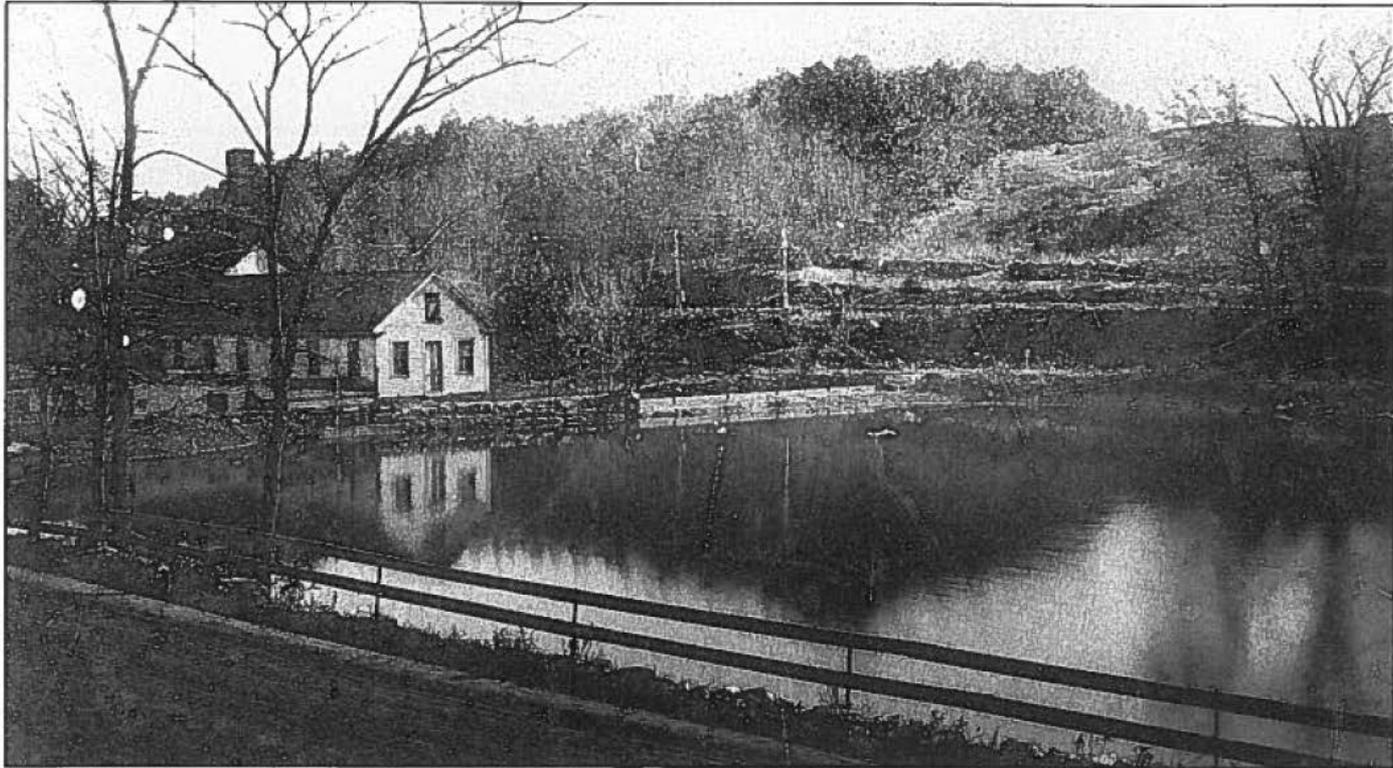


53 River Street

The Lazaro Property

South Acton's first mill



The South Acton Woolen Mill, at 51 River Street, was constructed c. 1845 as a sash-and-blind factory. The business lasted for a short time, and the mill became associated with the textile business. During the Civil War, blankets were reportedly made at this location to be shipped to our soldiers. At a later time, wool shoddy was produced here and it became known as the Shoddy Mill. The building burned in 1951. (Wetherbee collection.)



Historical significance

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.

