



2023 Most Endangered Structures List

For the past twenty-eight years, Preservation Worcester has published an annual list of the Most Endangered Structures. The List alerts the public to threats to some of our city's most historic treasures. Often the list serves as a catalyst for preservation and restoration.

What Qualifies as an Endangered Structure?

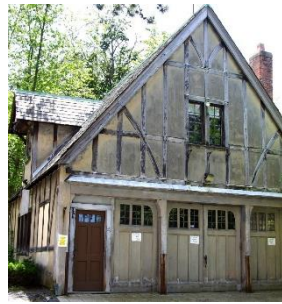
- Must be at least 50 years old
- Have architectural, cultural or historical significance to the city
- Be threatened by neglect, demolition, alteration, or inappropriate use



Cow Tavern
274 Salisbury Street | Circa 1780



Larchmont
36 Butler Street | Circa 1858
Photo by Erin Murphy



Carriage Houses and Barns



Pillars and Monuments



Thomas Anderson House
206 May Street | Circa 1892



Barn at Hope Cemetery
Webster Street and Hope Avenue | circa 1882



29 Bellevue Street | Circa 1900



Hyman Zive Three-Decker
135 Providence Street | Circa 1928



Greendale Village Improvement Society Building
480 West Boylston Street | Circa 1900



Cow Tavern

274 Salisbury Street | Circa 1780

The Cow Tavern is currently a private property in a state of extreme neglect. The structure was built in the Federal style circa 1780. The building is of timber frame vernacular architecture with a symmetrical façade, a center entrance, twin chimneys and granite foundation. The building was operated as a tavern until 1830. The original owner is unknown. The original property included a barn. There is ample documentation at the Worcester Historical Museum referring to it as an early 19th century tavern, showing that it operated during the 1800's when the surrounding area was farmland with orchards. There is photo documentation showing the building and surrounding areas before Salisbury Street was developed.

The house itself is in a state of extreme neglect – recently with broken windows, holes in the clapboard siding from rot, and serious foundation issues. The house is currently vacant and there does not appear to be any maintenance. Recently, the barn on the property was demolished.

In December 2020 a building permit was issued for a project cost of \$160,000. An electrical permit was also issued at that time. It does not appear that any work was done to the property. There are no taxes owed at this time. It was noted that the city has reduced the assessed value of the property several times in the last few years. The city records list the building as 50% good. Without intervention, this property may need to be demolished.



Larchmont

36 Butler Street | Circa 1858

Located on a hillside in what was countryside in the 1850's, Larchmont is a rare survivor of the many Italianate and Second Empire style villas that dotted the hillsides around Worcester in the 1850s and 1860s. It was built as the country home of Ransom C. Taylor (1829-1898), a wealthy real estate developer who in his time was Worcester's largest property owner. It was designed by Elbridge Boyden, the architect who designed Mechanics Hall and the Cathedral of St. Paul.

Constructed in 1858, Larchmont is a two-story wood frame structure, with a symmetrical façade above a slightly projecting central pavilion with a low gable. At the first story of the pavilion is an original bracketed entry porch (glazing added) and arched entry; at the second story is a Palladian window with a moulded cap set on consoles; and at the third story an oculus. Symmetrical porches with brackets and original balustrades are at either end of the façade. Alterations to the building include the removal of its original octagonal cupola, the addition of a porte-cochere, and the installation of aluminum siding (no details were removed for the siding). Despite these alterations, "Larchmont" remains among the city's finest examples of Italianate architecture.

Located in Quinsigamond Village, Larchmont is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is one of the oldest and most significant structures in the Village. The owner's July 27th petition to the Worcester Historic Commission to waive the city's one-year Demolition Delay Ordinance was denied. During the demolition delay period, Preservation Worcester will work with the owner and will endeavor to find a buyer for the property.



Carriage Houses and Barns

Carriage houses are outbuildings near a larger home. They were typically built to store horses and horse-drawn carriages, and sometimes housed coachmen or caretakers on the upper floor. They became popular in the United States in the mid-1800s when people used horse-drawn carriages for transportation. By the 1920s, motor vehicles made carriage houses obsolete. Over time, carriage houses evolved to serve as garages, guest houses, home offices, studios and living spaces.

Carriage houses and barns are often subject to neglect and/or demolition because they cannot be inhabited as accessory apartments according to the Worcester Zoning Ordinance. Revising the ordinance to allow those structures residential use would preserve historic buildings especially carriage houses and barns, diversify housing choices, create more housing units and provide less expensive housing.

