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A Promotional Plan for Fairmount Park: An Expansion of the Role and Revenue Sources for the Proposed Fairmount Park Conservancy

Courtney Cockrell Stephenson
University of Pennsylvania

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A PROMOTIONAL PLAN FOR FAIRMOUNT PARK:
AN EXPANSION OF THE ROLE AND REVENUE SOURCES FOR THE
PROPOSED FAIRMOUNT PARK CONSERVANCY

Courtney Cockrell Stephenson

A THESIS

in

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MASTER OF SCIENCE

1998

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I would like to thank Roger Moss for his tireless efforts and strict schedules, without which this paper would not have been finished on time. His knowledge of all of the nuances of site management and Philadelphia were immensely helpful. Amy Freitag deserves thanks for her intimate knowledge of how Fairmount Park works and for sending me in the right direction in the paper as well as for people to interview. Her efforts in getting the last chapters read before the deadline are to be commended. My husband, Andy, was tremendously helpful asking every day this semester when he came home as to whether I had worked on my thesis, driving me over to Manayunk several times to drop off chapters to Amy at all hours, setting the computer to save every fifteen minutes, and agreeing to edit the final draft. I would also like to thank the countless people who agreed to let me interview them without whose help the specific ties to the Park in this paper could not have been made.
Table of Contents

Introduction........................................................................................................ iv

1. A Brief History and Organizational Structure of Fairmount Park.................. 1

2. Promotion...................................................................................................... 25

3. Accessibility................................................................................................. 58

4. Education..................................................................................................... 67

5. Membership................................................................................................. 94

6. Fundraising................................................................................................. 102

7. Merchandise Sales....................................................................................... 121

8. Conclusion.................................................................................................. 129

Bibliography...................................................................................................... 138

Index.................................................................................................................. 148
Introduction

Towards the end of September during my first year at Penn, Laura Keim Stutman asked if I would be interested in a work-study position at the Robert Waln Ryerss Museum and Library, a Fairmount Park property. I was excited about this opportunity and felt that it would prove to be quite beneficial when it was time to officially begin my career in site management. Shortly thereafter, all of the staff at Ryerss was asked to bring a list of goals and ideas to chart the direction of the facility, both long and short term. It was at that meeting that it struck everyone involved that I saw the future of the Museum from a business point of view. I wanted to increase library and museum visitation through promotional material, to raise revenue through the development of a museum shop, to give a more accurate interpretation of the period rooms based on original photographs, to develop a guide training program, and to raise the consciousness level of the Friends Group for the protection of the collection. While Ryerss has made significant headway in the last three goals, as well as others, the first two have been put on hold due to financial pressures and the belief that a comprehensive plan should be developed to raise visitation and revenues for the entire Park.

The purpose of this thesis is to develop a plan to make Fairmount Park a highly visible, accessible, and respected organization known for its accurate historical interpretations, educational programming, and extraordinary resources. By enhancing its ability to capture local support and the tourist dollar, Fairmount Park may become a self-sufficient organization able to fund restoration and maintenance projects and to support a professional museum staff to further its preservation, education, and community service goals.

Fairmount Park in Philadelphia is a prime example of an underfunded, underappreciated resource that has lost important, historic properties to neglect,
Fairmount Park in Philadelphia is a prime example of an underfunded, underappreciated resource that has lost important, historic properties to neglect, thoughtless demolition, and arson. To stop this loss of properties and ensure the Park's viability in the future, the Fairmount Park Commission needs to recognize that it cannot rely on the City of Philadelphia to be the primary source of revenue required to preserve, restore, and maintain these buildings. It is clear from the 1997 "Mayor's Report on City Services" that the current administration does not recognize the Park's potential, for they measure the Park's success in acres mowed, maintenance jobs completed, trees planted, pruned, or removed, and ballfields maintained or renovated. As such, a long-term plan needs to be instituted to raise money through visitation, sales, and special project fundraising so that Fairmount Park can move towards becoming a self-sufficient entity.

Currently, Philadelphia is involved in numerous initiatives to increase tourism. These include expanding the Convention Center, developing a new ballpark, and improving the waterfront. With the Administration's current emphasis on developing tourism, Fairmount Park is in a key position to become part of the City's plan. With increased visibility and accessibility, Fairmount Park could become a tourist destination in itself, bringing much needed resources to the Park houses. Heritage tourism income, coupled with active community involvement, may offer the best solution in the late twentieth century to protect, preserve, restore, interpret, and administer the historic sites of Fairmount Park.

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However, it should be made clear from the beginning that visitation, programming, rental fees, and merchandise sales are only part of the solution. They are a means to an end. There are very few sites, possibly only two in the United States, San Simeon and Biltmore, that can fund their operation solely through admission and merchandise sales. It should be made equally clear that foundations and government agencies prefer to give grants to successful organizations that have strong admission statistics, a positive reputation with the public, and a solid track record for following through on their projects and maintaining them once they are completed. They like to see that the organization is run prudently, plans for the future, and instigates steps that will ensure its long-term stability. It is for these reasons that this thesis has been written.

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3 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania, Graduate Program in Historic Preservation, "Site Management," Site visit to Cliveden, Elizabeth Laurent, Curator, and Kris Young, Executive Director, 31 March 1998
Chapter I
A Brief History and Organizational Structure of Fairmount Park

Before outlining the plan for the Park's future, it is best to understand the Park's history and its current organizational structure. It is the Park's history that helps explain the current conditions in the Park.

The Earliest Developments and Theories Behind the Formation of the Park

During the eighteenth century, wealthy individuals built impressive summer estates on the banks of the Schuylkill River. They were attracted to the area by the scenic views and natural resources. The houses that were built on the East side of the river included Lemon Hill, Sedgeley, Fountain Green, Hatfield, Mount Pleasant, Rockland, Belleville, Ormiston, Edgeley, Woodford, Strawberry Mansion, Cliffs, Arnest, and Laurel Hill. The houses built on the West side of the river included Solitude, Sweetbriar, Belmont, George's Hill, Ridgeland, Egglesfield, Greenland, Chamounix, Lansdowne, and Liliacs. 4

As early as the yellow fever epidemic of 1793, city leaders began to question the quality and quantity of Philadelphia's well-water. They were primarily concerned that the amount of water needed to fight fires and clean the streets was insufficient. By 1798, it was determined that the city's cesspools were located too close to city's wells. As a

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result, the Joint Committee on Supplying the City with Water, referred to as the "Watering Committee," was formed to identify a site that would provide Philadelphia with an abundant supply of potable water. In 1801, Benjamin Latrobe and his partner, Nicholas Roosevelt, completed a steam-driven pump house at Centre Square that supplied water from the Schuylkill River by an underground wooden tunnel. The facility proved to be inadequate to meet the City's demand and had a number of problems with its machinery and its management. By 1811, the "Watering Committee" determined that building a new pumping station on the Schuylkill at the base of the Fairmount would offer the best solution. In 1812, Frederick Graff was commissioned to build the Fairmount Waterworks, which acted as the city's only pumping station from 1815 until 1854 when the county of Philadelphia was consolidated into the City.2

This new system was not without its problems, including a water shortage in the summer of 1818, leaking pipes, high costs, and boiler explosions in 1818 and 1821, which caused the deaths of three men. Thus, the "Watering Committee" recommended replacing the steam driven engines with water power, the least expensive power source at the time. In order to harness this power, a dam was built across the Schuylkill, which created a large slackwater pond for water storage and recreation called the "Fairmount pool"3 and reduced the chances of tidal backwashes that rendered the water undrinkable.4 Construction for the dam began in 1819 and was completed in July of 1821.5 While it may have succeeded in its purpose, it also created other problems. The Schuylkill became


3 Ibid, pp. 15-18.

4 Committee of Seventy, Municipal Utilities Governance Study (Philadelphia: Committee of Seventy, 1985), p. 13

wider and deeper, causing land owners up river to lose hundreds of acres and creating an area more conducive to industrial development. The water grew stagnant creating an ideal environment for mosquitoes, and the waste that flowed into the river from the houses and businesses that had developed as a result of the Waterworks contributed to unwanted odors. Property values plummeted, and many mansions were gradually abandoned.

From the opening of the Fairmount Water Works, it became a popular spot and its acreage was expanded from five to twenty-four acres by 1828. Hotels, taverns, and attractions were built to capitalize on the popularity of the area. In 1835, a garden was designed south of the engine house and an esplanade below it. The area, which contained ordered walks, a marble fountain, a gazebo, and ornamental sculptures, became a popular spot for recreational activities.

While much emphasis has been placed on the idea that Fairmount Park was created to protect the water supply, it wasn't the only reason. Although cities had long recognized the importance of providing adequate water to their citizens, it was not until the 1850s and 1860s that scientific evidence began to show the relationship between polluted water and epidemics. However, it took several more decades for there to be widespread acceptance of this belief. One must remember that upriver communities

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such as East Falls, Manayunk, Conshohocken, and Pottsville were already highly developed industrial areas that used the river for transportation, as a source of power, and as a convenient sewer.11

The First Annual Report of the Commissioners of Fairmount Park, of 1869, reveals that the Commissioners were also concerned with preserving and providing an area of beauty and picturesqueness, supplying fresh air, and refining the taste of its citizens. This report quotes the conclusions found by the Committee on Land Purchases and Damages, whose primary concern was to "negotiate, agree upon, and report to the Court of Quarter Sessions of the County of Philadelphia, for approval, the price to be paid by the City, for grounds within the Park taken for public use," as follows:

...the ground we propose to acquire is peculiarly adapted to Park purposes. No other city in the Union has, within its boundaries, streams which, in picturesque and romantic beauty, can compare with the Wissahickon and the Schuylkill; and there are few, if any, which include within their limits landscapes, which, in sylvan grace and beauty, surpass those which abound within the space we propose to appropriate. Nature herself has so adorned them that little remains for art to do, except skilfully [sic], with cautious good taste, to open such paths as may best develop the natural beauties of the ground. Here through long coming generations... will this Park continue -- a monument of wisdom and the foresight of those who founded it -- protecting the purity and securing the abundance of their water supply; ministering in its clear air and ample grounds to their health and enjoyment, and in the beauty and grace of its natural and its artificial adornments to the refinement of their taste; while to the spots already of historic interest, which are within its bounds, will be added others on which stately buildings will arise, for works of art or taste, or for instruction on natural science, or where monuments will be reared to the immortal memory of those who in their day have greatly served the State.12


What has been largely ignored by Fairmount Park historians has been the significance of the pure air movement that began in the 1830s and reached its peak after the Civil War in which many voices spoke of the horrors of stale, or vitiated, air. In 1850, A. J. Downing, in the *Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste*, called vitiated air the "national poison." Just after the Civil War, Louis Leeds repeatedly lectured on the subject stating that "man's own breath is his greatest enemy" and that, although Philadelphia was one of the healthiest cities, he was "forced to conclude that about 40% of all deaths that are constantly occurring are due to the influence of foul air." Dr. Arnott echoed this sentiment stating, "air expelled from the lungs is found to vitiate, so as to render it unfit for respiration, twelve times its own bulk of pure air." In 1869, Harriet Beecher Stowe and Catherine Beecher, in *American Women's Home*, wrote that "tight sleeping rooms, and close, air-tight stoves, are now starving and poisoning more than one half of this nation."13

The pure air movement is linked with and runs parallel to the rural cemetery movement which began in 1831 with the opening of Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts, which had an annual visitation rate of 30,000 by 1849. These rural cemeteries, which included Laurel Hill Cemetery, established in 1836 in Philadelphia, were generally located on the outskirts of urban centers to provide a pleasure ground for the public with their design based on romantic English gardens. Their purpose was to "purify the city without compromising its urbanity." As America became increasingly urban in the nineteenth century, city residents began to romanticize nature. Rather than seeing trees as building material or an impediment to cultivating the land, they became

The rural cemetery movement laid the foundation of the American park movement, which began in the mid-1840s. The realization was made that the same benefits of the cemetery could be provided by a park, where a greater emphasis was placed on locating these parks near the central part of the city, rather than on the outskirts.14

