

6.0 HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

6.1 Historic Resources

6.1.1 Historic Resources on the Project Site

The Project Site generally consists of large, vacant surface parking lots, devoid of any buildings or structures. The only building currently located on the Project Site is the Chapel of Our Lady of Good Voyage at 65 Northern Avenue, located on Block D. While included in the Massachusetts Historical Commission's (MHC) Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth, the Chapel is not listed in either the State or National Registers of Historic Places.

Chapel of Our Lady of Good Voyage, 65 Northern Avenue

Block D contains the Chapel of Our Lady of Good Voyage, located at 65 Northern Avenue. Designed by Boston architect John A. McPherson, the Chapel of Our Lady of Good Voyage was constructed in 1952 on land donated by Frederick G. Dumaine, Jr., President of the New Haven Railroad. The one-story, flat roofed, brick building has little ornamentation. What ornamentation exists is largely limited to the façade and includes three wood entry doors set within a cast stone entablature surrounded with Modern-style pilasters between the doors. Centered above the three entrance doors is a eight-pointed star stained glass window set within a cast stone surround. Flanking the star window are two square cast stone decorative panels. Window openings consist of brick lintels and cast stone sills. The existing wood frame stained glass windows, which depict spiritual symbols connected to the sea, were added sometime after the construction of the building; originally the building featured clear glass windows. The two narrow windows flanking the front entrance doors retain their original clear glass.

The Chapel of Our Lady of Good Voyage was established by the Boston Archdiocese for use of seamen and waterfront workers, including workers at the Commonwealth Pier and area warehouses. Also known as the "Fish Pier Chapel" or the "Waterfront Chapel," the Chapel of Our Lady of Good Voyage was one of several "workers' chapels" established by Cardinal Cushing during his tenure as Archbishop. As a mission Chapel of Saint Vincent de Paul in South Boston, the seaport ministry serves the crews of the approximately 1,000 merchant ships that dock each year in Boston.

The Chapel of Our Lady of Good Voyage is included in the MHC's Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth. The Chapel was documented as part of a 2003 effort to survey properties owned by the Boston Archdiocese. The building is not listed on the State or National Registers of Historic Places and is not within the boundaries of the Fort Point Channel National Register or landmark districts.

6.1.2 *Historic Resources within the Vicinity*

There are several properties listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places located within the Project vicinity. Most notable is the Fort Point Channel Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places; the generally co-extensive Fort Point Channel Landmark District; and the State and National Register listed Northern Avenue Bridge, spanning the Fort Point Channel. These historic resources and others are discussed and identified below.

Fort Point Channel National Register Historic District

Located south of the Project Site, and east of the Fort Point Channel, the Fort Point Channel Historic District was listed in the National Register in 2004. The district is largely comprised of land created by the Boston Wharf Company during an ongoing campaign of land filling which began in 1836 and continued until 1882. The Boston Wharf Company was also responsible for the design and construction of nearly all of the approximately 108 buildings within the district. These buildings were constructed for use as general manufacturing, warehouse, and commercial space, and as shipping and receiving uses for Boston's wool trade. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Boston developed into the principal marketplace in the United States for wool for apparel and fabrics.

The district is characterized by well-preserved late nineteenth and early twentieth century masonry buildings with an average height from five to six stories, and represent a variety of architectural styles including Romanesque Revival, Renaissance Revival, Classical Revival, Queen Anne, Italianate, and Industrial styles. During the period of 1893 to 1917, the Boston Wharf Company employed Morton D. Stafford as staff architect responsible for the designs of the majority of the Boston Wharf Company buildings. Howard Prescott succeeded Stafford as staff architect for the Boston Wharf Company from 1917 to 1939.

Fort Point Channel Landmark District

With similar but slightly different boundaries than the National Register district, the Fort Point Channel Landmark District was adopted as a City of Boston landmark district in December 2008. The Fort Point Channel Landmark District Commission is charged with reviewing proposed exterior alterations to properties within the landmark district to ensure consistency with the design guidelines established as part of the landmark designation process.

