

BRIEFING PAPER

LOWELL HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

July 13, 1984

MARKET MILLS EVENTS

A varied program of summer activities at Market Mills is off to a successful start. Every Tuesday through August there will be lunchtime entertainment in the courtyard. Efforts are being made to attract unpaid entertainers who would perform at other times. Complementing the Commission-sponsored performances on Tuesdays, the Heritage State Park is offering free entertainment on their grounds each Wednesday afternoon. In order to draw more people to the courtyard on Thursday evenings, there will be entertainment for two hours prior to the Thursday night Summer Stage events. Finally, special weekend events are set for July, August and September. On July 29 the theme is Transportation and there will be antique cars, model railroads, and carriages on display. On the weekend of August 11-12, the Market Mills Festival will celebrate the second anniversary of the complex. A festival organized around the annual Banjo and Fiddle Contest is the feature event in September.

MARKET MILLS SUMMER STAGE

The fourth season of performances at the Market Mills Summer Stage began June 28 with the Continentals playing to a large audience. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry - Northern Middlesex sponsor this summer entertainment series every Thursday evening at 7 p.m. The series will feature performances by The Shaw Brothers, The New Yankee Rhythm Kings, and will conclude August 30th with singer/song writer Tom Rush. The Commission is a major contributor to the Summer Stage, donating \$3,100 towards the series' total budget of \$15,300.

CULTURAL GRANTS

The Sixth Cycle of Cultural Grants is underway with a budget of \$8,000. Grants from \$500 to \$2,000 will be awarded in the following categories: 1) Festivals, Celebrations, and Performances; 2) Public Exchange Programs; 3) Assistance to Interpretive Projects; 4) Educational Programs; and, 5) Writing, Research, and Publishing Projects. The Cultural Committee voted to give special attention to proposals related to Market Mills. The deadline for applications is July 25, 1984. Applications will be reviewed by the committee and recommendations for awards will be made to the Commission at the August meeting. As of this date, 45 requests for applications have been received.

A BRUSH WITH HISTORY

Nine of the ten artists whose studio leases expired on June 30 have re-

newed their leases. Painter Frank Wyman will not be returning because he is setting up a studio in his home. The staff is seeking applications for the available studio space and will review contenders with the Cultural Committee.

Painter Catherine Bucciarelli, fabric artist, Elizabeth Cameron, and potter Sandra Kavanaugh, joined forces for a new exhibit last month called "Woven Concepts." The opening reception was well attended and received notice in the local media. Painter Tom Gill was recently invited to exhibit his work at the Francesca Anderson Gallery on Newbury Street in Boston. His paintings will be on display through July 31.

SCULPTURES

The "Homage To Women" sculpture by Mico Kaufman will be fully cast by the end of July. The two-ton bronze sculpture will be transported from the foundry in Rhode Island to Lowell and stored until the fall. The granite block base being ordered from Fletcher's Quarry, will be delivered in October, at which time the sculpture will be placed in the Market Mills Park. On July 10, the Lowell City Council approved the expenditure of \$6,000 for costs related to the installation of the sculpture. This means that no additional private funds will have to be raised beyond the \$25,000 committed by Larry Ansin. A meeting with sponsors of the project -- the National Park Service, City of Lowell, Commission, and private donors -- is scheduled for later in July. Issues such as the installation and the unveiling ceremony are on the agenda.

Arthur Robbins, developer of the Lowell Hilton, has agreed to fund a large public sculpture in the vicinity of the hotel, probably at the confluence of the Concord River and Pawtucket Canal. The staff is working with Mr. Robbins to develop a theme and design competition for the sculpture.

ACQUISITION

The Budget Committee will be meeting prior to the Commission meeting to consider an offer to purchase the Boott Mill Counting House and Coal Pocket from the owners of Boott Mill. Negotiations have been completed by Paul Cotter of the NPS Lands Office and a final offer has been accepted by the owners subject to approval by the Commission. The negotiated price is \$125,000 for both sections of the complex.

APPRAISAL

The final parcel to be acquired by the Commission is the Boott Mill Parking Lot adjacent to the Mogan Cultural Center. We are about to request price proposals from certified appraisers to establish a value for the property.