Located in South Acton, the first center of Acton and the area that is reflective of the industrialization due to the eighteenth and nineteenth century mills and the 1844 railroad, this industrial property is located at the site of the mid 19th century shoddy mill which was first built in 1845. By the 1860s the Holmes Woolen Company was here. Later J.A. Bowen was the proprietor of the wool extracting company which in 1890 became the South Acton Woolen Company. This company operated until the 1930s. In 1951 the buildings burned and this industrial building was constructed in 1957.

Destroyed by fire in 1951

\$150,000 Blaze Destroys Acton Mill

Lowell Sunday Sun February 25 1951



ACTON FIRE—Pictured above are ruins of the Acton Woolen Co. buildings, which destroyed early yesterday in a \$150,000 fire. Firemen from Concord and Maynard aided Acton department in fighting the blaze.

Ole' Box 51 Sounds as 'Sparks' Nap

ACTON, Feb. 24—The Sparks' dream box, "Ole 51," rang the jackpot today, when a spectacular general alarm fire, said to be the greatest in the history of this town, virtually destroyed the century-old South Acton Woolen Mill. Damage to buildings, stock and machinery was estimated at close to \$150,000.

The flames, feeding on large quantities of wool and wool oils and fanned by a high wind which was backboned by a swirling snowstorm, quickly ate through the sprawling 24-story wooden structures, leveling the main building less than an hour after the fire was discovered at 7:15 by Sam Parfomchuk, an employe living directly across the road.

Homes Endangered

Noticing flames coming from a window on the second floor of the north wing, a section used for storage, he ran several hundred yards to the home of Thomas M. Murray and telephoned the alarm, the famed "Ole 51." All three Acton companies responded and help also came from the neighboring towns of Maynard and Concord.

At the height of the fire, an explosion, said to have come from "saunas" storage tanks, sent flames leaping 100 feet into the air. Burning embers flew in all directions, endangering scores of homes and other business property in the vicinity, among which were the A. M. Merriam Company, which manufactures piano stools, and the Frank B. Lothrop Company, metal stampers.

The cause of the fire was not given, definitely by Fire Chief Stuart MacGregor, but it was learned that employes had difficulty with a small blaze in the plant about 8 o'clock last night, butting it for about an hour before it was extinguished.

(Continued on Page Two)

