



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: May 5, 2022

RE: BUILDING DEMOLITION REVIEW
24 N Front Street (Map 79 Lots 2 & 4) Buildings 4, 12, 19, western part of 2.

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 structures located at the above-captioned site in order to determine their historical significance and whether it is in the public interest to preserve such structures.

The NBHC reviewed the application for demolition at its May 2, 2022, meeting, and hereby forwards its findings and recommendation in this matter to the New Bedford City Council:

- A historic resources survey, funded through a grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission found the property at 24 N Front Street, known as the former Revere Copper site, to be eligible as a National Register District.
- The property is significant as the largest copper manufacturing facility in New Bedford during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and as a relatively unaltered example of a large-scale, mid-nineteenth- to mid-twentieth-century manufacturing complex.
- The property is significant because of its association with the Paul Revere Copper Company (founded in 1801 in Canton, MA) and Paul Revere's great-grandson Edward H. R. Revere (1867–1957), who became general manager in 1920 and lent his surname to the present company name in 1929.
- The existing buildings are in fair to poor condition and the current configuration of the buildings on the site does not lend itself to the operations of a water-dependent facility.
- This waterfront site has the potential to be a valuable port facility and 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 adjacent Hicks Logan and Wamsutta Mills districts.

In light of these findings, the New Bedford Historical Commission has determined that Buildings 4, 12, 19 and western part of 2, located at 24 N Front Street are Historically Significant but are not Preferably Preserved Historic Buildings.

Cc: Shoreline Marine Terminal LLC, Applicant
Department of Inspectional Services
Mayor's Office

Attachments: NBHC Staff Report & Supporting Materials found on the City's Web Page:
<https://www.newbedford-ma.gov/planning/historical-commission-2022-agenda-information/>



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STAFF REPORT

NEW BEDFORD HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING

May 2, 2022

DEMOLITION REVIEW

24 N Front St (Map 79 Lots 2 & 4)

CASE # 2022.05A: Bldgs: 1, 3, 3A, eastern part of 2.

CASE # 2022.05B: Bldgs: 4, 12, 19, western part of 2.

CASE # 2022.05C: Bldgs: 15, northern part of 14,
eastern part of 10.

OWNER: Shoreline Marine Terminal LLC
APPLICANT: 137 Popes Island
New Bedford, MA 02740



24 N Front Street - Former Revere Copper Site

OVERVIEW: Shoreline Marine Terminal LLC purchased the former Revere Copper manufacturing site in 2019. The former Revere Copper site is a 12.5-acre waterfront property at the northern end of New Bedford Harbor. The Revere Copper facility was a historical copper-rolling mill, and at one time was the largest nonferrous rolling mill in North America, until it closed in 2007. The LLC will use the waterfront site for multi-uses including a commercial shipyard, fish processing and potentially as a shore base to support the Massachusetts offshore wind industry. The site has multitude of buildings constructed by Revere Copper ranging in from 1865 to 1941. The Rodman Ice House was constructed pre- 1830 and was extant prior to the Revere Copper use of the site. The current property owner is rebuilding the failing bulkhead and is seeking to partially demolish and fully demolish certain structures to provide required open land to support the business operations. *See Exhibit A for a map of structures for demolition. NOTE: For the purposes of providing contextual information, the proposed demolition requests are within one (1) Staff Report, but will be voted on as three (3) separate cases.*

EXISTING CONDITIONS: The area encompasses 16 connected and detached industrial buildings and structures constructed from about 1865 through about 1965 for the New Bedford Copper Company (incorporated 1860), which was rebranded as the New Bedford branch of the Revere Copper Company in 1929. The original factory buildings included several wood-frame buildings though all wood-frame construction were replaced by brick during subsequent building campaigns. The oldest portions of the complex are to the west and were built in or before 1865. The site covers two city parcels: the south parcel contains buildings constructed for the Revere Copper Company and its predecessors, while the north parcel contains former Grinnell Manufacturing buildings that were purchased by Revere Copper in the 1930s. Building numbers were assigned by Revere Copper Company. Since the applicant's purchase in 2019, most of the buildings have remained vacant, with operation offices located in Building #10 and Shoreline has since begun redeveloping the property for future ship building and repair operations. Recent development activities include installing a new rail spur along the southern side of the property, demolition and removal of the exterior loading dock, coordination with the electrical utility to install new high voltage conduit to serve the future operations and continued treatment and mitigation of the subsurface contamination present at various locations across the Site.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: Recognizing that development pressures would accompany the increased build out and expansion of the City's waterfront for existing marine related activities and the introduction of the offshore wind industry along with the introduction of inter-city rail adjacent to the port, the Planning Department applied for, and received a grant from MHC to conduct a Waterfront Historic Resources Survey in 2019. This survey updated older Inventory Forms and developed new individual property forms as well as Area Forms. The purpose of the survey was to help to establish better decision-making relative to new construction as well as aid in the protection and rehabilitation of existing structures.