Frederick Law Olmstead, considered the most widely known and influential landscape architect of his time, was a leader in the American park movement. He denounced cities as being too large, too overcrowded, too dirty, and too polluted and recommended a return to the country. Recognizing that the latter was an impossibility, he and his fellow reformers sought to bring the country to the city. Large, urban parks were created to bring fresh air that would remove the vapor that caused disease, to bring people of different social classes together, and to help refine the lower classes.15

The Formation of Fairmount Park

In an effort to deter industrial development in the immediate vicinity of the Waterworks,16 Lemon Hill was purchased by the City at a cost of $75,000 in 1844. It continued to be operated as a beer garden and was not dedicated for public use until 1855. Two years later Sedgeley, which once had been part of the original Morris estate, was acquired for $125,000, largely through the efforts of concerned citizens.17 The original driving force being "to provide a place in which poorer people of our fellow citizens and


15 Schultz, Constructing Urban Culture, pp. 156-158.


their families might find health and recreation."\textsuperscript{18} Shortly thereafter, the land that had separated Lemon Hill and the Fairmount Waterworks was acquired through a court action. It was these three properties that comprised the original East Park and totaled 110 acres.\textsuperscript{19}

With the consolidation of the County of Philadelphia into the City of Philadelphia in 1854, the West Philadelphia Waterworks, located on the west side of the Schuylkill south of Girard Avenue, came under City ownership. Next to this property was Solitude and upon the death of its owner, Granville John Penn, in 1867, the City purchased the property. A year earlier, Lansdowne, a 140 acre estate, was purchased from the Baring family of Great Britain.\textsuperscript{20}

In March of 1867, the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania formed the Fairmount Park Commission to maintain the Park. They began to condemn, purchase, and receive land for the benefit of the citizenry. George's Hill, donated in 1868 by Jesse and Rebecca George, was considered the most important of these gifts, containing eighty-three acres.\textsuperscript{21} As land was acquired, most of it was left in a natural state; however, "small architectural elements such as rustic pavilions, footbridges, and park guard stations were constructed at several sites."\textsuperscript{22} In 1876, the Centennial Exhibition was held in Fairmount Park and drew almost ten million people, which broke


\textsuperscript{20} Ibid, pp. 505-506.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid, p. 507.

all previous visitation records to an exhibition in any country. The Park houses and picturesque surroundings were used as selling point to gain support for the Centennial to be held in Philadelphia.

By 1914, Fairmount Park proper (Old Park, East Park, West Park, Wissahickon, and Schuylkill) comprised of 3,418.47 acres with 27 miles of macadamized carriage drives, 44.5 miles of footwalks, 12 miles of bridle paths, and 42.6 miles of macadamized drives and dirt roads. The boundary around Fairmount Park proper stretched 33.7 miles. Additional acreage included Hunting Park with 86.5 acres, Burholme Park with 48.14 acres, Cobb's Creek with 338 acres, Morris Park with 20 acres, Pennypack Park with 532 acres, Cloverly Park with 2 acres, Wister Park with 44 acres, Fisher Park with 24 acres, and Fernhill with 10 acres. In just two years, Fairmount Park proper had grown to 3,526 acres, Burholme Park to 69 acres, Cobb's Creek to 500 acres, Pennypack to 1,097 acres, and Fernhill to 53 acres. They had acquired Clifford Park, containing 15 acres, Pastorius Park, containing 15 acres, The Parkway, containing 55 acres, Palmer Park, containing 3/4 of an acre, Tacony Creek Park, containing 16 acres, and the Northeast Boulevard, containing 250 acres. They also listed Logan Square, Rittenhouse Square, Washington Square, Independence Square, and Franklin Square as part of the Park. The Fairmount Park Commission has continued to acquire property through the twentieth century. By 1976, the Park had grown to over 8,300 acres and had a budget of $6 million


for the acquisition of new land for the Park. Today, there are sixty-three separate sites that comprise the Fairmount Park system with a total of over 8,900 acres.

The late 1890s brought the City Beautiful Movement, which resulted in the development of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway and the Philadelphia Museum of Art that linked the Park to City Hall. It was during Fiske Kimball's reign as the Director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art that he pushed for the restoration of the Park houses, intending them to be an extension of the P.M.A.'s exhibition space for their early American collection. The Sesquicentennial brought additional funding to the Park, but most of the efforts went towards the area around Broad and Patterson, where the stadiums are located today. One notable improvement that it did bring to Fairmount Park proper was the restoration of Strawberry Mansion by a group ladies now known as the Committee of 1926. During the 1930s, through the W.P.A., the federal government provided substantial funding for the Park's roads, bridle paths, landscaping, and the Philadelphia Zoo. In preparation for the Bicentennial, the Nixon administration gave the city $50 million dollars. However, much of the improvements that were attributed to the Bicentennial were actually accomplished with money intended for the general improvement of Philadelphia, unrelated to the Bicentennial. Included in these projects

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32 Roberts and Roberts, Triumph on Fairmount, p. 70.
was $8 million for the Philadelphia Museum of Art. In addition to the areas in Society Hill and Penn's Landing that received significant funding, the Park and the Park houses received money for restoration as well. Unfortunately, funding and enthusiasm for the Park and Park houses has been sporadic and tends to be surrounded by major historical milestones.

While it is repeatedly hailed as one of Philadelphia's greatest assets, it is a low priority in the City's budget. In 1972, allocations for the Park represented 1.4% of the City's General Fund. By 1990, the allocation was less than 0.8%. As a result of the 1983 Master Plan, allocations increased from $13.9 million in 1983 to $20.4 million in 1985, its all time high. This support was short-lived due to the poor economic conditions that developed during the late 1980s. The current allotment from the City is $11.8 million, only one million more than in 1977. This is simply not enough to take care of the 8,900 acres in park land, let alone the Park houses, ballparks, and so forth.

In order to take care of the Park houses, the Commission has had a long-standing relationship with private groups running the individual sites. Mount Pleasant and Cedar Grove are administered by the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Woodford, Strawberry Mansion, Lemon Hill, Laurel Hill, Sweetbriar, Bartram's Garden, Glenn Foerd, Rittenhousetown, Fox Chase Farm, and the Japanese House & Garden are under the

custodialship of various private organizations who provide tours to the public. The Ryerss Museum and Library is administered directly by the Fairmount Park Commission. Hatfield Mansion, Solitude, Letitia Street House, the Monastery, the Hermitage, and Bellaire are open to the public by appointment. The Liliacs, Falls Road House, and Verree Road House are not open to the public. Other houses serve purposes other than that of a museum including Ridgeland which serves as the Wellness Center, Belmont which serves as an events center, the Ohio Building which serves as a Ranger Station, Chamounix which serves as a Youth Hostel, Boelson which serves as the Headquarters for the Friends of Philadelphia Parks, and the Green Valley Inn which serves as a restaurant. The Water Works is scheduled to be converted into a restaurant, and Loudoun is being restored to re-open as a museum and meeting facility. There are certainly more houses located throughout the Park that have been adapted to uses other than that of a museum, but rather than to list them all, a small sampling was given that includes those that are more widely known.39

The Park's Unhappy History

While Philadelphians are proud of their Park, the treatment of these resources has been lackluster at best. The Park has been more diligent about removing obvious signs of neglect in recent years, such as graffiti from statues and other built structures. Yet, it remains grossly underfunded and understaffed. Fairmount Park has a history of neglect almost as long as its existence.

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The unfortunate history of the Park Houses begins with the Lansdowne Estate which was destroyed by boys playing with fireworks on the Fourth of July, 1854. What remained of Lansdowne was demolished by the City shortly after its acquisition of the property in 1866. Sedgeley, designed by Benjamin Latrobe as one of the earliest Gothic Revival residential structure in America, was destroyed by the City in 1857 reportedly due to its dilapidated state; although, it may have been as late as 1865. In 1867, the Commission ordered that all of the Park Houses be rented and that Eggsfield be demolished. The building of the Schuylkill Expressway during the 1950s was responsible for the loss of considerable acreage and the Shoomac Mansion. Both The Cliffs and Greenland were destroyed by fire in 1986. Loudoun Mansion was struck by lightning and partially burned in June of 1993. Much of the building and 80-90% of the collection were saved by firefighters, volunteers, and the surrounding museum community, yet they sustained significant water and smoke damage. The collection has been stored in an art warehouse facility since the fire. Unable to secure enough outside funding to cover the costs of the restoration, the Commission has been forced to use a

portion of the Loudoun Trust Fund to restore the house and plans to reopen it within the
next couple of years.\textsuperscript{47} Arnest Mansion, though well maintained in the 1950s, was
abandoned in the early 1970s. It was slated to received $117,000 for its restoration in
1975, but the funds were withdrawn in January of 1976. This left the house to
deteriorate further and become a target for vandals.\textsuperscript{48} It was determined in 1995 that
Arnest should be destroyed due to the amount of moisture and fire damage which had
resulted from years of neglect. It was considered more cost effective to demolish, rather
than pay the estimated restoration costs of $1.8 million.\textsuperscript{49}

For many years, employees of the Fairmount Park Commission acted as resident
overseers to many of the sites and performed maintenance and security duties for the
preservation of the houses.\textsuperscript{50} Then, in 1977, the \textit{Philadelphia Daily News} published a
series of articles written by Hoag Levins that called attention to at least forty-four Park
employees living rent-free in the Park Houses, which claimed to cost the taxpayers
hundreds of thousands of dollars each year.\textsuperscript{51} The Americans for Democratic Action

\textsuperscript{47} The Fairmount Park Commission, Amy L. Freitag, Historic Preservation Officer and Acting Director of
the Fairmount Park Trust, "Tour of the Park Houses," Interview by the author, 3 September 1997.

\textsuperscript{48} Andrea C. Strassner, "Arnest Mansion: East Fairmount Park" (unpublished paper, University of
Pennsylvania, Graduate Program in Historic Preservation, 1994), pp. 13-14. Copy on file at The
Atheneaum of Philadelphia and the Fairmount Park Archives in Memorial Hall.

\textsuperscript{49} Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Fairmount Park Commission Archives, Memorial Hall, Arnest file,
Internal memos: Thomas L. Kline, Cheif Engineer to William E. Mifflin, Executive Director dated 24
March 1995, and Paul C. Nice, Deputy Director of Administration to F. Eugene Dixon, Jr., President,
Isadore A. Shrager, Vice President, Robert N. C. Nix, III, Treasurer, and William E. Mifflin, Executive
Director dated 31 March 1995.

\textsuperscript{50} Klein, \textit{Fairmount Park: A History and A Guidebook}, p. 72.

brought suit against the Park, which resulted in the establishment of fair-market rents for the Houses. These articles sparked a public outcry which resulted in the removal of the resident overseers. What the newspaper failed to realize was that these employees provided maintenance services to the houses and, most importantly, around the clock security. The lucky houses have only suffered from a lack of general maintenance, others have been vandalized, and still others have been lost to arson.

Memorial Hall's problems began as early as the 1880s when the dome roof began to leak as a result of its rapid construction and its subsequent poor maintenance. Memorial Hall, built for the Centennial Exhibition of 1876, was intended to remain in permanent use as an art museum. It served this purpose from May 10, 1877, until 1928 when the current Philadelphia Museum of Art was completed. Memorial Hall continued to house less important collections until 1954, when the building was returned to the control of the Fairmount Park Commission. Amid proposals to knock it down, Memorial Hall remained vacant for four years, and its interior was damaged significantly by a leaking roof. In 1958, the architectural firm of Hatfield, Martin, and White was commissioned to renovate the structure to a "state of the art" recreational facility with a swimming pool, basketball courts, and Commission Offices in the smaller rooms. The project cost $1,500,000 and was completed in January of 1969. Memorial Hall remains in this state today.

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53 The Fairmount Park Commission, Amy L. Freitag, Historic Preservation Officer and Acting Director of the Fairmount Park Trust, "Tour of the Park Houses," Interview by the author, 3 September 1997.