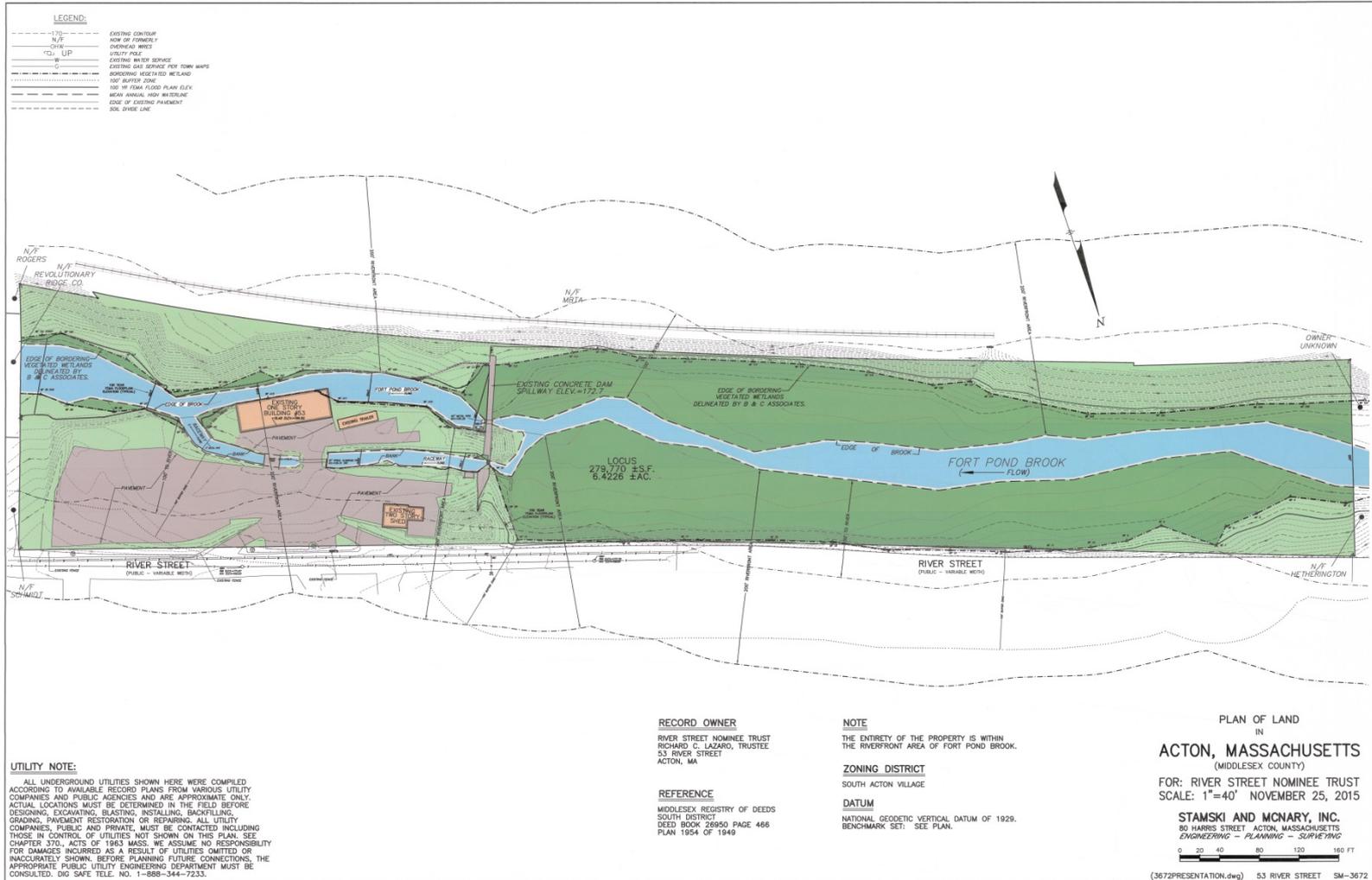
fire "putting it out." Apparently it broke out anew after employes left about 5:30 this morning. "Ole 51," long a "must" on the Sparks' list, is an automatic general alarm, and its sounding usually drew hundreds over the roads from the surrounding countryside. But the calls always proved inconsequential, being for such things as grass fires in the district.

So this morning only a handful of the faithful was on hand to view the proceedings. Those who didn't bother to come probably will spend the next 24 hours kicking themselves. It was a beauty.

Recent History of Industrial Use

- Lazaro Paving acquired property in 1982 (some records indicate use since 1975)
- Based paving operations at site for decades
- Lazaro no longer operates on the site; has rented space to contractors
- Rezoned from Industrial to South Acton Village in 1995
- History of neighborhood complaints of use of the property (truck traffic, noise pollution, hours of operation)

Existing Conditions



Existing Conditions

- 7.26 acres
- Fort Pond Brook flows through center of property
- Associated Riverfront Area, floodplain, bordering vegetated wetlands
- Historic dam and raceway that once powered mill
- Block storage building on river bank
- Stone blocks storage bins, miscellaneous debris
- Oil tanks inside block building
- 21E completed in 2010