The former Revere Copper Site was part of the Waterfront Historic Resources Survey, and an Area Form was developed for the site. Additionally, a National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form found that the former Revere Copper site had the potential to be a historic district.

The Criteria Statement Form states the following:

The Revere Copper Company is eligible for listing in the National Register at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Industry and Criterion C in the area of Architecture. It is eligible in the area of Industry as the largest and most significant copper manufacturing facility in New Bedford during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and in the area of Architecture as a relatively unaltered example of a large-scale, mid-nineteenth- to mid-twentieth-century manufacturing complex. The complex encompasses 14 extant industrial buildings on the west bank of the Acushnet River, the earliest of which are associated with the New Bedford Copper Company organized by Jirah and William Swift in 1860. The company was one of the first industrial enterprises in New Bedford to engage extensively with metal manufacture. Rapid industrialization brought increased competition for raw material in the copper trade, and in 1900 the New Bedford Copper Company merged with the Paul Revere Copper Company and the Taunton Copper Company to form the Taunton-New Bedford Copper Company. Under the Taunton-New Bedford name, the New Bedford site was almost completely rebuilt between 1900 and 1918 to designs by New Bedford-based architectural designer Charles W. Praray (1873–1919). The facility continued operations through the Great Depression, supplied the U. S. Navy with copper warship sheathing during World War II, and by the 1950s was the largest non-ferrous rolling mill in North America. The complex remained in operation until 2008 and has been vacant since that year.

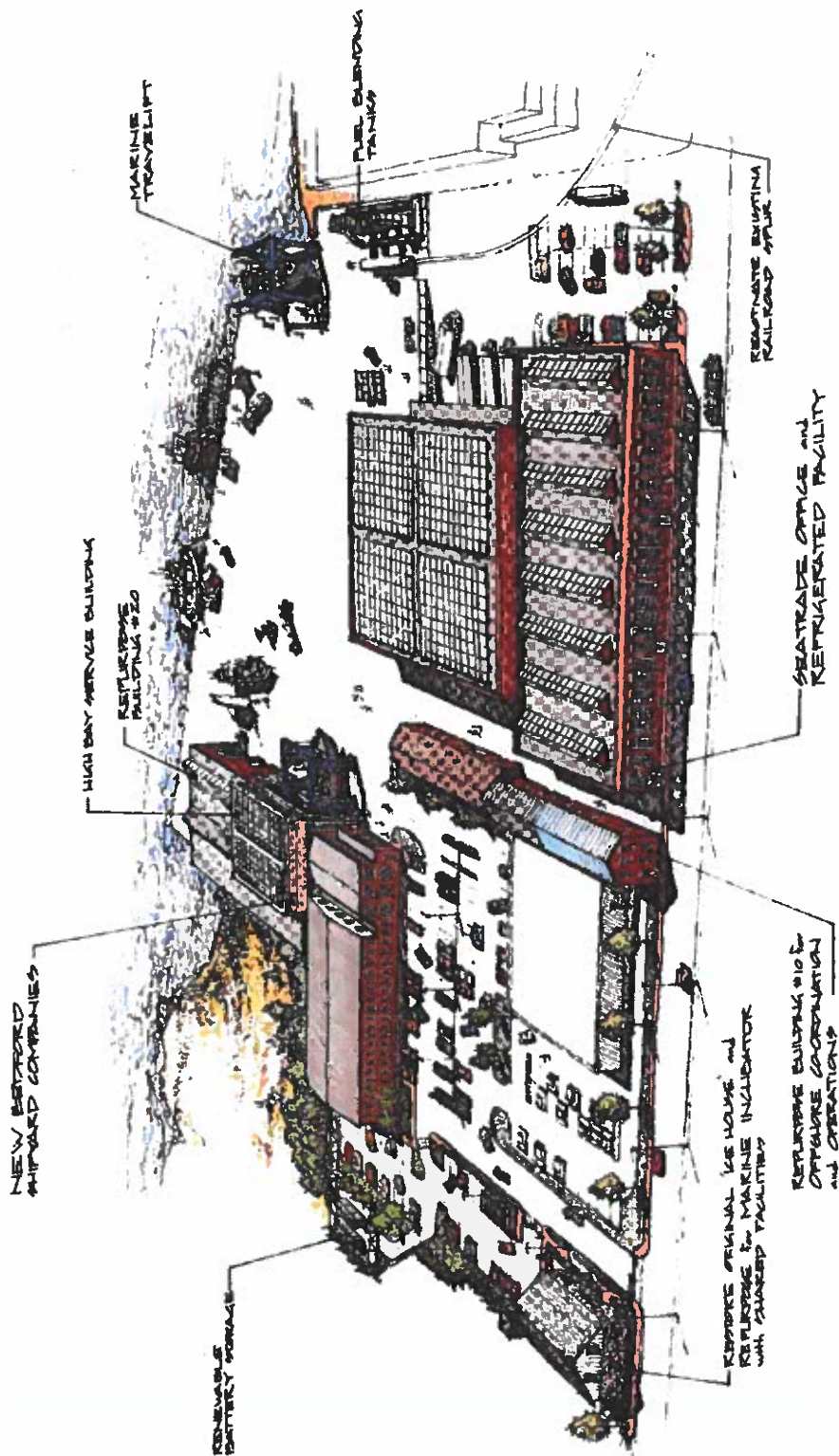


Circa 1865 Front Office (not proposed for demolition)