Horticultural Hall also was built for the Centennial and was intended to be a permanent structure to house rare and beautiful plants for the enjoyment and education of the public. Regular lectures were held on Saturdays and were well attended. However, as most structures in the Park, a proper preventive maintenance schedule was not provided for the building. As early as 1911, Park engineers deemed the building to be in need of serious repair. In 1954, a hurricane further damaged the structure and provided an excuse for the Commission to demolish the costly structure in the spring of 1955. Due to a lack of appreciation for Victorian architecture at the time, there were no public protests.57

Another group of Centennial buildings that had survived well into the twentieth century were those erected by Great Britain. These buildings were demolished as late as 1961. Other than Memorial Hall, the only other building that survives from the Centennial is the Ohio House.58

While the current neglected state of the Park may seem daunting, we must remember that New York's Central Park faced a similar situation in the mid-1970s. Their problems included a deteriorating infrastructure, low morale among staff, very little money for maintenance, high crime, and low visitation. In 1979, civic leaders began to tackle the problems by reorganizing management and hiring a full-time professional staff to work under a single park commissioner. Central Park is less than a tenth the size of Fairmount Park, yet in the mid-1980s, New York City was including between $8 to $10 million dollars annually in its budget for the benefit of Central Park. The City was also soliciting the help of large private donors and corporations -- instilling in them the notion that a healthy and attractive park would boost the city as a whole and, in turn, the

business environment. In addition to the money allotted to Central Park by New York City, the Central Park Conservancy, founded in 1980, has a membership of 15,000 households, contributes $10 million annually for operating expenses, and has raised $77 million for capital expenditures thus far. In comparison, Fairmount Park received $13.9 million in 1983 and $20.4 million in 1985, from which it has fallen to $11.8 million in 1997.

The Park's Organizational Authorities and Umbrella Groups

Fairmount Park is divided into several organizational authorities and umbrella groups that are entrusted with the care of the 300 to 400 structures, of which approximately one third are considered historic. These organizations include the Fairmount Park Commission, which is the leadership organization that has been entrusted by the City to care for the Park, the Fairmount Park Trust, which was created as a separate non-profit organization to carry out the restoration and preservation of the Park's historic resources, the Fairmount Park Council for Historic Sites, which serves as an umbrella group for approximately ten Park houses used as museums, the Friends of Philadelphia Parks, which is the umbrella group for the seventy-three separate friends groups and steward organizations in the Park, and the proposed Fairmount Park Conservancy.


The Fairmount Park Commission, a city agency, has been directly entrusted by the City with the responsibility for the administration, supervision, direction, and care of Fairmount Park. The Commission is comprised of ten appointed citizens who are appointed by the Board of City Judges as well as six ex-officio members who are given this honor by virtue of their office, including the Mayor and the President of the City Council. In 1952, the Fairmount Park Commission was made a city agency under the home rule charter and was assigned to the Department of Recreation.\textsuperscript{64} According to the 1997 "Mayor's Report on City Services,"

the mission of the Fairmount Park Commission is to preserve and protect its open spaces; provide opportunities for recreation; and maintain the landscapes, structures, streams, and woodlands that exist within its 8,700 [now believed to be 8,900] acres. The 63 neighborhood and regional parks managed by the Park Commission comprise the largest municipally operated, landscaped park system in the United States and one of the largest urban park systems in the world. In addition to managing open spaces, the Park Commission operates numerous and diverse recreation facilities and activities within Fairmount Park. These include seven recreation centers; eleven day camps; twenty-two playgrounds; 127 tennis courts at fifteen locations; 160 baseball, football, soccer, and softball fields; thirty-five basketball courts; four outdoor pools; and over 100 miles of recreation trails. Many special events also take place in the Park, including numerous running events, bicycle and antique car races, walk-a-thons, regattas, and small and large picnics.\textsuperscript{65}

It is important to note that the mention of the Park houses is conspicuously absent. This should be rectified, for the Commission has a direct responsibility for these houses. The Commission has entrusted the Park houses to various membership organizations who

\textsuperscript{64} Klein, \textit{Fairmount Park: A History and A Guidebook}, p. vii-viii, 38

lease properties from the Commission. These leases are given for the duration of one year, but many of these groups have occupied their site for many decades.66

The stewards have formed their own group called the Fairmount Park Council for Historic Sites, or "Sites Council," which acts as the umbrella group for most of the Park houses used as museums. Each site has two representatives, typically one from their Board and the Director. The Sites Council meets regularly to discuss issues that affect them as a whole as well as the progress and activities of each represented site. The Sites Council acts as a liaison between the houses it represents and the Commission;67 however, much of the communication between individual sites that is of particular concern to their own organization is conducted directly with the Commission through their own house committees.68

The fundraising events of the Sites Council tends to be by invitation or word-of-mouth aimed primarily at raising money for their own administrative costs and for future events. These events only bring in enough money to serve these purposes and are not enough to support any paid personnel. The Sites Council's primary goals are "to promote the houses, to be a command center for information, and to look for potential problems at the sites." Until recently, they produced a newsletter that was directed to all of their member sites to announce upcoming events and accomplishments, which helped to foster a sense of community within the group. It was used as an internal document, rather than


67 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Glen Foerd on the Delaware, Sharon Brangman, Executive Director, Curatorial Consultant for Fairmount Park, Member of the Board of Trustees of the Fairmount Council for Historic Sites, "The Role of the Sites Council," Telephone interview by the author, 8 April 1998.

as an external document, on the premise that each site should be responsible for its own promotion. Every site's situation is unique enough that it would be impractical and improper for the Sites Council to blanketly take on the responsibility for every site's promotional activities.69

The Sites Council has a lot of untapped potential. They should make an effort to include all of the houses, whether used for museums or not, as part of their group because every house should have a voice and could benefit from shared information. They should promote the houses, be a source of information, and proactively look for potential problems at the site. They should produce a newsletter to be made available to visitors in addition to its internal use. Otherwise, they can not expect to receive broad-based support for their events. They should be a source of information, but they will not be unless they can either provide office hours more than once a week or prerecorded touch-tone information. The message to call the President can be intimidating. They should work with the public relations department of the Commission so that efforts can be increased, rather than duplicated or not done at all. Their goal to look for potential problems is to be congratulated, but their efforts should include the department or organization the problems should be directed, particularly for maintenance and interpretative problems.

The Fairmount Park Historic Preservation Trust ("Trust") was formed as a result of two studies in 1987 and 1988 with funding from the Pew Charitable Trusts, the William Penn Foundation, and The Stockton Rush Bartol Foundation. The studies found that, because of the "rapidly deteriorating physical conditions of significant Park structures," there was a need for the creation of a new organization to take on the care of

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69 Glen Foerd on the Delaware, Sharon Brangman, Executive Director, Curatorial Consultant for Fairmount Park, Member of the Board of Trustees of the Fairmount Council for Historic Sites, "The Role of the Sites Council," Telephone interview by the author, 8 April 1998.
forty-two historic structures in the Park. This new body, the Trust, was "to generate and apply private lease income and funding to their restoration and preservation." The Trust is both a 501 (c)(3) and 509 (a) (3) not-for-profit organization. The Trust is responsible for the restoration, rehabilitation, and property management of a specific site once it has obtained two leases on the property, the first from the City through the Commission and the Philadelphia Authority of Industrial Development (PAID) and the second directly from PAID. The Trust then has the ability to sub-lease these properties to individual steward groups for "twenty-five years with three five year renewal periods,... [with] an annual aggregate rent to the City of ten dollars," rather than the traditional one year lease allowable under the Commission. This allows the membership organizations to have a longer lease to increase their stability at the site, to have professional consultants for their restoration and maintenance needs, to avoid City bureaucracy, and to choose the best and most appropriate contractor, rather than the lowest bidder as required by the Commission, as a City agency. The Park benefits by having historic preservation professionals as full-time consultants and further assurance that the buildings will be appropriately maintained.

The Trust's mission statement is as follows:

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Fairmount Park Historic Preservation Trust, Inc. is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation, development, and management of the historic resources in Philadelphia's Fairmount Park.

The Corporation seeks to fulfill its mission by providing for the restoration, preservation, maintenance, and interpretation of the historic resources in Fairmount Park, entrusted to the Corporation through long-term leases with the Fairmount Park Commission.

The Corporation carries out its mission through a program that includes:

1) Managing the properties entrusted to it by the Fairmount Park Commission through the administration of leases;

2) The planning, contracting, rehabilitation, restoration, and ongoing maintenance and supervision of the properties;

3) Managing the adaptive reuse of appropriate properties for preservation and the generation of income;

4) Promoting the historical and cultural resources of Fairmount Park and encouraging greater public visitation and appreciation of the properties;

5) Providing technical support for the rehabilitation, maintenance, and operations of the historic resources;

6) Generating revenues and fund-raising from public and private sources; and

7) Cooperating with other organizations and individuals, both public and private, interested in the historic resources of Fairmount Park.74

Unfortunately, when the Trust was being formed, misunderstandings developed between the Commission and the Sites Council as to the purposes of the Trust. The Trust was seen as a threat to the membership organizations that had been acting as

stewards to the Park Houses. They did not understand the purpose of the long-term leases as benefiting the stewards, but as a means of removing them. Unfavorable newspaper articles were published relating the following:

A plan approved last year by City Council has created a nonprofit trust to manage, restore and possibly make money from the 43 houses scattered throughout Fairmount Park. Since the 1920s members of distinguished Philadelphia families have spent volunteer time and considerable money serving as stewards for these authentic American treasures; they now feel powerless, in general, to continue their work.

The construction and location of most of these properties cannot support heavy 20th-century uses. Where is the space for private bathrooms for a bed-and-breakfast? Where is ample parking in a public green? How can these frail structures exist with commercial temperature and humidity controls imposed on them? how can the tremendous fire hazard from possible restaurant use in these isolated locations be eliminated?

Unfortunately, the City and the Fairmount Park Commission cannot afford to do justice to these significant tourist attractions. However, turning the Fairmount Park properties over to commercial enterprises simply because no other solution can be found is not the answer.

More than $1 million has already been spent by foundations on feasibility studies; the money could have bought a lot of maintenance and necessary repair. Moreover, many of the choice buildings (which are not even endangered), having long been well-maintained by public-spirited Philadelphia women, have been selected for income-producing use in this plan.75

With articles such as this, the Commission was not able to pacify the membership organizations. The misunderstandings and mistrust that surrounded its formation have severely damaged the Trust's ability to act.76 As of June of 1997, the Trust had "raised or leveraged almost $2 million in public and private funds toward the restoration of Park


76 The Fairmount Park Commission, Amy L. Freitag, Historic Preservation Officer and Acting Director of the Fairmount Park Trust, "The Roles of the Commission, Trust, and Sites Council," Interview by the author, 12 September 1997
properties;”77 however, it has received virtually no funding for its operational 
expenditures. The work has been transferred to the Historic Preservation Department in 
the Commission with the Commission's Historic Preservation Officer acting as Executive 
Director of the Trust. The Trust employs one full-time architectural conservator, with 
the help of a seasonal employee and several University of Pennsylvania work-study 
students. Although the Sites Council still sees the Trust as a threat, about eighteen of the 
fifty-two eligible sites have entered into the lease contract program and virtually all have 
received technical assistance from Trust conservators.78

The Friends of Philadelphia Parks is an umbrella group that serves to represent all 
of the volunteer groups associated with the Park. Since the primary concern of this thesis 
is the Park houses, this group is only briefly mentioned.

The formation of the Fairmount Park Conservancy, a separate 501 (c) (3) and 509 
(a) (1) not-for-profit public charity, has been proposed by Schultz & Williams, Inc., a 
marketing, management, and consulting firm for not-for-profit institutions. The 
Conservancy would "generate private support for Fairmount Park needs, as determined 
by the Commission and submitted to the Conservancy" with the Park Director of the 
Commission also acting as Director of the Conservancy. "The Conservancy would be 
responsible for all private fund-raising efforts associated with the Park. It would provide 
technical assistance and support for local Park groups and Friends' organizations (to 
maximize their fund-raising), and would work carefully with the staff of the Fairmount 
Park Commission who would continue to be responsible for public sector support,

77 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, The Fairmount Park Commission Archives, Memorial Hall, Fairmount 
Park Historic Preservation Trust, Inc. file, Internal documents, Letter to Kaki Gladstone, Director of 
Volunteer Services, Philadelphia Museum of Art, from Amy Freitag, Acting Executive Director, 

78 The Fairmount Park Commission, Amy L. Freitag, Historic Preservation Officer and Acting Director of 
the Fairmount Park Trust, "The Roles of the Commission, Trust, and Sites Council," Interview by the 
author, 12 September 1997
volunteer activities and educational programming." The Commission has begun to implement sections of this plan.80

Because of the history of mistrust in the Park, this promotional plan is intended to integrate all of these organizational groups and to retain or increase their power and participation in the decisions made for the Park. All of these groups need to work toward common goals, despite the uniqueness of each site. The primary goal should be to fulfill the American Association of Museum's definition of a museum as:

an organized and permanent non-profit institution, essentially educational or aesthetic in purpose, with professional staff, which owns and utilizes tangible objects, cares for them, and exhibits them to the public on some regular schedule.81

It is only through cooperation and understanding of the strengths and potential of each organization within the Park, that the Park will succeed in becoming a nationally renown tourist destination.

