

# LOWELL HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

The Commission Bulletin 204 Middle St., Lowell, MA 01852 (617) 458-7653 Winter '81 Vol. III No. 3

## An Invitation...

The planning is complete. Funds are available. The Lowell Historic Preservation Commission invites you to work with us to build a new future for Lowell, based on its past.

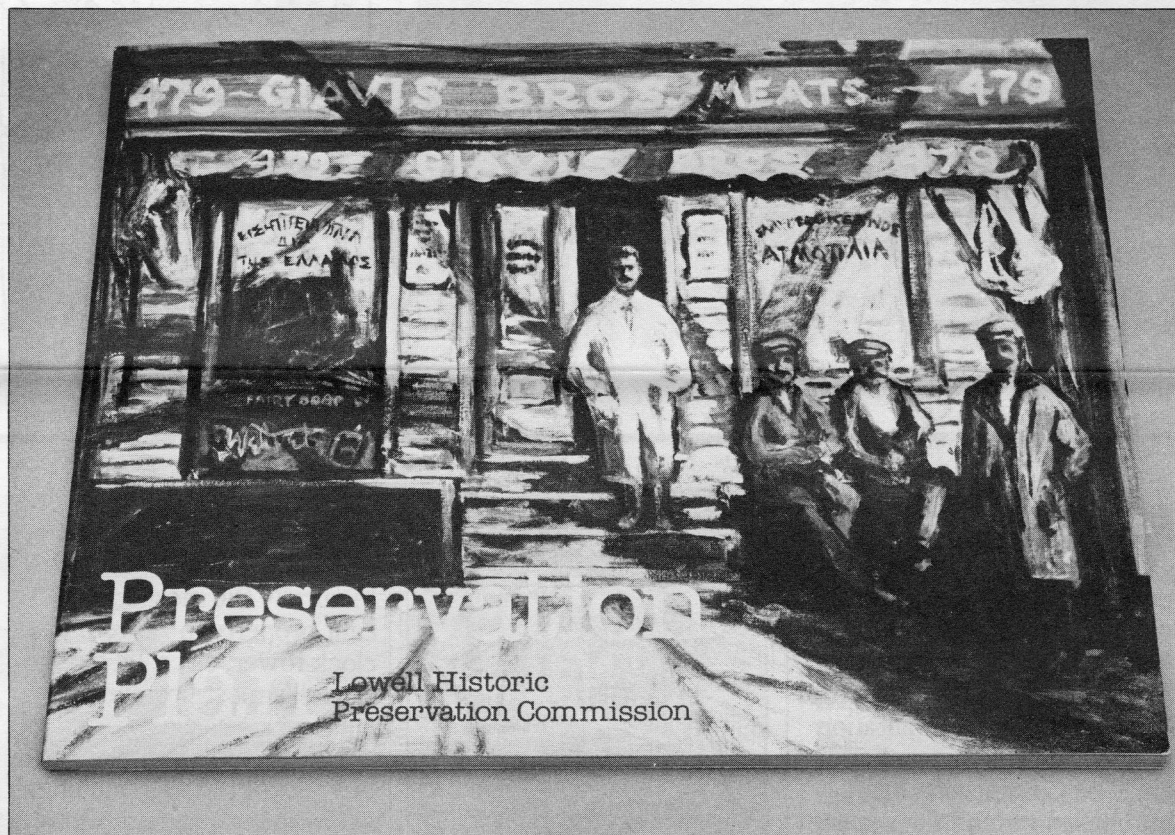
You can get involved by applying for a grant to renovate your building. Or by applying for one of the eight types of cultural grants available. There are other ways to join in. You or your organization may be interested in working on a project described here, or you may have ideas that will help to accomplish mutual goals. Let us know.

This newsletter will tell you what kind of grants are available and how to apply. It also highlights major projects

including re-use of a portion of the Boott Mill and Market Mills, an outdoor performance area, various exhibits, and an expanded trolley system. Guidelines for historic rehabilitation and new construction are also summarized.

These activities are part of the Commission's "Preservation Plan." This plan was prepared over the past year by the Commission, its staff and consultants. Based on legislative requirements and community suggestions, the Preservation Plan complements the recently announced Lowell Plan proposals for downtown development.

Call our office if you would like to obtain a copy of the Preservation Plan at 458-7653.



