THE PROPOSED ROXBURY HERITAGE STATE PARK: A LOOK AT ITS ROLE IN COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

by

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B.A., Antioch University (1981)

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE
DEGREE OF

MASTER OF CITY PLANNING

at the

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

May, 1989

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Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning on May 22, 1989 in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of City Planning

ABSTRACT

Five years ago, plans for a Heritage State Park in Roxbury began. Today, the Park remains in the planning stage with two specific sites to be highlighted and developed in separate phases by the Department of Environmental Management (DEM). Heritage State Parks throughout Massachusetts have functioned as a catalyst for growth in their host communities. The Parks commemorate a community's built and natural history, as well as its people. Usually, the Parks focus on past history. Because the ethnic and racial makeup of Roxbury has changed drastically over the past 50 years, the Heritage Park must be careful to reflect the needs of current day residents and focus on "living history." This thesis examines the proposal for Roxbury's Park in light of its mandate for community revitalization. An alternate Plan is presented that addresses issues not covered in the Department of Environmental Management master Plan for the Roxbury Heritage State Park. Specifically, the issues pertaining to "economic revitalization", "heritage", and siting for the Park. The Alternate Plan proposes a theme and sequence of site development that will insure a more effective revitalization strategy for Roxbury.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the role of culture in the development of communities has been increasingly recognized by public officials and communities nationwide. As a result, urban and regional planners have begun to include cultural components in their overall revitalization efforts. Highlighting the cultural resources of a community can have a tremendous impact on its image and hence, increase its desirability for permanent residents, investors, and visitors.

Culture can influence development positively in several ways:

1) It can be a catalyst for economic growth and in some instances provide an economic base. Natural and built features as well as cultural events often draw tourists year-round to some communities.

2) Permanent residents can be drawn into a region because of the activities and amenities present, particularly if residents feel a connection with the image of the community.

3) It can attract out-of-region visitors who will spend money at cultural events as well as in the surrounding businesses.

4) The aesthetics of the physical environment can be improved by cultural amenities such as parks, open space, and public art which enhance a community's image and in turn generate investment.

5) The quality of life for residents can be improved which in turn increases human potential and interest in preserving and contributing to a community.

Too often, those who influence the built environment focus on new or futuristic developments when planning growth.
Preservation of the social and cultural significance of communities has often been overlooked or discarded in favor of developments with a more contemporary theme such as shopping plazas or entertainment parks.

A system for cultural preservation has been implemented by Massachusetts with the Heritage State Park System and in New York with its Urban Cultural Park System. Both states have used the parks to preserve their resources and at the same time stimulate economic development. The parks illustrate the significant historical, cultural, and natural history themes that shaped their communities or regions.

The Boston community of Roxbury provides an excellent opportunity for development of a Heritage State Park. With its rich and diverse cultural history, natural features, and historic sites there is an exciting story to tell. This community epitomizes the common American story of a community's change from an agricultural to an industrial district with a diverse multi-ethnic heritage as a backdrop.

Roxbury contains the largest concentration of historic sites in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The National Register has identified 550 buildings of historic significance in a designated section of Roxbury. In addition, more dramatically than any other community in Massachusetts, Roxbury's ethnic composition has been drastically transformed

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over the past century. The first non-Indian settlers here were the British followed by the Irish. Later, Roxbury was home to a large Jewish community and today is composed primarily of black and Hispanic residents from the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean.\textsuperscript{2} Together, these unique features are worth commemoration through a Heritage State Park.

Five years ago, plans for a Heritage State Park in Roxbury began. Today, the Park remains in the planning stage with two specific sites to be highlighted and developed in two different phases by the Department of Environmental Management (DEM). The DEM master plan proposes development of the Dillaway Thomas House, a historic house located in John Elliot Square as the first step in the Park development. The second phase will be the development of the Nawn Factory site located in the Dudley Square district. This structure is the first industrial building in Roxbury. The site also includes the Eustis Street Burying Ground and the Eustis Street Firehouse. Both have been designated by the Boston Landmarks Commission as historic landmarks.\textsuperscript{3}


This thesis proposes an Alternate Plan for the Roxbury Heritage State Park in light of the interests of the community and the mandate of DEM. This Plan will focus on community economic revitalization for Lower Roxbury. Instead of beginning the Park at the Dillaway Thomas House, this study will demonstrate the benefits of beginning the Park at the Nawn Factory site and then proceeding to the Dudley Station area in a subsequent phase. Completion of the site at the Dillaway Thomas House will be the last phase in the Park development.

The plans outlined in the Master Plan are similar to those undertaken in other Heritage Parks as they focus heavily on the past histories of the communities. The Alternate Plan will recognize the history of Roxbury, but will emphasize "living history" -- all aspects of the various cultures that live and work in Roxbury. The "living history" will be reflected in the food, music, arts and every day activities of this multi-cultural community.

The drastic change in demographics in the community coupled with the poor image Roxbury has with outside communities requires a different approach to the Heritage Park concept. Because Roxbury has changed from a predominantly white community to a black and Hispanic one, it is necessary to place emphasis on the current residents. The constant daily reminders in the media of the drugs and street violence and poor race relations between black and white residents of
Boston contribute to an image of Roxbury being and undesirable place to live and visit. The Alternate Plan recognizes this obstacle and will suggest themes and a development strategy that will draw the interest of people of color, whites, and those inside and outside the Roxbury community.

This thesis will outline a plan for "marketing" the culture of the current residents and weaving them into the Alternate Plan's themes of Culture, Community, Transportation and Industry.

Below are specific criteria to evaluate the appropriateness of the DEM plan based on its goals to: commemorate a community's heritage; preserve its natural and built resources; and revitalize the community.

The Criteria are:

* **Preservation** - the plan should illustrate the preservation of the most significant sites that bear relevance to the community.

* **Economic Revitaliation** - the plan should effectively illustrate the role the Park will play in the economic revitalization of the community.

* **Visibility** - the plan should highlight sites that provide the most visibility to attract local interest and private investment in the area.

* **Education** - the plan should clearly tell a story of the people or the place, and demonstrate the educational value of the interpretative exhibits and information presented.

* **Recreation** - the Park should be oriented to residents and visitors who use the sites and provide and encourage light recreational use.
Based on the above criteria, I have evaluated the current Master Plan for the RHSP and concluded that it falls short of meeting the criteria in the most effective way. Specifically as it pertains to community economic revitalization. As outlined in the Master Plan, the restoration of the Dillaway Thomas House is the first step in the Park development. If this were undertaken as planned, it is at risk of being limited to a historic rehabilitation effort, that is not much more than a museum. Because the house is located away from the core commercial district, renovation will have less economic impact on Roxbury. The history of the Dillaway Thomas House is rooted in the English presence in Roxbury. While this aspect is significant and worth commemoration, it should be done at a later date given the limited resources available to complete the entire Park. The Master Plan does possess the same objectives as the Alternate Plan, however the latter addresses additional issues pertaining to the cultural and economic changes in Roxbury's history. In this study, Chapter One describes the Heritage State Park system in Massachusetts with an overview of two Parks in the state. Chapter Two provides background information on the history of Roxbury and identifies the sites that are historically significant and suitable for a Heritage State Park. Chapter Three outlines the DEM Proposal for the Roxbury Heritage State Park and ends with an evaluation of the plans. In Chapter Four, the Alternate Plan is described with focus on the
sequence of development and how to lay a successful foundation for the Park. Chapter Five describes Phase Two of the Park and briefly describes Phase Three. In Chapter Six I will recommend political strategies for Park development, administration and maintenance. This chapter will include recommendations for maintaining interest and commitment on the part of administrative bodies, community organizations and the general community. The Conclusion will evaluate the Alternate Plan's ability to meet the goals of the RHSP and the criteria outlined in the "Introduction."
CHAPTER ONE
AN OVERVIEW OF THE HERITAGE STATE PARK SYSTEM IN MASSACHUSETTS

The concept of Urban Heritage State Parks began in 1970 when the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management began examining tools for enhancement and economic growth throughout Massachusetts. The State developed the idea with two primary goals --- "the preservation of the cultural heritage of a town, and the development of the resources that comprise the area's heritage to increase public appreciation and enjoyment of these cultural assets." In 1979 the state's department of Environmental Management approved $35 million for urban parks in older industrial cities throughout Massachusetts. Eight cities - Lynn, Lawrence, North Adams, Fall River, Lowell, Gardner, Holyoke, and Springfield were selected because of their declining state (poor housing stock, and economic problems). All needed revitalization as they had been victims of disinvestment for several decades. *

Since the initial cities were targeted, the legislature has appropriated an additional $75.8 million for five new parks

bringing the total to $110 million. The collaboration between the State, municipalities, and private investors has been essential to the success of the Heritage State Parks.