Left Row – Top to Bottom:

- 17 Cedar Street
- Laurel Street
- 72 Charlotte Street
- 52 William Street

Right Row – Top to Bottom

- 51A Cedar Street
- Cedar Street
- 114 Austin Street
- 900 Main Street



Many Worcester residential developments created in the early twentieth century include architectural features (pillars or monuments) as part of their original design. Dating from 1907 through the 1920s, these structures, often concrete or stone, marked the entrances to streets or entire developments. Features have been connected to two real-estate developers operating during this period: Thomas E. O'Connell and Edward V. Haines.

O'Connell was considered the most important of several Irish real estate developers who opened land on Worcester's westside as desirable residential neighborhoods in the early 20th century. Haines, although a successful developer, was not as influential as O'Connell. Haines was known for developing Lake Park and Lake Park Heights (Coburn Rd, Woodrow Rd, Palisades St, Dallas St., etc.), which were laid out beginning in 1914. The O'Connell Real Estate Company was responsible for developing the west side areas of Hillside 1907 (around Pleasant St. and Moore Ave.), Lenox ca. 1911 (around Chamberlain Parkway and South Lenox Street). And several other developments like Maplewood 1914 (Burncoat St. and Thorndyke St.).

O'Connell's Real Estate brochure advertising "Maplewood" describes ornate entrances and a fieldstone wall laid in cement. These entrances and walls are still visible today; they lined the subdivision's seven new streets; these pillars also had brass plaques with street names. In some instances, the mounting holes for the plaques are still present. O'Connell installed two benches to mark the entrance to Chamberlain Parkway, which are still in place today. In a similar style, Haines lined the entrances to his developments with pillars. This is the first time these pillars and monuments have been placed on the Most Endangered Structures List:

- Chamberlain Parkway Entrance and 2 Benches
- Pillars at Entrances:

Devens St.	Coventry Rd.
Thorndyke Rd.	Monterey Rd.
Brighton Rd.	Coburn/ Woodrow Rd
Palisades St.	Dallas St./Touraine St.
Dallas St/Woodrow Rd	
- 227 Burncoat Street: The present stone wall is the original to the farming period fieldstone wall encased in cement by O'Connell.

Pillars and Monuments

1907 through 1920s



Thomas Anderson House

206 May Street | Circa 1892

Built in 1892, 206 May Street was part of the 1890 subdivision plan of a section of May, Chandler, and Courtland streets commissioned by George A. Thayer and drawn up by the civil engineering firm of Fay and Burbank. Mary E. Tenny purchased the 206 lot from Thayer in 1891, but sold the undeveloped lot back to Thayer after her husband's death in 1892. In 1892, Thayer sold the lot to Thomas Anderson, a carpenter, who built the home, likely by himself. Anderson sold the house in 1893 shortly after its completion.

Although not considered a "high style" example, the home exhibits the traits of the Shingle Style architecture, which was most popular from 1880-1900. The front-facing gable roof with multi-level eaves appear in less than 20% of all Shingle style examples. The structure retains much of its identifying style of continuous wood shingles. The beautifully intricate shingle work covers the second story without interruption. Based on archival research, the carpenter who is responsible was Thomas M. Anderson.

The home has been vacant for years and is deteriorating due to lack of maintenance. Earlier photographs of the property show that the front-most gable's two narrow double-hung windows were removed and covered by plywood. Additionally, a 6-pane square window was cut out, and the shaper altered and also covered by plywood. Finally, a small square decorative paned window was also similarly removed.

The building is currently owned by a management LLC and has been on the market for several years. It appeared on Preservation Worcester's Watch List for a number of years and on the Most Endangered Structures List in 2020.



The Barn at Hope Cemetery was built in 1882, replacing an earlier structure built in 1876. The barn is a fine stick-style structure, characterized by its verticality, angularity, steeply pitched roof and cupola, and overhanging eaves which are pierced with dormers. Elements of Queen Anne style are seen in the shaped shingles on the second floor that wrap around the structure.

The building suffers from neglect and deferred maintenance. Old timber frame barns are generally recognized as an endangered building type throughout New England. Preservation Mass, the statewide architectural preservation group, placed barns on their Ten Most Endangered Historic Resources List several years ago and has since formed a Barn Preservation Task Force to promote restoration and maintenance of old barns. Within this context, surviving urban barns are relatively rare.

