



CITY OF NEW BEDFORD

Department of City Planning

133 William Street • Room 303 • New Bedford, MA 02740

508-979-1488 • www.newbedford-ma.gov

MEMORANDUM

TO: New Bedford City Council

FROM: New Bedford Historical Commission

DATE: August 4, 2021

RE: BUILDING DEMOLITION REVIEW
1-3 Pine Street (Map 42 Lot 160)
Circa 1916, 4-5 story masonry industrial building, known as the Cannon Street Power Station

In accordance with the requirements of the New Bedford City Code, Article XI, Section 2-157 Demolition of Buildings, the New Bedford Historical Commission [NBHC] has examined the structure located at the above-captioned site in order to determine its historical significance and whether it is in the public interest to preserve such structure.

The NBHC reviewed the application for demolition at its August 3, 2021 meeting, and hereby forwards its findings and recommendation in this matter to the New Bedford City Council:

- The Cannon Street Power Station is a contributing building to the *New Bedford Gas and Edison Light Complex* National Register District, which derives its historical significance from its association with engineering, architecture and industry, particularly its significance as the chief power generating facility for the City of New Bedford and much of southeastern Massachusetts during much of the 20th century.
- The Cannon Street Power Station has been vacant for nearly three decades, has experienced a high level of deferred maintenance and the reuse of the Power Station does not have economic viability as past redevelopment scenarios of the subject site have demonstrated.
- If the site is not redeveloped it will remain contaminated and underutilized and remain in this condition for the foreseeable future. The Power Station will eventually fall into further disrepair, ultimately requiring demolition.

In light of these findings, the New Bedford Historical Commission has determined that the structure known as the Cannon Street Power Station at 1-3 Pine Street is Historically Significant but is not a Preferably Preserved structure.

Cc: Cannon Street Holdings LLC, Applicant
Department of Inspectional Services
Mayor's Office

Attachments: Demolition Plan Submission
NBHC Staff Report



CITY OF NEW BEDFORD DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING

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STAFF REPORT

NEW BEDFORD HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING

July 12, 2021

CASE # 2021.12: DEMOLITION REVIEW

1-3 Pine St (Map 42 Lot 160)

OWNER:

Sprague Massachusetts Properties
185 International Dr
Portsmouth, NH

APPLICANT:

Cannon Street Holdings LLC
98 Front Street
New Bedford, MA 02740



Cannon Street Power Plant

OVERVIEW: Cannon Street Holdings, LLC has Purchase and Sale Agreements to purchase and develop the Sprague/Eversource waterfront site as a shore base to support the Massachusetts offshore wind industry. The project will be known as the *New Bedford Wind Base at Cannon Street* and will combine both the Sprague and Eversource parcels into one facility of approximately 26.5 acres of usable offshore wind staging area. The applicant intends to demolish nine (9) structures on the site, including the circa 1916 Cannon Street Power Plant, which is the only site structure regulated by the Demolition Ordinance. *See Exhibit A.*

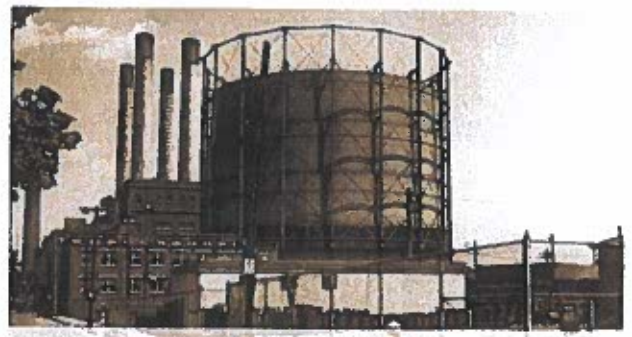
EXISTING CONDITIONS: The Cannon Street Power Station parcel is part of the *New Bedford Gas and Edison Light Complex* National Register District which was established in 2002. *See Exhibit B.* The NR District has two contributing buildings, the Cannon Street Power Station and the Taber & Grinnell Iron Foundry Building, and one contributing structure, Eddy's Wharf. The circa 1856 Foundry Building and the mid-nineteenth century Eddy's Wharf will be retained and are not part of the demolition request.