As part of the landmark designation, two "Protection Areas" were also adopted: the Seaport Boulevard/Boston Wharf Road Protection Area, and the A Street Protection Area. Blocks H, J, K and Q of the Project Site are located within the Seaport Boulevard/Boston Wharf Road Protection Area. The goals of the Seaport Boulevard/Boston Wharf Road Protection Area is to protect view corridors into and out of the adjacent landmark district and to ensure that

the massing, land coverage, and height of new construction on adjacent lots is compatible with that of the landmark district.

Northern Avenue Bridge

One of the more notable historic resources within the Project’s vicinity is the Northern Avenue Bridge. Spanning the Fort Point Channel, the Northern Avenue Bridge was constructed in 1908 and is one of only three surviving swing bridges built by the City of Boston in the late 19th and early 20th century. The bridge is 80 feet in width and features four sets of pin connected trusses. The bridge carries two sidewalks, two roadways and a center lane originally reserved for a double-track freight railroad. The bridge’s swing span is 283 feet in length. The rim bearing swing span is carried by a 40 foot diameter drum, in turn supported by 56 steel wheels running on a track along the rim of the granite island pier. In 1976, the National Park Service determined the Northern Avenue Bridge eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. In 2004, the bridge was listed on the National Register as a contributing resource within the Fort Point Channel Historic District.

Other Historic Resources within the Project Vicinity

State and National Register-listed properties, and properties included in MHC’s Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth, within a quarter-mile radius of the Project Site, are listed in Table 6-1 and their locations depicted on Figure 6-1.

Table 6-1 Historic Resources

| Map No. | Name | Address | Designation |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Fort Point Channel Historic District | Bounded by Fort Point channel seawalls, Northern Ave. bridge, Seaport Blvd, Stillings, Midway and A Sts and Necco Ct | State and National Register-listed |
| 2 | Northern Avenue Bridge | Northern Avenue over the Fort Point Channel | State and National Register-listed |
| 3 | Congress Street Fire Station | 344 Congress Street | State and National Register-listed |
| 4 | Russia Wharf | Russia Wharf, Atlantic Avenue | State and National Register-listed |
| 5 | Commonwealth Pier Five | 165 Northern Avenue | State and National Register-listed |
| 6 | South Boston Fish Pier | Northern Avenue | MHC Inventory |
| 7 | Chapel of Our Lady of Good Voyage | 65 Northern Avenue | MHC Inventory |
| 8 | Stone and Webster Building | 245 Summer Street | MHC Inventory |

Table 6-1 Historic Resources (Continued)

| Map No. | Name | Address | Designation |
|----------------|---|--|--|
| 9 | C Street Area | - | MHC Inventory |
| 10 | Federal Reserve Bank of Boston | 556-624 Atlantic Avenue | MHC Inventory |
| P1 | Fort Point Channel Landmark District | Bounded by Fort Point Channel seawalls, Seaport Blvd, Stillings, Midway and A Sts and Necco Ct | State Register listed, Boston Landmark |
| P2 | Seaport Boulevard/Boston Wharf Road Protection Area | Seaport Boulevard/Boston Wharf Road | Landmark Protection Area |
| P3 | A Street Protection Area | A Street, Wormwood, Melcher Street and West Service Road | Landmark Protection Area |

6.2 Archaeological Resources

The proposed Project is located on filled land which has been previously disturbed by the construction of warehouses and parking lots. No previously identified archaeological resources are located within the Project Site or immediate vicinity. No impacts to archaeological resources are anticipated.

6.3 Impacts to Historic Resources

The Project will include the demolition of the 1952 Chapel of Our Lady of Good Voyage, 65 Northern Avenue, a property included in the MHC Inventory. While currently not listed in the State or National Registers, MHC staff has determined the building eligible for inclusion in the National Register. The Proponent has initiated consultations with MHC and BLC in an effort to identify appropriate means to mitigate the proposed demolition of the 1952 Chapel.

