

BRIEFING PAPER

LOWELL HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

April 15, 1983

Boott Boarding House - Mogan Cultural Center

The NPS Land Acquisition Chief, Paul Cotter has reached a tentative agreement with Locks and Canals to acquire the boarding house. The sale will take place once final approval is obtained from Washington, and a few remaining issues are resolved regarding access to the building. This should coincide with the Commission's construction schedule which calls for the exterior work to be advertised in June with a late summer start up date. Perry, Dean and Partners have submitted their partial construction documents which are due in final form in May. The drawings are almost complete and appear well organized and clearly presented. They have also been asked to submit a price proposal for construction supervision services for the work.

Trolley

Work is proceeding well on construction of the cars although Dan Cohen's trip to Ida Grove last month uncovered a potential problem with the Boston & Maine's vertical clearance standards. The staff is attempting to resolve these and many other issues with the B & M, making sure that the specifications for the overhead system are corrected at the same time. While this has necessitated additional engineering to comply with B & M review suggestions, it is occurring before construction of the overhead system has been advertised and awarded. Meanwhile the operating agreement negotiated by the Park Service with the railroad has been approved by the B & M trustees.

A motion will be introduced at the Commission meeting to amend the contract with Louis T. Klauder and Associates, our consulting engineers on the trolley project. This is needed to cover the additional time required to resolve problems raised by B & M prior to preparation of construction bid packages for the overhead system. These include special contracting methods, supervision, clearances, pole locations, etc.

History Conference

The Lowell Conference on Industrial History is set for April 29-30 at the University of Lowell. Commissioners and staff will receive passes to the conference at the upcoming meeting. Governor Dukakis will open the gathering of historians, preservationists, teachers, and other scholars at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, April 29. The conference will conclude with a session at the Park Visitor Center at Market Mills where Park and Commission officials will discuss current programs and development plans in Lowell.

Central Street/Pawtucket Canal

The Commission's architectural consultants, Childs, Bertman and Tseckares (CBT) are preparing the bid documents for the demolition of Martin's Clothing and the Strand Theater entrance. The Commission has received a commitment from the Lowell Revitalization Committee, owners of the Strand, for reimbursement of that portion of the costs. Allowing for the relocation of the Martin's Clothing building and the bidding process, the demolition should occur in August. The authority will be requested to advertise for a demolition contractor.

Prior to the demolition, the steam pipes that are hanging on the support platform must be relocated to the north canal wall. The staff will negotiate an easement and a cost for this work with Locks and Canals.

The overall construction schedule is dependent upon the completion of an accurate land survey. While this issue has been complicated by changing field conditions and problems with obtaining accurate data, the staff and CBT have reevaluated the situation and are proceeding to remedy the situation as follows: 1) Robert Gill & Associates, low bidder on earlier related work, will proceed with a limited scope of work. Gill will complete the work relating to the landing, Lowell Sun Garage and Martin's. 2) The Gemarde's plaza, the most crucial area in the project, has been advertised for bid. This will delay the project by about a month, but will assure a competitive bid process. 3) The previous surveyor for the plaza met with the staff several weeks ago and agreed to withdraw his inaccurate survey and not to request payment. The staff then agreed to withdraw the determination of default.

Related to the improvements in the area, the Commission is obligated to repair the south facade of the Gemarde Jewellery building that was attached to World's Furniture. In addition, Joan Fabrics has agreed to make landscape improvements to the north edge of the parking lot in return for design services. The staff is investigating the most cost effective way to obtain the architectural and landscape services and the most efficient schedule for the work.

The survey delays will result in the project being bid late this summer. This will mean that the work will not be completed until the following construction season. While this is unfortunate, past lessons have indicated that attempts to fast track design and contracting work often end in expensive cost overruns. A full explanation will be made at our meeting.

Market Mills HVAC

The Commission's engineers, R.G. Vanderweil, have submitted bid documents to complete the HVAC and Make-Up Air systems at the Melting Pot. Bid documents have been put together for solicitation with a bid opening scheduled for May 18. A 45-day construction period is planned. This work will connect the make-up air system that was installed last fall to the kitchen exhaust hoods at the Melting Pot, allowing the present air condition cooling system to work efficiently. It is estimated that the work will cost between \$25-40,000. This is substantially less than the \$100,000 cost estimate for a full HVAC system which would have been necessary if the previous engineering recommendations actions had been followed.

Maintenance Services at the Melting Pot

The staff has issued findings that the low bidder for the maintenance services at the Melting Pot has not met the criteria as a responsible experienced firm capable of performing the required services. This is because the firm, Ultimate Cleaning Services of Lowell, has no experience doing maintenance for a comparable operation. In addition, the firm was established as a partnership in February, has no personnel or working facility, has little capital and assets, and no established reputation to determine competency. The SBA must rule on this matter before a contract can be awarded.

A Brush With History

A new artist will be recommended for acceptance into A Brush With History this month. Hiroko Trainor, a Lowell resident, is well known in Greater Lowell for her watercolor paintings and oriental calligraphy. She has won numerous awards in regional exhibitions and is a member of the Copley Society and Lowell Art Association. She will share space with weaver Louise Abbott and metalsmith Passiko Hastings. Acceptance of Ms. Trainor will mean that the artists' space is completely filled.

Spring Events

A series of colorful and entertaining weekly events are planned for May at Market Mills. Each Friday during the month the courtyard will feature live music, art displays, and an open air market atmosphere with carts from Lowell A La Carte. The Park Service and Commission will assist the Market Mills tenants in coordinating the events. The activity will add to the liveliness of the courtyard and draw the crowds back to Market Mills.

The annual Spring Festival, under the direction of the Greater Lowell Regatta Festival Foundation, begins May 28, coinciding with the opening of the National Park tour season. The Lowell Sun bicycle race, concerts, and an ethnic festival are a few of the offerings during the three day celebration.

Leasing

Business Systems Applications (Digital) has officially opened for business at Market Mills.

The Commission will be presented with a proposal for consideration from Mr. David Ray of Lowell who would like to lease 1,200 sq.ft. of space at Market Mills to open a combination gift and general convenience store. Mr. Ray, through a program available to handicapped persons, has obtained a \$100,000 loan from The Small Business Administration. This loan is conditioned on a five year lease. Further details will be presented at the Commission meeting.

Marketing activity for the remaining space continues with efforts focussing on follow-up telephone calls and canvassing.

Acquisition

The appraisal report for the Boott Mill Counting House and Coal Pocket at Boott Mill should be completed by the next meeting. The Commission may be requested to authorize negotiations to purchase these buildings. An agreement to purchase the Wang/Capehart Building is being negotiated with Wang Laboratories.

Relocation

The Solicitor's Office and Land's Office are reviewing the Sullivan relocation claim and will be advising the Commission on the course of action that must be taken to resolve the issue.

Budget

Based on concerns over potential operating shortfalls in FY 1984 and 1985, the Executive Director met in Washington with the head of the National Park Service Budget Office, Dan Salisbury. Mr. Salisbury was not optimistic about additional monies for FY 1984 due to a lack of anticipated contingency money. He did indicate that with a high regional priority ranking for FY 1985, he believed a strong case could be made for additional funds. The major costs faced by the Commission are personnel and maintenance costs related to the Market Mills, Central Street development area and Boott Mill Boarding House.

Standards

Thanks to the efforts of Dr. Duff and several other Commission members a meeting is being scheduled with Senator Phillip Shea to discuss a compromise on the Historic Board and District legislation. The meeting will include Mayor Fleming who has been the main objector to the proposal.