The complex may also be eligible at the state level because of its association with the Paul Revere Copper Company (founded in 1801 in Canton, MA) and Paul Revere's great-grandson Edward H. R. Revere (1867–1957), who became general manager in 1920 and lent his surname to the present company name in 1929. Further research would be required to confirm this.

PLEASE SEE MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION AREA FORM FOR INDIVIDUAL BUILDING DESCRIPTIONS ON HISTORICAL COMMISSION WEBPAGE.

SITE PROPOSAL CONCEPTUAL RENDERING



PHASE ONE
SHORELINE MARINE TERMINAL
APRIL 18, 2022
NORTH FRONT STREET, NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS
FARE CORPORATION

STATEMENT OF REASON FOR PROPOSED DEMOLITION:

CASE # 2021.12A: Bldgs: 1, 3, 3A, eastern part of 2.

The applicant is requesting a demolition permit from the Building Department for the full demolition of buildings 1, 3, and 3A, and the western section of building 2. The applicant states that they have entered into a lease agreement with a local scallop processor to re-purpose the subject buildings for their scallop processing operations. Scallop/seafood processing is an economic driver in the Port of New Bedford, employing thousands of residents and generating millions of dollars in economic impact throughout the City. This project will create much-needed cold storage space that is integral to supporting the seafood processing industry. This project supports continued economic development and job creation within New Bedford. Shoreline Marine Terminal, LLC and the seafood processing company are investing approximately \$15 million in the redevelopment of this portion of the site. The front of Building 1, facing North Front St will be designed and constructed to retain the historical character of the "Sawtooth" Building.

STATEMENT OF REASON FOR PROPOSED DEMOLITION:

CASE # 2021.12B: Bldgs: 4, 12, 19, western part of 2.

The applicant is requesting a demolition permit from the Building Department for the full demolition of buildings 4, 12, and 19, as well as demolition of the eastern end of building 2. The area created from demolishing the subject building creates the necessary room for the future marine travel lift, the storage yard for the future New Bedford Shipyard, and storage area for a future offshore wind tenant. The Shipyard will provide maintenance and repair services to commercial vessels in New Bedford Harbor. The Shipyard will fill an important gap in services within the New Bedford Harbor and ensure commercial vessels stay within the City for repairs and fabrication. The Shipyard and offshore wind tenant will also support job creation and economic development directly for the City. Shoreline Marine Terminal, LLC has already invested \$3 million in the development of the former Revere Copper Products site, which has laid vacant since 2007 and is rapidly falling into a state of disrepair. Shoreline is planning to invest an additional \$15 million in continued redevelopment and capital expenditures needed to operate the Shipyard and prepare the site for future tenants.

STATEMENT OF REASON FOR PROPOSED DEMOLITION:

CASE # 2021.12C: Bldgs: 15, northern part of 14, eastern part of 10.

The applicant is requesting a demolition permit from the Building Department to fully demolish building 15, the northern portion of building 14, and the eastern portion of building 10. Shoreline has not confirmed future use for the area created by demolishing the subject buildings. However, Shoreline is in conversations with offshore wind companies, local organizations, and other marine industrial-based businesses to redevelop this portion of the site for those intended uses. Shoreline has reviewed the options to re-purpose the buildings, however, new construction allows the buildings to better suit the needs of the future lessee(s). With limited waterfront real estate available and the planned opening of the Southcoast Rail Station, this site will remain a highly competitive and in demand for redevelopment. Ultimately, the Site will support several uses that will meet the economic development and neighborhood revitalization goals of the City.

PLEASE SEE SITE MAPS AND IMAGES ON THE HISTORICAL COMMISSION WEB PAGE

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 former Revere Copper site was vacant from 2007 until 2019 when the applicant purchased the property for a relatively nominal sum. This waterfront site has the potential to be a valuable port facility and 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 adjacent Hicks Logan and Wamsutta Mills districts.

The City encourages the adaptive re-use of historic mill buildings, however the current configuration of the buildings on the site does not lend itself to the operations of a water-dependent facility or to the modern methods of fish processing. Consideration should be provided for the selective demolition of buildings within the site to allow for its productive use.

EXHIBIT A FORMER REVERE COPPER SITE