Each park has an interpretative theme with a combination of architectural and natural resource features, as well as exhibits. Themes vary throughout the system and generally focus on 19th century industries as in the case of Lowell, Lawrence, Fall River and Holyoke which were all mill towns.

In all of the cities that house Heritage Parks, the impact has been positive. Not only have the parks resulted in the preservation of historic and cultural features, but they have contributed to the economic expansion of their host cities and towns. A 1987 report produced by the DEM indicates that the total investment of $58.713 million in eight Heritage Parks resulted in $176.205 million in public improvement, and $535.085 million in private investment adjacent to the Heritage Parks. There has been a multiplier effect on the area surrounding the Parks. New developments, housing, businesses, public improvements and

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6 Department of Environmental Management. 1987. **Private and Other Public Investments Associated With Heritage Parks.** The Department of Environmental Management, Boston, MA.

7 Ibid.
increased interest in the area have been the after effects of Heritage Parks. The direct effect of the parks however has been difficult to measure quantitatively as some improvements may have occurred without the presence of the Parks. Instead, it has been easier to determine the less tangible impact simply through the transformation that has occurred. The new look of these cities have resulted in increased confidence and optimism about the future of the cities and towns in the Park system.

In the cities of Lowell and Holyoke the impact has been the most evident. A brief look at the Parks in both cities will describe their impact on the aesthetics of the immediate environment as well as the economic expansion that has taken place. The "story" of Lowell and Holyoke is somewhat different from that of Roxbury as the first two cities have been historically more homogenous in their racial makeup, (though not in their ethnic composition) and have had specific industries rooted in their histories. Roxbury has seen a drastic change in its demographics over the past century and has no one particular industrial story or historic feature that is prominent. Instead, Roxbury could draw upon a number of themes and sites for its Park.

Despite these differences, there is a commonality that runs through the histories of these areas -- all experienced disinvestment and a negative image of their communities.
LOWELL

The Lowell Heritage State Park is the most unique of the Parks as it was developed in conjunction with a National Park Service effort to commemorate Lowell's heritage. The State's action served as a catalyst to encourage federal involvement. Currently, both agencies share facilities and are responsible for different aspects of programming and administration. Federal funding allowed the development of a more elaborate and extensive Heritage Park than anywhere else in the Park system.

Lowell was the first planned industrial city in the United States and was founded in 1822. Located on the Merrimack River, the "Spindle City" was transformed from an agricultural district to a thriving industrial center overnight with its textile mills and extensive canal system. *

Lowell's setting allowed it to be at the forefront of the industrial revolution. Mill complexes grew during the 1830's and 40's and continued throughout the 19th century. As a result, the area became attractive to Americans and immigrants from Europe and the British Isles. The use of electrical power at the turn of the century eliminated the need for industries to be located near water power. The textile industry moved South until the 1920's where raw materials and labor were cheaper. Mills began to close and the canals

* Ibid., pp. 9 - 14.
became obsolete as the city's economy began to contract. This decline continued for several decades though Lowell retained a manufacturing industry centered around furniture and textile production. Jobs were lost steadily however and a drastic decline in employment occurred throughout the 1970's.9

Accompanying the drop in manufacturing was the decline in retail establishments. With these problems facing the city, the need for a potent economic revitalization tool became apparent to public officials. The Heritage Park concept was seen as an appropriate revitalization tool.10

**Development of Lowell's Park**

The Lowell Heritage State Park was developed around the extensive canal system and the historic mill buildings throughout the city.11 The Park is located is what was considered to be one of the least attractive parts of the city -- a district characterized by abandoned factory buildings and clearly one not to be visited in the evenings.

Today, the Park attracts visitors to tours of the mills and canals, as well as to cultural events in the daytime and the evenings. Since the completion of the Lowell Park, visitors

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9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
have increased steadily. In fiscal year 1988, 361,145 people visited the Lowell Heritage Park.  

The visitor center at the Park shares facilities with the National Park Service so there have been additional financial support for the development of the Park. This visitor's center houses restaurants, a quilt museum, a bookstore, and arts and crafts shops, and galleries.

The Park has contributed to a positive image for the district it is located in and to the general Lowell community. Lowell has become a place with tourist and cultural attractions that is frequented by local residents and out of region visitors.

In the area immediately surrounding the Park sites, private commercial and retail facilities have sprung up. Public contributions such as pedestrian improvements, renovated 19th century features (ie. lampposts, brick sidewalks), and free consultation for facade restoration of commercial buildings have all contributed to a new look for the area.

HOLYOKE

Holyoke is a community of 40,000 residents located in the Connecticut River Valley. The city was one of the largest industrial centers in the state during the mid - to late 1800's. An elaborate canal system converted water from the

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Connecticut River into waterpower to operate the numerous textile and paper mills that existed in Holyoke. As in the case of Lowell, it was a planned industrial city and a "company town". Every development was controlled by Holyoke Water Power Company until the 1920's. Holyoke was also the center of a thriving paper-making industry and earned the name "Paper City". After the 1920's the town experienced a economic decline as industries moved South. Until several years ago the town was characterized by older housing stock and abandoned factory buildings. The once vibrant downtown area began declining during the 1960's as major retail stores were closed and shopping centers sprung up on the outskirts of the town.

By the 1970's, Holyoke had a high unemployment rate and dilapidated housing stock. The city was dubbed the "Arson Capital of New England" due to the large number of arson fires that occurred in the area. Up until 1982 store after store folded in downtown Holyoke. It was clear that Holyoke was in need of an economic development plan and public officials welcomed the idea of a Heritage Park.

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14 Ibid.


16 Ibid.
In early 1980, an abandoned railyard and mill building were selected to be the focus of the Park. A mixed use development was proposed to house a visitor center and a combination of state and privately funded facilities. 

Several months after the initial plans were drawn up, a fire destroyed both sites. The disaster was viewed as entertainment for many residents who brought lawn chairs and refreshments to watch the spectacular fire. The general sentiment was one of acceptance by the community as little value was placed on these historic buildings. Given Holyoke's history of fires, the burning of two more old buildings was seen as inevitable. By the Fall of 1980, plans were underway to develop another Heritage Park. A five-acre park on a freight yard was completed in 1984 with a new building reminiscent of a railroad roundhouse to house a visitor's center.

Exhibits interpret the history of this industrial city through the dams, canals, and paper and thread mills that existed in the area. The story of the various immigrants that populated the area is also told through the exhibits.

Visitors now flock to the Park to view exhibits and participate in cultural events. During fiscal year 1988, the

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17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
Park received 179,771 visitors. Some travel to the site on a renovated rail car that transports passengers between the Park and a shopping area outside the city.

The contemporary style visitor center is a good example of the results of collaboration between, state, local and private funds. The building houses a Children's Museum, a Volleyball Hall of Fame and a children's discount clothing store. Since the development of the Park other improvements took place in Holyoke. The city enlisted the aid of the state's Main Street Program to revitalize the city's main street and foster an appreciation of the historic buildings.

In 1985, the Greater Holyoke Inc. a local business association did a complete study of downtown Holyoke and encouraged local banks to pool funds for facade renovation. After the facade improvement program there was a festival to "celebrate Holyoke". Holyoke became a place to be proud of and as in the case of Lowell, a sense of pride and optimism was restored.

The Parks in Lowell and Holyoke were developed in highly visible locations and became integral parts of the community. Both were developed near commercial centers that

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20 Interview with Bob Freedman, Chief of Urban Services, DEM. 1989.


22 Ibid.
were suffering from disinvestment and were revitalized through the Heritage Park. The link with the commercial districts provided private investors with an excellent opportunity to become involved and created a multiplier effect.

The potential for similar results exists in the Dudley Square area of Roxbury. With its historic buildings, highly visible location, and need for retail facilities, the district has the essential ingredients for a successful Park.

A closer examination of Roxbury's history and its resources is described in the following chapter.
CHAPTER TWO

THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ROXBURY

Roxbury is a multi-racial community that has experienced drastic economical and demographical changes over the past century. Once an affluent residential community, this district has been transformed into an inner-city neighborhood suffering from economic decline. High unemployment rates, poverty, a shortage of housing, drugs, and general disinvestment are the primary concerns of this community. Despite these current conditions, Roxbury is one of the most fascinating districts in the Boston area. Its rich and diverse history could play a significant role in its future particularly if interpreted through a Heritage State Park.