6.3.1 Design and Visual Impacts

The proposed Project consists of constructing new retail, commercial, residential and institutional buildings on large, surface parking lots. Similar to the variety of buildings found in the nearby Fort Point Channel District, the Project's proposed new construction will vary in scale, materials, use, and character across the Project Site. In addition to modern building materials such as aluminum curtainwalls and insulated glass which will take advantage of the views of downtown Boston and the harbor, the Project will also utilize a wide range of traditional masonry building materials consistent with those found throughout the Fort Point Channel District, including stone, glass, brick, precast concrete, and terra cotta.

The sensitive design of the new construction will complement the adjacent historic district. The scale of the new construction will further assist in providing a transition between the landmark district, which predominately consists of five and six story buildings as well as some immediately adjacent taller buildings, and the larger new construction proposed for the Blocks on the north side of Seaport Boulevard and on the east side of Boston Wharf Road.

Blocks H, J, K and Q of the Project Site are located within the Seaport Boulevard/Boston Wharf Road Protection Area. The goals of the Protection Area are to protect view corridors into and out of the landmark district and to provide an appropriate transition of building scale and materials between the district and surrounding parcels. A design review process with the BLC, and the newly appointed Fort Point Channel Landmark District Commission, will ensure that the massing, land coverage, and height of new construction on adjacent lots will be compatible with that of the landmark district.

6.3.2 *Shadow Impacts*

Shadow impacts on historic resources resulting from new construction will be limited due to the height of existing buildings, the density of the neighborhood and the location of many of the Project's development Blocks north of the Fort Point Channel District. As discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4, shadow studies were conducted to investigate impacts from the Project.

As illustrated in the shadow study diagrams in Chapter 4, development Blocks north of the Fort Point Channel District, including Blocks A, B, C, D, F, G, H, J, K, L1, L2 and M1, will cast shadows on areas outside of the district, and therefore, will have no adverse impacts to the district.

Given their locations east of the district, developments proposed for Blocks Q, L3, L4, L5, L6, M2, N and P have the potential to cast shadows on the district at isolated time periods. However, due to the density of the district, many of the shadow impacts will be limited to the roofs of buildings, and not their elevations. In cases where the shadows extend beyond roofs to the building elevations, many of the shadows will be cast on secondary elevations and not the primary building façades.

As noted above, Blocks H, J, K and Q of the Project Site are located within the Seaport Boulevard/Boston Wharf Road Protection Area. The Seaport Boulevard/Boston Wharf Road Protection Area's design review process will further ensure that the landmark district is not unduly impacted by shadows cast by the Project's new construction.

Despite its location northwest of the Project Site, the Northern Avenue Bridge will only minimally impacted by shadows. During 21 of the 25 time periods studied, no new shadow will be cast onto the bridge. Shadow impacts from the Project beyond the as-of-right alternative will be minimal.

6.4 Status of Project Reviews with Historical Agencies

The Proponent has met with members of the Boston Redevelopment Authority design staff, as well as staff of the BLC to review, to discuss and seek input on the Project's evolving design. The Proponent will file for an Article 85 application for the Chapel as part of the Phase 1 portion of the Project.

When building designs for Blocks H, J, K and Q have developed sufficiently, the Proponent will file the necessary design review applications with the Fort Point Channel Landmark District Commission, given their locations within the Seaport Boulevard/Boston Wharf Road Protection Area.

The Proponent has had extensive discussions with both the BRA and the Archdiocese about the relocation and building of a new Our Lady of Good Voyage Chapel on Block H. The Proponent has requested a meeting with the MHC in an effort to identify appropriate means to mitigate the proposed demolition of the Chapel of Our Lady of Good Voyage. The Proponent is committed to working with MHC and BLC staff, and other interested parties, as the Project design advances.