



Hammond Reed Company House
5 May Street | circa 1895



2021 Most Endangered Structures

What Is The Most Endangered Structures List?

For the past twenty-three 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.



William Warden House
7 Circuit Ave East | circa 1895
Photo by Pat Glennon

What Qualifies as an Endangered Structure?

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



Unoccupied Buildings of Crown Hill
Crown Hill Local Historic District | circa 19th c.



Charles Paine House
5 Linden Street | circa 1863
Photo by Pat Glennon



Bramble Hill
757 Salisbury Street | circa 1901
Photo by Pat Glennon



Edmund E Morse House
72 Charlotte Street | circa 1873



Thomas Anderson House
206 May Street | circa 1892
Photo by Pat Glennon



Thomas Barrett House
41 Wellington Street | circa 1885



Edmund E. Morse House

72 Charlotte Street & Carriage House

72 Charlotte was one of the first homes on its street. The original parcel of land on which the property sits once included an excess of nine acres of land when it was purchased from William Ross in 1868. Charles Morse, a real estate speculator, purchased the plot from Ross and divided into smaller building parcels. Built c. 1873 by Edmund E. Morse, a Worcester carpenter and builder, Edmund and his wife Mary were the home's first residents. However, by 1874, the property was sold to Worcester Academy, who retained ownership until it was sold in 1886. The carriage house we see on the property dates to post 1886; it was built after the Worcester Academy ownership.

Although 72 Charlotte is in poor condition, a close examination of the architectural details reveals its construction in the Greek Revival style. There is dentil molding on the entry porch and transoms around the front door. The front-gabled roof with broken pediment is typical in the Northeast architecture. Constructed slightly later than the main house, the carriage house exhibits more elements of Queen Anne and the Greek Revival styles. The main house was converted into a three-family home, and the carriage house was converted into a workshop. Since the 1990s, it has been under the ownership of the same person who resides outside the city. This is 72 Charlotte Street's first appearance on the Most Endangered Structures List.





Bramble Hill

757 Salisbury Street

Built in 1901, Bramble Hill is a stately Georgian Colonial-style mansion. The front of the home has columns that welcome visitors and hint at the mansion's elegant interior. Originally the structure rested on 135 acres; most of which was sold and used to develop Salisbury Hill condominiums. Today 17 acres remain providing a secluded setting. The property also consists of several outbuildings including a stable/carriage house with an additional garage, a caretaker's cottage, and a children's playhouse.

Bramble Hill is best known for being home to industrialist Milton Higgins and his wife, Alice. The Higgins were prominently involved in the social, educational and cultural life of Worcester. For many years, Milton was the President and Chairman of the Board of the Norton Company. Mr. and Mrs. Higgins were associated with Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) and Clark University as well as many other city institutions. In 1962, Alice was named Clark University's first female trustee and was named chair of the Board of Directors in 1967.

In 2006, there was an attempt to rehabilitate the former mansion; however, subsequent broken pipes caused extensive damage, and the property continues to require significant repair. The former estate has been vacant and neglected since 2007. Vandals have stricken the property leading to broken glass, exposure to the elements and spray paint graffiti. In the past several years, Bramble Hill has been on and off the real estate market with several different owners. In 2018, the property sold for \$820,000 to Premier Property Group. In 2019, the developer proposed to demolish the historic estate and construct three low-rise buildings with 123 apartments. Due to its cultural and architectural significance, the building has appeared on the Most Endangered Structures List in 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2018, and 2020.



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William Warden House

7 Circuit Ave East

The William Warden House was constructed in 1895 by Worcester contractor, carpenter, and builder C.A. Colburn. The Warden House is considered a high-style example of Queen Anne style architecture which was in vogue at that time. The home boasts a lovely corner tower with a turret, a covered porch, and a pavilion. The outer walls are made out of intricate wood shingles, a key element of Queen Anne style. Brick chimneys accent the gabled roof. The original interior featured elaborate millwork, silk wallpaper and exquisite gas fixtures. Because of its architectural significance, the house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978.

The original owner, William Warden, was a lifetime Worcester resident. Warden was an entrepreneur who began working at age sixteen as an apprentice to a cabinetmaker. By the age of twenty, he was manufacturing picture frames. He also opened a wholesale crockery company prior to his significant real estate ventures. Warden was so successful and respected that he set land and real estate prices, and was often called upon to provide expert testimony in trial cases. Warden is best known for developing numerous properties including portions of Shrewsbury Street, Eastern Avenue, Elm Street, a 54-acre tract on the Auburn line, and most significantly, the Columbus Park Neighborhood.