The Barn at Hope Cemetery is further enhanced in value by its location in the cemetery. Hope Cemetery is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It was founded in 1854, when the City of Worcester appointed five Commissioners to act as a governing board. In 1855 with gifts and purchases, a small tract of land east of Webster Street and north of Hope Avenue was laid out for the cemetery. At this time Webster Street was just a country lane. An office building was constructed in 1882 with a vault and machine shop, and continued in use as offices until a new building was constructed in 2000. Two former buildings of note at Hope Cemetery were the Curtis Chapel, designed by Stephen Earle and dedicated in 1891 and taken down in 1961; and the Superintendent's House, erected in 1895 and removed in 1940.

This is the Hope Cemetery Barn's fourth appearance on the Most Endangered Structures List, previously appearing in 2005, 2007 and 2022.

The Barn at Hope Cemetery Webster Street and Hope Avenue | Circa 1882





Built in 1900, this large three-decker provided nine bedrooms in three apartments in a city with a lack of affordable housing and enhanced the neighborhood architecturally. In that regard, it most importantly retained its original wood shingle and clapboard siding and featured a wraparound porch, generous roof overhang with exposed rafter tails, a 3-story octagonal fronted wing, 3 stories of bay windows, ornate framing over what was the 3rd floor porch and front facing roof pediment.

The building is located in one of Worcester's older neighborhoods (The nearby one-time Winslow St. firehouse was built in 1873.) and was a shining example of high-quality architectural design on a street that is now plagued with a commercial warehouse on the former site of the Mason Street School and vinyl sided houses bereft of their original identity.

Built in 1900, 29 Bellevue suffered from recent substantial fire damage and prior removal of 2nd and 3rd floor porches. It is hoped that the long-time owner, who deserves great credit for largely preserving most of the original design, will choose to rebuild and in such a way as to restore the building's original materials and charm.

29 Bellevue Street | Circa 1900



Hyman Zive Three-Decker

135 Providence Street | Circa 1928

The Hyman Zive three-decker is one of several stylish three-deckers built in the late 1920s for middle class Jewish families in the Vernon Hill neighborhood. Designed in a mix of Craftman and Colonial Revival styles, these buildings from 127 to 139 Providence Street are set atop steeply sloping front lawns, overlooking Gaskill Field. 129, 131, 135 and 137 Providence St were all built by Hyman Zive, circa 1928. Zive was a realtor who owned ten other local buildings. In 1930, the initial occupants of 135 Providence St included Barnet Adelsky, a clothing merchant, and Samuel Blatt, a hat business owner.

The Providence Street buildings have hip roofs and asymmetrical facades, with projecting three tier porches capped by gables with diamond-paned lights in the pediments. The porches are supported by square columns, and feature arched openings in the first tier, peaked openings in the second tier, and rectangular openings in the third tier. The first-floor exterior has wood clapboards, the second and third floors are clad with wood shingles. These multi-family homes were built with nine bedrooms, three bathrooms, and has 4,209 square feet of floor space. Each floor has six rooms, consisting of a living room, kitchen, bath, and three bedrooms.

135 Providence Street is in poor condition in comparison to its neighbors, and its loss would leave a sizable gap in what is currently a fine example of the epitome of three-decker design in Worcester. The building suffers from deferred maintenance. Exterior clapboards on the first floor are unpainted, warped, and missing. A section of wood shingles on the second-floor porch are missing. A second-floor window is missing and boarded up. Original windows were replaced some time ago. Overall, the building retains much of its original design, but lack of maintenance is likely causing internal damage. In 2005, the neighboring three-decker at 131 Providence Street caught fire and was later demolished. That fire spread to 135 Providence Street, damaging the roof, and the second and third floor units. The roof was replaced in 2005, but repair status to the interior is unknown.



Greendale Village Improvement Society Building

480 West Boylston Street | Circa 1900

The Greendale Village Improvement Society Building, located at 480 West Boylston St., is making its first appearance on Preservation Worcester's Most Endangered Structures List. Built in 1900, this Queen Anne-style building has long brought architectural interest to the West Boylston Street corridor. The 2-1/2 story, wood-framed building features original trim details at its soffits and windows, including a half-round fan at the attic dormer. A distinctive three-story tower with a flared roof and an elegant pair of tripartite window units anchors the southwest corner of the building.

The Greendale Village Improvement Society was founded in January of 1895 as an effort by the residents of the Greendale section of Worcester to band together to better their neighborhood. The organization took up trash collection for residents, tree planting, snow removal, and organized fire protection efforts. It was decided that the organization needed a home, and in 1897 the Kendrick family deeded the land where the building now stands to the Society. After a neighborhood fundraising effort, ground was broken on April 19, 1900, and the organization occupied the space by the Fall of that year. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976.