for questions or comments from the public. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry then called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the MHC staff recommendations on the Preliminary Study Report for the **James Putnam Jr. House Historic District in Danvers**. A MOTION was made by Commissioner DeWitt and SECONDED by Commissioner Sullivan. The chairman called for questions or comments from the commission.

The Chair recognized Commissioner Pride, who asked if we have any letters from the owners of the two properties in Danvers. The Chair recognized Ms. Doherty who said that MHC has not received any letters from either property owners, nor has the Danvers Preservation Commission. Commissioner Pride expressed her concern about designating single-property local historic districts instead of having the local commissions work with property owners earlier.

The Chair recognized Commissioner McDowell who said both property owners would like to tear down their buildings, making their positions clear. He said both properties have been altered over the years, neither is in good shape, and the owners would like to demolish them to make improvements to the property. Commissioner McDowell stated that perhaps the wording of the commission's vote could be changed, allowing staff to acknowledge receipt of the reports and having the commission only vote on a recommendation.

The Chair asked for any other questions or comments from the Commission. The Chair recognized Commissioner Pride who asked for clarification on the plans for the Danvers Animal Hospital. The Chair recognized Ms. Doherty who said that in March the owners had applied to the Preservation Commission to demolish the

entire building but in early August submitted plans to the Planning Board showing they would demolish only the garage and a portion of the ell, leaving the house in place.

The Chair recognized Commissioner Pride who asked if the commissioners had received copies of the landmark and preliminary study reports beforehand. The Chair recognized Ms. Doherty who said no. Commissioner Pride expressed the wish that Danvers and other similar communities would take action earlier to preserve properties, noting an article stating the property's significance. She would like communities to more proactively preserve properties and not rely on demolition delay as their only tool.

The Chair recognized Commissioner DeWitt who said Commissioner Pride has raised the question about receiving the local historic district and local landmark preliminary study reports, which he would like in digital form. He also responded to Commissioner Pride's concern about proactive preservation, noting that in the political climate of local decision-making it can be easier for a community to preserve a building when there is an immediate threat, especially if it is not a multi-property district or an especially famous building.

The Chair called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he called for questions or comments from the public. The Chair recognized Brendan Mallon, who represents the owners of the James Putnam, Jr., House at 42 Summer Street, Danvers. He stated that the owners were not involved in the process and were never notified about this meeting or any other meeting. The owners filed a demolition permit application and after appearing before the Danvers Preservation Commission asked for the meeting to be continued based on the information about the house that was presented, to find alternatives that would potentially save the house. The owners requested the Preservation Commission start the delay clock and then presented a plan to save the house to the Danvers Zoning Board of Appeals. They have tried to meet with the Preservation Commission but have been unsuccessful. The owners do not support the proposed district as they believe their plan would preserve not only the exterior but also the interior. Mr. Mallon stated that the owners were not notified of the historic district process or the Commission's meeting. The Chair thanked Mr. Mallon for his comments and explained to him that the motion today is about acceptance and not a motion to comment or give approval.

Mr. Mallon also noted that there is misinformation and hearsay in the preliminary study report and the house is in very poor condition and not habitable. He stated that the house has been vacant for over four years and the interior has been heavily modified, most recently in the 1990s. He requested that the Commission continue their decision to allow his efforts to play out at the local level. He stated that the owners had purchased the property with cash, sight unseen, and its condition would require a significant amount of money to rehabilitate it back to habitable condition. If they are able to sell the excess land on the site, it will allow them to get some return on the property if they must rehabilitate the house.

The Chair acknowledged Mr. Mallon's comments and noted that the motion was not on approval but rather acceptance of the study report. The Chair recognized Commissioner Pride who said the wording of the staff recommendation is not just an acknowledgement of receipt but really an encouragement to move forward to establish the proposed district. The Chair agreed that the question is on acceptance and that encouragement would be the next step. The Chair recognized Ms. Doherty who said that the Commission's role is to consider, review, and comment. She stated in regards to Commissioner McDowell's point about acknowledgement that she does acknowledge receipt of reports from communities and let them know that the report is complete. The recommendation she reads to the commission is based on her interpretation of the study report, and it is to acknowledge and to recommend. One of the pieces could be removed, but the wording of the motion would need to be changed.

The Chair recognized Commissioner DeWitt who reiterated that it would be good for the Commission to receive the study reports as then the vote could be split, one for acknowledging the study report and one for the recommendation. But he stated that it is difficult to acknowledge the study report without having seen it. He appreciated the applicant's efforts to preserve the house and sell the land, and asked if they have applied for a variance to split the lot as they may be confronting a zoning issue that would make the lot nonconforming.

The Chair recognized Mr. Mallon who said they have submitted an application to the Danvers Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) to sell the land to the nursing home; it is a grandfathered use and needs a finding of the ZBA to expand the nonconforming use. The Putnam House would also need zoning relief to remain on a smaller lot than required by current zoning. He noted that the historic district

may be premature as the ZBA process is playing out; if it does not work out, then the Town could pursue historic district designation.