Sprague/Eversource Waterfront Site

The Power Station has been vacant since its closing in 1992 and stripped of its machinery. The building was previously open to the elements at numerous places on the roof and windows as a result, the interior of the building is heavily compromised. In 2017, partial remediation of hazardous materials took place, the roof was repaired and many of the windows covered.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: The core of the Cannon Street Power Station was constructed in 1916 with major additions in 1917, 1920, and 1922. The architects and engineers for all original phases were Stone & Webster of Boston. It is a five story, 150,000 square foot Classical Revival style building with a poured concrete foundation and red brick facades with multi-story steel framed windows. It has a flat roof surrounded by a brick parapet wall terminated with cast-stone coping. The remaining single chimneystack is a prominent feature which rises from within the structure of the Power Station. Originally, six chimneystacks were located at the Power Station.



Mid- 20th century image of Power Station

The Cannon Street Power Station, in its central role as provider of electricity to Southeastern Massachusetts from 1916 until its closure in 1992, played a major role in the area's 20th century industrial growth. The multiple building additions in 1917, 1920 and 1922, demonstrated the need to meet the increased power demands from the City's textile mills, then operating at their peak. According to a 1950 promotional booklet, the Cannon Street Power Station was supplying power to "45,000 domestic and 6,000 commercial, industrial and other customers in the New Bedford area and the surrounding communities. In addition, almost all of the electricity needed to supply the whole Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard and Plymouth area is made in the New Bedford power plant and sold at wholesale to Plymouth County and the Cape & Vineyard electric companies."

STATEMENT OF REASON FOR PROPOSED DEMOLITION: The demolition of the Cannon Street Power Station (and the other non-regulated structures) is required to prepare the site to be repurposed as an Offshore Wind Marine Terminal to service the Massachusetts offshore wind industry. The Power Station's removal is required due to its centralized location, bisecting the site. Specifically, the building location and proximity to the main earthen pier and deep-water berth on the site creates an access choke point for the flow of materials through the entire planned facility and to the deep-water berth for deployment offshore. Without the removal of the Power Station, the ability to move equipment and material throughout the site will be severely impacted and the proposed use will not be best realized. A rehabilitation of the structure will not remove these access choke point impediments and thus is the primary reason for the demolition request.



Site Proposal Conceptual Rendering

STATEMENT OF APPLICABLE GUIDELINES: The provisions of the Demolition Delay Ordinance shall apply only to any building or structure that, in whole or in part, was built seventy-five (75) or more years prior to the date of the application for the demolition permit, and is:

- A building or structure listed or eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or within an area listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or on the State Register of Historic Places;
- A building or structure importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, cultural, economic, political or social history of the city, or;
- A building or structure which is historically or architecturally significant in terms of period style, method of building construction or association with a significant architect or builder either by itself or as a part of a group of buildings, or;
- A building or structure located within one hundred fifty (150) feet of a federal, state or local historic district boundary.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The redevelopment of the subject site and the adaptive reuse of the Cannon Street Power Station has had several major proposals since its closing in 1992. A plan to build a \$127 million oceanarium failed in 2004, when the project was unable to secure adequate funding. Beginning in 2007, casino developers KG New Bedford, LLC, began planning a \$650 million waterfront casino and resort and signed a Host Community Agreement with the City in 2015; however, the project did not move forward when the Massachusetts Gaming Commission indicated that it would not award a gaming license to the developer due to lack of investor capital.



The entire site is located within the New Bedford – Fairhaven Designated Port Area (DPA), and a portion of the site is within Chapter 91 licensing jurisdiction. These designations prioritize waterfront industrial uses and limit the ability to develop DPA sites from significant conversion to non-industrial or non-water dependent types of development which could be sited in other areas.