79 Schultz & Williams, Inc., "Fairmount Park Commission Development Assessment & Plan," pp. 2, 18-20. This study is discussed in more detail in the Fundraising chapter.


Chapter II
Promotion

While it may be assumed that everyone knows where and what Fairmount Park is, its not necessarily the case. After all, corporations such as Coca-Cola and McDonalds spend millions of dollars each year to maintain and increase their name recognition and market share. In casual conversations with people who live in surrounding communities, comments have ranged from a desire to know more about the Park to recollections of going to special tours and raising money through the Junior League for the Waterworks nearly a decade ago. Another resident spoke of her reluctance to take her children to the Zoo for fear of being attacked between the parking lot and the entrance. Ironically, these casual discussions of this thesis topic hit the three core issues facing the Park's promotional problems:

1) a lack of general promotion and advertising,

2) a lack of new programs to get local residents to return on a frequent basis,

3) and a lack of positive public relations to dispel rumors and deep-seated notions that discourage the use of the Park.

When speaking to classmates from New York or Boston about Fairmount Park, they all wonder why there are so few people in the Park, much less at its houses. They see it as virtually abandoned compared to Central Park, Boston's Public Garden, and Boston Common. However, given the small maintenance staff that the Park has for its general upkeep and trash removal, the Park itself probably has as many visitors as it can handle. While the smaller neighborhood parks such as Burholme and select areas of the
Wissahickon enjoy strong visitation, Fairmount Park proper can be quite a desolate place. While the issue at hand is Park house visitation, it must be noted that the Park and its houses are inextricably linked. One reason that Ryerss has one of the higher visitation rates in the Park is because of the number of people who frequent its playground and ballfields.

While it is clear from their mission statement that the Commission's priority is the preservation of open space, the Commissioners should realize that one way to help achieve their goal is to capitalize on the potential of the Park houses. Rather than accepting the Park's current state, the Commission needs to begin to take action, through the new Fairmount Park Conservancy, to promote and develop its revenue-generating resources to supplement the City's funding for the maintenance and restoration of the Park houses and the Park's upkeep and beautification.

The Creation of the Park Houses and the After-Effects of World War II

Before tackling the ominous task of promoting the Park houses, it is important to understand more of the Park's history. For better or worse, the fate of Fairmount Park mirrors that of the City. The natural picturesqueness and beauty of the Park during the nineteenth and early twentieth century is evident in its many descriptions during the period. Despite the fact that it was one of the most politically corrupt cities, Philadelphia, as the premier industrial city in the nation, prospered.

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Fiske Kimball, Director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art from 1925 to 1955, was the man responsible for transforming many of the Park houses into the museums that we know of today. In 1926, Mt. Pleasant was opened to the public, "the inside completely refurbished and suitably furnished with pieces lent from the collections at Memorial Hall." Also in that year, the Committee of 1926, originally formed as the Emergency Aid during World War I, restored Strawberry Mansion. Kimball was able to add an architect, Erling Pederson, to his staff to assist in his restoration efforts. Nine houses were restored in all and were subsequently called the "Colonial Chain." The Philadelphia Museum of Art retained supervisory control of the houses; although, various clubs and organizations were allowed to occupy the sites. From such an exalted beginning, it seems difficult to understand what went wrong -- until the broader history of Philadelphia and the Park is examined.

One major factor in the decline of Philadelphia during the twentieth century was that the City's Republican leadership generally refused to accept aid from Franklin D. Roosevelt's Democratic administration in Washington during the Great Depression. The second major factor is that for the forty years following World War II, Philadelphia's industrial core disintegrated, and 400,000 of its residents left the city. The refusal to accept money from Washington is noted as a major contributor to the end of eighty-six years of Republican dominance over the City in 1951 with the passage of a new City charter and the election of a Democratic mayor. Despite these changes, the Fairmount Park Commission was still seen as a "structural, psychological, and behavioral remnant of the Republican machine days" due to the continued practice of appointments to the Commission based on factors other than Park advocacy.87

86 Roberts and Roberts, *Triumph on Fairmount*, pp. 48-49, 70-72, 299.

These events are important because much of the Democrat's success in the 1950s is attributable to minority support. Since the Commission was still seen as the last Republican stronghold (even as late as the 1990s), relations between minority groups and the Commission became increasingly combative. The Park represented -- and probably still does for some -- a "showplace of white elitism and oppression with its displays of ancestral homes and... private sports clubs." This has led to the abandonment of support of the Park in favor of the Recreation Department by many in the African American community.\(^8^8\) How much of a factor this has been for the various administrations would require its own report; however, it is clear from what has been gleaned thus far, that the Park has been a low priority for the City since at least World War II and that any infusion of money during the twentieth century has been due to major historical milestones or through the support of private foundations.

**The Park's Promotional History Since the Bicentennial**

Promotion for Fairmount Park enjoyed its best years during the Bicentennial years, 1976 and 1977. Frank Binswanger had convinced Mayor Frank Rizzo to develop a trolley system based on the "Old Woodside Trolley" as a promotional vehicle to bring visitors to the Park, particularly to the Park houses. The trolley had an annual budget of $750,000, and riders were charged a nominal fee that never exceeded $2.50 and were given coupons and discounts that amounted to more than the ticket price. As the administration changed, funding for the promotion of the houses and the trolley was slowly reduced and an emphasis was placed on special events that were aimed at the local community, rather than the tourist market. Special events required much less government

\(^8^8\) Ibid, pp. 63-64.
funding and used available staff and resources. The Park co-sponsored events with local recreational centers such as haunted houses, tennis tournaments, kite festivals, and concerts. Some of these events generated revenue streams up to $20,000, while others only broke even, but promoted the idea that Fairmount Park is "Philadelphia's largest playground." Money generated from these events was put into a "festival fund" for future events. Eventually, these events grew to be too large for the existing personnel and were seen as a drain on resources and personnel, despite the fact that they generated revenue for the Park. The administration redirected its energies to focus on its basic mission, which is the preservation of open space and passive recreational activity. The current public relations department consists of two people, and the entire promotional budget provides only for their salaries.89

While the 1983 Master Plan, which was a comprehensive plan by Wallace, Roberts, & Todd "to establish goals, policies and guidelines for preservation, restoration, land acquisition and disposition, development, maintenance, operation, administration, and financing of the Park System through the year 2000,"90 may have included recommendations for the promotion of the Park, it was never really implemented. In 1991, Richard R. Nicolai, then the Park Promotion Director, is reported to have stated that his mandate was to keep the Park out of the media and to avoid negative press. He, too, did not have an operating budget for advertising or promotion.91 Fortunately, the current Public Relations Officer, Tom Doyle, is not under the same strict mandate;


however, he is encouraged not to call too much attention to the Park for fear of negative press.\textsuperscript{92}

**The Components of a Marketing Plan**

While the Commission's aversion and mistrust of the media appears to be rooted in previous experiences, it is not uncommon for museums to be skeptical or suspicious of marketing or promotional campaigns. Museums usually view the term marketing as being synonymous with commercialism and that a museum's educational and curatorial objectives will be compromised and distorted if its methods are employed.\textsuperscript{93} Fairmount Park may not have this problem, but it has others that may be equally difficult to overcome, namely a lack of funding and fundraising efforts, an understandable mistrust of the media, and a negative reputation with some potential users. It is these same obstacles that are the reasons why marketing and promotion are so important for the Park.

Marketing is a "management process which confirms the mission of a museum or gallery, and is then responsible for the efficient identification, anticipation, and satisfaction of the needs of its users."\textsuperscript{94} It is a means of achieving the museum's objectives. The four stages of marketing are:

1) setting objectives through targets and strategies;
2) market research;

\textsuperscript{92} The Fairmount Park Commission, Thomas W. Doyle, Public Relations Officer, "The Public Relations Department," Taped interview by the author, 5 March 1998.


3) promotion; and
4) evaluation.95

A fundamental objective of the Fairmount Park Commission should be to increase visitation to the Park and its museum houses by aiming promotional messages at specific segments of the population. The strategies that should be implemented to achieve this objective are:

1) to improve accessibility to the Park,
2) to provide an enriching educational experience through accurate research and trained guides,
3) to create a professional environment throughout the Park,
4) to improve its image,
5) to gain greater support from local residents,
6) to significantly increase revenues by fundraising and product sales, and
7) to redefine the roles of the groups involved in the Park.

These strategies should enable the Fairmount Park Commission to cultivate existing and potential revenue sources, namely the Park houses, so that it may increase its operating budget to better care for its resources and not be at the mercy of those who approve the City's budget. Further, the City officials need to be convinced that Fairmount Park can be made into a tourist destination that helps support their goal in filling hotels and restaurants that in turn generate revenue for the City. A major component of this plan is to implement the suggestions by Schultz and Williams in their 1998 "Fairmount Park

Commission Development Assessment & Plan” to create a separate 501 (c) (3) and 509 (a) (1) organization, called the Fairmount Park Conservancy (as discussed in more detail in the Fundraising section of this proposal). All money raised would go directly to the Conservancy since otherwise money raised by the Commission would not necessarily stay in the Park.96

While general promotion of the Park should be the job of the Commission, much of it may need to fall to the hands of the Conservancy, who will have greater ability to outsource and to create positions. As seen in the Trust's mission statement, it was to be their responsibility; however, due to their lack of financial and organizational support, they should be at least temporarily relieved of this obligation. What is certain is that a promotional campaign is needed now.

Before spending time and resources developing a promotional plan, it is important to perform market research.97 The objective of this research is to determine whether there is a sufficient visitor base that is willing to purchase what the Park currently offers or whether there is a need to change the Park to attract the desired number of potential visitors. The Park is not measured solely by its buildings, collections, statuary, and grounds, but rather, it "is critically dependent on how they are presented, and the experience and level of enjoyment that the visitors receive."98

Before developing an interpretative plan or a promotional image campaign that will attract the public to the Park houses, it is imperative to know who the users will be, in terms of their characteristics, expectations, and needs. These potential users are

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typically divided into the following categories, at whom various promotional vehicles can be aimed:

1) local residents;
2) day visitors from the region;
3) national visitors staying overnight;
4) international visitors staying overnight; and
5) educational groups.\textsuperscript{99}

While market research can be done by hiring a professional marketing research firm, which may use techniques such as focus groups, in-depth interviews, telephone interviews, and postal surveys,\textsuperscript{100} it can also be economically accomplished by using common sense and available resources. It is advisable to use the following methodology given the limited funds of the Park, unless a sizable grant can be procured or a pro bono arrangement be made to retain a market research firm. The information can be gathered by individual sites through systematic observation, surveys, and internal records. At the completion of the research phase, the information should be able to answer:

1) why people visit the Park houses;
2) who visits the Park houses;
3) when and how often they visit;
4) how long they stay;
5) what the competition is;
6) what the strengths and weaknesses of the competitors are;
7) what percentage of the market visits the Park houses, and

\textsuperscript{99} Ibid, p. 382.
\textsuperscript{100} Ibid, pp. 388-390.
8) whether the Park's market is growing or shrinking.

