

## **The Hyannis Armory Building**

### **Building issues**

The 1958 construction poses very real logistical issues for rehabilitation, alteration and change of use into housing, even as a group setting. These same issues would be a challenge to outfit for office space, general meeting space or classroom space.

Heavy reinforced concrete makes plumbing changes very expensive and difficult as floors cannot be easily cut.

The building contains lingering hazardous materials that were widely used when this building was completed in the late 1950s. A large portion of this remediation effort has been completed by the Town to date. However, the heating system is gone, water service is limited, the building doesn't meet ADA accessibility requirements, and the ability to meet modern health and safety standards would be expensive and challenging for any future use.

Energy efficiency in the ongoing operations when it's finished poses a challenge due to constructing details. The large garage doors, lack of insulation, wide open spaces, and single paned windows will require a complete installation of a new HVAC system with modern air exchange systems to meet current building codes.

Taking the building down poses major challenges. From a permitting/Historic standpoint, its age (it approaches 75 years old), challenges associated with its being listed as a Massachusetts historic structure, and its presence in an historic district in the Town poses hurdles to procedure.

logistically, the nature of the construction (it served as a cold war shelter) would require massive and expensive labor and deconstruction due to reinforced concrete, double masonry walls and a tight working site on a very busy road.

The Town has been working in phases since 2018 to rehabilitate the building in such a way that it could be used as a community space, a new hearing room, and accessible offices. This effort may make it possible for the Town to abandon the 200 Main Street parcel and potentially consolidate Town operations to a more central campus on Town Green. The 200 Main street parcel may offer better solutions in a more appropriate location in Town.

The current Armory site itself is very wet on the back 1/3 of the property. It limits what can be done on the 2/3 acre parcel and restricts parking and services to access the basement through the back portion of the building.

### **Historic restrictions**

The building is listed on the Massachusetts Historic register as a cultural resource and contributing building in the Hyannis Main Street waterfront Historic District, and holds a significant place in American history. (Due to the 1960 Acceptance speech for JFK.)

It is not currently on the National Historic Register, however, it is believed by several sources at the State that it would qualify if a robust application was made by the Town.

### **Deed restrictions**

The Town originally purchased this parcel (along with other abutting parcels including the former Hyannis Normal school Property on Town Green) in 1953.

The Town provided some of this land back to the state for the purposes of building an armory in 1955.

The building was built in 1958 at a cost of \$200,000. It has 18,700 square feet including a 3,900 basement

On August 16, 2006, Chapter 265 of the acts of 2006 “an act authorizing the Commissioner of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance to convey certain land to the Town of Barnstable” This act returned the armory building and land to the Town of Barnstable, with restrictions.

***“The premises are conveyed subject to the perpetual restriction that they shall not be used for other municipal purposes.”***

### **Other uses over the years**

As reported by the Cape Cod Times, 1/6/2006, In the 1970’s, during the busy tourist season, the armory was used to temporarily house people left homeless by the cost of summer rentals at the armory and at barracks located at Otis Air force Base. By all accounts this was not a permanent use.

In 1984 the NOAH shelter started a temporary winter shelter at the armory.

In 1998 the citizen committee proposing a Cape Cod Maritime Museum and visitor center suggested the use of the armory for this purpose. They located closer to the harbor partly because of the costs to renovate the space.

2003, the sculpture of a young JFK walking in the dunes by David Lewis is proposed and one of the location for its installation is at the armory. Eventually, the sculpture was located in front of the Old Town Hall building where the JFK museum resides.

In 2009, while the Hyannis Youth and Community Center was being built, Recreation staff worked out of the building and sold beach stickers. This was during the good weather as the heating system and bathrooms did not support the long term office use.

2011 location for multipurpose exhibits associated with the annual Father’s day car show as a short term use.

### **Town efforts and Request for Proposals (RFPs) to find tenants.**

2007 – Possible visual arts center (Proposal withdrawn early in the process)

2008 – Cape Cod symphony and community group submits proposal to take down the building and build a regional performing arts center (Project cancelled with 2008 downturn in economy.)

2011 – early discussion on Town adaptive reuse for hearing room and office space through Department of Public Works.

2012- Extensive report by Design Lab Consulting firm on possibility of arts campus center adaptive reuse.

2013 - proposal for Pirate Museum – required state permission by Legislature to allow a for profit museum – successful permission granted, but proposal was withdrawn in 2014 due to costs and logistics for parking.

2014 – first design plans for adaptive reuse as Town offices. Town council approved budget spent to identify and catalog hazardous materials in the building.

2016 – Request for Proposals issued for possible long term tenancy. Proposal from Sturgis Charter school considered, but eventually negotiations fell through due to costs to upgrade building to health and safety standards for school children.

2017 – updated adaptive reuse plans for Town Offices. Remediation efforts begun on a limited basis.

2018 – Remediation funding through Town's Capital Improvement plan begins. Earmark for 1.6 million from State passed by legislature, but not finalized through governor's office due to state budget woes.

2020 to 2022 -- COVID slowed the efforts for this property. The workforce shift focused on a smaller Municipal footprint with certain town employees possible sharing desks or working remotely even after the pandemic.

2025 – February -- CPC has approved proceeding with full Community Preservation application package for nearly \$3 million to address the failing exterior envelope, including doors, windows, more haz mat remediation, flat roof replacement, damaged brick and other items to make the building water tight.

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