



## CITY OF NEW BEDFORD

### Department of City Planning

133 William Street • Room 303 • New Bedford, MA 02740  
508-979-1488 • [www.newbedford-ma.gov](http://www.newbedford-ma.gov)

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** New Bedford City Council

**FROM:** New Bedford Historical Commission

**DATE:** March 31, 2022

**RE: BUILDING DEMOLITION REVIEW**  
**13-19 Commercial Street (Map 47 Lot 189) Circa 1790 timber-frame building and 1851 wood -frame south addition.**

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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 March 14, 2022, meeting, and hereby forwards its findings and recommendation in this matter to the New Bedford City Council:

- The buildings are architecturally and historically significant, representative of the City's rich whaling and fishing industry, linked to the marine industry for 176 years, and associated with the long-term ownership by the Beckman family.
- The property's rehabilitation has been carefully reviewed and permitted by the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals and the Historical Commission. The project is utilizing Federal and State Historic Tax Credits and has been approved for over \$1.7M in rehabilitative tax credits for this project and as such, has been reviewed by the National Park Service and the Massachusetts Historical Commission.
- The property is located within the Bedford-Landing Local Historic District and at its March 14, 2022 meeting was issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of the ca. 1790 timber-frame building and ca. 1851-wood-frame south addition.
- The demolition does not adversely affect the 3-1/2 story wood-frame gable roof structure facing Route 18, or the adjacent "stone" buildings to the west.

**In light of these findings, the New Bedford Historical Commission has determined that the buildings at 13-19 Commercial Street are Historically Significant but not Preferably Preserved historic buildings.**

**Cc:** National Downtown Club LLC, Applicant  
Department of Inspectional Services  
Mayor's Office

**Attachments:** NBHC Staff Report



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## STAFF REPORT

NEW BEDFORD HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING

March 14, 2022

**CASE # 2022.03: CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**

13-19 Commercial Street (Map 47 Lot 189)

**OWNER** National Downtown Club LLC  
**APPLICANT:** 66 State Rd  
Westport MA 02790

**OVERVIEW:** The applicant is seeking to demolish a portion of the wood-framed structure known as the Beckman Building.

**EXISTING CONDITIONS** The Beckman Buildings consist of a stone building (21-35 Commercial Street) and a frame building (13-19 Commercial Street) that were constructed in three phases between 1843 and 1851.

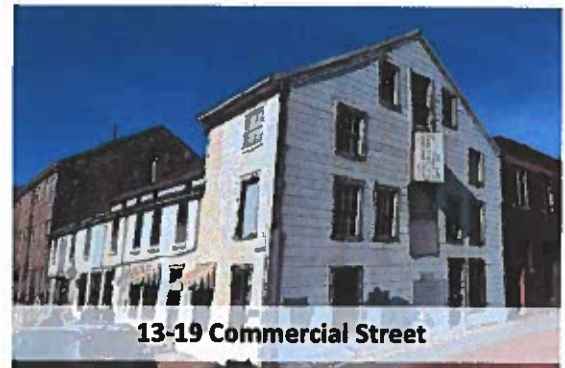
The stone building was constructed during the first two phases in 1843 and 1845. The frame building (11-19 Commercial Street) was constructed in the third and final phase c. 1851. It is comprised of an earlier, c. 1790 2-1/2-story timber-framed building that was moved to the site and enveloped with a 2-story wood-framed addition to the south and a taller 3-1/2-story wood-framed addition to the east c. 1851. The frame building directly abuts the stone building, but they are not connected on the interior.

**BACKGROUND:** The Historical Commission conducted a site visit to the subject property in April 2018 to review the conditions of the buildings prior to a development plan being in place. In December 2019, at a joint meeting of the Historical Commission and Planning Board, the development for a mix of commercial and residential use was approved for the wood frame and stone building along with the adjacent National Club Building. At that time the plan was to rehabilitate all the buildings, with the understanding that most of the c. 1790 "interior" building would require major reconstruction.

The development team is utilizing Federal and State Historic Tax Credits and has been approved for over \$1.7M in rehabilitative tax credits for this project. *Please see the Part 2 of the Massachusetts Historic Tax Credit Application* which describes in detail the project rehabilitation.

**PROPOSAL:** The building interiors have been cleared, allowing a better understanding of the existing structural and material conditions. The amount of reconstruction required to address wood frame deterioration warrants the request to demolish those portions of the frame building too far deteriorated to adequately repair. The partial demolition is limited to the 2-1/2 story "interior timber-framed" structure and the southern 2 story shed addition. The 3-1/2 story gable roof structure facing Route 18 would remain and would be protected. *Please see the attached Structural Review.*

The applicant intends to amend the Federal and State Historic Tax Credit Application to reflect the proposed demolition.



