



INTRODUCTION

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Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to make an assessment of all existing structures that currently exist on the GP Site (excluding the tissue warehouse and adjacent properties) and determine their suitability and/or value in a redevelopment of the property. With respect to this scope of services, the following assumptions were made:

- Redevelopment of the Georgia Pacific site will likely be a mix of uses, including commercial, retail, residential, and institutional. Therefore, existing structures considered to be only suitable for industrial uses, but offer little reuse potential in a mixed-use masterplan will be slated for removal. Some of these buildings may offer interim value until redevelopment occurs.
- Buildings which are of substantial construction, in good repair, and are of historic significance have been identified as a priority for reuse, subject to further analysis within this report.
- Analysis was limited to that which could be visually inspected. This report includes no information regarding subsurface conditions or underground structures, including in-water piling systems.

Methodology

In order to properly identify the structures that offer the highest potential for reuse, it was first necessary to formulate a building inventory of all 50+ structures on the site. Subsequent analysis would include an assessment of cultural and historic resources, structural review, formulation of renovation costs, and conceptual masterplanning to determine how a historical district might be defined.

Building Inventory

Basic information about each building was recorded and summarized in a quick reference format contained in the following section. A photograph accompanies brief information about the building's size and construction. In the back of the section a key plan is included which divides the buildings in one of four categories:

Reuse Potential – Buildings which have historic value and good potential for redevelopment.

Interim Use Potential – Buildings of significant size which could be easily reused for industrial uses in the interim, before redevelopment occurs.

Minimal Use Potential – Buildings which have little interim use potential, have no historic value or mixed use redevelopment potential.

Ongoing GP Operations – Buildings which are currently being used as part of the Georgia Pacific tissue manufacturing process.

Cultural and Historic Resources

In assessing the historic importance of the buildings and structures on the site, a comparison was made between the existing physical conditions and historical significance of the properties and the criteria for formal listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Further comparisons were made with listed National Register historic buildings in the Pacific Northwest to confirm landmark eligibility.

The written findings and assembled attendant materials in this report are the result of several field documentation visits to the subject property, examination of the company records on site and background research in public archives and records in the Bellingham Public Library, Whatcom County Courthouse, Whatcom Museum of History and Art and the Washington State Archives in Olympia.

Findings in the document are divided into several sections and address a broad field of issues and conditions related to the property as a historic site. These sections include physical, economic and procedural considerations that may affect future ownership and development by the Port of Bellingham.

Because the option exists to either individually list buildings on the National Register of Historic Places or create a comprehensive district that encompasses a larger planning area, a potential historic district boundary is proposed for future planning or discussion. The buildings of greatest historic value and best potential for economic development and reuse are individually documented in the historic resource profile section included in this document.

The boundaries for a national historic district should include the immediately related area around historic buildings and should be tightly drawn. Historic District boundaries are intended to closely define the physical location of grouped historic buildings and their historic context but not include unrelated open space and surroundings

A summary of agency provided information on the economic incentives for rehabilitation of historic buildings is included at the end of the document.

Structural Evaluation

The basis of this evaluation was a general walk-through of the majority of the buildings to observe signs of structural distress, settlement, and deterioration. In many cases, original construction drawings were available for review.

Since the scope of work was limited, a more detailed analysis was conducted on five of the major buildings representing various construction types and structural retrofit scenarios. The five buildings include:

Warehouse No. 3 (3) – A large heavy timber single story structure requiring a new roof, exterior wall cladding, window and door openings, and insulated floor.

Old Granary (7) – This stand alone building has a heavy timber structure with concrete exterior walls. Its location, relatively good condition, and uncluttered interior spaces make it a likely candidate for early re-development.

Barking and Chipping Plant (8) – A significant "brick era" building, this structure will require removal of a significant amount of industrial equipment, construction of interior floors, and introduction of window openings before reuse can be considered.

Board Mill (12) – This large, two story building is probably one of the easiest of the "brick era" buildings to be converted for multi-use. It is well constructed, relatively free of industrial equipment, and requires less modifications for reuse.

Digester Building (13) – Another of the "brick era" buildings, this structure has an unusual proportion, being over 150 feet tall and only 44 feet wide. Removal of the large digester tanks and rebuilding floors will be challenging from a cost perspective.

Renovation Costs

Conceptual renovation costs have been established for the five structures identified for more detailed analysis within the Structural Evaluation scope of work. This cost information is based on very preliminary assumptions and is primarily useful to compare order of magnitude differences between proposed projects. The data was formulated based on visual inspections, the structural evaluations, and identification of the types of proposed uses in conjunction with historical cost information from other recent similar projects.

Historic District Concepts

In the final section of this report, a Historic District Zone Map and two street grid concepts are presented in order to test the viability of redeveloping some or all of the historic structures within an urban context. Important considerations include the creation of an identifiable historical district while accommodating such modern necessities as convenient vehicular circulation routes, pedestrian access, public amenities, and infill development opportunities.