Jim Higgins

## "It Was Just A Dream..."

### Three Commissioners on Lowell's Future

The Commission is a 15-member federal agency in

Jim Higgins



*"The Commission plan fits in well with the plans of the Lowell Development and Financial Corporation, the City of Lowell, Lowell Plan, and State and National Parks. What it means is that within approximately ten years, Lowell will physically and economically be an entirely new place to live in, but will maintain its cultural and historical expression."*

**George Duncan** Vice President, First Bank and Trust, Lowell; former President, Lowell Development and Financial Corporation

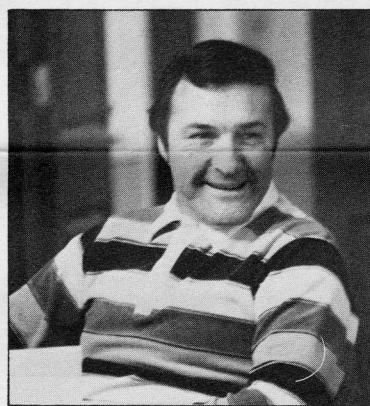
the Department of the Interior set up to preserve resources related to the Lowell National Historical



*"I see downtown Lowell becoming a place that people will really want to come to shop, meet for coffee, or just enjoy a pleasant place. It's an exciting plan that will lead to a rebirth in many ways. It will have a great impact on the future of Lowell."*

**Kay Georgalos** Principal, Dracut Centre School; Trustee, University of Lowell; Vice President, Human Services Corporation

Park. Recently several members were asked to talk about the Plan's opportunities for Lowell residents:



*"To me the Preservation Plan is about what Lowell has to look forward to. It's about something new and different. It means daily activities, tourism, a boon to the arts and most important—a good feeling about our city. It was just a dream when I was the Mayor in 1974, but now it's coming true. I see a lot of happiness because of the changes."*

**Armand LeMay** Lowell City Council; Chairman, State Heritage Park Committee; former Mayor

## Grants Workshop

Remember to reserve Saturday, February 7th for the second annual Commission technical workshop. This year's workshop will help you apply for the grants for cultural programs and for exterior renovation of historic buildings, discussed in this newsletter.

The workshop will be divided into three sessions: a presentation on available programs followed by questions and answers; luncheon and discussion of the benefits of an arts program to an older, urban area; and a time to meet personally with Commission staff.

You'll be able to find out about the specific grant programs, how to fill out the application form, and how competitive your proposal should be. This workshop is for both beginners and experienced grant-seekers. Don't let the fact that you have never applied for a grant stop you from participating. The Commission is more interested in the value of your ideas than in the weight of your credentials.

Admission is free; lunch is pay-as-you-go. For additional information on the grants workshop, call our office at 458-7653.

**Place:** Mack Building  
(State Heritage Park headquarters)  
25 Shattuck Street, Lowell

**Date:** Saturday, February 7, 1981

**Time:** 10 a.m. Presentation on grant programs, Q&A session

12 noon Lunch, Guest speaker:  
Barbara Garvey,  
Springfield Commissioner of Cultural Affairs