MOGAN CULTURAL CENTER - DESIGN CONTRACT

In order to reflect changes in the scope of services for design of Phase II interior of the Cultural Center, Crissman and Solomon has recently submit-

ted a proposal to the Commission to modify their original contract. They have outlined additional work which has been necessary 1) in the schematic design in order to analyze costs and alternatives related to the link building and to coordinate with unforeseen field conditions and changes to the Phase I plans prepared by Perry, Dean, and 2) in the final design stage due to the demolition of the link building and redesign of a new structure. The number of drawings now required for the construction documents has increased by 15%. While these statements are persuasive, actual dollar amounts are still to be agreed upon. We hope to have a final proposal by the Commission meeting.

CENTRAL STREET/PAWTUCKET CANAL

The project construction is about 10% complete. Within the next two weeks, progress is expected to jump significantly. The excavation in the Lowell Sun Garage is complete and the reinforcing steel in place; placement of structural steel and concrete pouring should be complete by the end of the month. On the plaza, drainage structures are in place and work has begun on the entrance to Gemarde jewelry building. AFM, the contractor for the restoration of the south facade of the Gemarde building is on-site and is working on the basement foundation.

The Commission and National Park staffs met with Peter Aucella, Director of the City Division of Planning and Development, to review current and proposed work and to discuss the City's role in bridge improvements and in pedestrian access to the hotel. We expect these discussions to be on-going and to result in an action plan for the area.

TROLLEY

With the basic system operating smoothly, Commission planners are now devoting their energies to extensions to the trolley routes. Negotiations are proceeding well with T.K. Dyer, the firm selected to perform the survey and final track layout for three extensions. Work should begin on the survey within the next few weeks, allowing land negotiations to proceed. Track extensions are planned in three areas: 1) From the Post Office on French Street to the Wannalancit Mills; 2) Along French Street from the Post Office to join the Boott Mills branch; and, 3) Beyond the Boott Mills towards the Hotel/Lower Locks area.

THE MELTING POT

Paisley Maintenance, the new maintenance contractor for the Melting Pot, has been doing a very satisfactory job since beginning on June 8. The Commission staff has been working closely with both the tenants and workers to assure a satisfactory performance.

Efforts continue in marketing the remaining 500 square feet of restaurant space at the Melting Pot. Karl Johnson and Armand Mercier have been working together contacting prospective tenants.

OPERATING BUDGET

The office has yet to receive the monthly computer print-out of its operating and development budgets from the NPS regional office. It is therefore not included. Full reports will be distributed at the Commission meeting.

ASSISTANT HISTORICAL ARCHITECT

David Bitterman has been selected from a field of 30 applicants for the position of Assistant Historical Architect. Mr. Bitterman received his professional degree in architecture from the University of Illinois in 1978 with a concentration in architectural history and preservation.

He is a registered architect whose professional experience has been in private architectural offices in central Massachusetts where he specialized in preservation work. This year he completed the coursework at Boston University in the American Studies Ph.D. program in architectural history. In addition to his general background in the preservation field, Mr. Bitterman has a long-standing interest in historic industrial architecture. The position was authorized by the Commission at the June 25, 1984 Commission meeting. Mr. Bitterman will be paid \$23,088 annually.

This position is necessary because of the growth in the number of grant and loan projects and size and number of development projects over previous years. Twelve new grant projects are underway, while the peak number in any previous year has been six. Additional technical administrative skills are needed to carry out this increased activity.

In addition, some of Pam Chicklis' duties involving architectural and signage design and some of Penny Watson's architectural drawing work have to be assumed by the incumbent in this new position.

GRANT/LOAN TERMINATIONS

The June briefing paper detailed the failure of two grant/loan recipients to meet their contract obligations. Dr. John Burke has failed to complete the Bascom Block, 196 Merrimack Street, due to legal dispute with a tenant. The project was to receive a grant of \$23,000. Nicholas Flaris never began a project which was to result in the rehabilitation of the Bridge Street Boarding House. This loan was authorized on March 25, 1982.

No Commission funds have been spent on either of these buildings. A motion will be sought to terminate existing agreements on both of these projects. Please see your June briefing paper for further details.