The Chair recognized Commissioner Sullivan who said that Mr. Mallon's issues are characteristic of preservation activities at the local level and typical of contested preservation cases all across the state. He reiterated the significance of the house as a First Period house, noting the information included in the study report. He stated that many of the issues – the owner's intent and efforts, the zoning complications – are best settled at the local level. He stated that the Commission is an advocate for preserving history under its enabling legislation, and as such not recommending the proposed district could torpedo local preservation efforts. The local issues are best handled there, or through discussions with professional staff, and the Commission should not be distracted by advocacy from property owners who bought a house sight-unseen. The owners' concerns should be irrelevant to the Commission, which should focus instead on the community's preservation efforts.

The Chair recognized Mr. Mallon who said that the sellers only offered a quick sale of the house, a few days to accept the cash offer, sight-unseen, suggesting that they understood the poor condition of the house. He reiterated that the owners are working with the Town and going through one process to save the house, so to pursue the local historic district process over that is unfair and against the purpose of the demolition delay, which is for the community and owner to work together to save the house. He again requested that the Commission continue their decision to a later meeting to let the local process play out.

The Chair recognized Commissioner DeWitt who summarized the tight time schedule of pursuing a local historic district designation within a year, highlighting the set Town Meeting date and the required approval from the Attorney General's office. If the Danvers Historic District Commission does not move forward at fall Town Meeting, they will not be able to do so again until spring Town Meeting shortly after which the demolition delay will expire. He seconded Commissioner Sullivan's note that these discussions should really be had at the local level, at Town Meeting, and the Commission instead should focus on the significance of the property. For the commissioners, the questions are: is this is a significant building and do they recommend its preservation.

The Chair then recognized Mr. Mallon who said if the Commission has not received the study reports he does not understand how they can vote on the

proposed district. Having the reports would allow the Commission to make their own decisions and to investigate the information on their own. The Chair reminded Mr. Mallon that qualified staff review the reports and make recommendations to the Commission.

The Chair recognized Commissioner Sullivan who said that this is a procedure that have been followed for as long as he has been on the Commission. While it would be nice to have the report to review in advance, Mr. Mallon is advocating the Commission change decades of procedures just to run out the clock. Commissioner Sullivan asked the chairman to move the question and the chairman agreed. The chairman called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he called for questions or comments from the public. Hearing none, he moved the motion with eight in favor and three against (Commissioners Early, McDowell, and Pride). The motion CARRIED.

Chairman Rosenberry then called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the MHC staff recommendations on the Preliminary Study Report for the **Putnam-Learoyd House in Danvers**. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Kish and SECONDED by Commissioner DeWitt. The chairman called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he called for questions or comments from the public.

The Chair recognized Nancy McCann, attorney at 89 Newbury Street in Danvers, speaking on behalf of property owners George and Marian Myers who were unable to attend the meeting. Ms. Myers stated the owners had not received any information on today's meeting and were not involved in or advised of the process of the preliminary study report and the proposed district. The Myers have owned the property for over fifty years and have not received any outreach from the Danvers Historic District Commission. She said the Myers are opposed to and object to the adoption of this single lot historic district.

Ms. McCann raised concerns about some of the information included in the preliminary study report. She stated that the back house and the barn that are referenced in the report were destroyed by fire in the 1970s and then reconstructed. The sketch drawing from the 1960s shown in the presentation shows outbuildings and barns that have since been removed and replaced by a 10,000 square foot veterinary hospital. While the preliminary study report highlights other pieces of Danvers history, the significance of this property is related to a love triangle and

attempted murder, which the owners do not believe to be significant to Danvers history.

Ms. McCann stated that the owners have submitted an application to the Danvers Planning Board that would require the demolition of the sections of the house reconstructed in the 1970s but would retain the front part of the house. She noted that part of the issue is that a property owner cannot submit an application involving demolition to the Danvers Planning Board or ZBA unless they first go to the Danvers Preservation Commission for demolition delay review.

If the local historic district were approved, Ms. McCann stated that it would have a significant financial impact on Dr. Myers, who is planning to retire, and a detrimental impact on the operations of the Danvers Animal Hospital. She stated that the property has not been well studied by the Historic District Commission nor has the report been vetted at the Town level. She asked the Commission to recommend that the Town not move forward with local historic district designation for the property.

The Chair recognized Commissioner Early who asked if the Commission has any notification requirements for local historic district and landmark study reports. The Chair recognized Ms. Doherty who stated that the Commission does not.

The Chair recognized Commissioner Sullivan who reiterated that the Commission has heard advocates speak for the property owners and have not heard from the Town's side, but that such back-and-forth is not part of the Commission's procedure. What our statute says is that the Commission shall encourage all government bodies and persons considering actions which may affect a historical or archaeological asset of the Commonwealth to consult with the Commission to avoid an adverse effect to such an asset. So the question is, "Is this a significant asset?" The Commission's professional staff has presented information from the Town that it is a significant asset. He agreed that all of the issues raised by Mr. Mallon and Ms. McCann must be adjudicated at the local level. He seconded what Commissioner DeWitt had previously stated, that the Commission is charged with deciding if a building is significant and do we recommend that the town should consider preservation.