2 p.m. Informal consultation with applicants

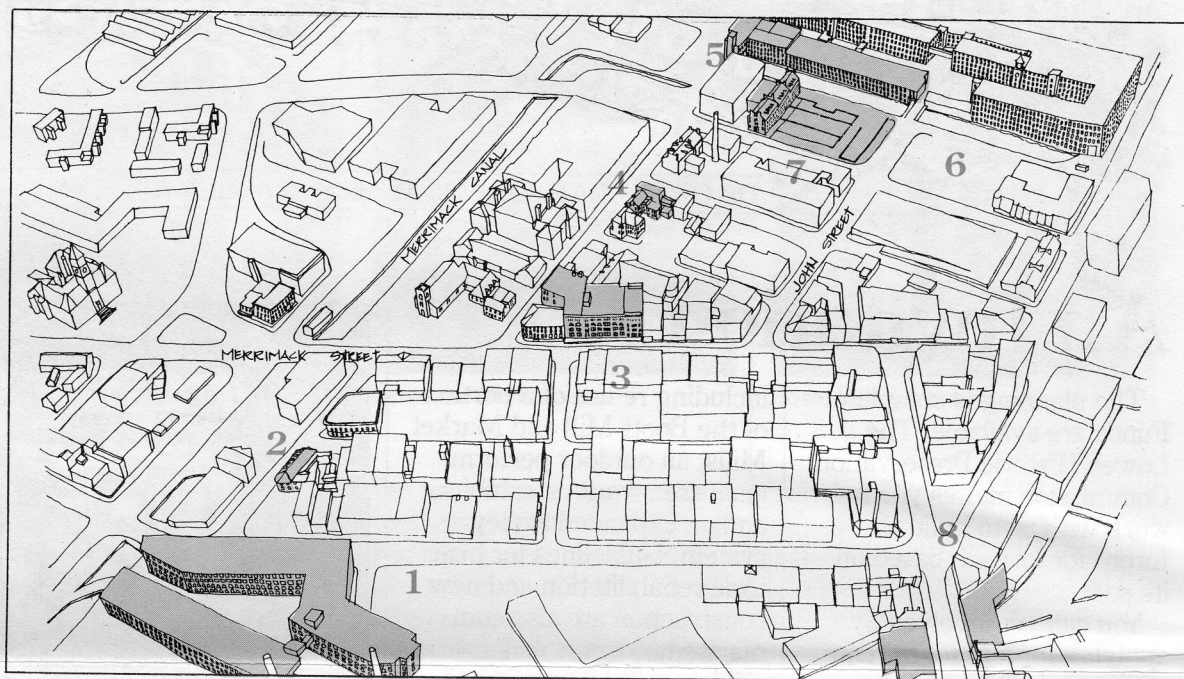


# What's In The Plan?

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## Major Projects

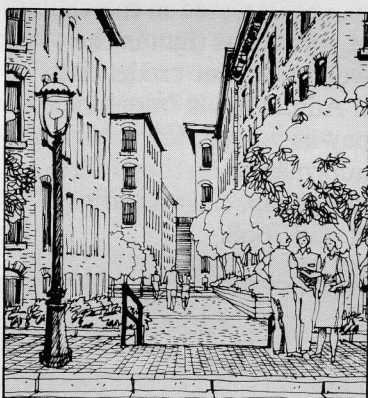
This page summarizes key projects in the Preservation Plan. These highlights preview activities that you can expect to see in the next several years. The map is to help you locate them. The goal of these projects is to complement other economic development efforts while blending cultural opportunities with "bricks and mortar."



### 1. The Gateway-Market Mills

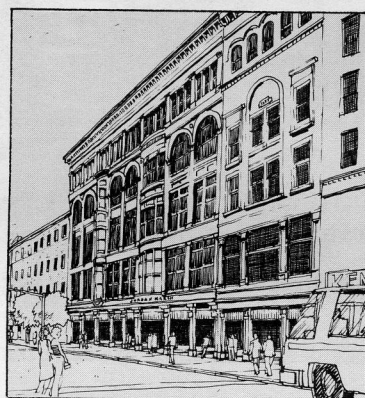
These two mill buildings, now known as Market Mills, were constructed to manufacture wool. Partially vacant for years, the mill is now part of a \$12 million rehabilitation project by private developers. The Commission has purchased ground floor space to rent for ethnic food booths, artists' working space and for other commercial purposes. Local business people will be invited in the next several months to submit proposals for renting space.

The National Park Service will construct its Visitor Center here complete with tourism information and feature a multi-screen slide presentation. The courtyard between the mills will be landscaped for use by local residents and visitors alike.



### 2. Lowell Gas Light Company Building

A grant would be available to clean and repair the brick and sandstone exterior of this building.

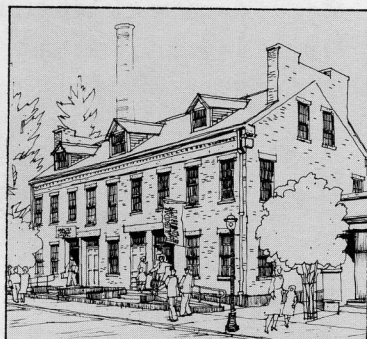


### 3. Bon Marche Building

Plans call for encouraging exterior renovation through a grant to bring the building back to its original appearance. This will hopefully be part of an expansion by Jordan Marsh in Lowell.

### 4. Early Residence

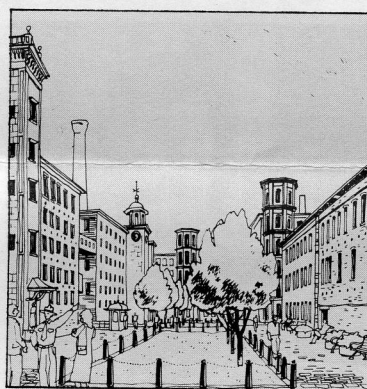
"A place we can tell the story of how our parents and grandparents built Lowell and worked here." That's the way Joe Dzik, President of the Greater Lowell Central Labor Council, describes the Early Residence project on Kirk Street. After purchase of the 1845 building, it will be repaired and turned into union offices and a museum portraying the role of working people in Lowell.



### 5. Boott Mill

Built in 1835, the Boott Mill is historically and architecturally the most significant property in Lowell. The clock tower, circa 1865, is Lowell's most prominent landmark.

The Commission plans to buy two of the mill buildings and provide grants to rehabilitate the remainder of the complex. A portion of the millyard will also be landscaped. Several museums and commercial enterprises will be established at the Boott. In addition, one of the oldest water powered turbines will be opened for viewing.



### 6. Boott Mill Park

A new city park will be created next to the Boott Mill. It will link the mill, downtown commercial activities and the proposed Cultural Center. The park will be used for recreation, contain archeological exhibits, and feature an outdoor performance center. Presently a parking lot, the site will be terraced, forming an amphitheater for an all-weather stage. The park will be maintained by the National Park Service and the Commission.



