

2015 Most Endangered Property List

The Preservation Society of Fall River

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The Preservation Society of Fall River announces its “Most Endangered Historic Properties List”: the former Bedford Street Police Station, Central Street Fire House, the Armory, and the King Philip Mill Complex.

In a city where there are over 2,000 documented historic properties, and dozens of iconic sites, it is easy to identify blighted and failing historic properties. Since historic preservation is still largely a fledgling notion in Fall River, we believe that the burden to lead by example is mainly that of the municipality. For that reason, all of our most endangered properties are municipally owned.

Leading the pack is the former **Bedford Street Police Station**. It is located at 158 Bedford Street, and was built in a neo-classical design of yellow brick in 1915. Its location is familiarly recognized as a cornerstone to our downtown and Lower Highlands Historic District. The property has been vacant since the new station was built over 10 years ago. The building was initially sold to a developer, but after years of laying fallow, the city re-took ownership for non-payment of taxes. Over the past year, the Preservation Society has taken an active interest in identifying potential developers who would incorporate commercial development with restoration.

The **Bank Street Armory** is a granite-built icon resembling a medieval fortress located at 72 Bank Street, built c.1895 in a Romanesque Revival style. The Armory anchors the western border of the Downtown Historic District. For several years the Armory has been home to the non-profit “Re-Creation”, but with Re-Creation’s plans to leave, years of neglect, and recent structural concerns, this 19th century icon needs a solid future plan for use and maintenance.

The **Central Fire Station** located at 165 Bedford Street, built c.1920 of that era’s classic yellow brick, is one of the city’s oldest Fire Stations still in use. Lack of repairs and upgrades has made the station not only in a deteriorated status, but also lagging behind in technology upgrades that the Fire

Department requires and deserves. In fact, the station is at a turning point, where the city must decide whether to invest in those upgrades, or build new.

The Kilburn St. **King Philip Mills** were built between 1871 and 1892. This 1,000,000 square foot granite complex has been the subject of debate since fire destroyed a portion of it. After the fire, the owners abandoned responsibility, and the city took over ownership. Area residents have rightly complained about safety concerns of the abandoned property mainly due to risk of arson, and have advocated for demolition, but we believe that there is a second option: selling it for development. Several other large mill complexes have recently been developed for re-use with acclaim—Bourne Mills, Acushnet River, Mechanics Mill, and the Curtain Lofts—proving that the capacity for quality redevelopment is not only possible, but also can serve to stimulate neighborhood revivals.