



CITY OF NEW BEDFORD DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING

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STAFF REPORT

NEW BEDFORD HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING

April 6, 2020

CASE # 2019.01: CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

18 Johnny Cake Hill (Map 53 Lot 161)

**OWNER/
APPLICANT:** Old Dartmouth Historical Society/
New Bedford Whaling Museum
18 Johnny Cake Hill
New Bedford, MA 02740



OVERVIEW: Launched in 2018, the New Bedford Whaling Museum project, *Lighting the Way: Historic Women of Southcoast* explores the historical impact of women from the region. In recognition of the centennial of the 19th amendment, the *Lighting the Way* project will be highlighting local women involved in supporting the 19th amendment through a series of banners.

EXISTING CONDITIONS: The complex that houses the New Bedford Whaling Museum encompasses the entire block between Johnny Cake Hill and William, Water, and Union streets. It consists of four independently constructed but interconnected buildings: the c. 1820 Sundial Building; the c. 1822–1825 William H. Allen Building; the 1883 National Bank of Commerce; and the 1915–1916 Jonathan Bourne Building, which connects to the rear (west) elevations of the two older buildings and has multiple contemporary additions.

PROPOSAL: The Whaling Museum's *Lighting the Way* project is seeking to install six temporary, digitally printed vinyl banners to be installed on the exterior walls of two of its buildings and along the wall of Paul Cuffe Park. The banners will depict artist renderings of historic southcoast women who were civically engaged in the endorsement of the 19th amendment, along with text which will include biographies, dates and short quotes. The banners will be installed and displayed from August- December 2020. **Banner Specifications:** Digitally printed vinyl with aluminum frame system. The mounting method(s) have not been specified.

STATEMENT OF APPLICABLE GUIDELINES: *The Bedford Landing District Design Guidelines* state the following relative to this proposal:

TEMPORARY SIGNS: Temporary signs include, but are not limited to: promotional banners, feather flags, open flags, for sale/rent/lease signs, political signs and free-standing a-frame/sandwich boards. All temporary signs shall have a specified time for the duration of use.