The property is under foreclosure and is owned by Wells Fargo Bank. Despite being on the Preservation Worcester's Watchlist in 2018 and 2019, this is the property's first appearance on the Most Endangered Structures List.



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Hammond Reed Company House 5 May Street

The structure located at 5 May Street is a striking four-story high-rise apartment building. Built circa 1895, the brick and stone façade is inspired by Richardsonian Romanesque style architecture. Elaborate stonework accents the brick including a Roman-inspired arch over the doorway and an ornate etching on the keystone. The front exterior carving bears the notation of "18MAY95" referencing an important date during construction.

In 1895, the property was deeded to Arthur Stone by the Hammond Reed Company. At some point pre-1903, Theodore P. Brown took residence and conducted business from the building. The Hammond Reed Company was a manufacturer and patent holder of Simplex self-playing pianos. Interestingly, period piano retail catalogs note 5 May Street as Simplex's retail headquarters.

From 2010-2011, 5 May Street was the focus of a federal investigation when the property manager misused federal funds that were meant to rehabilitate the building. In 2013, the city of Worcester gained ownership and sold it in 2016 to Vader Realty LLC. Currently, it is co-owned by Kensington Management Trustee and Five May Street Worcester Realty Trust. This is 5 May Street's first appearance on the Most Endangered Structures List.





Unoccupied Buildings of Crown Hill

Crown Hill is a 40-acre Local Historic District (LHD) located just outside downtown Worcester. Officially incorporated in 2013, the LHD includes 152 buildings, and 21 vacant parcels and parking lots. Crown Hill is surrounded by Pleasant, Irving, Austin, and Newbury streets. When built, the area's downtown proximity made it an ideal location for the middle-class and many homes were occupied by merchants who would walk downtown to their businesses. While the area is best known for its' prominent Greek Revival architecture, the area also features examples of popular mid-and late-19th century architectural styles including Italianate, Second Empire, and Stick Style.

In the 1940s, the neighborhood suffered from declining conditions spurred by the end of World War II and the waning of manufacturing jobs in the city. Some of the Crown Hill's buildings were subdivided into apartments, while others were demolished and replaced by parking lots and modern structures. Preservation Worcester (then the Worcester Heritage Society) began working in the area in the 1970s, buying properties, rehabilitating them, and reselling them with preservation restrictions to ensure their future protection. The organization was one of the first to use funding from the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. The city also invested community development funds to stem the decline of buildings and infrastructure. At that time, a small section of the present Crown Hill LHD became a National Register of Historic Places District.

Crown Hill has active and engaged residents and robust neighborhood association that work tirelessly to celebrate and preserve their neighborhood, its beautiful homes and character. They are concerned that nine of the district's buildings are unoccupied. Unoccupied structures threaten a neighborhood's safety and vitality, and degrade property values. This is the first time the unoccupied buildings of Crown Hill have been placed on the Most Endangered Structures List.



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Thomas Barrett House

41 Wellington St

Constructed in circa 1885, the Thomas Barrett House is a Queen Anne style home. Built in an unusual hybrid subtype, we see both patterned masonry and a front-facing gable. The house is brick with contrasting wood features. The windows have accents of granite stonework. The home boasts a front-facing gabled roof. Also present is an enclosed wooden balcony above the front door. A triangular pediment above the front door has intricate and beautiful carvings that suggest the previous magnificence of the home.

Wellington Street was undeveloped until Thomas Barrett, a mason, built his home. Soon after, apartments began to appear on the street. Perhaps Barrett's trade as a mason influenced the building materials and design of this house. This is the first time the Thomas Barrett House appears on the Most Endangered Structures List.





Thomas Anderson House

206 May Street

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 plyboard. Additionally, a 6-pane square window was cut out, and the shaper altered and also covered by plyboard. 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. Despite being on Preservation Worcester's Watchlist for a number of years, this is the first time it appears on the Most Endangered Structures List.



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Charles Paine Carriage House

5 Linden Street

The Carriage House of 5 Linden Street dates to c. 1863 and is part of an 1863 subdivision laid out by the civil engineering firm of A. C. Buttrick. Charles Paine constructed the property, however, it belonged to the Bowen/Whittemore family for most of its early life. That family of merchants, provision dealers, and bankers retained ownership from 1881 until 1937.

The carriage house measures 10,500 square feet. Executed in the Second Empire Style (1855-1885), it exhibits a centered cable with flared eaves which is found in less than 20% of all examples of Second Empire structures. The roof is hipped with slate tiles which is also typical of the style. Although in need of repair, some of the original architectural elements remain including cornice brackets and the flattened arched hooded crown oversized barn window in the gable.

This is 5 Linden Street Carriage House first appearance on the Most Endangered Structures List.

