

July 2015

Dismantling and Removal of the Benning Power Plant

BENNING POWER PLANT CLOSURE AND REMOVAL

Why did Pepco Energy Services (PES) demolish the Benning Power Plant?

In 2007, PES announced that it would close the Benning Power Plant, located on the westernmost portion of the Benning Service Center at 3400 Benning Road, N.E., in Washington, D.C., where it occupied approximately 25 percent of the facility's 77 acres. In June 2012, operations at the plant ceased as planned, and PES placed the plant into an idle condition termed a cold closure, a condition in which the major plant equipment such as the boilers, generators and cooling towers were no longer operable. PES then determined that dismantling and removing the plant would be in the best interest of PES, the District of Columbia and the neighboring community. The demolition was completed on schedule in May 2015.

What did the plant removal process entail?

The dismantling and removal of the power plant was a carefully planned and executed project that included:

- Decommissioning the plant equipment
- Removing asbestos and other potentially hazardous building materials under carefully controlled conditions so they were not released during conventional demolition
- Conventional demolition of most of the building components
- Removing and recycling or disposing off site demolition debris
- Grading and leveling the ground surface under the former plant site.
- Recycling building materials and salvage for reuse

What happened to the asbestos?

Asbestos was previously widely used as an industrial material for electrical insulation for wiring and building insulation. After equipment in and around the power plant was disconnected and disassembled, a team of trained hazardous materials experts safely removed all asbestos-containing materials under controlled conditions to prevent the release of asbestos fibers and then appropriately disposed of the asbestos waste. Interior demolition, including removal of the piping and electrical equipment, could occur only after all asbestos had been removed.

ENVIRONMENT

How was the plant removal project related to the Benning RI/FS?

The demolition project was separate from the environmental study currently being performed at the Benning Road site (referred to as a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study or Benning RI/FS), but these projects were coordinated — with input from the District Department of the Environment — to ensure that the demolition work did not delay or interfere with the field work for the Benning RI/FS. Because the Benning RI/FS is focused on soil and groundwater conditions at the Benning Service Center site, the removal of the power plant structures did not affect the sampling plan or site assessment activities for the Benning RI/FS. However, the removal of the power plant structures will enable additional sampling for the RI/FS in areas that were previously inaccessible.