

BRIEFING PAPER

LOWELL HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

May 21, 1982

Visitor Center Opening

As members of the Cultural Committee can attest from their visit last week, the NPS Visitor Center looks spectacular. The opening is slated for next Friday, May 28th, the same day as our Commission meeting. Over 700 people have been invited to the opening, which will feature a dedication, hors d'oeuvres, a swing band in the courtyard, and an artists' preview.

Commission members are encouraged to bring family members with them for the Visitor Center opening. NPS tours are available during the Commission meeting for spouses and family members. Tours will leave from the Mack Building at 5:00 p.m. and return at 7:00 p.m., with the Visitor Center opening at 7:30 p.m.

As explained in the accompanying letter, the grand opening for the Melting Pot, Brush with History and the associated events have been delayed for one week. This will assure enough time for the food booth tenants to prepare for their opening. The advertising campaign and promotional events have been scheduled around the theme of "Market Mills: The Heart of the Park." A full schedule will be available at next Friday's meeting.

Market Mills Construction

Construction at Market Mills has progressed rapidly. Aside from minor delivery delays for light fixtures and wood doors, construction is on schedule. A short extension of the contract has been granted the contractor for change orders relating to the exhaust and fire alarm systems. It is anticipated that all work will be complete on or by June 17. On Friday May 21st, the Commission took possession of the food booth area allowing the tenants to begin their improvements.

Leasing Market Mills

All seven food booth operators have now signed leases and are in the process of equipping their leased space. The seven leases will run for the maximum time (5 yrs.) with option to renew at the end of the lease period.

The remaining space continues to be marketed for retail use. A number of businesses have been contacted including those on a list provided by Commissioner Bob Duffy. The space has been shown to several prospects. The imminent opening of Market Mills is beginning to increase retail interest.

Artists' Space

Seven greater Lowell artists have signed leases for studio space at Market Mills. This represents rental of approximately 80% of all available space. A sneak preview of the studios and sales gallery will be held at the time of the Visitor Center opening on May 28. Formal opening of the studios will occur on the evening of June 25, with the grand opening of Market Mills.

The Mogan Cultural Center

The Lowell City Council has passed a motion asking the Commission to look into naming the proposed Boott Mill (Boarding House) Cultural Center after Pat Mogan. Pat is retiring this year as Superintendent of Lowell Schools.

A motion will be brought to the Commission on Friday to find a suitable way to honor Dr. Mogan for his contributions to Lowell and the Park. The Department of Interior is being contacted to determine the procedures for naming the proposed facility after the father of the Lowell Park.

Boott Mill Acquisition

The appraisal of Boott Mill Buildings 1, 2, counting house and coal pocket is presently being reviewed by the National Park Service review appraiser from the Omaha office. He spent the past week in Lowell and met with Commission and Park Service appraiser. His recommendations are expected in the next three weeks.

Strip of Land

Negotiating sessions have been held with principals of the Boott Mills in an attempt to acquire the Market Mills "strip of land" to be acquired for the NPS parking lot. It is hoped that negotiations can be concluded shortly.

Eminent Domain

Final 15 day notice to purchase has been forwarded to the owners of Martin's and the Early Residence. There was no offer to settle, therefore eminent domain actions are being commenced.

Stage Relocation

Thanks to the efforts of Commissioner Armand LeMay, Assistant City Manager Jim Campbell, and others, a portion of the Shattuck Street stage was relocated to the Market Street Park adjacent to Market Mills. Permission to use the park was granted by Peabody Properties, following assurances of insurance, security, and maintenance provided by the City, National Park, Commission, and Chamber of Commerce. Summer performances are now being coordinated by the Chamber. The first performance will be the Shaw Brothers on June 24, at 8:30 p.m. The State Heritage Park and Commission are working together to provide lights, sound, and final treatment of the stage. A special thanks to Armand LeMay who donated two days of his time and assembled a crew to move the stage.

Women's Sculpture

The Cultural Committee convened on May 19, and voted to recommend to the full Commission funding for the sculpture proposal not to exceed \$25,000. The following motion will be recommended to the Commission:

5/19
Meeting



That the Commission provide up to \$25,000 for the sculpture entitled "Women's Aspirations" by Mico Kaufman and that prior to providing any funds that a fixed price contract be entered into.

A full description of the statue proposal is included in this package.

New Member

The Commission has a new member and Bob McIntosh has a new job. Bob has been named Superintendent of Gateway National Park in New York.

Replacing Bob on the Commission is Jerry Rogers, Associate Director of Archeology and Historic Preservation for National Park Service, Department of the Interior in Washington. Jerry has been involved in and with Lowell since the idea was first presented in Washington in 1972. He has worked at the National Register of Historic Places and has been associated with the Archeology and Historic Preservation for the past ten years.