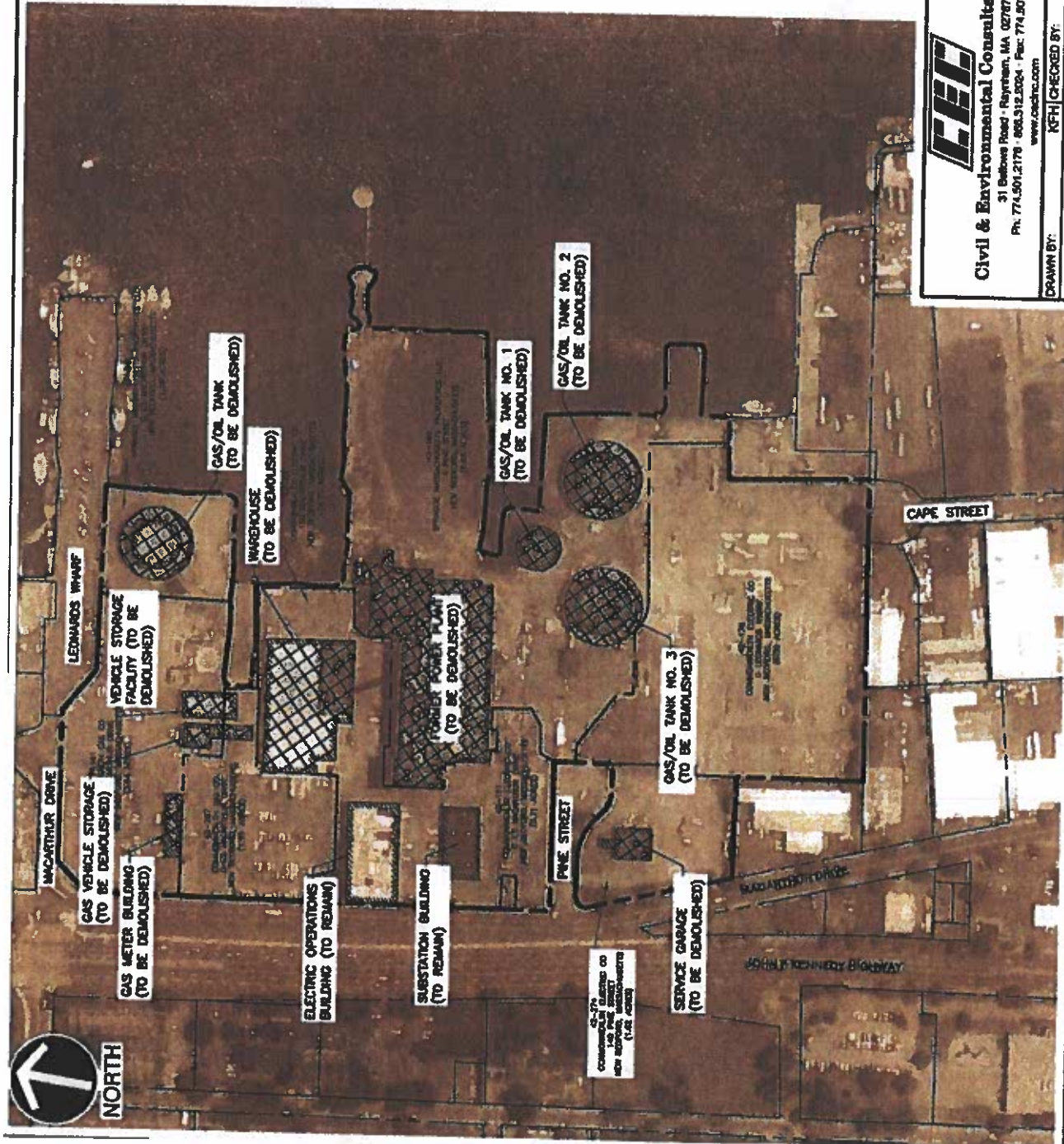
The current proposal takes advantage of the site's waterfront location and will capitalize on the emerging offshore wind energy industry by providing the City's second staging area and additional seafood offloading opportunities. These are water dependent industrial uses which require a waterfront location and the site infrastructure exist for the proposed use and operation.

The redevelopment of the site will mitigate site environmental hazards, have positive impacts on local employment and the commercial tax base, as well as help catalyze other economic investments in the central waterfront and downtown area. The City has collaborated with the applicant in a proactive development role, with the City and its New Bedford Redevelopment Authority, negotiating with Cannon Street Holdings to acquire approximately four acres of the site for a nominal amount. The plans for the NBRA acquired property will be determined by a focused planning exercise to determine the development scenario that maximizes the economic benefit of its real estate asset.

The Cannon Street Power Station is a contributing building to the *New Bedford Gas and Edison Light Complex* National Register District, which derives its historical significance from its association with engineering, architecture and industry, particularly its significance as the chief power generating facility for the City of New Bedford and much of southeastern Massachusetts during much of the 20th century.

The Cannon Street Power Station has historical significance; however, it has been vacant for nearly three decades, has experienced a high level of deferred maintenance and the reuse of the Power Station does not have economic viability as past redevelopment scenarios of the subject site have demonstrated. If the site is not redeveloped it will remain contaminated and underutilized and remain in this condition for the foreseeable future. The Power Station will eventually fall into further disrepair, ultimately requiring demolition. For these stated reasons, Staff recommends that the Cannon Street Power Station not be preferably preserved.