Since archeological studies have indicated the presence of Indians in Roxbury centuries ago, we can assume that they were the first to settle there. The first white settlers arrived from England in 1630 and made their homes in the Roxbury Highlands. They were attracted to Roxbury because of it fertile farmlands, hills, and abundance of brooks and streams. This area soon became a farming community that provided Boston with goods throughout the 17th and 18th century. When the first English settlers arrived the

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Highlands were forested and the lowlands consisted of pastures and marshes.

It was on these lowlands that the first industries were established. They were primarily farm-related (grist mills and tanning shops). By the 1800's, a distillery, turpentine factory, and wharf existed in the same area. The Roxbury Canal was located in the lowlands within a few hundred feet of the Nawn Factory site but was eventually filled.

Roxbury was connected to Boston by a narrow strip of land that ran between Back Bay and South Cove (See Fig. 1.) Washington Street ran along that neck of land and still remains a major route to Roxbury. During the American Revolution, Roxbury proved to be a significant asset to the American Army as troops used the Highlands for a lookout.

Fig. 1

STUDY MAP OF ROXBURY, 1845.
However, the town suffered considerable damage during the Siege of Boston (1775-1776) and many of the houses in the lowlands were destroyed.²⁴

Throughout the 1700 and 1800's there were three main centers in Roxbury: John Eliot Square, Dudley Square and the lowlands around the Nawn Factory Site. Much of the residential development in Roxbury occurred between 1870 and 1900. It was during this period that the bays between Boston and Roxbury were filled and access to both centers was increased.²⁵ During the 17th and 18th centuries most of Roxbury residents were white Anglo-Saxon families. During the latter part of the 19th century, Jewish families began moving into Roxbury.²⁶

Blacks in Roxbury:

Although blacks were present in Roxbury since the 1600's, the population was relatively small until the 20th century. Blacks were brought to Roxbury as slaves and worked primarily as house servants.²⁷

²⁴ Ibid.


²⁶ Ibid.

During the first part of this century, Black families moved into the northern portions of Roxbury. A large migration of blacks from the South occurred during the 1940's and 50's. This group was predominantly lower-income. By the beginning of the 1960's Roxbury had been transformed from a predominantly white community to a black and Hispanic one. Today, a large group of black and Hispanic families from the Caribbean, and Cape Verde Islands have joined the African-American population. 

Poor housing stock and economic decline became most evident in Roxbury during the 1950's. This was a result of general disinvestment in the area. Today, Roxbury is a mix of middle class sections and neighborhoods characterized by abandoned buildings, vacant lots and street crime.

Over the past twenty years community groups have advocated for improved conditions in Roxbury. The desire for more jobs, housing, economic revitalization, and less crime are key concerns for this community.

Community groups such as the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative have been a vehicle for voicing Roxbury's concerns. Economic revitalization is seen as they key to solving much of

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28 The Boston Redevelopment Authority, pp. 1-4
the problems that face this community. 30

This thesis supports the view that economic revitalization is the foundation for growth and change in the community. Thus, the area that holds the most potential for Roxbury is its commercial districts.

LOCATION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF CORE SITES

The Dillaway - Thomas House

The Dillaway-Thomas House is an 18th century structure located in John Eliot Square and is targeted for major restoration. Upon completion, it will provide temporary headquarters for the Park as well as a center for educational, recreational, and cultural activities for the community.31

Built between 1750 and 1754, this three story wood structure is approximately 4,200 sq. ft and sits on a 16,494 sq. ft lot. It is currently vacant and in poor condition due to neglect and damage from a 1983 fire. 32


31 Heritage State Park Master Plan. pp. 7-14

The house was built by Reverend Oliver Peabody, pastor of the First Church of Roxbury and it is believed that completion was done by those that succeeded him. During the siege of Boston, the Continental army was headquartered there but the house reverted to a parsonage after the American Revolution. One of its' later tenants was Charles Dillaway, a local teacher, historian and deacon of the church.  

The City of Boston purchased the house in 1927 in order to use the site for a school but the Roxbury community opposed demolition of the house. A restoration effort was undertaken in the 1930's and from 1933 to 1969 the house was home to the Roxbury Historical Society. Since 1969 the house has been unoccupied and is currently in poor physical condition.  

John Eliot Square

The first residents of Roxbury settled in John Eliot Square thus, the Square could be considered the area of Roxbury with the oldest known history. Arriving in 1630, the British settlers were attracted to the wooded hills and abundant streams and brooks nearby. Within the first two

33 Roxbury Past and Present, pp. 10-18
years of arriving in Roxbury, residents built the First Church of Roxbury which became the center for all community activities. The first pastor of the church was John Eliot an Englishman who was well known for his missionary work with the Indians. Later, other homes were erected and "meeting house hill" became the center for cultural and religious activities in Roxbury during the 17th and 18th century.  

Fig. 2.

First Church at John Elliot Square (1700's)

Three centuries of architecture and history can be observed today in John Eliot Square. The Dillaway-Thomas House and the First Church recall a more rural aspect of this area while an Art Deco style school and modern brick buildings

34 Ibid.
represent different eras of the 20th century. On a sidewalk on Centre Street stands the Parting Stone," a slab of stone originally set in the road in 1776. The stone points to the direction of Watertown, Rhode Island, Boston and Newton and is now positioned against a building. A billboard above the same building advertises a Boston radio station. Some new buildings have been constructed across the street from the church and a few brick 19th century buildings have been restored.

Fig. 3

John Elliot Square Today
The Nawn Factory Site

The Nawn Factory sits at the corner of Washington Street and Melnea Cass Boulevard in Lower Roxbury. Adjacent lots contain the Roxbury Burying Ground and the Eustis Street Firehouse. The total size of the site is 42,120 sq. ft. The factory, burying ground and firehouse are contained within the Eustis Street Architectural Conservation District.\(^3\) A designation determined by the Boston Landmarks Commission. The Firehouse and the Burying Ground are on the National Register of Historic Places.

The factory is a 1880 Industrial Italianate structure and is one of the last nineteenth-century industrial buildings left in Roxbury. It replaced a wooden two-story structure that was built in 1835 and housed a leather dressing business. This two story brick building is a monument to the transition Lower Roxbury made from a rural to an industrial district during the late 1800's. \(^3\)

The factory site was first owned by George Alcock, one of the first settlers in Roxbury, who purchased the property in the 1630's. Alcock was a deacon at the first Church and a physician. He was an ancestor of Bronson and Louisa May Alcott.

\(^3\) Heritage State Park Master Plan, 1986, p. 7

\(^3\) Preservation Development Inventory.
After several owners the property was divided and an office building was erected in the late 1790's. At that time two other buildings existed nearby on Washington Street. All three laid the foundation for a commercial and industrial district.

Subsequent owners continued the commercial use of the building. In addition to the Nawn Factory, a tavern, bowling alley tenement house, tannery, and a barber shop have stood on the site.

In 1860, the portion of the property containing the leather factory was sold. In 1868, Owen Nawn bought the portion of the lot with the building situated on the east side of Washington Street. Nawn was a building contractor and developer and his company was one of the sub-contractors for Dudley Station. 37

The property remained in the hands of private owners until 1969 when the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Department of Public Works acquired it for a highway project that was eventually cancelled.

The Eustis Street Firehouse

The Eustis Street Firehouse is the oldest standing firehouse in Boston. The first firehouse on this street was

a two-story Greek Revival building constructed in 1829. The firehouse that stands on the same site today is a 1859 brick Italinate structure with a wood addition in the rear that was built in 1869.38

This building commemorates two aspects of Roxbury's history: 1) the transition of Roxbury from an agricultural community to an urban one as the public sector was now involved in the provision of services, and, 2) the change in fire fighting methodology during the last century. The latter is documented by the wood addition to the rear of the building which was added to house hook and ladder, and horse drawn equipment. A portion of the building was reserved for a stable and a hay door and loft still remain. 39

The firehouse discontinued its use in 1916 with the introduction of large motorized equipment. The building served as a meeting place for Spanish-American War Veteran groups who made interior alterations. The exterior has changed little during the past 140 years.

In 1969, the Boston Parks and Recreation Department was met with vehement opposition when they proposed demolition of the building. The firehouse is currently owned by the Boston Parks and Recreation Department.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.
The Roxbury Burying Ground

The Roxbury Burying Ground was established in 1630 and commemorates the earliest portion of Roxbury's development. It is one of the three oldest cemeteries in Boston. Many of Roxbury's earliest residents are buried here including John Eliot and members of the Dudley family. There is no documentation of slaves buried in this ground through they were present in Roxbury. It is possible that they are buried there with unmarked gravestones or the initial graves were relocated.