While much of this information can be gleaned from general observation and polite conversation, tools such as visitor sign-in sheets will subtly obtain and record where visitors live, how often they visit, how they heard about the site, and how they got there. Identifying how they heard about the Park house is the most crucial information. The benefit of this type of system is that it is continuous and will, therefore, indicate changing visitation patterns that can measure the success of advertising and promotional efforts. For more in depth programming and opinion questions, short exit surveys should be performed for a specified length of time. While these surveys tend to have a specific focus, they tend to include questions regarding basic demographic information such as age, income, and education, which may help determine optimal museum hours, admission costs, and programming as well as gage how specific groups perceive the main focus of the survey.\(^\text{101}\) There are several types of surveys that can be used to glean specific information, including:

1) market surveys, which measure the size, structure, trends, and demands of the market for a particular idea, and feasibility studies, which determine if projects already decided upon are feasible;

2) market awareness and attitude surveys, which measure current and potential customer attitudes and knowledge of the institution, whether it appeals to them, how they perceive current advertising messages, and what would encourage their patronage of the institution;

3) customer surveys, which are generally conducted at the end of a visit, but can also be aimed at those who come as far as the door but do not enter, to establish who they are, why they are there, how they feel about their experience, and whether they have received value for their money;

\(^{101}\) Ambrose and Paine, Museum Basics, pp. 18-22.
4) product development, which is used to measure attitudes about proposed changes or changes that have already been made and can be used at various stages of product development; and

5) advertising testing and tracking, which measures image and awareness of the institution before and after a promotional campaign is launched to determine its effectiveness and appropriateness.102

Measuring the quality of the visitor experience and the success of the various promotional sources are the most crucial aspects of these surveys. These are the two aspects that will contribute to the success of fundraising and membership drives in the future. These surveys are considered truly valid only if there are at least 1,000 people surveyed.103 Since this number is targeted towards larger art museums and Royal Heritage sites in England, it is arguable that 1,000 surveys would be sufficient for all of the Park house sites.

Further information can be gathered by surveying people who have not visited the houses to determine what would entice them to do so. This could be done by telephoning households, asking people to fill out surveys in locations such as Center City, King of Prussia, and the Park, or by incorporating the questions into the annual telephone surveys conducted by the City for their favorability rating of City services.104 Observing and gaining information about other cultural institutions and available activities, not just other house museums, will help with pricing structure, promotion, interpretation, and programming. External sources such as government statistics and research publications can be obtained to better understand the local and regional marketplace. These statistics


will illustrate education, income, age, and occupation of the inhabitants of surrounding communities that will help determine target audiences for programming and specific local newspapers such as The Breeze or Chestnut Hill Local for promotional articles or advertising. These statistics, combined with exit polling, can reveal who the houses are not attracting to try to develop programming that would. The overall goal of this market research and analysis should be to "examine the quality, range, and delivery of your museum's services [to determine if the Park is meeting]... the needs of its users."\(^{105}\) With this information, a determination of where to concentrate advertising, promotional, interpretative, and programming efforts can be made to attract potential patrons and better serve existing ones.

The for-profit world has long recognized that successful marketing relies on the proper balance of the Four P's: product, price, place, and promotion.\(^{106}\) It has been argued that traditional marketing theory does not apply to museums because it has been based on large, for-profit corporations that supply goods to homogeneous markets.\(^{107}\) However, a museum still needs to provide products and services that people want in a pleasant environment. The price of admission and museum shop items need to be balanced between what people are willing to pay and overhead expenses. Museums need to be placed to be accessible and attract a wide audience. (While, of course, the Park houses are not going to be moved, accessibility is just as important to their success as in the for-profit world and, therefore, is applicable to the argument that there are basic marketing principals to which not-for-profit institutions must also adhere.) Promotional


material needs to be well conceived, well distributed, and well received in order to generate visitation and positive word-of-mouth publicity.\textsuperscript{108}

The key to marketing is effective communication, meaning that the message gets across and it sticks. When beginning the promotional planning process, the Park must have the following components in place:

1) a mission statement that encompasses all of the Park's responsibilities, including their historic structures;

2) research and analysis of the market research data that reveals who the target audience is, both currently and potentially throughout the region;

3) target market definition, which defines the demographic and geographic parameters of the target groups;

4) brand and product concept, which describes how the institution is named and the design behind its logo;

5) media plan and schedule, which is understanding the various media options and how well they will communicate the institutional message;\textsuperscript{109}

6) realistic judgment, which outlines the operational opportunities and constraints from outside sources;

7) a forecast of the quantity and quality of visits;

8) a policy of the appropriateness of publications, retail, and catering services;

9) promotion of the Park's services, which is recommended to be no less than ten percent of the Park's revenue;

10) rational timetables;

11) a realistic budget for income and expenditures; and


12) a dream.\textsuperscript{110}

A successful promotional campaign depends "upon utilizing all media, exploiting advertising possibilities even when there is little or no advertising budget, and, if necessary, evaluating and correcting the messages that are being conveyed." Successful planning requires determining the best way to utilize news media sources, to present material in a timely fashion, and develop new, creative programs and exhibits. When developing a plan, the following should be considered:

1) planning should begin as early as possible, a year to seven months in advance, at the latest;

2) a representative from each Park house should be involved in the initial planning stages to maximize story possibilities, identify interests of target audiences, resolve problems at particular sites that may affect the plan's outcome, and introduce factors that may have been overlooked;

3) objectives that serve the needs of the Park as a whole, resolve small site specific problems, and promote the public's understanding of the Park's purpose should be developed;

4) press releases should be planned to be released before, during, and after events for maximum effect.\textsuperscript{111}

During the implementation process, releases should be sent to the appropriate news media. Newspapers look for timely, informative, and useful information that will be of interest to their readers. The information provided should be clearly stated, accurate, newsworthy, and in a format acceptable to the agency. The material provided should emphasize the most important information and explain the "who, what, when, why, 


\textsuperscript{111} Adams, Museum Public Relations, pp. 163-164.
where, and how" of the story in the first two paragraphs with the least important information at the end. The information should be simple and brief to retain the readers interest and should ensure they receive all the necessary information. The writer needs to keep in mind that many Americans have low reading skills and, therefore, should avoid technical, industry-specific words. It is advisable to send a calendar of upcoming events to local newspapers so that it would be received two weeks in advance of a new month. One or two sentences should be written about each event including its basic date, time, place, and title.

While television and radio tend to seek information via telephone because of the immediacy of the stories they cover, written press releases can be sent to them in advance if local interest is considered strong enough. The following criteria should be used to determine if a story should be directed to local news and radio stations:

1) if it affects a large number of people;

2) if it will make a perceptible difference in the safety, lifestyle, or well-being of the audience;

3) if it will be considered surprising or novel;

4) if it is information that is of importance or value to a large segment of the audience;

5) if it will entertain, excite, appeal, or interest the audience.

Sometimes stories will be picked up by different media as the promotional campaign advances and will result in a fully integrated campaign. A schedule should be

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112 Ambrose and Paine, Museum Basics, pp. 120-121; Adams, Museum Public Relations, p. 91-92. For more advise, including letterhead, paper size, typeface, and format, please refer to pages 93-97.


114 Ibid, p. 97. For more advise, including content and format, please refer to pages 97-98.
developed to maximize story potential and to reach a wider audience. All stories published in the media should be carefully observed and recorded so that the promotional program can be properly evaluated. Newspaper and magazine clippings should be maintained in acid free folders, and videotapes should be made of television coverage. The Public Relations Officer of the Commission does maintain a file of newspaper clippings and video tapes; however, the Park does not supply a budget to even purchase newspapers or order videos from local news organizations. He is expected to pay for the papers himself, to record the clips on his own VCR, and to maintain the files without a budget for acid-free materials. While it is understandable that the Commission would consider a clipping service too expensive, they should at least supply subscriptions to the regional and neighborhood papers for their public relations department.

While monthly or weekly press releases may only require an in-house staff member to perform, it may be desirable to hire an outside public relations firm for specific short-term projects or to develop an advertising campaign. This option for these projects should be considered if the public relations department lacks the "necessary staff, expertise, contacts, or equipment" with an in-house public relations staff person to act as the liaison between the sites and the firm.

When deciding on the appropriate action to promote a special event or the Park in general, several methods should be explored. Both advertising and publicity are recommended to maximize museum attendance. Advertising allows for control of what, when, and where information appears and is a proven motivator. Publicity is seen as


117 Adams, Museum Public Relations, p. 20.
believable, legitimate news and does not carry a charge. Its format allows for more information to be provided that can lead to the understanding and support of the public of the institution's purpose and goals. Direct mail can reach a target market and can be used as a testing ground for new concepts; however, it tends to be quite expensive and should only be undertaken once a dedicated membership group for the Park as a whole has been created. Direct mail can be useful because it carries a specific message or request and can be repeated. It is most appropriate for membership renewals, annual and capital giving campaigns, and programming announcements. Whatever the situation, the method that has the maximum value and balances the maximum effect with the least cost should be chosen. Ideas such as:

1) ticket giveaways on radio stations for the Christmas and "Historic Houses in Flower" tours,

2) informing traffic and weather people of events such as runs and walk-a-thons aimed at raising money for the Park, which many tend to do already for the many charitable walks that take place in the Park,

3) having joint promotional projects with other organizations such as the P.M.A. and the Zoo since they, too, are located in the Park,

4) having joint advertising campaigns with service providers or retailers such as the Philadelphia Trolley Works,

5) developing tour packages with other cultural organizations such as the historic houses of Germantown,

6) asking billboard companies to donate vacant space for advertising throughout the area,

7) asking local stores and public facilities to display event material in their windows like the Philadelphia Flower Show does,

8) developing positive relationships with travel bureaus, convention centers, visitor centers, and tour bus operators to encourage their employees to suggest a visit to the Park to tourists,
9) lobbying for state highway signs along the Schuylkill Expressway,

10) emphasizing the Park houses' unique qualities in printed promotional material,

11) having public relations staff replenish brochure supplies at the various locations where they are distributed rather than paying a service,

12) supplying businesses and city agencies that participate in travel shows across the country to lure companies and groups to have conventions in Philadelphia with display photographs and other material for their displays,

13) selling merchandise in Park houses and P.M.A. museum shops that have the Park house name on it,

14) licensing reproduction furniture and objects,

15) lending items to exhibits at the P.M.A., requesting that they mention the Park and the specific Park house in its promotional material for the event or if similar objects or more pieces of a set are displayed at a Park house, it should be noted (i.e. the Cadwalader furniture at Strawberry Mansion during the Peale show),

16) seeking corporate sponsorship for major fundraising events,

17) requesting advertising space early enough in local papers and magazines to receive not-for-profit rates and an optimum location,

18) obtaining free demographic reports from media agencies and government sources, and

19) including some type of measuring device, such as a coupon in an advertisement, to monitor which media source is most effective.

These are all advisable techniques for reducing the costs of advertising.\textsuperscript{118}

The fundamental rule of the marketing process is that all aspects of the marketing plan are continuously or regularly evaluated as to their success in reaching its objectives

\textsuperscript{118} \textit{Ibid}, pp. 169-174.
and its cost-effectiveness. This will enable the plan to be refined to meet its objectives even more effectively. Performance must be measured against variables such as weather, economic circumstances, tourist volume, and the competition to truly gage the plan's effectiveness.\(^\text{119}\)

**General Promotion**

One fundamental problem for the Park houses, from the standpoint of visitation, is the lack, and poor distribution, of promotional material for both tourists and residents. Promotional material is key in motivating the public to visit the Park houses and to attend special events. It provides positive reinforcement of the houses as worthwhile and enjoyable places to visit for both local residents and tourists.\(^\text{120}\)

Promotional material should present accurate and realistic information about the Park houses so not to create unrealistic expectations.\(^\text{121}\) Visitors who feel that they have been mislead or deceived tell others of their experiences. All promotional material should be geared towards a target audience, both in message and medium, and its success will be dependent on the ability to appeal to this audience.\(^\text{122}\)

One of the basic needs of the Park is to have brochures available at prominent tourist sites such as the Visitor's and Convention Bureau, the Visitor's Center at Independence Hall, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Convention Center, and all of the Park houses. Reciprocal agreements should be made with other historic sites to display Park house brochures in exchange for displaying theirs. Brochures could be


\(^{120}\) Adams, *Museum Public Relations*, p. 163.

\(^{121}\) Ibid, p. 54.

\(^{122}\) Ibid, pp. 90-91.
distributed through hotels, yet many hotels have contracts with distribution firms that
carry a fee for their services. Funding for such brochures could be sought through local
businesses or by fundraising activities mentioned in a later chapter.