### 7. H & H Paper—Cultural Center

The only surviving Boott Mill boarding house will become a Cultural Center and boarding house theme restaurant. This 1835 building now houses the H & H Paper Company. The Commission plans to acquire this structure and renovate the exterior.

The restaurant will feature exhibits about the mill girls and will illustrate the relationship between the boarding house, the canal and the mills. Planned as an activity center, the Cultural Center will allow visitors and residents to explore Lowell's past and present cultural expression. These programs include opportunities for informal research on local historical subjects, a lending library, and exhibits of "unsung" heroes of Lowell. The Center will also contain rehearsal, class and performance space for neighborhood groups.

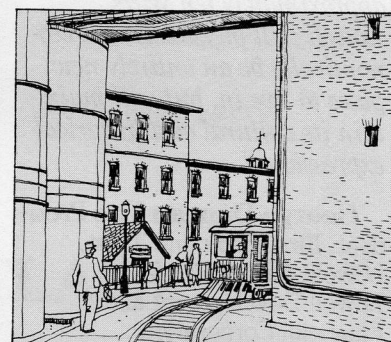
### 8. Martin Clothes, World Furniture Buildings

These buildings would be acquired and demolished to open up a view of the Pawtucket Canal and Lower Locks. Efforts would be made to relocate these businesses in downtown Lowell.

### Transportation

Based on the success of "The Whistler" rail car this past summer, the Commission and Park Service are now developing an expanded trolley program along the 19th century historic theme. It is essential that transportation facilities be set up to conveniently move visitors to points within the Park without using their cars.

People travelling to Lowell will leave their cars near the Visitor Center and be able to make a loop of the entire Park by riding the trolley and the canal barges. The familiar "Whistler" will be joined in 1982 by an open trolley car like those that ran in Lowell in the early 1900's. Within a few years, you may be able to hop a trolley at noon, step off at the Boott Mill for some quick shopping and travel on to Market Street for lunch.



Sketches by James Piatt



## Getting Started

It's time to begin planning for the Commission's first cultural grant awards. Eight different programs give individuals and organizations an opportunity to participate in Lowell's rebirth. Applications will be accepted for the programs described below until February 20th. If you miss this first cycle, there will be a second funding period in the Fall. These two cycles will be repeated annually. Applications can be obtained by calling or writing

to the Commission office.

While there are many kinds of projects and activities that the grants can be used for, each must contribute to a better understanding of Lowell's history and reflect the human story of the Industrial Revolution.

Funds for each grant category are limited and the award process is competitive. All residents and organizations from the area are encouraged to look into the grant programs. You do not need previous grant experience to apply. Projects will be evaluated on the basis of:

1. Relevance to the themes of the Park

2. Benefit to residents and visitors to Lowell

3. Ability of the applicant to successfully carry out the project and individual financial need

4. Demonstration of cooperation with rather than duplication of similar activities in Lowell

If you or your organization have an idea that you think is eligible for one of the grant categories, the Commission encourages you to come to its Grant Workshop on Saturday, February 7th. Details can be found on page one of this newsletter. The staff will explain the grants program, and help you apply.



Kevin Harkins

## Festivals, Celebrations and Performances

The purpose of these grants is to help sponsor highly visible public events. They may be musical events, ethnic festivals, historic re-enactments, or artistic celebrations. They may be either indoors or outdoors, large or small—so long as they add to the vitality of the National Park area.

Lists of historic celebrations and events that were sponsored by Lowell groups in the late 1890's may be found on page 129 of the *Details of the Preservation Plan*. The "Details" are available in the Commission office or local libraries. The lists are one way of discovering interesting ideas for grant proposals.

Grant funds can be used for promotion, purchase of materials, performers' wages or facilities rental. To the extent that time allows, the Commission staff may be able to assist in the scheduling, promoting and housing of events funded by our grants.

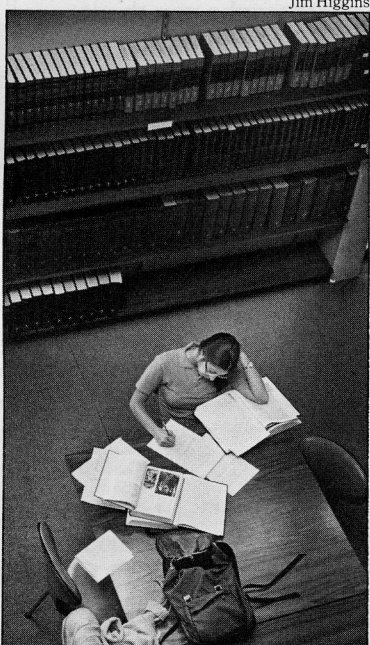
Up to five grants of \$1,000 will be available to non-profit organizations. They may be neighborhood groups, arts organizations or civic, religious, cultural or ethnic groups. The event must be held within one year of funding.

