



## 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.**

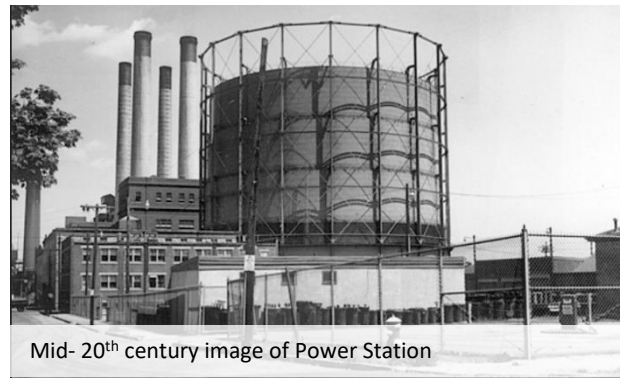
**EXISTING CONDITIONS:** The Cannon Street Power Station parcel is part of the *New Bedford Gas and Edison Light Complex* National Register District which was established in 2002. **See Exhibit B.** The NR District has two contributing buildings, the Cannon Street Power Station and the Taber & Grinnell 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.



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 20<sup>th</sup> 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.

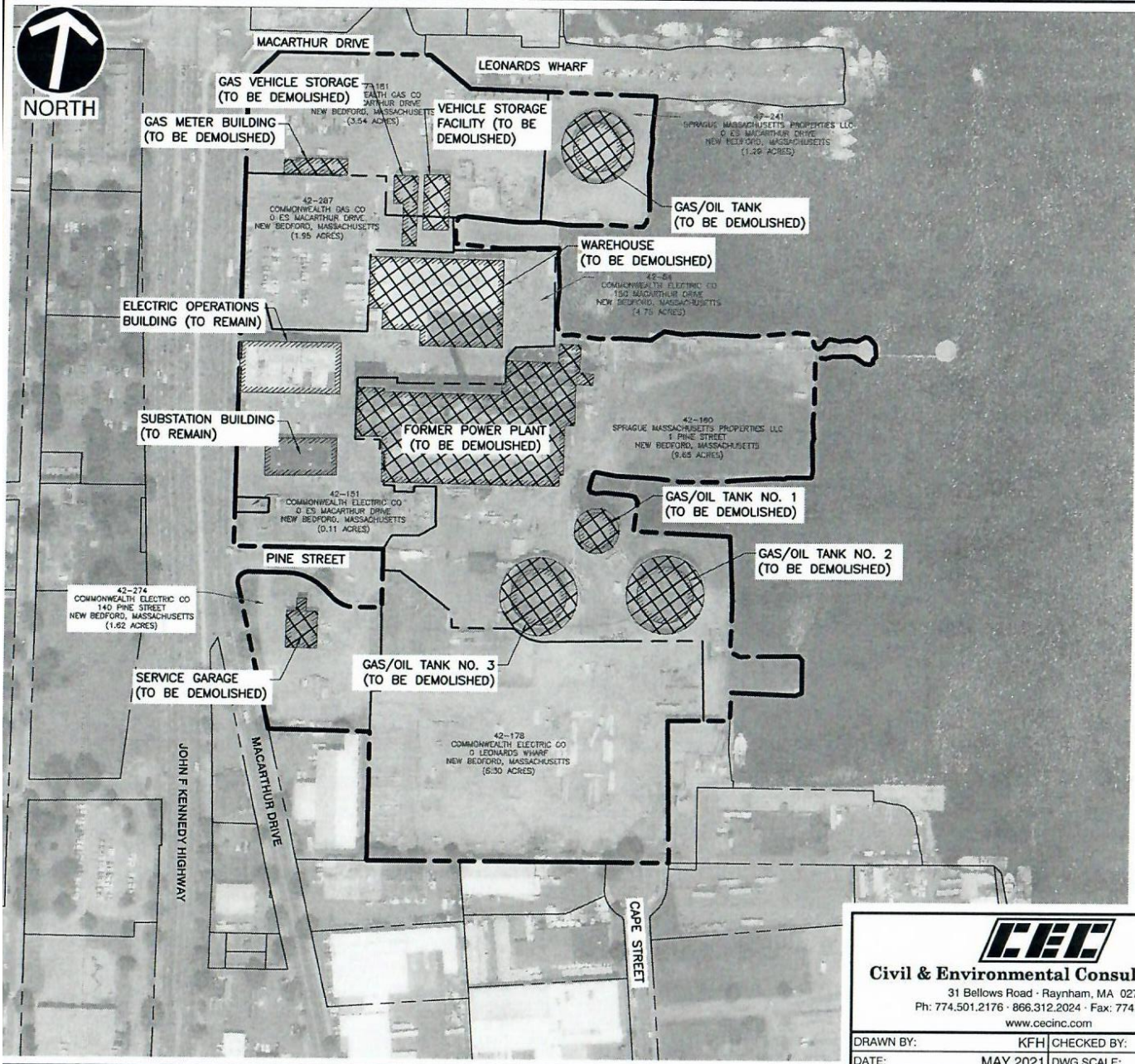
The current proposal takes advantage of the site’s waterfront location and will capitalize on the emerging offshore wind energy industry by providing the City’s second staging area and additional seafood offloading opportunities. These are water dependent industrial uses which require a waterfront location 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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
- EXISTING BUILDING
- 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 PLANS 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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<b>SITE DEMOLITION PLAN</b>			
DRAWN BY:	KFH	CHECKED BY:	DRAFT
DATE:	MAY 2021	DWG SCALE:	1"=200'
APPROVED BY:	DRAFT	FIGURE NO.:	1
PROJECT NO:	312-561		

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