EXHIBIT A - Demolition Plan



LEGEND

- SUBJECT PROPERTY LINE
- APPROXIMATE SITE BOUNDARY
- ADJACENT PROPERTY BOUNDARY
- XXXXX EXISTING BUILDING
- XXXXX PROPOSED DEMOLITION (SEE NOTE 1)

NOTES

1. PROPOSED DEMOLITION SHOWN ON THIS PLAN IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AND IS BASED ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS AT THE TIME OF THIS PLAN'S PREPARATION.

REFERENCE

1. AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY BY Bing Maps, PROVIDED BY AUTODESK, ACCESSED APRIL 21, 2021.
2. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES AND INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM MASS GIS OLIVER DATABASE, ACCESSED APRIL 21, 2021.

DRAFT



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www.cecinc.com

**CANNON STREET HOLDINGS, LLC
CANNON STREET STATION REDEVELOPMENT
NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS**

SITE DEMOLITION PLAN

DRAWN BY: KPH | CHECKED BY: KPH | DRAFT APPROVED BY: [Signature]
DATE: MAY 2021 | DWG SCALE: 1"=200' | PROJECT NO.: 312-661 | DRAFT FIGURE NO.: 1

EXHIBIT B - New Bedford Gas and Edison Light Complex National Register District



IN CITY COUNCIL, August 19, 2021

Referred to the Committee on Appointments and Briefings.
 a true copy attest:

Dennis W. Farias, City Clerk

Dennis W. Farias

City Clerk

CANNON STREET HOLDINGS, LLC

July 12, 2021

VIA Hand Delivery

Diana Henry, Chair
New Bedford Historical Commission
133 William Street
New Bedford, MA 02740

RE: Cannon Street Power Station, Circa 1916
Assessors Map 42, Lot 160
Demolition Plan Submission

Dear Chairwoman Henry,

We refer to the above and our previously filed Submission dated June 15, 2021. As you know that filing was voluntarily withdrawn on June 29, 2021. Please consider this letter as our request to again reengage the review process by the Historical Commission and we ask that we be placed on the next available agenda which we understand will be on August 2, 2021.

The below is an identical submission as contained in our June 15, 2021 filing and is in response to the previous determination by the Preservation Planner that the Cannon Street Power Station, Circa 1916, (the "Power Plant") has been classified as a regulated structure under the New Bedford City Code, Article XI, Section 2-157 (the "Demolition Ordinance"). We respectfully resubmit the following information for consideration by the New Bedford Historical Commission (the "Commission"). The information provided is formatted into the sections as requested by your letter dated May 28, 2021.

1. Site Plan

Please see the attached Site Demolition Plan of Civil & Environmental Consultants, Inc dated May 2021. The scaled plan identifies the:

- a. parcel boundary lines and adjacent property boundary lines,
- b. Assessor Map & Lot information for the parcel(s) involved with this project,

- c. structures currently located on the parcels, and
- d. structures to be demolished (including regulated and unregulated structures).

2. *Statement of Reasons for Proposed Demolition*

Following on the information provided under the previously submitted Form E-1 on May 18, 2021, the project intends to demolish 9 structures currently found on the site. Of these structures, only the Power Plant has been found to be regulated by the Demolition Ordinance.

The Power Plant is a multi-story power plant building spans approximately 450- feet by 180 feet. The building is of brick and masonry construction, is built on multiple stories, and is currently vacant and unused. The building was previously open¹ to the elements at numerous places on the roof and windows and as a result, the interior of the building is heavily compromised.

The demolition of the Power Plant (and the other non-regulated structures) is required to prepare the site to be repurposed as an Offshore Wind Marine Terminal to service the Massachusetts offshore wind industry.

With specific focus on the Power Plant, its removal is required due to its centralized location on the site. Specifically, the building location and proximity to the main earthen pier and deep-water berth at the facility creates an access choke point for the flow of materials and supplies, (i) throughout the entire facility and (ii) to the deep-water berth for deployment offshore. As shown on the attached Site Plan, both the historically significant Foundry Building and the Substation Building fronting MacArthur Drive will remain to the west. Without the removal of the Power Plant, the ability to move equipment and material throughout the site will be severely impacted and the proposed use will not be best realized. In 2017, the *Massachusetts Clean Energy Center* published a Massachusetts Offshore Wind Ports & Infrastructure Assessment intended to investigate economic development opportunities in Massachusetts associated with the offshore wind industry including a redevelopment and reuse assessment of various port facilities throughout Massachusetts.² This assessment included both the Sprague Parcel and Eversource Parcel and recognizes that the Power Plant bisects the property making it difficult to connect the open portions of the site to the earthen pier and deep-water berth.³ This assessment

¹ The building underwent a program in 2017 to temporarily repair the roof structure and windows to close the building to the elements. Additionally, the removal of some (but not all) Asbestos Containing Materials occurred as part of these temporary building repairs.