The Chair recognized Commissioner Early who asked if the staff go out to look at proposed districts; Ms. Doherty said yes.

The Chair recognized Ms. McCann who stated that the Commission's vote to recommend a district will carry weight at the local level during the public hearing and Town Meeting vote. She argued that the actual weight of that recommendation may not be recognized in light of the Commission not receiving the reports before the meeting.

The Chair recognized Commissioner DeWitt who said it is true that the Commission's vote will be recognized but that it is also important to remember that the district will go through a very public and political process during Town Meeting, where it requires a two-thirds vote, a tough barrier to get through. Questions such as inadequate notification to the property owners is a valid question for Town Meeting and the Danvers Preservation Commission to discuss. It is, however, not this Commission's issue. The Commission's vote is just one small step in the larger process of designating a local historic district.

The Chair recognized Commissioner McDowell who said Commissioner Sullivan and Commissioner DeWitt are correct. However, he said that this is really a local decision and the local Preservation Commission should have notified someone of the significance before the property was purchased. If a property has been vacant and abandoned for some time, the local commission should have been more proactive during that time to preserve the building. He stated that his vote against the proposed district is not intended to torpedo the effort but is instead a recognition that the local commission should have made more efforts in the past to preserve the building. He suggested that the Commission change the wording of the staff recommendation and motion, allowing staff to accept the reports on the Commission's behalf and allowing the Commission instead to only vote on a recommendation.

The Chair called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he called for questions or comments from the public. Hearing none, he moved the motion with seven in favor and four against (Commissioners Early, McDowell, Perille, and Pride). The motion CARRIED.

Chairman Rosenberry then called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the MHC staff recommendations on the Preliminary Study Report for the **Elm Park Neighborhood Local Historic District in Worcester**. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Sullivan and SECONDED by Commissioner Wilson. The Chair called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he called for questions or comments from the public. Chairman Rosenberry read out a

message from the public chat from Ms. Deborah Packard, Executive Director, Preservation Worcester, who had to leave the meeting: “Preservation Worcester supports the establishment of the Elm Park Neighborhood Local Historic District and commends the Worcester Historical Commission and the City of Worcester on their continued efforts.” Hearing no further comments, the Chair moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

This concluded the voting. Chairman Rosenberry then turned to the next item on the agenda, the **Executive Director’s Report**. He then turned the floor over to Brona Simon, Executive Director.

Ms. Simon began by opening a discussion regarding the format of the Commission’s monthly meetings. She said the emergency provisions of the open meeting law have been extended by the Legislature to expire March 31, 2023, to allow state agencies and town governments to continue using virtual meetings.

Ms. Simon said because some organizations have decided they are going to start meeting in person and not virtually due to the current situation of the pandemic. Ms. Simon said she would like to hear what the Commission’s preferences are.

Chairman Rosenberry said at the end of the recent Legislature session which ended July 31, 2022 that there was a discussion made about extending certain pandemic era policies that included remote meeting policies and the option of in-person or hybrid participation for all public meetings. There were questions at the time on what the impact would be for, some local boards and local commissions who might not have the resources to continue providing remote access. The Chair said we could continue to meet remotely until March 31, 2023. He said it’s unclear what the Legislature will do come March 31st. He suggested that a hybrid format meeting at Columbia Point could possibly be arranged and those who would like to be physically present could do so or remotely through zoom.

Commissioner Pride preferred virtual format for meeting. Commissioner Wilson preferred virtual format or Hybrid. Commissioner Sullivan noted that flexibility Option or Virtual meeting are very helpful. Commissioner Friary stated that a hybrid meeting would allow Commissioners the option of meeting in person and having round-table discussions. Commissioner McDowell suggested in person meeting twice a year and Zoom meetings the rest of the year. Commissioner DeWitt stated that in person meetings are better for subcommittees. Commissioner Early stated that Hybrid model would allow greater access for the disabled than in-person meetings.

Chairman Rosenberry said remote access adds a sense of flexibility to people if they are under quarantine or may not be able to be in person, but still able to appear virtually.

Commissioner Pride stated that it would be helpful if the commissioners would have an “elevator conversation,” namely introduce themselves and give a short talk about who they are and what they do. Commissioner Ceccacci agreed. Ms. Simon replied that this could be added to the agenda of the next meeting.

This completed the Executive Director’s report.

The Chairman then called for any other new business, Hearing none, he called for a MOTION to adjourn. A MOTION was made by Commissioner DeWitt and SECONDED by Commissioner Kish. The MOTION CARRIED, and the meeting adjourned at 3:34pm.

Commissioners Present

John Rosenberry

Charles Sullivan

Dennis DeWitt

Michael McDowell

Anne Pride

Gina Perille

Susan Ceccacci

Donald Friary

Patrice Kish

Simone Early

Kellie Carter Jackson

Mark Wilson

Staff Present

Brona Simon

Jennifer Doherty

Michael Steinitz

Ben Haley

Elizabeth Sherva

Joshua Dorin

Peter Stott

Paul Holtz

Nancy Alexson

Shari Perry-Wallace

Liz King

A TRUE COPY ATTEST

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Brown