The Nawn Factory and the Firehouse are remnants of what was once the industrial center of Roxbury. Today, the factory site consists of the Nawn factory, a wooden house in the rear of the building, the burying ground, and the firehouse. All of the buildings are in need of repair and are boarded up. Though the grass in the cemetery is kept mowed, many of the stones in the cemetery are falling over and need to be reset.

Dudley Station and the Adjacent Buildings

Dudley Square was the center of commercial activity in Roxbury during the 19th century and for the first 50 years of the twentieth century. The Dudley Station, a turn of the

* Ibid.
*1 Ibid.
century structure has been a central feature in this district. The station is located at the intersection of Warren, Dudley, and Washington Streets. It has been a crossroad for the past two centuries as the roads to Boston, Newton, and the Roxbury farmlands converge here. This district was the second largest commercial center in Boston. The Area around the station has been an important center for Roxbury's Black and Hispanic communities and continues to be. For decades, the station was a busy stop on the MBTA Orange Line better known as the EL." This line, a crucial transportation link through Dudley Square was removed several years ago and accelerated the decline of the area. Without efficient public access to the district, there was little incentive for businesses to remain. Similarly, a shortage of well maintained retail and commercial facilities have discouraged new enterprises.

The historical significance of the above sites provide a foundation for the Heritage Park. However, the important issue here is how to relate this "significance" to the current residents. How does the development of the Nawn Factory Site, the Dillaway Thomas House, and Dudley Station impact the average resident? The DEM Master Plan outlines the development of two of the sites, the Nawn Factory and the Dillaway-Thomas House, and describes the uses for the buildings. The interpretation of Dudley Station and the surrounding buildings has not been fully developed by DEM. However, it will be included in a Heritage Trail.
The Alternate Plan places emphasis on the Dudley site and views it as a key component in the Park. The interpretation and use of this site will be discussed after the following description of the DEM Heritage Park Plan for Roxbury.

Today, the Square is a testimony to decades of social, cultural, and economic transformation. The area remains a center for transportation and retail activity in Roxbury. People of African-American, Hispanic, and Caribbean descent are the predominant groups that pass through the Square daily. Abandoned buildings and vacant lots are interspersed with active businesses along Washington and Dudley Streets.
CHAPTER THREE

THE PROPOSED ROXBURY HERITAGE STATE PARK

Background

In July of 1984, 4.6 million dollars were set aside by the Massachusetts legislature for the Roxbury Heritage State Park. The intent was to commemorate the district's history and provide a catalyst for community revitalization in the area. With these general goals in mind, six objectives were identified:

1) "To preserve and integrate Roxbury's historic space and landscapes, natural as well as built, for maximum community benefit and use.

2) To help define and celebrate for present residents (especially young people) the rich, diverse history of Roxbury's people and land.

3) To maximize Park related economic development opportunities for Roxbury residents and businesses with a special emphasis on career development and job creation for young people.

4) To promote a strong positive image of Roxbury as a vital community.

5) To instill a sense of pride in and proprietorship for Roxbury and its residents.

6) To support through programming efforts existing community organizational and individual efforts to preserve, conserve, and celebrate, Roxbury's built and natural historical legacy." (DEM Master Plan. 1987)

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In December of 1984, the Governor of Massachusetts, Michael Dukakis appointed a 15 member advisory committee to guide the development of the Roxbury Heritage State Park. \^{49} The Committee is comprised of community residents, historians, developers, business people, and public officials. Members provide input on all aspects of the Park development. Since its formation, the committee has worked closely with the Department of Environmental Management. The Advisory Committee has identified the theme for the Park as "Roxbury -- its people in time and place." \^{50} The sentiment of planners and the community has been that all of Roxbury is the Park as the richness of its history is evident throughout the community.

The Advisory committee has recommended several themes based on Roxbury's history: a colonial town, a multi-ethnic neighborhood, an Indian hunting and fishing ground and a natural history site. \^{51} Additional themes have been suggested to include the economic history of Roxbury, but at this time the Master Plan does not include transportation as a separate theme. The Roxbury Heritage State Park Master Plan has identified several historically significant sites in Roxbury to be the focus of the Park. In addition, other parks and

\^{49} Ibid.
\^{50} Ibid.
\^{51} Ibid.
institutions will be included in the programming, such as the National Center of Afro-American Artists and its museum and the Roxbury Community College. The sites were chosen either because of their historical significance or their potential as centers for cultural activities for the Roxbury community.52

The Advisory Committee meets monthly with Park staff and interested members of the community and continues to play an integral role in the Park development.

The DEM Master Plan

The RHSP is planned as a multi-phased project to be carried out over approximately the next two to three years.53 Integrating several key sites, the Park will run along a "Heritage Trail" from Washington Street at Melnea Cass Boulevard, through Dudley Square up to John Eliot Square, and then to the Southwest Corridor.54

The sites that have been identified are:

* The John Eliot Square historic district to include the Dillaway-Thomas House and the First Church.
* The Roxbury Burying Ground -- the oldest cemetery in Roxbury.
* Eustis Street Fire House -- the oldest firehouse in Boston.
* Nawn Factory -- the first industrial building in Roxbury.

52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
* Dudley MBTA Station and adjacent buildings -- a turn-of-the-century transit station and its surrounding 19th century buildings.  

The Park will not be limited to these locations but will include:

* The Museum of the National Center of Afro American Artists 19th century home built from puddingstone that now houses a museum.

* The Cochituate Standpipe -- a water tower built in 1869 on the site of High Fort a Revolutionary War fort.

* The Elevated Orange Line structure -- the portion of the MBTA transit line in Dudley Square district of Roxbury.

* The Shirley Eustis House -- the previous home of two of the first governors of Massachusetts.

* The Parting Stone

* Roxbury Community College

* The municipal parks in Roxbury

The cooperating sites will provide additional resources to the Park and be integrated into the programming of Park activities.  

(See Appendix 1.)

Of the above sites, two core sites have been identified as the focus of the Park -- the Dillaway-Thomas House and the Nawn Factory. The DEM plans to begin construction of the Park at the Dillaway-Thomas House instead of at the Nawn Factory because of the house needs immediate attention and the Advisory Committee recommended development at this point.

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55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.
It is estimated that both sites will cost less than $5 million to develop but the Nawn site will be less expensive than the Dillaway-Thomas House. Because of the financial difficulties Massachusetts is experiencing, the funds for the Park were allocated five years ago have not been released. It is possible that construction of the Nawn site will not begin for at least a couple of years and the Dillaway-Thomas House might be the only evidence of the Park for a long period of time.

Why the Current Plan Falls Short of its Objectives

One of the most challenging tasks for the RHSP is to change people's image of the district -- those that live in the district as well as those outside. Community, public, and private interest in the Park will require a shared vision for Roxbury. There has been a long standing desire to change the image of the Dudley Street neighborhood from a blighted area to one that is thriving. The potential exists for this area to become the commercial center it once was but it will take a major development effort.

Rebuilding Lower Roxbury and the rest of Roxbury will take more than sporadic restorative projects. What is needed is a systematic plan that would identify the most crucial spots capable of making the most potent statements.

The current plan to begin the Park at the Dillaway-Thomas House is at risk of being limited to a historic rehabilitation effort. This will result in little impact in the Dudley Square area where it is most needed. After examining the multiplier effect that has occurred in other cities with Heritage Parks, it is clear that the close proximity of the Parks to commercial centers is a key factor in their success.

The problems with the current Master Plan are related to two major issues -- economics and heritage. The decline of the commercial center, the presence of a high unemployment rate and the poor aesthetics of the area have created a negative image of Roxbury. The Park must then reflect a commitment to the revitalization of commercial activity as well as the current cultural, and economic needs of the people. Residents should be able to walk by the rehabilitated sites and not only feel pride but know that there are benefits for themselves in the Park. Thus, the Park must link the current visions of the community with the history of the area, and this connection must be obvious. The proposal outlined in the Master Plan does not integrate the historic resources with the most pressing need for contemporary residents -- that is the need to revitalize commerce in the area which in turn will generate employment.

This paper recognizes the historic value of the Dillaway-Thomas House, but proposes a different locus which
would be the Nawn Factory site as the foundation for the Park. After completion of this phase, the Park will continue along Washington Street to the Dudley MBTA station with restoration and rehabilitation of the station and surrounding buildings. In addition, a strong theme of business and commerce is recommended to provide a framework for continued revitalization efforts in the Dudley area.

Ideally, the park should begin at Dudley Station because of the large amount of activity in the area, and the presence of the adjacent buildings. However, beginning the development at the Nawn site has two primary advantages: 1) the site can reflect the "heritage" of both past and present residents and, 2) it is located in an area that can provide a catalyst for commercial revitalization along Washington Street and in Dudley Square.

