

1132

Provincetown Advocate - Sept. 5, 1974

Neglect Collapses Wall At Cape Cod Cold Storage

By Alan Bernheimer

A year-old West End pregnancy finally came to term a few minutes past midnight on Saturday of Labor Day weekend, but its only issue has been called an attractive nuisance.

A large section of the bulging east wall of the abandoned Cape Cod Cold Storage plant at Kelly's Corner collapsed, baring a section of its defrosted skeleton, depositing a huge pile of rubble, and leaving part of the remaining wall to wave in the breeze.

Operations of the Atlantic Coast Fisheries in the 62-year-old wooden building were shut down in June, and the Live Fish Company of Pittsburgh, which ran the plant, announced it would sell the

building and land. Neighbors have noticed the bulge in the east wall for the past year, but its growth rate increased markedly after the shutdown, they said. There was humorous and serious speculation that the ice inside had been supporting the five-story structure.

In the Saturday collapse, the wall along the top three stories fell, leaving a hole 24 feet high and 40 feet long. A ten-foot section, waving in the breeze, still hangs from the sagging roof, where a crack is appearing, which neighbor Marion "Rocky" Taves said increased during the day Monday.

Town Manager Gardner Benson said the area has been roped off to discourage

visitors to "the attractive nuisance." He added that Town Building Inspector Robert Wilkins had asked the Planning Board six weeks ago to consider condemnation proceedings against the structure, but that the board had not yet taken any action in the matter.

Condemnation procedure requires the Building Inspector to request the board to authorize a site visit by him, the Health Inspector, the Fire Chief, and a member to the board in order to cause condemnation and/or removal of a structure.

Planning Board clerk George Bryant said Wednesday that while the matter had not come before the board, he recalled board chairman Roslyn Garfield mentioning a letter about it. Ms. Garfield could not be reached.

Joseph Bakoff of the Live Fish Company was in Provincetown this week and said the company would decide by Friday what

actions to take. "The weak spot has given way, but the rest of the building is perfectly sound," he commented. He added that the company is maintaining a watchman on the premises, as it has since the closing. Bakoff was the general manager of Atlantic Coast Fisheries operations here.

In a related development, the Coast Guard recently visited the waterfront site, reportedly to consider purchasing it for its planned in-town station.

Bakoff said talks between the Guard and the Pittsburgh company were in the preliminary stages. But Richard Briggs, public information officer at First Coast Guard District headquarters in Boston, said Monday, "The Coast Guard is just checking out possible locations. It's strictly in the shopping stage."

The Coast Guard last December announced a proposal for its new search-and-rescue station to be built as an

addition on the east side of MacMillan Wharf, but local response was not enthusiastic. In addition, harbor shoaling in the area has reduced clearance there to a minimum, causing the Guard to lose interest in that site.

Taves, whose boatyard abuts the Cold Storage Plant, Monday called the West End site ideal for the Coast Guard station. He said there would be no interference with the fishing fleet around the Town Wharf, no automobile traffic brought to the center of Town, and that there was plenty of water there for the Coast Guard boats.



Innards of abandoned Cape Cod Storage plant see light of day where east wall fell from top three floors Sunday. Roof sags over 40-foot opening.

- January 8, 1976 -



THE END OF AN ERA. Atlantic Coast Fisheries Plant comes down.