



## 4. Methodology

### BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Local and state repositories containing materials pertinent to the project were searched to identify existing documentary resources. A survey of New Bedford Mills completed in 1977 by the New Bedford Office of Historic Preservation served as a primary source of information for the survey update. Copies of historic maps were collected and reviewed to provide information about development patterns and aid in locating and identifying buildings for survey. Other sources of preliminary information included Sanborn Fire Insurance Atlases, Assessor's field cards and tax records.

### RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY

Geographical Information Systems (GIS) mapping showing property location was utilized along with aerial maps. These items were used in the identification of industrial resources in the field.

During this phase, a database was created to input both field and research data. Information entered into this database was used to prepare the final survey documentation.

### FIELD WORK

A field survey was conducted from October 2007 through January 2008. The baseline level of information gathered during the survey included locating each property on a base map (current city plat maps), recording an address and estimated or exact date of construction, and black and white photographs.

Additional data collected on each property included property ownership, estimates of gross and rentable space, site and structure conditions, occupancy, current use, and identification as to whether specific sites are located within other existing local and National Register historic districts, planning and reinvestment districts, greenways projects, etc.

### RESEARCH

This research includes site-specific research into the history of individual properties. The research focused on obtaining relevant information to establish the historic significance of selected properties. Among the sources consulted for historical information were published local sources, historical maps, and historic inventory forms.

Environmental Assessment was obtained from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (Mass DEP). Information gathered from the Mass DEP online database provided information on releases, clean up activity as well as Activity and Use Limitations. The information from the fieldwork and research was incorporated into the survey data sheet prepared for each property.

## CRITERIA

To evaluate the development potential of each property, a set criteria was prepared and three categories were given consideration. The three categories examined the Economic Development Potential of each property, the existing Site and Structure Conditions, as well as Historic Significance. Each of these categories has a set of ranked criteria utilized to determine value. The criteria is as follows:

### Economic Development Potential

- Potential for Redevelopment to determine the extent at which the property is currently being utilized and its potential for reuse based on its proximity to other development, and its location in relation to current planning districts, such as the Hicks-Logan-Sawyer District and the Upper Harbor Redevelopment District.
- Transportation/Access/Intermodal examined proximity to highways, main arterial thoroughfares, potential passenger and freight train locations, as well as pedestrian access.
- Neighborhood Job Development considered the impact of redevelopment regarding job creation for New Bedford residents.
- Site Visibility/Location appraised the value of location, visibility of the property, and views from the property.

### Site and Structure Condition

- Environmental Conditions were researched to establish whether environmental assessments had been conducted and if there were use or activity limitations on properties.
- Physical Condition. Assessed for exterior only. Masonry and mortar, roof and window conditions were assessed.
- Special Exterior Features were taken into consideration such as the existence of loading

docks, significant or detailed architecture, and windows with special views.

- Special Interior Features were taken into consideration such as the existence of elevators, sprinkler systems, upgraded mechanical systems, technology access, and available finished leasable space.
- Special Site Features considered location, viewsheds, and parking availability.
- Existing Public Safety Issues appraised vacancy, blight, and security.

### Historic Significance

- Based on whether the property was located within or adjacent to a Historic District, whether it had architectural significance or had an important historical association.

## SCORING

A matrix table was used as an evaluation tool to rate and compare the multiple criteria. The three categories were assigned weighting factors based on the importance of each category and their relationship to each other.

- Economic Development Potential was assigned a weight factor of 5.
- Site and Structure Condition was assigned a weight factor of 3.
- Historical Significance was assigned a weight factor of 2.

The criteria used to evaluate the three categories were assigned a ranking of 1-5.

- 1 qualified as a Highly Disadvantageous Ranking
- 2 qualified as a Disadvantageous Ranking
- 3 qualified as a Neutral Ranking
- 4 qualified as an Advantageous Ranking
- 5 qualified as a Highly Advantageous Ranking

Within the matrix the individual property's total value could range from the lowest score of 40 to the highest score of 200.

The three category sub scores were extrapolated to demonstrate the distinct values that exist for Economic Development Potential, Site and Structure Conditions, and Historic Significance.

## FINAL WORK PRODUCTS

**The final phase of the survey process involved preparing the final forms for each resource and producing the survey report. Included within the report are the following:**

- data sheets with a color photograph of each property;
- a set of current city plat maps with each property identified;
- a summary list of inventoried resources;
- evaluation reports.

This report also includes information provided by the New Bedford Economic Development Council on the various incentives available for redevelopment projects. Information contained in this report is intended to be used to guide future planning and development strategies specific to mill structures and sites. The inventory report is intended to assist developers in working with city, state, and federal government offices to develop, evaluate and approve appropriate redevelopment projects.