The Alternate Plan responds more appropriately to Roxbury's need to revitalize its commercial district, improve the aesthetics of Lower Roxbury, and meet some of the most pressing needs of its current residents.

Because the Park may take several years to complete, it is essential that the first step be a strong one with a great deal of impact to retain community interest and spur continued development. Beginning the development of the Park at this site will result in laying a foundation where it can have the most economic impact.
The Nawn site provides such an opportunity because of its location, theme, and historic features. The significance of these elements is outlined in the following chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR

DEVELOPMENT OF THE NAWN FACTORY SITE

**Theme:** Business, Industry, and Service in Lower Roxbury

**Goals:** Community Revitalization through the interpretation of the history of the Nawn Site and the surrounding area.

The Park will begin at this end of the Heritage trail with continued development up to Dudley Station and eventually to the Dillaway-Thomas House. The portion of the trail in lower Roxbury will link private and public revitalization efforts as much of the economic growth will depend on private industry. This portion of Roxbury is one of the most utilized sections in the community. The corner of Melnea Cass Boulevard and Washington Streets, as well as portions of the Dudley Street area are characterized by high pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The district is frequented by shoppers and those using Washington Street as a major transportation route.

The RHSP at this location will be a catalyst for economic growth as the site is located in the commercial district of Roxbury. This process will require the cooperation of local community groups, private industry, and public agencies. Several organizations such as the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative have long advocated for the revitalization of the Dudley Street District. This agency's plan proposes the renovation of commercial buildings along Dudley and Washington Streets, reinvestment strategies for the
area, and increased social services. The Alternate Plan recognizes this vision and has placed high priority on these objectives.

The Phase involving the buildings adjacent to Dudley Station will have to involve public and private investment. Both sectors will have to work together to build a consensus around the development and use of these buildings to house commercial, social service, and educational activities.

Preservation:

The Alternate Plan will assist in preserving some historical physical elements along Washington Street and in Dudley Square, and put them to use. Besides the Nawn Factory, the Firehouse and the MBTA station, there are several other buildings worth preserving. They include several buildings adjacent to Dudley Station, the old Liberty Hall on the corner of Ruggles and Washington Street, and a famous bakery. This will involve the efforts of private and public partnerships as development occurs in the district. Through preservation, the cultural and commercial life of Roxbury will be commemorated.

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Interpretation:

The RHSP will provide residents and visitors with information regarding the significance of the site and of Roxbury and its people. Focus will be on the social, economic and cultural forces that shaped this community. Through the interpretation, residents should be able to identify their own heritage in the Park regardless of the length of time their particular ethnic group has settled in the area. The Park should reflect past and well as living history and tell the "complete" story of Roxbury including how disinvestment occurred.

SCOPE OF THE PARK

The Roxbury Heritage State Park will begin at the Nawn Factory Site with renovation of buildings and development of open space with interpretative exhibits. Development of the Park will move up Washington Street to Dudley MBTA station and the surrounding historic buildings. The Park will terminate at John Eliot Square with restoration of the Dillaway-Thomas House and the First Church and its grounds. The RHSP will be developed along a Heritage Trail beginning at the intersection of Melnea Cass Boulevard and Washington Streets, continue through Dudley Square and terminate in John Eliot Square until further sites are developed throughout Roxbury.
Fig. 6

- NAWN SITE
  1. NAWN FACTORY
  2. EUSTIS STREET BURYING GROUND
  3. EUSTIS STREET FIREHOUSE

- DUDLEY STATION & ADJACENT BUILDINGS
  1. DUDLEY STATION
  2. ADJACENT BUILDINGS

- JOHN ELLIOT SQUARE
  1. DILLAWAY THOMAS HOUSE
  2. FIRST CHURCH
  3. FIRST CHURCH
The features include:

* The Nawn Factory Building
* The Eustis Street Burial Ground
* The Eustis Street Firehouse
* The Dudley Street MBTA Station and surrounding buildings
* John Eliot Square to include the Dillaway-Thomas House, the First Church and its grounds.

The Park will be focused on three areas, the Nawn site on Washington and Eustis Streets, the Dudley Station area, and John Eliot Square with a different theme in each location.

The sites along Washington Street and in Dudley Square would clearly illustrate the district's commercial, transportation and service themes as well as focus on present day activity. The presence of contemporary Roxbury residents will be integrated through programming and the use of the site buildings. The Dillaway-Thomas House will place more emphasis on the social and community life of past residents but provide resources for the current community with meeting space and educational information. In addition, the archeological significance of this site will be introduced as it was previously a Native American hunting ground.

During the completion of the three primary phases of the Park, other historically significant sites such as the Museum of the National Center for Afro-American Artists, the Shirley Eustis House, and the Cochituate Standpipe should be preserved and included in the programming and the Heritage Trail. The
theme surrounding these other features should be clearly linked to the entire Heritage Park so that the sites become more than historical preservation projects.

THE NAWN FACTORY SITE

The Nawn Factory site consists of the Nawn Factory and its grounds, the Eustis Street Burial Grounds, and the Eustis Street Firehouse. The DEM plans have detailed the development of the Park at this site but have focused only on the factory building and not on the Burial Ground or the Firehouse. The Boston Landmarks Commission, along with the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, has outlined a preservation plan for the cemetery and the firehouse. The Alternate Plan will make recommendations for restoration of these two sites as well as for the factory.

The Nawn Factory Preservation

The traditional architectural elements of this industrial structure will be reinstated. The end product will resemble the original factory building so that its functional and architectural significance is preserved. The facade of the building is brick and it should be maintained. Any additions to the building or new structures on the property should match the materials and design of the factory.
Several yards from the factory are the remains of a building that was once used to house factory workers. The Park should restore this structure or retain some of its original architectural elements in a reconstructed version. The Alternate Plan would recommend restoration of the house and a program that focused on the social aspects of the people who lived and worked at this site. Signage should compliment the facade and design of the building and be consistent with other portions of the site (the cemetery, the firehouse) as well as on the streets that border the site.

The Grounds

The grounds should be landscaped to allow for passive recreational use and be designed to insure safety and easy maintenance.

They should include greenery, outdoor furniture, and interpretive exhibits. This space could be divided into two sections with one accessible directly from the street with benches, lampposts, and permanent exhibits such as sculptures. The other should be accessible from the factory building only. This would allow for better safety and more effective maintenance of the exhibits, factory building, and grounds.

Interpretation:

A visitor's center will house exhibits and information that will provide an overview of all of the themes and sites
present in the Park. The focus however, will be on Roxbury's commercial and industrial history. The role of the past and present residents in shaping commerce in the area will also be documented. Thus, exhibits and programming will illustrate the past use of the building but will not be limited to this theme.

Fig. 7

View of the Nawn Factory from Washington Street

(To the rear of the building are the remains of a 19th Century worker house)
The factory building could actually be re-used on a small scale to produce a local product such as banners that depict the Heritage Park or the Cultures of Roxbury. The product should be unique to Roxbury. In addition, resources for businesses in the community could be available in the Center in the form of information and workshops. Residents could be provided with practical information about beginning and running a business. Additional programming could be developed on immigration to Roxbury and Boston from Europe, the British Isles, the Caribbean and Cape Verdean Islands, as well as the migration of African Americans from the South. The Nawn factory could have a permanent Immigration & Migration Exhibit.

More detailed information on the burying ground and firehouse will occur on those particular sites.

Use:

Visitors to the Nawn site will arrive at the Visitors Center on foot, by public transportation, or by automobile. A visit to the site will be for recreational or educational purposes. Thus, visitors will make a trip to this building to learn about the history of Roxbury, their roles in that history, or to attend a social, educational, or cultural event. Art exhibits, outdoor concerts and performances are examples of some of the cultural activities the building could
Visitors will enter the Center from the Street where pedestrian and vehicular access, and parking are clearly designated.

General information on the Park would be available on ground levels with exhibits, meeting space, and educational labs and facilities on the second floor.

The Eustis Street Burying Ground

Recommendations for conserving the cemetery have already been drawn up by the Boston Parks and Recreation Department and Historic Boston Inc. These agencies propose the resetting of gravestones, and repair of the ironworks and entry way to the cemetery. The entire effort is to be administered by Historic Boston.

The Alternate Plan adheres to the recommendations by these two agencies but would include programming to include educational information. (ie. funerary art and the changes that have occurred during the past two centuries). This information could be documented in exhibits in the burial ground. The cemetery should be accessible through the factory building as well. Many of the stones are fragile and the walkways are very narrow so the grounds are susceptible to damage from excessive visitor use.