Existing Conditions



Existing Conditions



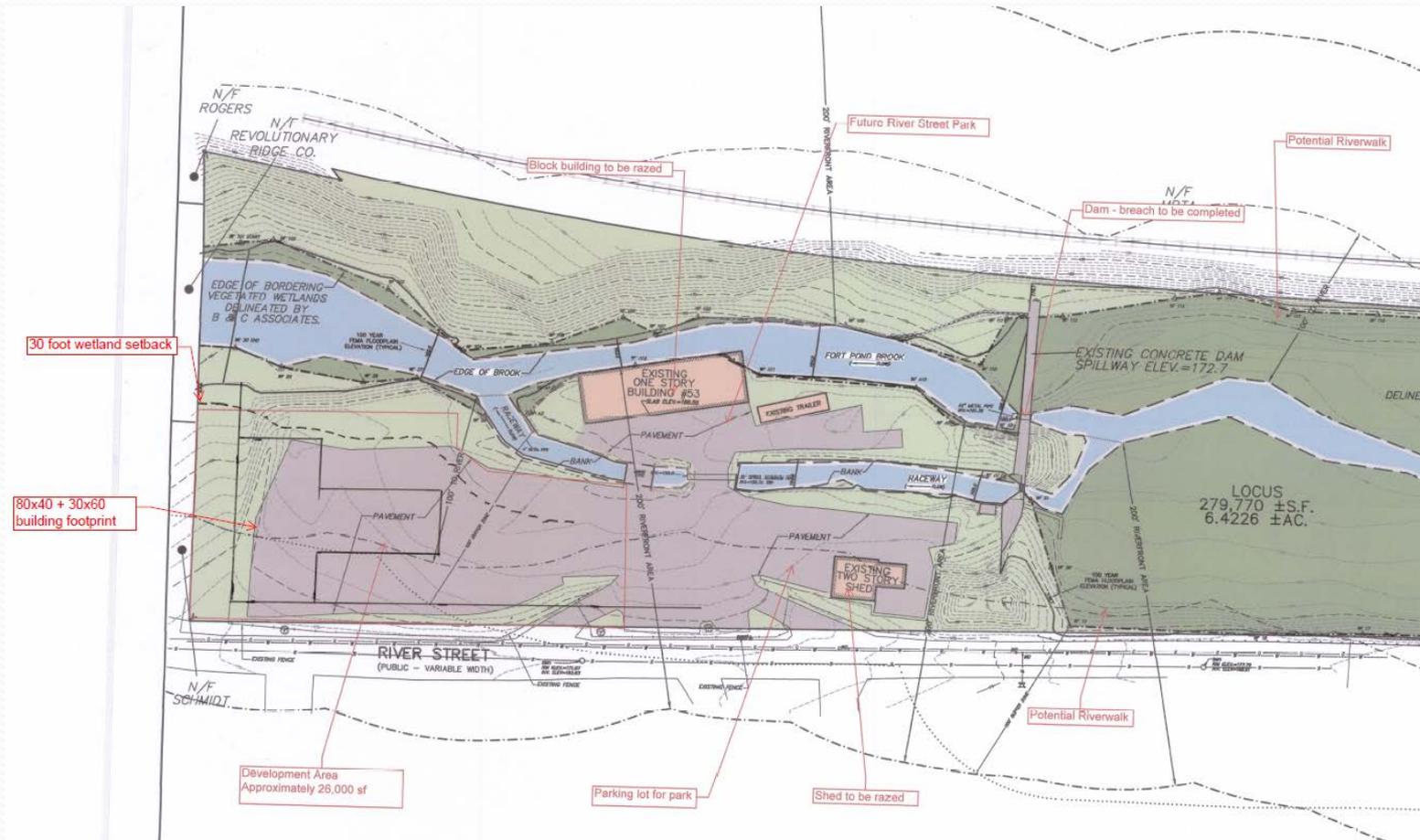
Existing Conditions



Existing Conditions



Town's Preliminary Plan



Town's Preliminary Plan

- 26,000 sf lease area for affordable housing
- Partner with AHA and ACHC to construct 12 senior affordable accessible rental units
- Building to be designed to look like original mill
- Approximately 5,000 sf building footprint, 2-3 stories for 13,200 sf total
- Create a riverside park with crushed stone pathway to accessible flower gardens, pollinator meadow, shade trees and accessible fishing platform/observation deck, ADA park benches, ADA picnic tables

Town's Preliminary Plan

- Breach the dam for safety purposes and restore the natural stream flow
- Demolish stone block building and salt shed
- Remove debris and remediate any contaminated soil
- Remove invasive plants, restore disturbed wetlands
- Add interpretive signage about historic use of property as colonial mill site and South Acton in general
- Construct river walk through flood plain after dam is breached

Funding Sources for acquisition

- \$875,000 purchase price
- \$13,000 site assessment (phase 1 and 2)
- \$20,000 for legal expenses

- \$200,000 gift from ACHC
- \$375,000 request from CPC from Open Space set aside
- \$300,000 request to bond CPC funds for Historic Preservation
- Site assessment and legal from General Fund

Next Steps

- Board of Selectmen sign P&S on September 19
- Town Meeting vote on October 5
- Due diligence period through end of year
- Closing first week of January

53 River Street

- Thank you for your support
- Questions?