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Endangered: These historic Worcester structures are here today, but could be gone tomorrow

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There are churches, a cemetery barn, and a former theater on [Preservation Worcester's 2017 Most Endangered Structures list](#).

The group has released the list since 1995 in order to let people know about some of the city's historic buildings and treasures that can be lost. All buildings on the list must be built before 1968 and have significant historical, architectural or cultural contributions to Worcester.

The structures are all threatened by neglect, demolition, alteration or deterioration, Preservation Worcester said. A committee solicits nominations from the community and then the Preservation Worcester Board of Directors approves the list.



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Notre Dame des Canadiens Roman Catholic Church

Located at 5 Salem Square, the church was built in 1929 and was the first French Canadian Roman Catholic parish established in Worcester. Preservation Worcester had the church on the Most Endangered Structures list in 2009 and 2016.

In April, the one-year demolition delay for the property expired. The city's Planning Board approved plans to build apartments at the location. Preservation Worcester worked to try to save the church and the "Re-imagine Notre Dame" group continues to find a new owner-developer to re-purpose the building.

The city approved of the site plan by the [Roseland Residential Development Group in August](#).



Preservation Worcester
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church

Located at 26-28 Mulberry St. in Worcester, the church was built in 1928 and is apparently going to be sold. Owned by the Diocese of Worcester, the church sits on a just over a five-acre plot of land. There is the church, community center, rectory and baseball field on the property.

The church was closed in May 2016 after a safety assessment. The Mount Carmel Preservation Society wants the building to be preserved and for someone to find a new use for it. The property can be legally demolished by the owner now.



Preservation Worcester
Lothrop's Opera House - Olympia Theater

Lothrop's Opera House, located on 17-27 Pleasant St., in Worcester, is the oldest surviving theater in the city, according to Preservation Worcester. It was opened in 1891.

The theater has gone through several name changes over the years: Olympia Theater; Lynch's Pleasant Theater; Fine Arts Theater; and the New Art Cinema. The theater closed in 2006 and is listed in a district on the National Register of Historic Places. The city's Redevelopment Authority's Downtown Urban Revitalization Plan lists the theater as a property that potentially could be demolished.



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Preservation Worcester
Holbrook-Sawyer Building

The Holbrook-Sawyer Building is right in the heart of downtown Worcester in between the Hanover Theatre for the Performing Arts and City Hall. Built around the 1850s, the building might house classic Italianate-style architecture under that ugly facade, Preservation Worcester says.

Once the home of the Great Wall Restaurant, the building was declared unsafe in June 2017 when the back of it began crumbling. The building remains unoccupied.



Preservation Worcester
Charles H. Bowker House

Preservation Worcester calls the Charles H. Bowker House "a wonderful example of High Victorian Gothic architecture" that can be viewed from many parts of the city. Located at 3 Harvard Place, the building was the home of industrialist Charles Bowker.

A fire caused damage to the roof and interior, and although the realty trust has paid the current taxes on the building, repairs have not been done to fix the property.



Preservation Worcester
Hope Cemetery Barn

The Hope Cemetery barn, tucked on the Webster Street grounds, is still being used these days as a storage shed, but the building still needs repair.

Preservation Worcester received a grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission in 2006 to create a report on the structure, built in 1889. The organization said Worcester has not used the Existing Conditions and Treatment Report.

The building is on the National Register of Historic Places.



Preservation Worcester
14 Northampton Street (formerly 7 Westminster Street)

Preservation Worcester calls the 1848 building a “fine example of Stick Style architecture” but notes it remains vacant and is in need of repair.

“This property is located in the Grant Square area where forty-eight house lots originally were laid out by Phineas Ball for builder, Ebenezer Harrington, in 1848,” Preservation Worcester said.



Preservation Worcester | P. Glennon
Helen Dodge Three-Decker

Built in 1912, the Victorian-era style home is located at 570 Pleasant St. in Worcester. The home is under a demolition delay ordinance currently.

The owner, Josue Rosa, [told the Worcester Telegram & Gazette](#) that he would give someone the house for nothing, but the new owner would have to move the home.

Rosa told the newspaper he is hoping someone would take the building and restore it.

“It can be described as a significant and distinctive example of a fashionable, middle-class, three-family dwelling that is built in facing the Newton Hill section of Elm Park on Worcester’s high-status West Side,” Preservation Worcester said.

The three-decker was placed on the National Register of Historical Place in 1990.



Preservation Worcester
Carriage houses across Worcester

Preservation Worcester said the carriage houses across the city were originally built for house-drawn carriages, but are obviously no longer used for that purpose.

An amendment to city zoning ordinances does allow the structures to be used as rental properties.



Preservation Worcester
Three-decker porches

Worcester is known for the three-decker building, but over the years the properties moved to becoming rental properties. At once time, families would occupy the dwellings.

Preservation Worcester points out that the homes would have stacked porches, which allowed people to create decorative millwork. Now, the porches are often removed or closed in.

“These alterations destroy their individuality and distinctive character, and transform them into faceless, boxlike structures,” Preservation Worcester said.