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51 Eustis Street Area: District Committee Report
The Eustis Street Firehouse

This building is suitable for renovation and could house the administrative offices of the Park. In addition to this function, exhibits documenting the history of the firehouse could be contained on the ground floor of the building.

The firehouse will be renovated and its original appearance will be reinstated. Some exhibits will be included to describe the historical significance of the building. The function of this building will be limited to exhibits and administrative offices due to its small size. However, space
could be reserved to encourage active use by the community. Youth employment skill workshops could be offered here or this site could be the training center for jobs generated throughout the Park.

Fig. 9

The Eustis Street Firehouse

Programming at this site will also include the role of service in the community as the firehouse was established for this purpose.

Vehicular Access:

Vehicles will access the development primarily from Washington Street and Melnea Cass Boulevard. This intersection is a natural gateway to Roxbury from Boston and should be
marked with signs or exhibits to this effect. The Visitor Center should be accessible visually from the surrounding streets. A parking lot and vehicular drop-off area should be included to cut down on further congestion of Washington Street. The parking area should be separated from the outdoor recreational space by a natural or built barrier such as shrubbery or a fence. A parking lot could be created adjacent to the factory site or within a block of the Heritage Park between Dudley Station and the Nawn site.

Pedestrian Access:

Pedestrians will access the Visitor Center from Washington Street, Eustis Street or Melnea Cass Boulevard. Sidewalks should be widened to accommodate walking tours, wheel chairs, and groups of children. The area surrounding the site should invite and accommodate pedestrians who will be stationary for a period of time. Currently, the intersection of Eustis and Washington Streets is wide with two islands that pedestrians use as a respite from the busy traffic when crossing the streets. Some of the roadway could be redesigned to create large areas for pedestrians or public art. The sidewalks that border the site as well as those in the surrounding area, should allow for visitors to stand and read signs, view exhibits, and take photographs.
The building should be noticeable to pedestrians and motorists. Signs and banners should direct visitors' attention to the site and to others along the Heritage Trail. Pedestrians should be guided by visual cues such as paving, signage, and banners and access should be continuous.

Fig. 10

Intersection of Rustis and Washington Streets
CHAPTER FIVE

DEVELOPMENT OF PHASE TWO

What Development of the Park at Dudley Should Accomplish

Theme: Transportation and Cultures at a Crossroad

Goals: Community Revitalization through the renovation of the Dudley Street Station and the surrounding buildings.

Development of the Dudley Street Station and its surrounding buildings should accomplish the following:

1. Reestablish the district as a thriving commercial and retail center.
2. Re-activate buildings not in use.
3. Provide needed retail facilities for the area.
4. Provide a safe and aesthetically pleasing terminal for residents to use.
5. Document and commemorate the role of the station and Washington Street in Roxbury's history.
6. Preserve the historically significant buildings along Washington Street at Dudley Station.
7. Reestablish the transit connection along Washington Street between the Nawn Factory and Dudley Station.

Existing Conditions

The conditions in the Dudley Street district are the results of gradual disinvestment for the past twenty years. Though it is located less than two miles from downtown Boston, it has essentially been abandoned by the Boston community. The area has suffered from neglect by the private sector as well as from state and city agencies.
Description of the Dudley Street Station

The Dudley Station appears to the first time observer to be an abandoned terminal. It looks as though it is no longer in use when empty, or a temporary structure because of its dark appearance. This turn-of-the-century station however is a beautiful and historically significant structure. Its current dilapidated appearance blends appropriately into the surrounding buildings which are also decaying. A closer examination reveals that there are people waiting for buses inside the dark terminal. The general feeling is uncomfortable as it does not invite pedestrians. There is no obvious distinction between the paths for the buses and waiting areas for passengers. Buses arrive and depart amidst a great deal of pedestrian traffic.

Fig. 11

Dudley Terminal
The Adjacent Buildings:

The 19th century buildings adjacent to the Dudley terminal range from four to seven stories. All are in disrepair and are boarded up. They originally housed ground level retail business with light manufacturing operations and offices on the upper floors. At one time, these businesses provided a source of income for many residents in the community.

A closed furniture factory, Ferdinands, occupies the majority of the block that the terminal is on. The front entry way is currently home to street people. The general appearance of the entire block and surrounding blocks is one of decay and abandonment despite heavy automobile traffic.

Fig. 12

Buildings Adjacent to Dudley Terminal
But like the Dudley Station, the decay gives way to beautiful structures upon closer examination. They are evidence of a once vital commercial district.

Further down Warren Street there are contemporary one story brick structures that house active businesses primarily restaurants and lounges. A shoe store, a dress shop, an appliance store, and a Woolworth's store are interspersed among abandoned buildings.

Despite these conditions, the potential for a metamorphosis exists. The attractions that would draw visitors to the area would be a revitalized retail center with a renovated terminal, and buildings that serve a useful purpose to the community.

The Dudley Station is a major crossroad for buses, auto traffic and pedestrians. Renovation of the terminal building would revitalize this transportation center and increase the aesthetics of the immediate area.

Currently, the MBTA and DPW have made plans to renovate the terminal building and re-design Washington Street. The MBTA plan is to drop the terminal building to the ground and renovate it in a style reminiscent of the original design. Street and sidewalk improvements are planned for Washington Street by DPW and the area surrounding the terminal will be landscaped. Construction is scheduled to begin in the summer of 1989 and will take approximately one year.
The Alternate plan for the Heritage Park proposes collaboration between the MBTA, DPW, and DEM. Since these three agencies all have plans for the area, improvements should be consistent in design and signage, and the Heritage Park themes should be incorporated throughout all developments.

Though city and state agencies will have to work together, the private sector should play an important role. This segment of the Park will be highly dependent of private revitalization efforts. Renovation of the Dudley Station is likely to trigger the interest of the private sector and encourage development of the surrounding buildings.

Development of the Dudley Street Station and the surrounding buildings is an appropriate second step to the Park development because the station is situated along Washington Street. This street has been a major spine connecting Boston to Roxbury and transporting residents to the district's core shopping area. Visitors to the Park can begin their journey at the Nawn Factory Site and move up Washington Street to Dudley Station.

The sites are located within three blocks of each other and visitors can move between sites easily on foot. Residents and visitors would be drawn to the site for practical purposes such as for transportation or for cultural purposes. The architectural features of the adjacent historic buildings provide another source of interest particularly if they
provide a function.

This site draws on the "transportation" theme of the Park but this alone is insufficient. What is required here is a secondary theme that celebrates all of the cultures that come together at this station particularly the Black and Hispanic communities. The Park at Dudley station would be integrated into the lives of the current community as the site already provides a function and thousands frequent it daily. Hence, the culture of all of the people that come together daily at this crossroad will be celebrated in the Park.

The following are suggestions for development of the Park at this site. The basic elements involve: Preservation, Interpretation, and Use.

**Preservation:**

The terminal building and the commercial and retail buildings at the site possess 19th century and turn of the century architectural features that should be preserved. They are key features in the interpretation of the "living" history of Roxbury. Instead of lowering the terminal building to the ground as proposed by the MBTA, the building should be maintained as a two story structure. The original architectural elements could be enhanced by adding glass to the upper level that would allow light to enter the structure.

There are several large buildings adjacent to the terminal that could be refurbished to provide space for
cultural and retail activities. On Washington Street between the Nawn Site and the Dudley Station is an old performing arts theater that served the Roxbury community throughout most of this century. This theater could be renovated and reopened to house space for performing and visual arts.

The buildings in Dudley Square provided a means of employment for residents for several decades and can do so again once restored. Thus, it is possible to preserve these structures, interpret their historical significance, and introduce new use.

Interpretation:

The story of Roxbury at the Dudley site would be interpreted through exhibits present throughout the terminal building, its grounds, and adjacent retail and commercial buildings. The theme will include transportation in the area as it has existed over the past three hundred years, and the culture of the various ethnic groups that have passed through Dudley Square. The cultural theme will emphasize the contributions of present day residents through its programming and use. Programming will commemorate the performing, visual, and literary arts of the various cultures, as well as their every day lives.

Features for the transportation theme will include the renovated station and a refurbished trolley car that would run a portion of the Heritage Trail from the Nawn Factory up
through Dudley Square and then to John Eliot Square. Renovation of the station will reinforce the commitment that the State feels that Roxbury and its people are valuable.

Use:

Some visitors to the Park will travel up Washington Street to Dudley Station after visiting the Nawn Factory site. Others will begin the tour at the terminal building after arriving by public transportation.