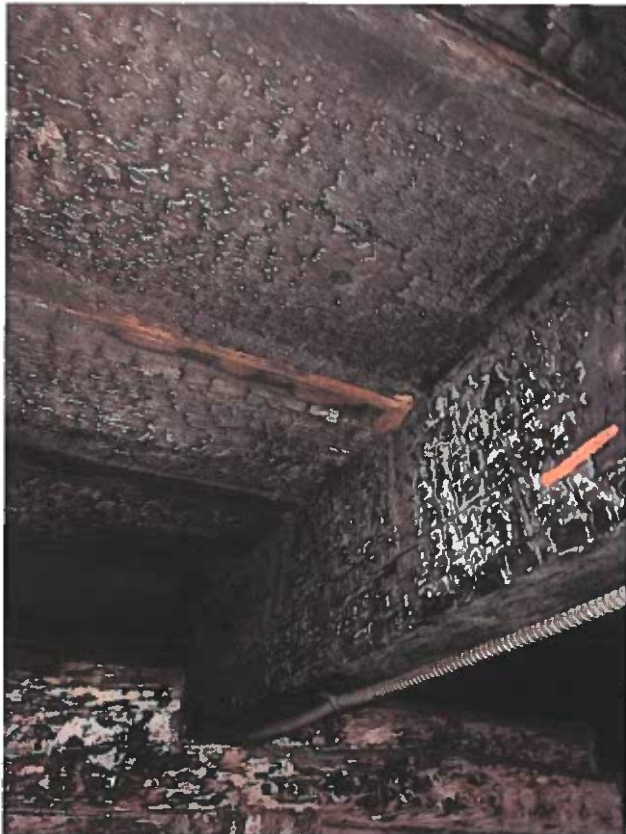
13-19 Commercial Street



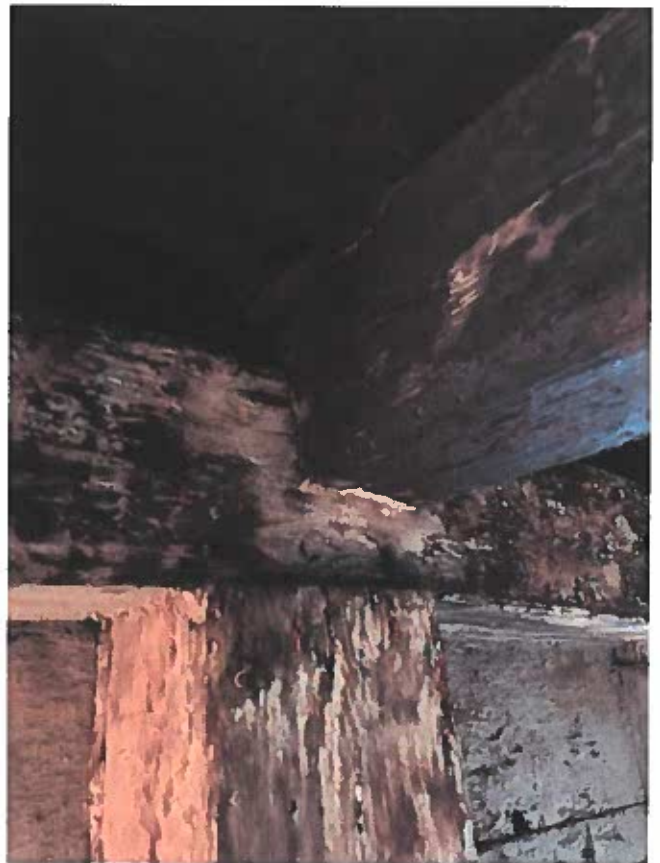
DEMOLITION SCOPE LIMITS

The development plan includes the rehabilitation of the existing doors and windows of all of the buildings, including the building portions to be demolished. The restored windows and doors would be reinstalled within the new framing and the applicant intends to utilize the same exterior finish materials as previously proposed. ***Please see the attached Window and Door Schedule.***

#### INTERIOR and EXTERIOR CONDITIONS IMAGES















**STATEMENT OF APPLICABLE GUIDELINES:** Due to the location of the building within the Local Historic District, demolition requests of this type fall under **MGL Chapter 40C: Section 6. Certificates of Appropriateness, Non-Applicability or Hardship; necessity; applications and plans, etc.; building and demolition permits restricted.**

*Except as the ordinance or by-law may otherwise provide in accordance with section eight or said section eight or nine, no building or structure within an historic district shall be constructed or altered in any way that affects exterior architectural features unless the commission shall first have issued a certificate of appropriateness, a certificate of non-applicability or a certificate of hardship with respect to such construction or alteration.*

*Any person who desires to obtain a certificate from the commission shall file with the commission an application for a certificate of appropriateness, a certificate of non-applicability or a certificate of hardship, as the case may be, in such form as the commission may reasonably determine, together with such plans, elevations, specifications, material and other information, including in the case of demolition or removal a statement of the proposed condition and appearance of the property thereafter, as may be reasonably deemed necessary by the commission to enable it to make a determination on the application.*

*No building permit for construction of a building or structure or for alteration of an exterior architectural feature within an historic district and no demolition permit for demolition or removal of a building or structure within an historic district shall be issued by a city or town or any department thereof until the certificate required by this section has been issued by the commission.*

Although this is a Certificate of Appropriateness, the City's Demolition Delay Ordinance requires that a recommendation be sent to the City Council.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Commission find the two structures referred to as the c. 1790 "interior timber-framed" and 1851 "shed addition" buildings at 13-19 Commercial Street to be historically significant but not preferably preserved, and that a Certificate of Appropriateness be issued for the demolition. This Certificate should be conditioned that the demolition does not adversely affect the 3-1/2 story gable roof structure facing Route 18, and that the reconstruction follows the Secretary of the Interior Guidelines for Reconstruction and meet any requirements relative to the Federal and State Historic Tax Credit amendment review.