Brochures for the Park and the Park houses are available through the Fairmount
Park Commission. The Fairmount Park Commission has produced three attractive and
informative Guide Series brochures called "Fairmount Park: Art & Architecture,
"Fairmount Park: Recreation and Leisure," and "Fairmount Park: Gardens and Nature." However, with only 14,000 printed, they were not produced for widespread distribution
to the general public, but are available to anyone who calls the Fairmount Park
information number at Memorial Hall.123 Unfortunately, a potential visitor already has
to know something about the Park in order to benefit from their publications. While they
may serve local residents well, they are too large to fit in standard brochure rack slots,
contain far too much information, and are too expensive to be used for general
promotional purposes.

In addition, there are several other brochures that are part of the overall Guide
Series. These include specific brochures for the Wissahickon, Bartram's Gardens, the
Pennypack Environmental Center and the Fairmount Water Works. These are also
available upon request. Every year a new brochure is produced to be distributed at the
Philadelphia Flower Show that highlights a specific portion of the Park that would appeal
to Show attendees. This is financed by local businesses such as Adcock Water Gardens,
The 1998 brochure was the "Romance in the Rock Garden," which highlights the
Glendinning Rock Garden as a beautiful spot for a wedding ceremony and photographs.

123 The Fairmount Park Commission, Thomas W. Doyle, Public Relations Officer, "The Public Relations
Department," Taped interview by the author, 5 March 1998.
This is a terrific example of how to target a specific audience with a product that should appeal to them with the financial support of local businesses. More of this type of effort should be made throughout the year.\textsuperscript{124}

The Philadelphia Museum of Art Park House Guides also produce several brochures. One is a standard two-page brochure called "The Fairmount Park Houses: Group Tour Information" that is available at the Convention Center. It has a stunning photo of the exterior of Mt. Pleasant on the cover, but it is designed for group tours only, which are scheduled in advance, not the individual who is looking for something to do that day. They also produce brochures that promote their Christmas Tours and their "Historic Houses in Flower" tour.

There are also brochures produced by the individual stewards or friends groups for their sites. Unfortunately, these brochures tend to only be located at the house itself.\textsuperscript{125} While it's certainly possible that a visitor may pass one on to a friend, it is more likely that the brochure becomes merely a memento stuck in a scrapbook or thrown away. The purpose of the brochure is to lure people to your site, which is a moot point if they are already there.

This study recommends that the Fairmount Park Commission produce a general brochure for the Park houses. These brochures would need to be eye-catching, with color photographs of the houses, along with descriptions of the properties, hours of operation, cost of admission, and directions. For the sake of economy, rather than having an individual rackcard or brochure for each property, the houses should be grouped together in one full-color, four-panel brochure. The cover should be modeled on the P.M.A.'s Park House Guide brochure (mentioned above) with a large, elegant photo of one of the houses.

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid.

Inside there should be a small photograph and description of each house with the hours and cost of admission, much like the Philadelphia Trolley Works and 76 Carriage Company brochure for their tour of the Park houses. This would encompass all of the museum houses in Fairmount Park proper as well as those in the outlying parks that are regularly open the public. The fourth page could include houses requiring an appointment or for membership information in the Conservancy (explained later). The back two pages would include a large map of Fairmount Park proper, modeled after the map on the back of the "Guide to The Fairmount Park Houses" (produced by Caslon, Inc. through the generosity of a private donor) that is currently available at the P.M.A.'s museum store. This would allow for extra space to provide small maps of houses in outlying regions, to promote the Park House Guides' group tours, annual special events, and trolley tours.

In order to distribute brochures through the Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau, one must be a member and pay the $275 per year membership fee. As of April of 1997, the Fairmount Park Commission was not a member. Whether this fee could be waived, since both institutions are city-run organizations, is worth attempting. According to Jesse Walters, Director of Membership, the number of brochures needed to supply the Bureau depends on the attractiveness of the top third of the brochure; however, since they have recently acquired clear brochure racks that enable the visitor to see the entire front cover, it is essential that the entire cover be enticing. Martha Wolf, Director of Bartram's Gardens, said that Bartram's goes through several thousand brochures at the Bureau each year and 5,000 at the Flower Show. Don Vion, the Director of the Philadelphia Convention & Visitor's Center, recommends that, if the brochures were to be

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displayed in their brochure rack so that people could easily take one, 15,000-20,000 brochures per year would be appropriate. Because this brochure would be for the entire Park, it is not unrealistic to believe that the Park may go through 50,000 brochures a year if they were to be distributed widely and diligently re-supplied. It has been suggested that rather than placing brochures in brochure racks, it might be cost effective to have the Visitor Center staff give them only to those who inquired about Philadelphia parks or historic sites. However, this requires the visitor to feel comfortable, to have the time, and to have a strong enough interest to ask the staff. Chances are the visitor will have found enough brochures about the historic sites in the brochure rack not to need to bother to ask for more. This strategy limits potential visitors before they even get a chance to consider Fairmount Park. Sharon Brangman, the Curatorial Consultant for Fairmount Park and Executive Director of Glenn Foerd, supports the concept of "blanketing the City with brochures" as a more effective way to reach a broader audience. Otherwise, the Park houses could be easily missed.

When looking into postcards and rackcards for Ryerss last spring, Golf Associates Scorecard and Rackcard Co., in Asheville, NC, was recommended by Michele DiGirolamo, from Bartram's Gardens. Of the six companies contacted, Golf Associates proved to be the least expensive for that project; therefore, a sampling of their

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128 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Center, Don Vion, Director, "Recommended Number of Brochures Needed for the Visitors Center," Telephone Interview, 3 March 1998.


130 Glen Foerd on the Delaware, Sharon Brangman, Executive Director, Curatorial Consultant for Fairmount Park, Member of the Board of Trustees of the Fairmount Council for Historic Sites, "The Role of the Sites Council," Telephone interview by the author, 8 April 1998.

price quotes for this project have been obtained. They charge for a full-color four paneled, 8 1/2' x 14" sheet, brochure $3,323 for 30,000 and $4,949 for 50,000 with up ten photographs, plus UPS shipping. For a 9" x 16" sheet, which can be folded into four or five panels and contain up to twenty photographs, they charge $4,107 for 30,000 and $6,304 for 50,000, plus UPS shipping. There are several ways to pay for these including corporate and local business sponsorship, various fundraising measures, and Conservancy membership dues. The Philadelphia Trolley Works should be the first approached since they, too, will benefit directly from them. In exchange for their financial support, the sponsorship of these businesses would be duly noted on the brochure.

One approach that worked well when the Fairmount Park trolleys were in operation was to take hotel concierges on complimentary trolley rides so that they would be inclined to recommend the Park to their customers. This type of personal promotion should be reinstated. Another possibility is to have information booths stationed at both the Visitor's Center and at the Convention Center to promote visitation to the Park. They could distribute the above mentioned brochures, sell trolley tickets, and explain the week's events. This could also be expanded to sell products that specifically promote the Park and its houses.

As the Park begins to build its revenue stream, it should also consider a comprehensive Visitor's Guide, modeled after the SPNEA Guide, to include all of the Park houses, statues, and notable views. Because of the obvious expense of such an item, it could be made available only at the individual Park houses and the Philadelphia Museum of Art for a small charge and/or as a benefit of membership. The purpose behind this idea

132 Asheville, North Carolina, Golf Associates Scorecard & Rackcard Co., Charlotte Sarti, Sales Representative, "Costs of Full-Color Four Panel Brochures," Telephone interview by the author, 10 April 1998. Prices are, of course, subject to change.

is to encourage further use of the Park in general and to encourage visitation to houses a 
visitor would otherwise not visit.

The concept of a Visitor's Guide also could be undertaken as a pamphlet that 
could be inserted in the Philadelphia Inquirer on an annual basis. The guide would reach 
many more households. Rather than being geared towards the museum visitor, it would 
include valuable information such as Commission telephone numbers, rental and permit 
information, a calendar of events, tree trimming information, and other useful information 
that would encourage the use of the Park and increase attendance at events.134 Either 
local businesses and corporations should be sought to provide funding, or advertising 
space should be sold in the guide to finance such an endeavor.

The Fairmount Park Commission should also be advertising on the back of every 
carriage and taxi cab in the City reminding visitors to visit the Park with slogans such as 
"You haven't seen Philadelphia until you've seen Fairmount Park." This ad campaign 
could be expanded to include other locations such as billboards and bus stations that 
would better reach local residents as well. This, too, would be expensive and not feasible 
at first. However, since the Park already has an agreement with the Philadelphia Trolley 
Works and 76 Carriage Company, it is probable that they might supply the advertising or 
be willing to split the cost with the Commission to advertise on the back of their 
carriages. Afterall, they would be benefiting from the cost of the trolley ticket sales that 
would be generated by such advertising. According to Angie McHugh, Special Events 
Coordinator at the Philadelphia Trolley Works, they would be willing to consider a joint 
advertising campaign with the Commission; however, specifics were not discussed.135

134 Ibid.

135 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Philadelphia Trolley Works, Angie McHugh, Special Events Coordinator, 
Advertising Aimed at Local Residents

While the brochures outlined above would generally be aimed at tourists, more needs to be done to influence local residents to visit the Park houses. Because print advertising in magazines has been found to be passive, it is recommended that the public relations department supply ideas for serial articles and upcoming events on the Park houses for magazines such as Philadelphia. This type of strategy is far less expensive than hiring an advertising agency, much less the cost of the actual ads themselves.

At present, the public relations department is fortunate to have the support of the Philadelphia Inquirer for a monthly cartoon featuring F. P. Frog. F. P. Frog introduces events, programs, and Park issues in a friendly, innovative way that is particularly enjoyed by area children. Alongside the cartoon is usually the details about the particular event that is being promoted. This cartoon has been highly successful in reaching the public. The Fox Chase Farm was fortunate to have their Sheep Shearing Day event featured in the cartoon and was attended by approximately 400 people, as opposed its usual draw of under 100 people.\textsuperscript{136} While past results are no guarantee of future success, these results are certainly a strong indicator that the cartoon is effective. The public relations department should begin to compile the success of their efforts by monitoring attendance records of events all over the Park, whether featured in the cartoon or not. This will help the department gain the support of both the Commissioners and the individual sites that hope to benefit from their services.

\textsuperscript{136} The Fairmount Park Commission, Thomas W. Doyle, Public Relations Officer, "The Public Relations Department," Taped interview by the author, 5 March 1998.
At present, many sites prefer to do their own promotion. Yet, they should consider the potential gains from using the public relations department in addition to their own efforts. Whether the individual sites should act independently or whether the affected sites should as a group send the public relations department the newsletter produced by the Sites Council to announce these events should be decided by each site.

For special events such as the Christmas Tours and the April "Historic Houses in Flower," print advertising in commuter rail, subway stations, and trailpasses should be considered to help reach the local market. This advertising should be expanded to small posters, like the ones for the Flower Show, that can be distributed to be placed in shop windows in the city and in the suburbs. Press releases should be issued well in advance to inform local news organizations of upcoming events in the Park. Appearances on shows such as Comcast Newsmakers and Good Day Philadelphia should be sought to further the public's exposure to these special events.

Advertising Aimed at a National Audience

The purpose for advertising to a national audience is to reach people in the planning stages of their vacation to persuade them to come to Philadelphia, to extend their intended trip to Philadelphia, and to put Fairmount Park on their itinerary. Rather than a passive print ad, the strategy of encouraging magazines to write articles about the Park should be expanded. Perhaps one of the first targets should be airline magazines that have a strong presence in Philadelphia such as USAir. The next target should be magazines that reach an audience predisposed to visit historic house museums such as The Magazine Antiques, The Old House Journal, Preservation, and Colonial Homes. These specialty

137 Glen Foerd on the Delaware, Sharon Brangman, Executive Director, Curatorial Consultant for Fairmount Park, Member of the Board of Trustees of the Fairmount Council for Historic Sites, "The Role of the Sites Council," Telephone interview by the author, 8 April 1998.
magazines should be interested in articles about the general history of the Park as well as any major restoration projects. Because of the wider range of articles that would be appropriate for their audience, it is wise to cultivate long term relationships with them. Travel magazines should also be considered as targets for this type of promotion. It should be noted that The Magazine Antiques, in November 1962, and Colonial Homes, in December 1993, both featured articles about the general history of the Park and its museum houses.

There should also be an effort to review travel guides, maps, and City tourism information annually. These publishers could be contacted to add, increase, or correct information about the Park and its houses. Many individuals and families rely on travel guides and maps to plan their vacations both before and while they are here. Convention planners do the same with the City tourism information. It is up to the Park to encourage the inclusion and positive message of the Park in these publications.