The terminal building in Dudley Square is the "hub" of the community and has the potential for exciting recreational programs. This building, as well as the adjacent commercial ones, should be used for retail activities. Additional uses for the adjacent buildings should include space for nonprofit institutions and housing. Retail businesses, restaurants and clubs could be located on the ground level with easy access to the public from the sidewalk. Upper floors would be reserved for cultural and institutional facilities and housing.

The Main Attraction: A Market at Dudley Square

The recommendation for the top floor of the terminal or an adjacent building is to create an enclosed year-round marketplace. This market would draw local residents and
visitors from outside the area daily to the site. Similar markets exist in older sections of Vancouver, British Columbia and Seattle, Washington and have successfully transformed their surroundings. In both cities, the markets are major tourist attractions and at the same time are heavily frequented by local residents.

The market at Dudley should reflect the excitement of the current local residents, with foods, goods, and entertainment from the wide range of countries represented in the community. The market would be the most obvious celebration of living history.

Space inside the market would accommodate stalls as well as small shops that sell a wide variety of goods such as specialty foods, clothing, and arts and crafts. Ethnic restaurants and clubs could be located in areas that allow use throughout the day and evening with access from the street. The marketplace should draw people during the day and in the evenings as well to insure that commercial activity does not cease at the end of the day.

Cultural institutions in the community could house their activities in the market, along with other non-profit institutions such as music schools, and martial arts clubs for adults and children. There is a wide variety of music and art that is found in Roxbury and the marketplace would be a vehicle for exhibiting these arts. Artists could use space as studios for performance or production and allow the public to
view the process. For example, there are West Indian steel bands in the Boston area that could produce instruments here as well as perform. Additional institutions could provide educational and social services and act as stable tenants for the building. Cooperative housing could be placed on upper floors for artists. If the market was placed in the Dudley Station, the MBTA would provide a great service by subsidizing rental space in the terminal.

The marketplace could transform this site into a thriving retail center that would provide a needed service to the community and require little capital outlay for entrepreneurs.

**PHASE THREE**

What the Park at the Dillaway-Thomas House and John Eliot Square Should Accomplish

**Theme:** The Rural and Archeological Aspects of Roxbury's History

**Goals:** Community Revitalization through the Renovation of The Dillaway-Thomas House, The First Church, and other historic architectural elements.

Development of the Dillaway-Thomas House and John Eliot Square should accomplish the following:

1. Preserve the buildings and sites with historical significance.
2. Reactivate the Dillaway-Thomas House for use.
3. Increase the aesthetics of John Eliot Square.
4. Document and commemorate the history of the Dillaway-
5. Provide an interpretative educational and cultural program for residents and visitors.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

John Eliot Square

Today John Eliot Square is characterized by a combination of 17th, 18th, and 19th century brick and wood frame structure in disrepair and newly renovated brick structures. The latter buildings function as mixed use facilities.

The square contains manmade and natural features that would render them ideal for inclusion in a Heritage Park as its street patterns, buildings and landscape provide a distinctive setting. The First Church is surrounded by a treed lot and sits on a hilly triangle bounded by Roxbury, Putnam, and Bartlett Streets and sits diagonally from the Dillaway-Thomas House. It is not difficult to envision the pastoral setting that was once present.

This church is currently owned by the Unitarian Church and has received a matching grant from the National Preservation Projects Fund through the Massachusetts Historic Commission.
Across the street on Bartlett Street is a five-story renovated brick building that houses offices, a video store, and a real estate office. Despite the presence of businesses, this area remains primarily residential. John Eliot Square's history is residential and this aspect should be emphasized in development of the Park at this site.

The Dillaway-Thomas House

This 17th century Georgian style house is in poor condition and is in need of extensive repair. It is currently boarded up and is expensive to maintain and renovate. There
is much potential in the grounds however as there is ample space for gardens and outdoor interpretative exhibits.

As with the other two components of the Park, the development of the Dillaway-Thomas House and John Eliot Square will revolve around three basic elements: Preservation, Interpretation and Use.

**Preservation:**

The Dillaway-Thomas and John Eliot contain the oldest historical sites in Roxbury. They sit on what was once fertile farmland and possess a wealth of architectural and natural resources for the Park.

The current Master Plan produced by DEM proposes the development of the Park at this point. The Alternate Plan views the Dillaway-Thomas House as the least significant site for community revitalization and recommends that it be the last phase in the Park's development.

The restoration of the house will preserve a landmark which is gradually deteriorating. Building improvements will include interior and exterior refurbishment and landscaping of the grounds. Similar improvements should occur at the First Church and grounds and replicate as much of the original design as possible.

Because renovation of the house will occur in a future phase, the building should be stabilized to avoid further damage from the elements or vandals.
The Alternate Plan proposes development of this site with similar physical improvements and programming as outlined in the Master Plan. However, the Alternate Plan recommends a theme that focuses on the rural and archeological elements of John Eliot Square.

The architecture, street design, and open space in John Eliot Square resemble a Colonial Town. These elements should be highlighted to tell the story of the first settlers in Roxbury. This story will include the information on the Indian hunting grounds that were present at the site, as well as on the first non-Indian settlers. In addition, this theme
would distinguish the site from the more urban image of Dudley Station.

Detailed information pertaining to the agricultural, archeological, and natural history of the area would be emphasized here. Information on this theme could be integrated into the design of the grounds.

Use:

John Eliot Square has historically been the meeting ground for the Roxbury community since residents first settled here. This tradition can be maintained through the Park as the church and house could provide space for community events. The concept of the Roxbury community beginning at this point could be the integral theme that weaves the natural history and architectural elements together.

Open space could be developed for light recreational use, and education purposes pertaining to natural history and botany.

The Main Attraction

The recommendation for this area is that it draw upon the Colonial Town elements of John Eliot Square. The restoration of the Dillaway-Thomas House in itself is not a sufficient attraction. All of the other components of the square such as the church, the streets, sidewalks, street lamps, buildings and grounds must be developed to their fullest to complement the house.
The grounds of the Dillaway-Thomas House and the First Church offer provide the best settings for a small outdoor park or garden. These sites would provide a respite from the bustling activity at Dudley Station and the Nawn Factory Site with its gardens, open space, and facilities for cultural and community activities.
CHAPTER SIX

POLITICAL STRATEGIES FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

The RHSP will impact the development of an entire neighborhood. Thus, the development and management of the Park will be dependent on the interest and contributions of community, City, and State agencies as well as on the private sector.

An appropriate partnership between all of the actors must occur on an ongoing basis since communities are not static. As buildings are erected, open space designed, transportation and other public improvements constructed, each agency or corporation will influence the Park.

If all of the agencies that should play a role in the Park begin working at its inception, the foundation for continued communication and cooperation can be laid. The key elements in a successful Park revolve around the following:

1) Administration, Development, and Maintenance
2) Cultural Planning and Programming
3) Financial Assistance
4) Technical Assistance

ADMINISTRATION, DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

State Agencies

The DEM is the designated administrator of all of the Heritage Parks in the State system and will provide the same functions for RHSP. DEM however, should play an active role
in coordination of other agencies and act as a liaison. With all of the public improvements and private developments that will eventually go into the area, it should be in DEM's interest to preserve and maintain its original concept for the Park.

Data regarding the Park, its development and use should be maintained by this agency and made accessible to the community for evaluation and analysis. In addition, the economic benefits of the Parks in other communities should be well documented and made available to private investors and the business community.

DEM should coordinate the development plans of other State agencies such as the DPW, the Massachusetts Historical Commission, the MBTA and the PFD. Coordination will involve City agencies such as the Boston Parks and Recreation Department and the Boston Landmarks Commission.

**City Agencies**

These agencies should share the financial responsibility for maintenance for the Park sites where City property is involved. These responsibilities should be clearly designated to avoid neglect of specific buildings and open space. Similarly, the development of additional sites in the Park, should receive development assistance from the City particularly in the case of the development of open space or park areas.
Community Organizations

The Roxbury community can play an integral role in the Park development and maintenance. Community groups such as the Roxbury Neighborhood Council and the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative can monitor the activities of all agencies involved. These organizations could enter a contract with the State and the City to provide maintenance services to the Park and in turn generate employment for the community.

The Roxbury Heritage Park Advisory Committee should continue to provide input into the Park and could coordinate other neighborhood groups. However, evaluation of the Park should be done by community groups and a merchants association.

Community groups could organize a community maintenance program such as the "Adopt a Park Program" used by many cities and town across the country. With this program, specific neighborhoods assume some responsibility for maintaining a park site by cleaning up litter or providing a "Crime Watch" service.

