



City of New Bedford

Department of Planning, Housing & Community Development

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STAFF REPORT

NEW BEDFORD HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING December 4, 2017

Determination of Historic Significance for Historic Resources Funded through CPA

Historic Resource Information	
PROPERTY NAME:	West Beach Bathhouse (North)
PROPERTY LOCATION:	West Rodney French Boulevard
PROPERTY AGE:	Constructed 1916 / altered 1935
PROPERTY TYPE:	Public Building

The West Beach Bathhouse is one of two bathhouses located at West Beach and is located adjacent to the Hazelwood Park National Register District. Originally built in 1916 as the Children’s Public Bathhouse, and most likely attributed to local architect Louis E. Destremps, it was situated just north of the Adult Public Bathhouse. The Adult Public Bathhouse is a contributing resource to the Hazelwood Park NRD however the Children’s Bathhouse, for reasons unknown, was not included within the boundaries.



The one story narrow, linear, stucco concrete block Children’s Bathhouse has a gable roof, and along with the Adult Bathhouse may have been rebuilt in 1935 during the WPA era as a replacement to the original 1916 structure. Located directly across from Hazelwood Park, the bathhouses and beach pavilions were developed during the same time period in which the park’s recreational amenities, such as tennis courts, handball courts, and a bowling green, were built.

The creation of recreational resources was in response to the city’s population growth of immigrant labor. Hazelwood Park and the municipal beach provided open space for the increasingly congested South End, which was home to seven sprawling mill complexes and double- and triple-deckers closely spaced in dense neighborhoods.

The development of the bathhouse reflects New Bedford’s participation in the City Beautiful movement at the turn of the 20th century as the creation of open space and recreational facilities was perceived as a solution to the potential and actual social turmoil triggered by the working and living conditions of a growing, and largely immigrant, population crowded around the city’s South End mills. The 1935 modernization of the bathhouse reflects the use of New Deal funding programs during the Great Depression which hit New Bedford’s textile industry particularly hard.

The building has a demonstrated association with the cultural, economic, political and social history related to the city’s textile industry, immigrant population and community planning and development practices of the early 20th century. The bathhouse retains integrity and Staff recommends that the NBHC find the West Beach Bathhouse to be a Significant Historic Resource.

CPA HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

Historic Resource Information	
PROPERTY NAME:	West Beach Bathhouse (North)
PROPERTY LOCATION:	West Rodney French Boulevard
PROPERTY AGE:	Constructed in 1916 / altered 1935
PROPERTY TYPE:	Public Building

YES	NO	Buildings and Structures
Cultural or Historic Association:		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource is associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic, industrial, political or social history of the City of New Bedford.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Resource is associated with one or more important persons or events.
Architectural/Design Quality:		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Resource possesses distinctive design or physical characteristics in terms of period, style, or method of building construction.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource is associated with a famous architect or builder.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Resource possesses high artistic values.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource has architectural significance, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures.
Integrity:		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource retains integrity.

YES	NO	Vessels, Real Property, Documents, and Artifacts
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource is a complete set of materials or records.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource illustrates the site of an important historic event.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource identifies a person or group of persons who have impacted the community.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource exemplifies the cultural, economic, industrial, social, or political heritage of the City.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource represents the work of a master craftsman, artist, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource possesses high artistic values.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource can be used to inform an area of scholarship.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource retains integrity.

YES	NO	NBHC Determination of Significance
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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