² <https://www.masscec.com/massachusetts-offshore-wind-ports-infrastructure-assessment>

³ <https://files.masscec.com/Eversource%20Energy%20%26%20Sprague%20Oil.pdf>

concluded that the best or highest redevelopment scenario required the demolition of the Power Plant.

A rehabilitation of the structure will not remove these access choke point impediments and thus is the primary reason for the demolition request.

3. *Narrative Description of Post Demolition Development Plan*

The Power Plant is found on property currently owned by Sprague Massachusetts Properties, LLC. This section of the site consists of approximately 11-acres of filled tidelands and fronts on New Bedford Harbor (the "Sprague Parcel"). Landward of this parcel is an approximately 18-acre parcel currently owned by Eversource Energy (the "Eversource Parcel").

The project will acquire both parcels and a non-contiguous adjacent parcel (the "Gas Building"). Once acquired, and in furtherance of a public private partnership agreement with the City of New Bedford, approximately 26.5 acres of the property will be used as an Offshore Wind Marine Terminal in support of the nascent offshore wind industry in Massachusetts.

We highlight that the public private partnership agreement with the City outlines an agreed development objective to repurpose the combined Sprague Parcel and the Eversource Parcel into a marine terminal to support marine related renewable energy projects. Appropriate safeguards by way of rights of first refusal in favor of the City have been established should Cannon Street Holdings decide to abandon the project or wish to change this development objective following demolition.

The project will also convey three sections of the property to the City of New Bedford. It is reported that the City will use these parcels in furtherance of its vision for the further development of the New Bedford waterfront district. These three parcels are:

- (i) 2.4 acres on the northwest corner of the Eversource Property fronting MacArthur Drive,
- (ii) 5000 SF of land abutting the intersection of Leonard's Wharf and MacArthur Drive, and
- (iii) The Gas Building

Please see the following link which will bring you to a visual presentation of the project.
<https://earth.google.com/web/data=Mj8KPQo7CiExbidBTIINb2IIOU14VWpKY25tWkV1U3MwUW83bTJaZOUSFgoUMEEyRjUxMDU0QjE4NTBBNOQ1MDM>.

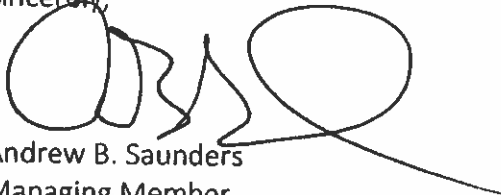
In summary, except for the Foundry Building and the entrance guard stations, all other buildings and above ground storage tanks will be removed. As part of these demolition activities, all structures will undergo an asbestos survey by a licensed Massachusetts Asbestos Inspector and an asbestos removal plan will be submitted to the Department of Environmental Protection prior to any demolition activities occurring. The project has also engaged a Licensed Site Professional to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the entire site and required environmental remediation activities will be undertaken to bring the site in compliance with the Massachusetts Contingency Plan. The site will be regraded, ground load bearing capacities will be enhanced, bulkheads/piers will be rebuilt and dredging activities will be undertaken. The Foundry Building will be renovated and put to its past use as an office and warehouse facility all while preserving the exterior to federal historic preservation standards. A new multi-use building will be constructed on the Northeast section of the site directly abutting Leonard's Wharf to be house a retail market, a fishing vessel offload facility, and additional offices. This structure will be subject to form-based zoning requirements which will require street facing exteriors to be made of traditional materials like brick and/or an architecturally appropriate facade (and not aluminum clad).

Once commissioned, it is envisioned the Offshore Wind Marine Terminal will initially support offshore construction activities and then transition to an operation and maintenance facility during the expected 25-year operational life of the various offshore wind facilities.

In closing, we ask that the Commission consider the above in its deliberations and act favorably upon our request to the Building Commissioner to issue a demolition permit for the Power Plant.

Should you require and further information to assist in your review, please do not hesitate to advise.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. B. Saunders', with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Andrew B. Saunders
Managing Member

Cc: Anne Louro via Email only – anne.louro@newbedford-ma.gov
Danny D. Romanowicz via Email only – dromanowicz@newbedford-ma.gov