The Private Sector

The private sector will play a major role in the development of the Park along Washington Street and at Dudley Station as private capital is essential to economic revitalization. This sector will have to make a commitment to the Park throughout the development stage. Incentives must be
offered to businesses and private investors to subsidize development, preserve historic features, and maintain interest in the Park and the economic development of Roxbury.

The business community should be an integral part of a maintenance plan for the Park. Business owners should be prepared to contribute to the maintenance of the Park through direct financial support. The maintenance of the Park will affect how the sidewalks outside their business are maintained and in turn affect the success of their businesses.

CULTURAL PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

Planning and programming will be a continuous task for the Park as populations and interests change. A basic program around the theme of the Park and individual sites will be permanent but exhibits, and cultural events will vary.

State Agencies

DEM will assume the majority of the responsibility for financing the program. DEM will do so with the input of the community on an ongoing basis to insure that the interests of the community are reflected at the sites. This agency will work closely with other city agencies such as the Parks and Recreation Department to plan programs that relate to other recreation parks in Boston. For example, programs on botany and gardening could be offered.
Community Organizations

Community groups and agencies could be responsible for the programming to be developed at the Park. These groups could act as a liaison between the Park administration and the community. This faction could also assume some responsibility for sponsoring and conducting cultural activities, educational workshops, and exhibits at the Visitor Center, Dudley Square, and the Dillaway Thomas House. For example, the community should make the final decisions about the selection of artists or designers for murals, sculptures, poem and prose exhibits, and the general ambience of Dudley Station and the market place.

Private Sector

The private sector could support cultural programs by developing and/or subsidizing space for performances and exhibitions.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

State and City Agencies

Both State and City agencies could provide technical assistance pertaining to preservation, facade improvements, design and development issues as they relate to architecture, and general building improvements. Agencies such as the Boston Landmarks Commission and the Massachusetts Historical
Commission provide support in these areas and should play an active role in the Dudley commercial district.

**Community Organizations**

Technical assistance from community groups and agencies could occur in the form of research and data collection and analysis of the Roxbury district. These groups could facilitate community meetings and act as a general liaison with the private sector, the public agencies and the community. These services are particularly useful in the case of determining employment needs and the concerns of small business owners. Agencies such as the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative could be funded through public or private funds to provide such services.

**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

**State and City Agencies**

Financial support will remain the primary responsibility of the DEM however City agencies should be urged to participate and supplement limited resources. Both the City and State should provide information to the community about the various financial assistance programs available for the improvement and development of residential and business facilities.

Agencies such as the Massachusetts Community Development Finance Corporation and Massachusetts Industrial
Finance Agency are examples of such agencies. Support could occur in the form of direct grants or by subsidizing commercial space.

Both the City and State should provide incentives to businesses through tax benefits for financial support and matching fund programs for businesses near the Park site. The emphasis should be on the development of the small business owner.

Community Organizations

Financial support from community agencies would come from community development corporations such as the Roxbury Development Corporation.

Private Sector

This sector should provide grants and loans to the community to support small business development, non-profits agencies, and institutions who want to stake out a claim in the development of Roxbury at the Park sites. This support could occur in the form of subsidized rental space, matching fund grant programs and low interest bank loans. Because of the extensive financial support that is needed in Roxbury, greater emphasis should be placed on grants as many small businesses and non-profit institutions are unable to manage their debt service when they rely heavily on loans.

The private sector should be encouraged to develop an
interest in Roxbury and the motivation should come from the business community.

Once Roxbury's potential is recognized by its residents, and the public and private sector, it needs to be promoted. All sectors could play an active role in marketing Roxbury. This "selling" begins with education followed by a forum for on-going communication between all actors. Changing a community's perception about itself is often a difficult task as this image is usually a combination of myth and reality. However, the ongoing task for all involved will be to continuously challenge their own assumptions as well as others about the potential of this community.
The Roxbury community is faced with a number of pressing issues that need immediate attention. The DEM Plan outlined objectives to be met in the Park development. At the beginning of this paper specific criteria to evaluate DEM's plan. The objectives and criteria established by DEM and the Alternate Plan was based on the priorities set by the community.

The Alternate Plan not only acknowledges the concerns of the community, but reflects the same objectives that are outlined in the DEM Plan. However, the Alternate Plan presents a different approach by shifting emphasis from preservation to economic revitalization in the first phase. I do not dispute that development of the Dillaway-Thomas House could be a catalyst for growth in John Eliot Square, but it is unlikely to have the same impact as the Park's presence in Lower Roxbury. Essentially, I proposed a plan for a location I felt most needed the Park, had the greatest visibility, and would create a multiplier effect for the rest of Roxbury.

The DEM Plan met most of the criteria outlined on Page 5 of the Introduction however the "economic revitalization" objective is not adequately addressed in the first phase. Economic revitalization means more than a few jobs for youth and maintenance jobs for adults. It appears that these will be the bulk of the jobs available at the Dillaway-Thomas House.
Although there are businesses in John Eliot Square, the area is primarily residential. Development of the Nawn Site and the Dudley Station would accommodate a wider range of employment needs for youth and adults. The development, maintenance and operation of the factory site and the marketplace will generate a greater number of jobs.

The other criteria that the DEM Plan fell short of was "visibility". The vicinity of the Nawn site receives a great deal more pedestrian and vehicular traffic than John Eliot Square. "Visibility" of sites is a primary concern for business owners and allows visitors easier access. Residents of Roxbury have fewer vehicles than those in any other part of Boston.

Since the fragile nature of the Dillaway-Thomas House is of concern to the DEM and the Advisory Committee, both parties should consider long term stabilization as an alternative to immediate renovation. Stabilization is expensive but the benefits of beginning the Park in Lower Roxbury could eventually outweigh such costs.

The Alternate Plan proposed a strategy for addressing all of the Park objectives in the first step and did so by balancing the issues of "preservation (heritage)" and "economic revitalization." In this analysis "heritage" and "preservation" are closely linked as the decision for preserving certain historically significant elements must be tied to the community's connection with that feature. The
problem with the preservation focus of the Dillaway-Thomas House is that the link with the "heritage" of the current residents is not apparent.

The Nawn Factory holds no more significance for the current community but its proximity to the core commercial district makes it a more effective first step for the Park. The criteria outlined in the Introduction have all been met by focusing development in Lower Roxbury. The Alternate Plan meets the criteria in the following ways:

**Preservation:** Development of the Nawn Site allows for the preservation of historic buildings in Lower Roxbury as well as those identified in the DEM Plan. Those historic features outside the focus areas would be included in Park programming.

**Community Revitalization:** Focus on Lower Roxbury allows for economic revitalization by activating old buildings to function as businesses. Jobs could be made available for people with a variety of skills.

**Visibility:** The Nawn Factory and Dudley Station are situated in highly visible areas of Roxbury. The interests of local residents, visitors, and private investors can be captured more easily at these sites.

**Education:** The Alternate Plan provides themes that are educational for residents and visitors. Programming has reflected the needs of the community as they pertain to natural and built history, business, employment training, and the arts. The educational programming reflects the diverse interests that are present in the Roxbury.

**Recreation:** Programming and design of the Park sites have included recreational elements. Along the trail to the three core sites, there are recreational features, from open space for light recreational use, to interpretative exhibits, resource centers, and the variety of features that would be present in the marketplace.

The rich history of Roxbury provides a variety of themes that a Heritage Park could be based on. It is because
of this diverse past that great care must be taken to develop a powerful theme that commemorates all who have lived and worked there. If emphasis is placed on aspects of Roxbury's history that holds little significance for the community, the "story" could be diluted. Similarly, if too many elements are highlighted without a strong theme to link them together, the cultural wealth of Roxbury could be lost to developments that bear no connection to the needs of the current community.
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INTERVIEWS AND PRESENTATIONS


Chris Green, Department of Environmental Management. February, 1989.


DUDLEY SQUARE
- Nawn Factory
- Orientation Center RHSP
- Historic Firchouse
- Eastis Burial Ground
- Dudley Terminal Area

JOHN ELIOT SQUARE
- George White Fund Playspace #4
- Jeep Jones Park
- The Heritage Center
- At The Dillaway-Thomas House RHSP
- Southwest Corridor
- Roxbury Community College
- First Church Of Roxbury
- Cochituate Standpipe
- National Center Of Afro-American Artists
- The NCAAA Museum
- Elma Lewis School Of Fine Arts
- Playhouse in the Park
- Franklin Park
- Shirley Eastis House
- Grove Hall

Key
- Heritage State Park(RHSP)
- Community Landmarks
- Historic Trail

ROXBURY
Heritage State Park(RHSP)
Location Map