Jerry began with the Department as a seasonal Historian at Fort Davis, Texas in 1964. He holds a degree and master's degree in History from Texas Tech, where he also worked as Associate Director of the college's museum.

Trolley Equipment Arrival

After a voyage half way around the globe, four sets of 1920 vintage trolley bodies arrived in Lowell for storage in the National Park Service warehouse on May 18th. The Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board's equipment appeared in good condition, although an engineer from Louis T. Klauder and Associates will make an official inspection. Each set consists of 2 trucks (the wheels and motors) and the propulsion and brake equipment.

The Commission will prepare the bid package for construction of two cars for a late summer advertisement. A Fall contract for the car building is expected and the first car should be operating by Spring 1984. Proceeding with the package depends on money from the Park and by Congress being made available to the Commission. The budget is approximately \$400,000.

Hotel Groundbreaking

Ground was broken for the Lowell Hilton on Friday, May 14th. Numerous public officials were present and over 300 persons attended the ceremony. It is hoped that the hotel can be opened in 18 months.

The Commission staff is continuing to work with the hotel architects to develop a coordinated landscaping plan as it relates to our Central Street/Pawtucket Canal project.

FY 1983 Budget

On May 13th, Congressman Shannon testified before the House Appropriations Subcommittee in favor of the Commission and NPS development budgets. The Congressman was well received by Subcommittee Chairman Sidney Yates. Funds will depend on the disposition of the contested FY 1983 federal budget.

Building Grant Update

The replacement of the upper windows at the Palmer Street Firehouse was completed last week. It is anticipated that the remaining work to the building will be concluded in a few days. Rehabilitation of the facade and storefronts of the Simpson Block at Kearney Square was completed in April and a grant payment will be issued upon receipt of a final report from the developers. The remaining storefront at the Nesmith Block is near completion. It is anticipated that all outstanding work items will be complete within a month. Work at the Bascom Block has been suspended due to litigation between the owner and a tenant. The Commission has encouraged the owner to offer a compromise to the tenant so that the storefront repairs can be completed this summer. Projects awarded during the second round of funding are in design and planning stages. The Hildreth Building, Robbins Block and Whistler House will begin construction within the next two months.

Plan Update

At the request of the Planning Committee, the staff has prepared an update on the Preservation Plan. Presented in chart form, the update is included with the Briefing Paper. It summarizes all the development projects found in the 1980 plan, notes their current status and costs, and compares these with the original projections. The chart shows that the number of projects have been narrowed somewhat and that major projects are moving along according to schedule.

Standards

After a series of six work sessions, the Council's Ad Hoc Committee has forwarded its final version of the home rule petition setting up the Historic Board and District to the full City Council. A number of constructive technical changes were made by the Committee as well as two changes in the makeup of the proposed Board, to include a joint representative of the Downtown Businessmen's Association and Chamber of Commerce and a representative of the State Commissioner of Environmental Management. The act was referred to a June 8 public hearing by the Council at its May 18th meeting. Commission and DPD staff are preparing materials for an informal workshop to be held in advance of the public hearing, explaining the purpose of the legislation and answering questions about its effects on downtown tenants and property owners. The responsiveness of the Council has been due to the work of Councilors-Commission Members Dick O'Malley and George Anthes.

Boott Mill Boarding House

On May 3rd, the Boott Mill Boarding House Evaluation Committee selected the following firms as the most qualified out of the 49 submitting qualification statements:

Architectural Endeavor, Inc.

Boston Architectural Team

Childs, Bertman, Tseckares

Moore-Heder

Perry, Dean, Stahl Rogers

These firms took part in interviews in the Commission office on Thursday, May 20th. The Committee will attempt to announce its recommendation at the next Commission meeting.

The work consists of developing the construction documents for selective demolition and the reconstruction of the exterior of the Boarding House back to its original appearance. A construction budget of approximately \$1,300,000 is anticipated for the first of two phases.

Lower Locks Improvements

The Commission has prepared a final scope of services and has submitted it to Childs, Bertman, Tseckares and Casendino for price negotiations. The architecture and engineering work will consist of developing plans for pedestrian viewing platforms on either side of the Central Street bridge and for a walkway from the bridge to the area along the Pawtucket Canal to the Market Street Garage. Technical specifications for the demolition of World's and Martin's buildings will also be prepared. A mid-June contract award is anticipated, with design work completed in November. Demolition of World's is expected to occur in September.

The total demolition and construction budget is \$550,000 and includes \$200,000 from the Northern Middlesex Area Commission.