## Work/Study Student Grants

Through direct stipends or grants to universities and other public educational institutions, students will have the opportunity to work on Park theme projects. These grants may take the form of work/study for full-time students, summer internships, or scholarships granted to colleges or universities.

Depending on the specific program under consideration, either individual students or institutions may apply.

This summer, several summer interns will be employed by the Commission. Applicants should contact the Commission office for further details.



Jim Higgins

## Educational Programs

This grant Category will assist educational institutions in developing programs and learning materials that support Park and Commission themes. Lowell Public Schools and the University of Lowell will be the primary institutions involved in these programs. Curriculum development, special classes, workshops, conferences and artists in residence, would be among the programs encouraged.

Grant funds may be used for staff time and materials. Programs funded through this category will be selected for their potential development or pilot usage.

For example, a short course might be developed for selected high school students to explore 19th century architecture and current preservation methods, a workshop for elementary students could be designed to teach simple principles of hydropower. Or, curriculum materials may be developed based on Lowell's history.

Any educational organization, school or institution may apply as may individuals if the project is sponsored by an existing public educational institution. The number and size of grants available this Spring are flexible.

Up to \$8,000 is available for this program. Both small and large grant proposals will be entertained. Please contact the Commission staff well before the application deadline to discuss grants in this category.



Jim Higgins





Jim Higgins

## Sample Grant Projects

The Commission's competitive grant program is new, but a few demonstration grants were awarded during the past year. Here is a summary of these grants to give you a better idea of the kind of activities the Commission is interested in funding. Use your imagination. And remember, experienced and novice applicants are welcome.

Here are some examples:

- The writing and production of a "Lowell Play" will be funded by a grant from the *Festivals, Celebrations, and Performances* category. The Commission received proposals for six scripts. One will be chosen for production in the Smith-Baker Center during the Lowell Festival this May. The play will be about Lowell's history.
- A grant from the *Aid To Interpretive Projects* category will fund various foreign exhibits for the Festival '81. The exhibits might deal with Irish lace, Greek tapestry, or Franco-American crafts. Sponsors can apply for grants of up to \$1,000.
- The second "Lowell Conference on Industrial History" will occur May 21 and 22, 1981 and is partially funded under the grant category of *Public Exchange Programs*. As before, the University of Lowell, the Lowell National Historical Park, the Lowell Historical Society, and the Commission will team up to host the Conference. This year's topic is "The Relationship of Government and Industry in the United States."

### Public Exchange Programs

These grants will provide opportunities for citizens and visitors to share their backgrounds and interests. These programs can take many forms, including farmer's markets, neighborhood events, community/school projects, religious or ethnic unity programs, worker's conferences, or history conferences.

The objective of these programs is to reinforce the "interconnectedness" of people in Lowell. A variety of people working together is the foundation of a vibrant city.

This year, two grants of up to \$2,000 each may be offered within this category. In addition, funds will support the second annual history conference (see above). Last year, the conference was an opportunity for local and national historians to present research on Lowell-related topics. A similar format is planned for this year.

Any individual or organization, institution or association may apply for these funds.

### Assistance To Interpretive Projects

In order to encourage the development of a network of displays, exhibits, presentations, openhouses, plant tours and other interpretive devices which will portray Lowell's history and culture, the Commission will offer matching grants. Those seeking to research, plan or develop such programs, whether they be private individuals, organizations, businesses or others can apply for these funds.

This grant period, one grant of up to \$4,000 or two grants of \$2,000 each will be available in this category.



Jim Higgins

### Writing, Research and Publishing Projects

Through this grant category, the Commission will sponsor research and publication of ideas, theories and information which further the understanding of the issues that are the basis for the founding of the National Park. The areas of scholarly inquiry may vary greatly: social history, religion, labor, immigration, leisure, entertainment, hydropower, role of early transportation in industrialization, weaving techniques, historic landscaping or photography projects.

The Commission may publish the research as a series of special topic booklets.

Two types of awards will be made. One, an award to an applicant *proposing* an area of inquiry. Two, awards to individuals who *respond* to Commission-initiated Requests for Proposals. Only the former awards will be made during the initial funding period.

Any applicant who can demonstrate the experience and ability to conduct the work is eligible to apply. Up to four grants ranging from \$500 to \$2,000 each are available.

### Guest House Program

Would you like to offer rooms in your home to Park visitors? The Commission Guest House Program is modeled after England's famous Bed and Breakfast concept where visitors may stay overnight as paid guests.

Grant funds of up to \$2,500 can be used by Lowell residents to renovate their homes to set up an appropriate guest room and accommodate visitors. The objective of this program is to provide the chance for out-of-town visitors to meet and share experiences with local residents. The Commission's long range goal is to set up and operate a coordinated network of guest houses. Home owners will receive technical assistance as needed to assure that the Guest House Program operates effectively.