A comprehensive web-site should be developed that includes exterior and interior views of each Park House, accurate and informative narratives, and necessary information including hours and directions. If possible, the site should include a virtual tour of the houses, particularly the most popular ones. The site should have links from existing Philadelphia sites such as "www.InPhiladelphia.com" and "www.libertynet.com" to increase its accessibility. There are several sites that are available now. One was recently introduced by a Drexel student, "design.coda.drexel.edu/students/achozen/FairmountPark.html," and the other is through City Hall, "www.phila.gov.city.departments/fairmoun.html" or "www.phila.gov/tourism/fairmtpark.html." The former is quite good and has colorful pictures and maps of the Park. It does not, however, include houses in the surrounding parks. The ones produced by the city government contains a fairly comprehensive list of houses, yet it does not contain individual pictures of the houses and
a few inaccuracies have crept in, such as the hours of operation for the museum at Ryerss. The public relations department needs to be proactive in improving the City site by providing photographs of the Park houses, concise statements about each house, and corrections, if necessary. Glenn Foerd's web-site has proven itself to be increasingly effective in reaching a national audience and can only improve as the technology advances and the internet becomes more accessible. The internet should be one of the highest priorities in the Park's promotional campaign.\textsuperscript{138}

Finally, the creators of the Touch & See Philadelphia sites located in Liberty Place and the Convention Center should be approached to improve and expand the Fairmount Park section of the program. The section about the Park houses is small and contains little information.

\textbf{Public Relations}

Although Fairmount Park has some of the lowest crime statistics in the City,\textsuperscript{139} its reputation does not reflect it. At a minimum, efforts should be made through press releases and appearances of Park officials on local news shows to combat the negative stereotype of the Park. Rather than fearing negative press, the public relations office should feed the media with positive stories such as low crime rates, facility improvements, and photographs of the Park in the 1980s versus now. The Park needs to show itself as improving. The insistence on keeping media reports at a minimum has allowed negative word-of-mouth publicity to fester, particularly in the surrounding suburbs. The Commission needs to realize that saying nothing hurts the case even more.

\textsuperscript{138} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{139} University of Pennsylvania, Graduate Program in Historic Preservation, "Landscape Seminar: The Centennial," Amy L. Freitag, Guest lecturer, 26 September 1997.
Negative press can be turned to their advantage if they would only use it as a rallying point for local constituencies to pressure city government to give more financial support to the Park. Embracing the fact that there are virtually no bathrooms in the Park or that the Ranger Corp should be saved (or, better, the Park Guard be reinstated) could serve as rallying cries for the seventy-three friends groups to bring positive action from the City. As stated previously, the Sites Council and the Friends of Philadelphia Parks need to unite behind the public relations department as an added benefit to their existing promotional efforts. These umbrella groups should also take advantage of their diversity and increase their lobbying efforts in their own neighborhoods through the individuals groups which they represent. Afterall, the members of these groups are taxpayers and voters. As Andrew Goldfrank said in his 1991 thesis, "Bringing New Life to Historic Urban Parks: Identifying the Key Elements of the Restoration Process," the Commissioners need to become advocates of the Park and realize their political strength, rather than making due with their paltry city funding. The Commission needs to make a deal with City Hall to not reduce its budget allocation if it increases funding from outside sources.140

Fairmount Park needs to start rebuilding its reputation on its successes and achievements by releasing this information to the public to form a strong, united, organizational identity that will be reinforced through its products, services, and publications. The name Fairmount Park needs to stand for quality in its services, its staff, and its collections through improved interpretation, programming, and professionalism. The Park needs to be continuously developed and improved through hard work and commitment. All levels of staff and volunteers who deal with the public

should be trained regularly and systematically in customer relations. Poor visitor
relations and inadequate presentation can far overshadow any gains made on the
promotional front by negative word-of-mouth communications. A firm commitment from
all staff members and volunteer groups to build the Park's reputation needs to be gained to
truly be successful. After all, "your users are your best advertising agents."142

According to the American Association for State and Local History, a successful
public relations program requires:

1) a complete understanding of the museum's programs, collections, and
   its public;

2) an implemented plan for the continuous recording and evaluation of
   public opinion regarding the museum;

3) a policy-forming procedure that balances public reactions and the
   museum's needs, goals, and objectives consistent with professional
   standards;

4) a public relations plan that defines needs, sets goals, and provides for
   performance evaluation;

5) a communication program that uses the most appropriate
   media to reach its target audience;

6) a long-range view that allows the institution to anticipate
   opportunities and potential problems and to deal with them
   effectively.143

When sending regular information to media sources, there is a fine line between
sending timely information and too much information. Not only does it waste valuable
Park resources, but news organizations will begin to disregard it. Lists of news


142 Ambrose and Paine, Museum Basics, pp. 118-119.

143 Adams, Museum Public Relations, p. 3.
organizations and contacts that consistently publish museum information should be updated regularly with comments that will help make future decisions regarding the media. These lists should divide organizations by their audience such as local, regional, general interest, and special interest so that the information will reach the appropriate audience. The public relations department is currently using these types of lists provided by the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce and the Philadelphia Business Journal. Dependable, receptive contacts have been cultivated in several local news organizations by the department.

To ensure a consistent, well-managed, and positive public relations program, a "writer's guide" should be developed and updated each year by the public relations department to be given to local news organizations. The information should include such items as photographs of the Park houses, the Park's mission statement, a list of upcoming events, and names and numbers of the public relations personnel, the chairman of the board, and the executive director, as well as other pertinent information that would prove helpful to the news organization to increase the chances of positive news coverage.

While contact with the media should be a positive experience, sometimes inaccurate and unfair stories are written. Having media kits that contain general information about the Park available and holding media receptions to announce major projects or accomplishments are advisable to generate a message consistent with the museum's goals. While this is far more applicable for news items that affect the Park as a whole, each Park house should at least have a page that includes the basic information

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144 Ibid, pp. 120-127. For detailed information as to who to contact in the news organization, when a certain media is more appropriate, and media deadlines, consult pages 121-127.

145 The Fairmount Park Commission, Thomas W. Doyle, Public Relations Officer, "The Public Relations Department," Taped interview by the author, 5 March 1998

regarding the museum, its mission statement, and a brief history of the property and its past owners. If possible, Park house staff should prepare for an interview by reviewing general information as well as specific topics that have prompted the interview. Statements should be truthful. When the answer is unknown, it should be stated as such and the reporter should be telephoned later with the answer. It is advisable to form consistent policies regarding the media such as whether to waive admission fees or to allow photography.147 As the Commission well knows, they have little control over what a newspaper will print. Their job is to sell the news, not to promote Fairmount Park. Positive relationships with the media should continue to be cultivated so as to understand each other's requirements.148

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147 Ibid, pp. 128-132, 157. For information regarding personal contact situations with the media, consult chapter 7, "Meeting the Media," pages 128-162.

148 Ambrose and Paine, Museum Basics, p. 119.
Chapter III
Accessibility

For Philadelphia the Centennial celebration gives a grand opportunity to secure rapid and cheap access to its park. Such access is a public want today, and each succeeding year will make it more and more evident.... The more this subject is examined the more clearly it will appear that a wise policy requires the access to an exhibition to be not only cheap but rapid and comfortable. It should be more -- it should be inviting, and, if possible, the cost should be covered in the cost of entrance. In other words the would-be visitor should be able to buy his transportation and entrance-ticket together, for a price which, to him, is satisfactory for the entrance alone. This plan works well in London for the Crystal Palace, Sydenham.149

This is the advice that W. P. Blake gave the organizers of the Centennial Exhibition of 1876 from his observations of the Vienna Exposition of 1873. His advice is still very much applicable today and relates to another core problem of the Park, that of accessibility.

Past Trolley Service

Accessibility to the Park has had a rocky past. The last effort for the City to be the direct supplier of access to the Park began in 1976 with a strong push from Mayor Rizzo's Office for the Bicentennial. The trolleys ran in fifteen to twenty minute intervals and were administered by a staff of twenty to twenty-three people. The tour guides were well-informed and promoted the City with enthusiasm. While the trolleys enjoyed tremendous popularity and increased visitation from 25,000 to 100,000 to the East and

West Park houses,\textsuperscript{150} they were reported to be $800,000 in debt by 1980. While there were charges of mismanagement and of drivers ignoring their prescribed routes,\textsuperscript{151} this experience has acted to discourage any attempts to renew the City's involvement in providing trolley service to the Park,\textsuperscript{152} despite the service being referred to as "temporarily discontinued" in the "Fairmount Park: Recreation and Leisure" brochure.\textsuperscript{153}

The projected 1997 visitation for Woodford, Strawberry Mansion, and Lemon Hill was 6,750 at each house and 5,930 for Sweetbriar and Laurel Hill. Assuming that Mt. Pleasant and Cedar Grove would have had similar projections to the former, the total projected visitation for Fairmount Park proper for fiscal year 1997 was 45,610. This includes the Christmas and "Historic Houses in Flower" tours.\textsuperscript{154}

**The Current Trolley and Bus Access**

At present, SEPTA provides bus service from Center City to the Zoo and Memorial Hall on bus #38 and to the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Zoo on bus #76; however, there are no buses that move from house to house. There is one trolley company, the Philadelphia Trolley Works, that provides a trolley service to the East and West Park Houses, which include the Japanese House and Garden, Cedar Grove,


\textsuperscript{152} The Fairmount Park Commission, Amy L. Freitag, Historic Preservation Officer and Acting Director of the Fairmount Park Trust, "Tour of the Park Houses," Interview by the author, 3 September 1997.


Sweetbriar, Strawberry Mansion, Woodford Mansion, Laurel Hill, Mount Pleasant, and Lemon Hill. They have a contractual agreement with the Park and depart from the Visitor's and Convention Center every half hour during peak season and every hour during the off-peak season.\textsuperscript{155} The tour was designed so that visitors can tour three or four houses on alternate days with stops at the P.M.A., the Zoo, and Smith Memorial Playhouse. With the Strawberry Mansion bridge not in use, the three hours that would be required to go to all eight houses and the Zoo is far too long for a single tour.\textsuperscript{156} The trolley tour, without touring the Park houses, is forty minutes in duration.\textsuperscript{157} They have friendly and knowledgeable drivers who provide their patrons with basic information about the Park and its built environment.\textsuperscript{158} The trolleys work very well for the P.M.A., not only for their regular daily tours, but with their annual Christmas and "Historic Houses in Flower" tours.\textsuperscript{159} They increase the frequency and number of trolleys during these events to run approximately every fifteen minutes in a loop around the Park.\textsuperscript{160}

From observation, there are three critical areas in the current trolley system which need improvement. The first is that their brochure fails to let people know that the trolley only stops at certain houses on certain days. Customers should be made aware of

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\textsuperscript{155} The Fairmount Park Commission, Thomas W. Doyle, Public Relations Officer, "The Fairmount Park Trolley," Telephone interview by the author, 10 June 1997.

\textsuperscript{156} Philadelphia Trolley Works, Angie McHugh, Special Events Coordinator, "The Current Fairmount Park Trolleys," Telephone interview by the author, 10 April 1998.


\textsuperscript{160} Philadelphia Trolley Works, Angie McHugh, Special Events Coordinator, "The Current Fairmount Park Trolleys," Telephone interview by the author, 10 April 1998.
\end{flushleft}
this prior to purchasing their tickets because it gives the impression that they are only receiving half of the services for which they paid. Secondly, many tourists fear getting off the trolley and being stranded in the Park, of wasting too much time waiting for the trolley to return, or of having a really long, boring tour of the house. Lastly, the cost of the Park tour is $8.00 per adult, $6.00 for seniors, and $5.00 for children between the ages of six and twelve plus additional fees for admission into the Park houses. Considering the cost of a movie today and the cost of trolley tours in cities such as Boston, this may not be cost prohibitive for the average family; however, it certainly does not encourage patronizing the Park houses.