PROPOSED BANNER LOCATIONS

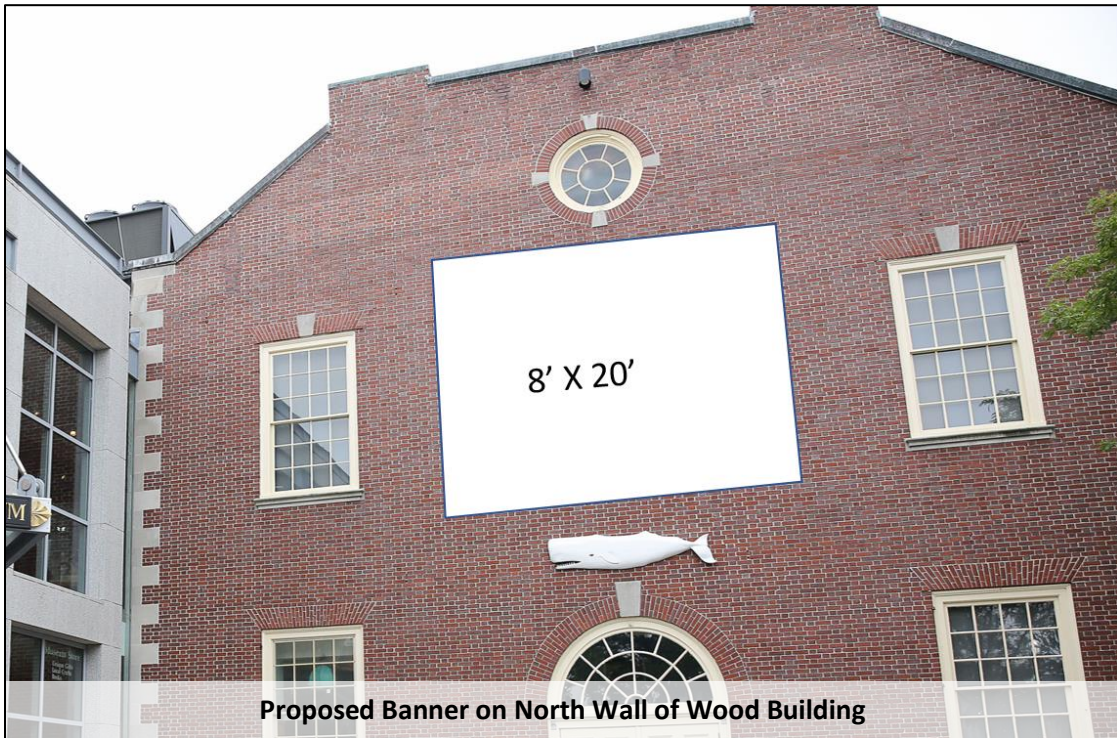
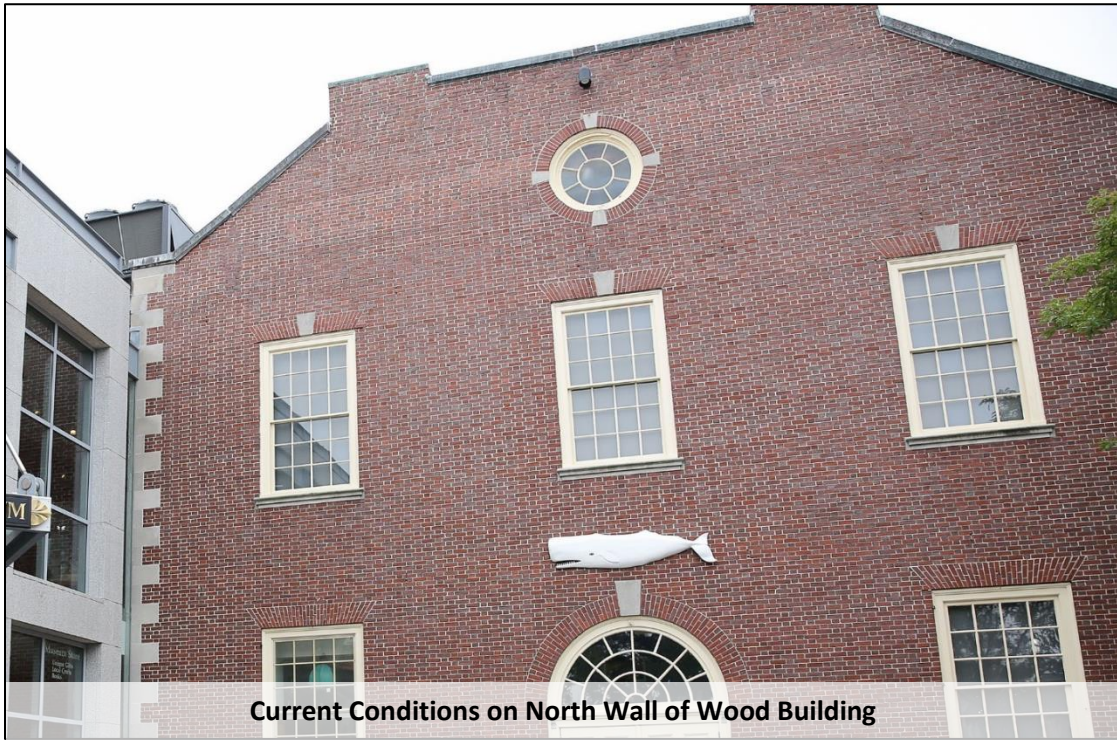
Current Conditions North Side of Union Street- Cuffe Park Wall and Sundial Building



Proposed Banner on west wall of Sundial Building

Proposed Banners within the "windows" of the Cuffe Park wall





STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Temporary special event signage for cultural institutions is a key component for attracting attention and making good impressions for residents and visitors.

The proposed banners will be fabricated by Poyant Signs Company and be displayed for approximately five months. Poyant Signs has installed similar types of banners within the city and the proposed vinyl material will not deteriorate within the proposed timeframe.

Staff does have concerns relative to the general installation of the banners, as there is no specific installation method indicated.

Sundial Building: The proposed 8' X 20' banner will be installed on the stucco wall of the Sundial Building. The banner is to scale with the location and Staff has little concern relative to installation due to the stucco material.

Cuffe Park Wall: The proposal is to fasten the banners to the frame of the "windows". Staff questions why the banners cannot be installed within the frame of the windows, as the planned purpose of the windows was to showcase rotating interior images.

Wood Building: The proposed 8' X 20' banner will be installed covering a second floor window. Staff is concerned that during the display time period, wind and water could potentially damage the wood-framed window located underneath the vinyl banner.

Staff recommends the approval of the temporary signage and the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness with the following conditions:

- An alternative location be found for the proposed banner on the north wall of the Wood Building. Staff suggests the applicant and Commission consider the west wall of the Cook Theatre as an alternative location.



- Prior to installation, the sign manufacturer representative meet with Staff to determine fastening methods and to ensure that the installation does not create damage or loss of historic fabric.