This spring, one grant of \$2,500 will be available to a Lowell home owner. The individual or family must be occupants of the proposed guest house. Applications will be reviewed on the basis of adaptability of the proposed guest house location and owner's demonstrated interest in participating in the program.



Jim Higgins

### Local Artisans Programs

The objective of this category is to encourage a wider understanding and appreciation of both fine and applied arts as well as craft traditions as they relate to historic Lowell.

For example, the Commission is seeking proposals for projects that include the collection and exhibition of historic arts and crafts, the application of old techniques to new art forms, and assembling works of art in a way that provides new insights into local cultural expression. Grant funds can be used for the materials required to design and construct an exhibit, for the purchase of specific works of art and craft and for the promotion of these forms of artistic expression. Grant funds may also be used to promote educational programs which bring art into the lives of the public. This can include projects for all ages—preschoolers to senior citizens.

The Commission hopes to award up to six grants ranging from \$500 to \$2000 each to qualified artists, art groups and associations, musicians, performers or other organizations involved in promoting the arts for the enjoyment of Park visitors and residents.





## Getting Started

Do you own an historic building located in the priority areas shown in the map at right? If you do, you may be eligible to receive a grant and/or a low interest loan to renovate your building. Both commercial and residential buildings may qualify for grants of up to 50% of approved costs. Loan rates are 40% of the prime interest rate.

The purpose of these financial assistance programs is to make quality rehabilitation of important buildings possible.

There are two annual funding cycles for grants and loans. February 20, 1981 is the Winter deadline; there is a second cycle this Summer. Applicants are encouraged to review their preliminary plans and cost estimates with the Commission staff.

Services available for applicants from the Commission staff include financial packaging, design suggestions, and help in interpreting the Commission's construction standards.

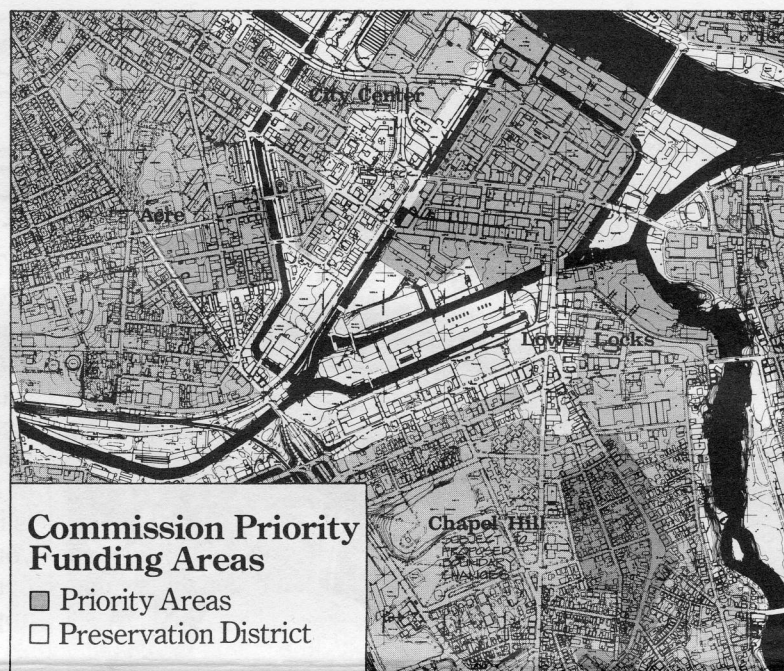
Applications for grants and loans will be evaluated according to these criteria:

— Is the building listed as

nationally significant in the Commission Index?

- Is the property in one of the four priority areas?
- Will the project have a positive impact on the Park and Preservation District and is it consistent with Commission goals?
- Is the applicant financially and technically able to satisfactorily complete the project?
- Is the Commission grant/loan important to the financial viability of the project?

Recipients will be designated approximately 45 days after the deadline.



## Grants

Grants will be awarded for exterior rehabilitation only. Funds can be applied to such items as windows, store fronts, masonry repair and cleaning and signage. The maximum grant amount is \$75,000. Applicants must submit their proposal (official application form, preliminary design, cost estimates) to the Commission prior to one of two annual deadlines.

