



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

October 4, 2011

Kimberly White
Remedial Project Manager
US Environmental Protection Agency
1 Congress Street, Suite 1100
Boston, MA 02114-2023

Superfund Records Center
SITE: New Bedford
BREAK: 10/1
OTHER: 498986

RE: New Bedford Harbor Superfund Site, 2011 Marine Reconnaissance Archaeological Survey,
New Bedford, MA. MHC #RC.17682.

Dear Ms. White:

Staff of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, the office of the Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Officer, have reviewed the Final Letter Report for documentation of the ship's anchor recovered in 2010 in central dredge area K, prepared by Fathom Research, Inc., received September 29, 2011, for the project referenced above. The MHC is also in receipt of electronic correspondence among EPA, the US Army Corps of Engineers, Fathom Research and the Massachusetts Board of Underwater Archaeological Resources regarding post-review discoveries of additional ship timbers on September 16, 2011, within dredge area K.

MHC notes that the EPA has determined that the ship's anchor is an isolated artifact and therefore is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. However, in MHC's opinion the anchor is a rare example of the Long Shank Admiralty pattern anchor type, and retains rare non-ferrous elements, evidenced by the remaining tarred canvas and puddening on the anchor's ring. The anchor is diagnostic of the late 18th to early 19th century, and exemplifies the maritime industries that created and used it, including sailors, iron workers, riggers, carpenters and ship chandlers in the New Bedford region. The anchor's deposition in an active harbor setting is characteristic of a common pattern of maritime equipment loss and disposal practices that may be used to answer research questions on New Bedford's maritime history, even though it cannot at this time be definitely associated with a particular vessel or event.

Because the anchor is not contaminated, and is capable of being transported and displayed after stabilization through standard conservation treatments, it represents a singular opportunity for local and/or regional maritime education, research and interpretation. Documentation of the anchor completed by Fathom Research could assist in the development of a public display by any interested educational institution or local interested parties. The proposed interim stabilization methodology, including plastic wrapping and resubmergence in anoxic harbor mud, should slow decomposition of the anchor. MHC requests that if the ship's anchor is requested for further conservation and display, that the MHC be notified of its disposition so that the MHC may offer further technical assistance in archaeology and historic preservation.

MHC understands that Fathom Research will document the newly recovered ship timbers. The proposal to maintain the timbers in a wet environment is consistent with standard conservation protocols to



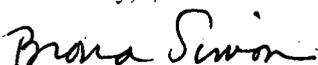
minimize decomposition prior to documentation. Fathom Research also proposes to conduct coring to obtain cross-sectional wood samples for tree-ring dating of both sets of timbers, which MHC understands will be retained until analyses are completed. The results of timber documentation and core sampling should be provided to the MHC as they are completed.

MHC understands that dredging is complete for the 2011 season and that post-dredging survey may be proposed for the 2012 dredging season. The research design and methodology for upcoming pre- and post-dredge survey(s) should be submitted to the MHC for review and comment as it is developed (36 CFR 800.4(a)).

If other historic maritime archaeological discoveries are made during the remediation project, MHC recommends that the EPA, with the assistance of the US Army Corps of Engineers, continue to follow the notification and consultation process pursuant to 36 CFR 800.13. MHC looks forward to continued consultation with EPA and the Corps with other interested and consulting parties to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse effects to significant historic properties during the project.

These comments are provided to assist in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (36 CFR 800). If you have questions or require additional information please contact Jonathan K. Patton at this office.

Sincerely,



Brona Simon
State Historic Preservation Officer
Executive Director
State Archaeologist
Massachusetts Historical Commission

xc: CR Environmental, Inc.
Lois K. Adams, EPA Region 1
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