

NRPC Brownfields Assessment Program

In 2019, NRPC was awarded a \$300,000 grant from the EPA to identify, assess and characterize known or potential sites contaminated with hazardous substances or petroleum. These sites, known as Brownfields, sites are typically abandoned, vacant, or under-used industrial or commercial properties. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines a brownfield as a property where the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of petroleum or hazardous substances. It is estimated there are more than 450,000 brownfields in the U.S. and over 100 brownfields in the NRPC region.

The goal of the Brownfields Assessment Program is to cover the costs of environmental assessments on qualifying brownfield sites to help facilitate their clean-up and redevelopment into economically viable uses. Generally, most, sites that have a real or perceived environmental concern are eligible to participate. Public or private property may be eligible. The NRPC Brownfields Advisory Committee works with its Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) Credere Associates, and the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES), and EPA regulatory agencies to confirm eligibility when selecting sites for assessment.

Since 2019, NRPC has funded environmental assessments on five sites in the region. Descriptions of each site are provided below. Several additional sites in the region were assessed during prior funding rounds in 2004, 2007, and 2014. Due to funding limitations, NRPC is no longer accepting applications for new sites, though it is hoped that additional funding will become available in the future.



Ultima-NIMCO

Address: 1 Pine St Ext, Nashua, NH

Building/Site Size: A single 60,000-sq. ft. building on a 3.8-acre site.

Former & Current Uses: Store House and Support Structures for Textile Manufacturing; Machine Shop; Paint Retail Business; Radio Broadcast Station (current).

Site History: The site was historically part of the Nashua Manufacturing Company, a cotton textile manufacturer, which was chartered in 1823. The building is composed of three primary sections: an original eastern portion built as a storehouse in 1902, central machine shop additions built between 1963 and 1966, and a western portion that was originally built as a stand-alone transmission building sometime between 1919 and 1923. Other now-demolished buildings and structures on the site include two separate storehouses and various above-ground and under-ground oil storage tanks. A paint storage/retail business operated out of one of these storehouses between 1955 and 1977.



After the textile mill complex closed in 1948, Ultima Nashua Industrial Corporation (Ultima-NIMCO) converted the building into a machine shop in 1955 and operated it until as late as 2007. The City of Nashua purchased the property in 2000 as part of eminent-domain proceedings associated with the Broad Street Parkway project. The building and site remained vacant except for a radio broadcast company that operates out of the transmission building.

Program Accomplishments: The NRPC Brownsfields Assessment Program funded a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, which assesses potential hazardous contamination on-site/in the building through visual observations, historical use reviews, and regulatory records. A Phase II Environmental Site Assessment is currently underway.

Hazardous Materials Analysis: The assessment suspects there are petroleum, other organic chemical compounds, and chlorinated solvents (CVOCs) contaminants from past industrial uses, alongside asbestos-containing materials (AEM) and lead-containing paint (LCP) – two hazardous building materials commonly found in older buildings.

Redevelopment Proposal: The City intends to issue a request for proposals to find a qualified developer to redevelop the site. The city anticipates mixed-use redevelopment that may include a residential component.

Current Status: The city posted a request for proposals for a high-level master plan for the mill yard area.



Former Telegraph Building

Address: 54 School Street, Milford, NH

Building/Site Size: A single 7,000-sq. ft. building on a 0.52-acre parcel

Former & Current Uses: School; Sewing Factory; Newspaper Office and Printing House; Contractor Shop (current)

Site History: Once known as the “Old Brick School House”, the original part of the building was built in 1853, which served as the town’s school until 1926.

The building housed a sewing factory between 1946 and 1950. Two newspaper companies – the Cabinet Press and the Telegraph, operated out of this building successively between 1951 and 2015. A warehouse addition was built circa 1968 and office space was added in 1980. The Housing Initiatives of New England Corporation (HINEC) currently owns the property. The warehouse portion is leased to Son’s Chimney Services & Stove Shop while the remainder of the building is vacant.

Program Accomplishments: The NRPC Brownfields Assessment Program funded both Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessment. The Phase II assessment investigated the presence and prevalence of hazardous contamination on-site/in the building, including laboratory testing of collected building material and soil samples. The assessment informs the owner and other stakeholders about the site conditions and potential remediation, paving the way toward redevelopment.

Hazardous Materials Analysis: The assessment found asbestos-containing materials (AEM) and lead-containing paint (LCP) – two hazardous building materials commonly found in older buildings.

Redevelopment Proposal: HINEC plans to rehabilitate the building and site for affordable senior housing.

Current Status: A proposed 18-unit affordable senior housing development received site plan approval from the Milford Planning Board in April 2021 and redevelopment activity is pending.



Marjan-Corban

Address: 124 Turkey Hill Road, Merrimack, NH

Building/Site Size: Vacant 11.84-acre site

Former Uses: Homestead/Farm/Hayfield; Automobile Salvage Yard; Sludge Repository for the Municipal Waste Treatment Plant

Site History: The site was a farm before 1959, with a house, garage, and barn. In 1959, Richard Corbin purchased the property and operated an automobile salvage yard until 1985. For an approximately 6-month period in early 1971, the site received sludge from the Town's wastewater treatment plant. The sludge was buried in shallow trenches along the eastern edge of the site.