The grant formula is as follows:

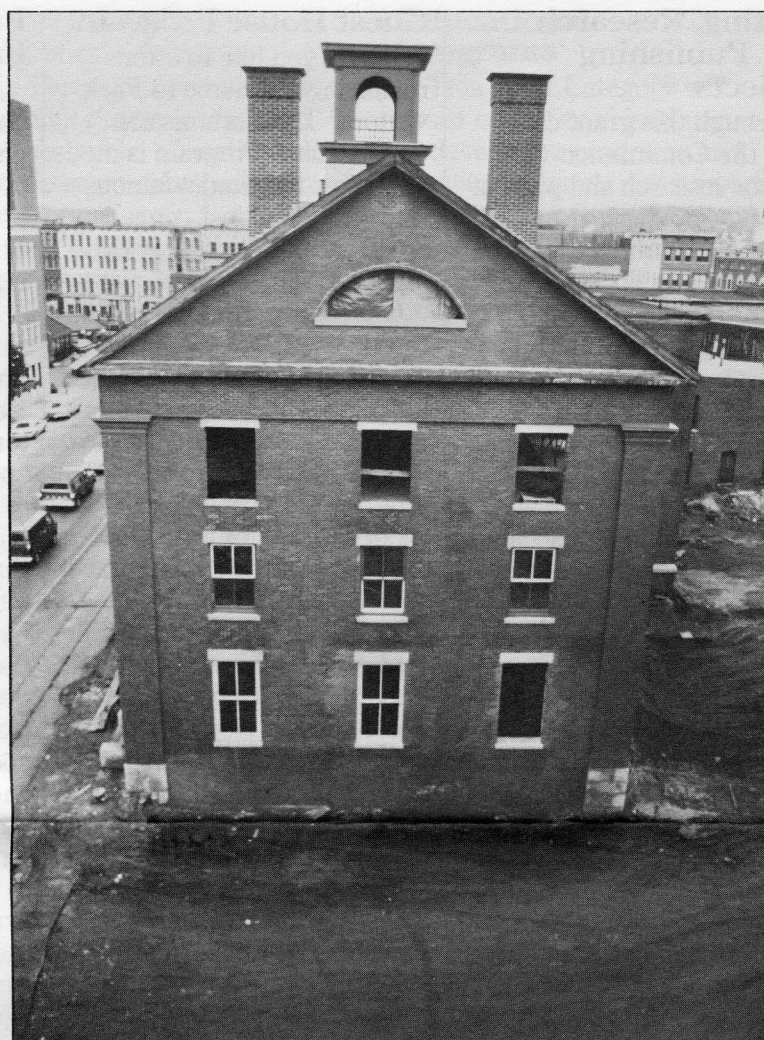
Exterior Cost	Commission Share
\$1,000-150,000	50%
\$150,000-	\$75,000

An applicant, once selected, will enter into a standard contract with the Commission. A final design must be approved and work can then commence. Reimbursement by the Commission will be made after work is satisfactorily completed. On larger projects it is possible to receive a portion of the grant after half of the work has been completed.

## Loans

Through an agreement with the Lowell Development and Financial Corporation (LDFC), loans for the rehabilitation of historic buildings are available at 40% of the prime interest rate. For example, if the prime interest rate is 20%, the LDFC rate would be 8%.

Owners of qualifying residential or commercial buildings (see Index) first apply to the Commission for a loan by



Old Market Building—grant funds at work.

submitting an official application form, preliminary design and cost estimates. A grant may also be applied for at the same time. If the Commission approves your loan request, it is then forwarded to the LDFC board with a financial application form. Upon approval by the LDFC, agreements are signed and your project can then proceed. An interim construction loan will probably be necessary because the LDFC low-interest loan begins after work is completed. Qualifying owners can

receive a loan of up to 30% of the value of their building after the improvements are made. For example, an owner of a building valued at \$50,000 who invests an additional \$50,000 (\$100,000 total appraised value) may borrow \$30,000, 30% of the total value. The maximum loan amount is \$75,000.

Between three and five loans will be made available annually. The LDFC will be responsible for determining creditworthiness and administering individual loans.

## Index and Standards

One of the Commission's major responsibilities is to develop standards for rehabilitation and new construction in the Preservation District and National Park.

The standards, which can be found in the *Details of the Preservation Plan*, were based on careful study of some 800 structures. As part of this study, all buildings were "indexed" or evaluated for their historical significance and importance to the city. The complete Index, also in the *Details*, lists all properties in the Park and District and includes construction dates, historic names, and other valuable information along with a rating of significance. Rating categories are: A—National Significance, B—Local Significance, C—Non-Contributing, and, D—Inconsistent. Buildings rated "A", depending upon their location, are eligible for Commission financial assistance.

The Standards themselves were designed to be used as guidelines to evaluate proposed projects involving historic properties. They cover general design issues as well as problems unique to older structures such as store front alterations, cleaning, replacing windows, and construction of additions. The idea is to give helpful, clear advice early in the process so that historic features are not lost. Experience has shown that timely and constructive suggestions on "good practice" can prevent most problems.

Standards are divided into

three groups: Existing Buildings, New Construction and Public Improvements. An example of the first type is standard "E-4 Masonry." Although work on old masonry may seem to be of no special concern, some common practices can be extremely detrimental to the appearance and life span of buildings constructed of brick and stone. The masonry standard describes preferred methods for cleaning historic buildings. It explains why, for example, sandblasting brick in an attempt to clean it not only alters its appearance, but can result in rapid deterioration by destroying the hard outer surface and mortar joints. Recommended instead, is cleaning with mild chemical solutions or plain water which preserves the original finish.

The Standards are now being used as informal guidelines by city and federal agencies in Lowell and will eventually be incorporated into City ordinances.



Jim Higgins



# Sample Grant Project

## The Howe Building

There is probably no such thing as a "typical" Commission grant, but a discussion of an actual project funded by the Commission might give you an idea of what's involved.

Located at 11 Kearney Square, the Howe building is listed in the Index as an A2 building. Because of its downtown location and historic significance, it qualified for a grant. The previous owner,

the Lowell Sun Publishing Co., donated the building in 1977 to the Architectural Conservation Trust (ACT) for Massachusetts with the stipulation that it be renovated in an historically sensitive manner.

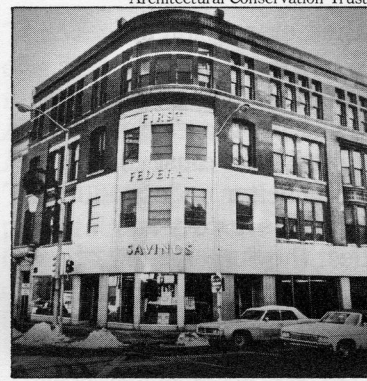
A Commission grant of \$25,000 was a key component of initial renovation costs. ACT also received grants of \$120,000 from the Massachusetts Historical Commission, and \$4,000 from the City's facade program. The Lowell Development and Financial Corporation made the owners a low interest loan of \$32,000. This sort of "creative financing" is typical of many projects in Lowell.



Howe Building circa 1895.

When ACT requested a Commission grant, the staff reviewed their proposal for consistency with the Commission's preservation guidelines. The staff felt several issues needed more consideration:

U. of Lowell



Before rehabilitation.

the handicap access and the method of masonry cleaning. For the access, the Commission architect worked out an alternative scheme to make the wheelchair ramp compatible with the historic facade.

Architectural Conservation Trust



Howe Building today.

Jim Higgins

For cleaning, the staff recommended an approach that matched the method of chemical cleaning to the building's soil condition.

## An Interview With Martha Mayo

When Martha Mayo took over the University of Lowell's Special Collections in 1973, it consisted of little more than 600 boxes of unsorted material, stored in a building with a leaky roof, and an excellent cataloguing system which had yet to be put into place. Unlike today when hardly an hour goes by without an inquisitive student or Park researcher seeking her assistance, Mayo's first year at the Special Collections was a lonely one. Tucked away in the library, without even a phone, she set to the task of poring through the thousands of photographs, maps, technical documents and records and categorizing them for future use.

Did she have any idea how invaluable this information would soon become to scholars, park planners, and architects seeking to renovate Lowell's historic buildings? "I caught the Park bug," she recalls, "when the Model Cities people convinced me

there would be a Park... that it was possible." She helped them dig through countless early photographs of canal locks, walls, mills and bridges being built and repaired and journals of those in charge.

Fortunately, Lowell's early planners, men like Kirk Boott and James B. Francis, kept excellent records of their activities. This gives the collection unusual strength, because "... they had a strong sense that what they were doing was unique and that records should be kept," according to Mayo. This information helped determine the location of the National Park and made a good case to Congress for its establishment.

Today the Special Collections are housed on the top floor of the University's Alumni/Lydon Library. Researchers have already based a number of significant books and dissertations on information found here. The collection attracts so many

scholars because it contains material in four areas of national interest: immigration, labor, women and local history.

Are all the interesting subjects already over-researched? Not according to Mayo, who promises she has any number of ideas for projects for which there is a wealth of hardly touched information. Not surprising for a collection that includes "over 10,000 books, pamphlets and reports... and paintings, photographs, letters, diaries, company records, newspapers, films and tape recordings." With her background in American History and Library Science, she constantly looks for new ways the collection can be used.

The Special Collections are open weekdays 8:30-5 and until 10:30 PM Monday evenings. Special arrangements can also be made by calling 452-5000 x 2388. If you're interested in Lowell's history and want to dig for it, this is the place. If you have records



or photographs you think future researchers will want, why not pay a call on one of the "unsung heroines" of

Lowell's renaissance whose work is making sure that the city's future will have a firm base in its past.

## Minority Business Agreement Signed

Commission chairman John Duff signs an agreement with James McLaurin of the Small Business Administration pledging assistance to minority business endeavors related to preservation in Lowell. Witnessing the signing, from left to right, are Commissioners Armand LeMay, Robert Crecco, and Pat Mogan.



Lowell Historic Preservation Commission  
Department of the Interior  
204 Middle Street  
Lowell, Massachusetts 01852

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