In 1985, Marjan Associates purchased the site intending to develop it into a residential subdivision. This effort was suspended after a 1987 Environmental Site Investigation revealed environmental concerns about buried municipal sludge and contamination related to auto salvage operations. A series of environmental assessment and groundwater monitoring efforts were made until 2011. All buildings had been razed but scattered automobile parts can be found throughout the site.

Program Accomplishments: The NRPC Brownfields Assessment Program funded both Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessment. The Phase II assessment investigated the presence and prevalence of hazardous contamination on-site, including laboratory testing of test pit soil and monitoring-well water samples. While the assessment recommends further studies on soil and groundwater, it provides critical information and confirmation on the character and extent of the contamination on site.

Hazardous Materials Analysis: The assessment found Perchloroethylene (PCE) concentrations in site groundwater in exceedance of New Hampshire's groundwater standard. PCE was likely used as a metal-degreasing solvent during the automobile salvage operation. Perfluorooctanoic and perfluorooctanesulfonic acids (PFAS/PFOS), industrial surfactant most frequently associated with Teflon, were also detected in groundwater samples but the assessment was inconclusive on the source of these chemicals.

Redevelopment Proposal: Current owner of the property is assessing redevelopment alternatives.



Former Milford Texaco

Address: 168 South Street, Milford, NH

Building/Site Size: A gas station (with a 375-sq. ft. commercial building under an overhead canopy) on a 0.26-acre site

Former Uses: Railroad depot; Foundry; Soapstone store; Furniture manufacturing; Warehouse; Gas station

Site History: Before becoming a gas station, the site had been a railroad depot, a foundry, a soapstone company, two different furniture factories, and a furniture warehouse at different times. The first gas station was built on-site circa 1940 and the gas station began operating as the Milford Texaco from 1969 onwards. There were six active underground storage tanks on-site by 1987 and one tank was removed in 1989.



In the early 1990s, a new owner acquired the site, built the current gas station, and replaced the aging underground storage tanks with three new ones. A series of environmental investigations took place from 1996 to 2000 due to concerns about residual petroleum impacts from the former gas station operations. The current owner purchased the site and continued gas station operations until 2016 when the site was abandoned.

Program Accomplishments: The NRPC Brownfields Assessment Program funded both Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessment. The Phase II assessment investigated the presence and prevalence of hazardous contamination on-site, including laboratory testing of soil and groundwater samples. Furthermore, all three underground storage tanks were removed as part of the Phase II assessment. The assessment recommends continued groundwater monitoring but concludes no further assessment or removal of soil is warranted.

Hazardous Materials Analysis: The assessment found volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and lead levels in groundwater in exceedance of New Hampshire's groundwater standard. The assessment also found methyl tert-butyl ether (MTBE) and several pyrogenic polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) in the soil samples. All of these chemicals are associated with gasoline.

Redevelopment Proposal: The Town is looking to reuse or redevelop the site for commercial, passive recreation, or parking opportunities.



Abbott Memorial Trust

Address: Adjacent to 7 Burns Hill Road, Wilton, NH

Building/Site Size: Vacant 0.15-acre site with walking path, retaining wall, and a dam

Former & Current Use: Mill complex (general manufacturing, sawmill, gristmill, coal storage); Hazardous waste disposal site; Municipal parking; Public park (both former and current)

Site History: The site was formerly part of a larger tract of land before its subdivision in 1991. A dam existed on the property since 1837 while the earliest manufacturing activity on the site happened when a boiler house chimney was erected for the Whiting’s Box Company in 1872. The Whiting mill complex expanded over the years, which includes a mill building, sawmill, gristmill, and multiple auxiliary buildings. Circa 1906, the current dam was reconstructed at the site.



The Whiting mill structures were demolished in 1960 and E.J. Abbott, who operated Abbott Machine Company (AMC) – a manufacturer of metal textile machinery, and whose facility was located approximately 0.5 miles southeast of the site, purchased the property in 1961. In about 1964, AMC disposed of six 55-gallon drums and four-furnace boxes containing ash from spent sodium cyanide case hardening solution at the site. The waste was disposed of in an excavation of the oil mill building’s foundation and the material was encased in concrete. There is little documentation of E.J. Abbott’s use of the property besides the ash disposal. In 1968, the property expanded in size with fill along the river.

In 1984, the E.J. Abbott Memorial Park, consisting of municipal parking and park, was established on the property. In 1991, the property was subdivided, with the stipulation that no use or improvements are to be made on the current site due to suspected cyanide disposal. In 2000, the Town purchased the adjacent lot and constructed the Wilton Police Department with an adjoining parking lot. In the process, a walking path, an information board, and grass landscaping were added to the current site.

Program Accomplishments: The NRPC Brownfields Assessment Program funded a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, which assesses potential hazardous contamination on-site through visual observations, historical use reviews, and regulatory records. A Phase II Environmental Site Assessment is recommended.

Hazardous Materials Analysis: The assessment determines that there is a threat of sodium cyanide release from the ash disposal site on the property and recommends a further assessment to confirm or dismiss the threat.

Redevelopment Proposal: There is currently no proposal for redevelopment.