**Recommended Changes for the Trolley**

To increase visitation to the Park houses and the ridership on the trolley, several changes need to be made. The first is that the brochure needs to be specific as to which houses are available on what days, or at least that only four houses will be on the tour, before the ticket price has been paid and the tour has begun. People do tell their friends and neighbors when they perceive themselves to have been mislead or cheated. This is particularly important because as more tourists come to Philadelphia because of the Convention Center, the more likely it is that their perceived negative experience will reach the ears of potential customers.

While it is unlikely that the trolley company could be persuaded to increase the frequency of their service to every fifteen minutes initially without an increase in business, the Fairmount Park Commission should try to convince them to do so by bringing them in during the planning stages. People are much more likely to cooperate and be enthusiastic in working towards a common goal if they feel as though they can contribute and will benefit from the plan.
The next step is to include the tour of the houses in the ticket price without raising its cost to the patron. Rather than the Park houses receiving a fee when a visitor actually tours the house, they should receive a fee for every ticket sold such as $2.00 for every adult and $1.00 for every senior or child. This money would go directly to the Fairmount Park Conservancy to fund on-site staff positions and maintenance and restoration projects. The key in this recommendation is perception. Trolley patrons need to perceive that they are not getting their money's worth unless they visit at least one house. In order to do that, the brochure and the ticket need to make that point clear, stating that the cost reflects the visit to one or two houses with visitations above that being a savings. The ticket should be designed so that it is perforated with small coupons to be removed at each house or non-perforated to be punched at each house. This should influence people to go to multiple houses to feel as though they had been successful in getting value for their money. While there may not be any immediate financial benefit to this, it would eventually, with increased patronage of the trolleys and the introduction of museum shops as discussed in a later chapter. The trolley company also should institute the option to use the ticket again within a week for an additional charge of approximately half of the original cost. Even if the trolley company is reluctant to make these changes, the increased advertising of the Park will bring increased demand that will prompt the existing trolley company to increase the frequency of the trolley and eventually competition that will bring down the price and continue the cycle further. According to Angie McHugh, Special Events Coordinator at the Philadelphia Trolley Works, they would be willing to consider combining the price of the ticket to include admission to the houses, but at a price to be determined. One perceived obstacle is that each house is run by a separate organization and, therefore, the agreement of the individual stewards would
be necessary. However, if all of the income raised from the trolley tours is directed to the Conservancy, then all houses would benefit from this plan. The preferable way is that the money go into a general fund available to all historic structures and landscapes under the care of the Conservancy; however, in reality, concessions may have to be made that funds only go to those houses on the trolley tour. The precedent is that, in California, San Simeon, also known as the Hurst Castle, helps to fund less profitable house museums in the state for the benefit of all.

It should be noted that the Philadelphia Trolley Works strongly encourage its customers of the Center City tour to also take the tour of the Park. They advertise for the Park tours on their trolleys as well as for the Christmas and "Historic Houses in Flower" tours. They are also in discussions with the Park House Guide office to allow them to book group tours directly, rather than both through them and the P.M.A, which tends to discourage some groups, perceiving this process to be too complicated. This process requires a deposit be made to both the P.M.A. and the Trolley Works. Another difficulty with the current situation is that the Park House Guide office requires an official head count several weeks in advance. Some groups, particularly elderly groups, are reluctant to make such a commitment that far in advance because they can not control people from not to participating and then having to pay for them. The Philadelphia Trolley Works hopes to increase the number of group tours to the Park by eliminating these factors and would only require a final head count a few days in advance.

\[161\] Ibid.


While it has been suggested to bring back the City-run trolley,\textsuperscript{164} it may be more advisable to keep the trolley service private. With the new Convention Center and the City's emphasis on tourism, providing such a service does have the potential to be profitable if it were to be properly managed, marketed, and priced for individuals and groups. However, obtaining the initial funding for the purchase of equipment, gasoline, salaries, and so forth from the City would be extremely difficult. The City would be more inclined to have a private company on its tax roles providing a lucrative service than competing against it.

Two other options are to introduce a lightrail system based on the "Old Woodside Trolley" or a monorail system. These would be tremendously expensive to institute with the equipment and man-power required for such an operation, but they are worth considering for the \textit{long-term}. If either of these endeavors were to be undertaken, funding should be sought from the Department of the Interior or through federal transportation money.\textsuperscript{165}

\textbf{Recommended Changes For The Park Houses}

When the City was running its own trolley service during the 1970s and 1980s, the guides at Laurel Hill would wear Colonial costumes and each time the trolley stopped, they would come out of the house and wave to the trolley riders. This gave the impression to the riders that this was a friendly and safe place to get off the trolley and tour the house. Laurel Hill was the most highly visited house in the Park in this period. Today, the doors of the houses remain closed and riders feel uneasy about leaving the

\textsuperscript{164} The Fairmount Park Commission, Thomas W. Doyle, Public Relations Officer, "The Fairmount Park Trolley," Telephone interview by the author, 10 June 1997.

\textsuperscript{165} Ibid.
security of the trolley, particularly while in sight of economically depressed areas.\textsuperscript{166} There seems to be a consensus that some of the houses do not necessarily appear to be open, even when they are.\textsuperscript{167}

While wearing Colonial or Federal costumes may not be practical or desired, it is important that when the trolley stops that the guide comes out of the house to make the riders feel secure in leaving the trolley. Rather than having the trolley driver introduce the house, the guide should do this in a way that entices the passengers to want to learn and see more. Not only will this increase the comfort level of the riders, it will create a personal connection between them and the guide.

**Increased Walkability of the Park**

One of the perceived amenities of the Park is its size. However, this poses a problem when a person may want to see the houses in East and West Park without paying for the trolley. A greater effort should be made to supply sidewalks, crosswalks, better signage, map locators, and pleasant landscaping to encourage walking and biking in the Park. For too long, the emphasis has been on the automobile. A visitor to Philadelphia should at least be given access to Lemon Hill without the fear of being hit by a car. The Philadelphia Museum of Art could be immensely helpful in this endeavor by advertising the accessibility of Lemon Hill, as well as the Waterworks, in their on-site material and in their entrances. Lemon Hill enjoyed tremendous visitation during the Cezanne show because people had to park near it to get to the P.M.A.\textsuperscript{168}

\textsuperscript{166} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{167} Philadelphia Trolley Works, Angie McHugh, Special Events Coordinator, "The Current Fairmount Park Trolleys," Telephone interview by the author, 10 April 1998.

\textsuperscript{168} The Fairmount Park Commission, Amy L. Freitag, Historic Preservation Officer and Acting Director of the Fairmount Park Trust, "Tour of the Park Houses," Interview by the author, 3 September 1997.
It should be noted that there is an effort now underway through the generosity of the William Penn Foundation to create a two mile botanic trail between Bartram's Gardens and 30th Street Station, with Bartram's acting as the host institution. It is to be both a bikeway and a walking trail. The hope is that one day it will be possible to travel on a bicycle between 30th Street Station and Valley Forge.169 An effort should be made to link the other properties to this trail as well.

Chapter IV
Education

Park Public Relations Officer, Tom Doyle, has responded to those who remark that the Park should be promoted more with: "Well, what are you going to promote?" With the current interest in heritage tourism, the Park houses seem to be the best answer. They have the potential to capture revenue through general admissions, special tours, programs, fundraisers, and product sales.\(^\text{170}\) However, significant improvements must be made to the visitor experience before this can become a reality.

I recently visited several of the Park houses with a friend from college who, despite growing up near Philadelphia, had never taken a tour of any of the houses. Choosing to go on a Thursday in March, we found Cedar Grove, Mt. Pleasant, Woodford, and Strawberry Mansion open for tours. Although we were told a great deal about the houses and their collections, we found that none of the "guards" on duty that day -- who regularly conduct tours of the house -- had gone through the Park House Guide Training Program at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, nor have they had any other type of formal guide training. However, at least at Cedar Grove and Mt. Pleasant, the guards are given self-guided tours from which to study and are very familiar with the collections.\(^\text{171}\)

The tour at Cedar Grove opened with a long explanation of four or five generations of the family and their separate building campaigns, which was somewhat


confusing even to those who are familiar with Old Philadelphia names. This was followed by a typical "inventory tour," in which the guide simply stated the names of the objects, but rarely explained the terminology or why the objects are important. This kind of tour proves tiresome both to those who are familiar with early American material culture and to those who are not. The brightest spot on the tour was learning that the "chest on chest on chest," which is a high chest built in three stackable sections, in Cedar Grove is one of but a few that exist today.

The tour of Mt. Pleasant was also an "inventory tour" and included detailed names of the plasterwork designs. However, rather than being told all of the owner information up front, it was mixed in throughout the tour, which made it far more interesting and enjoyable. To his credit, the "guard" emphasized the concept of architectural symmetry during the mid-Georgian period and explained that few people would have had libraries at the time.

Woodford, because it houses the Naomi Wood Collection, is more appropriate for an "inventory tour," yet it was less of one than the two previously mentioned. Rather than simply stating the names of objects, the objects were explained as to their function or importance. Brief information about previous owners and Naomi Wood was given; however, this type of information should have greater emphasis during the tour. It is the uniqueness and the individualness of these houses that will encourage visitors to return and to feel a connection to them, not "this is a Windsor chair" as heard in the two previous houses.

Strawberry Mansion was by far the most informative and interesting tour, despite only being able to see the principle downstairs rooms due to the preparations for the

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172 This would have been much easier to digest if the "guard" had had architectural drawings of the plan at its various stages of development with the corresponding dates and generations of the owners. This could be done on a several regular size pieces of paper that would be laminated and shown on each tour. The same could be done for a family tree.
"Historic Houses in Flower" tour. The "guard" informed us of the importance of the creation of the waterworks, the mansion's proximity to town and the Schuylkill River, the various room usages by succeeding owners, the difference between the modern piano, used for events, and the pianoforte, and the decision to retain the side additions earlier in the century. The tour gave the house a context. It did not allow for the visitor to make assumptions, and it introduced an important concept in preservation, that of retaining or removing later additions. This is not to say that improvements could not be made, but it was certainly the most educational and interesting of the group.

Guide training needs to be centralized for everyone who gives tours of the Park houses, preferably through the Philadelphia Museum of Art, or at least with their assistance. The P.M.A.'s Park House Guide program is very well respected in Philadelphia. Their guides primarily provide guiding for group tours and for the Christmas and "Houses in Flower Tours;" however, they do guide for walk-ins during the summer between 11:00 and 2:00 for the seven major houses in Fairmount Park proper. They have a total of fifty active guides, some of whom have been guiding for twenty-five years, and are in the process of training eighteen new guides. The P.M.A. trains their guides every three years and provides new information to their guides once a month. This information is updated continuously by the Curator of Park Houses in the American Art Department.173 It is hoped that the P.M.A. will accept into their training program the "guards" as well as expand their training program, or at least lend their expertise, to include other Park houses. Otherwise, since the Trust does not have the personnel or resources, the Conservancy should make an effort to adopt the job of interpretation and

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guide training into their plan or direct funding towards the Trust so that they can fulfill this aspect of their mission statement.

While there should still remain some separate training for the "Park House Guides" who give the specialized group tours, the same care should be taken to train the "guards," who usually give daily tours to walk-ins and trolley passengers. The current system is sending a message that both the "guards" and the visitors who are not part of a tour group (or do not come during the summer at a specific time) are not as important to the Park. The "guards" need to become "guides" or "interpreters" with an increased sense of responsibility to educate the public. They need to be recognized as an integral part of the visitor experience. The three core recommendations to improve the visitor experience at the Park houses are:

1) to emphasize training for everyone who conducts tours of the houses,

2) to encourage the coordination of the interpretive themes of each house so that tours do not become repetitive if visitors visit more than one house, and

3) to encourage the development of several tours offered at each house to increase repeat visitation.

Visitor Satisfaction

The most effective way to achieve visitor satisfaction is "by engaging the interest of the visitors, conveying information to them about what they see, [and] ensur[ing] that they derive value for money if an admission charge is made."174 The way to achieve this is to have a knowledgeable, informed, and enthusiastic "guides" who enhance the visitor experience. Many people visit museums because of reports they have heard from their friends and acquaintances and build expectations for their own visit based on these word-

of-mouth communications. Because each new visitor will repeat this process, it is important that all museum employees make sure that the pre-visit, on-site visit, and post-visit experience is positive and consistent. Park house guides need to be able to explain the nature of the collection, the scope of the collection and programs, the facilities, the museum's point of view, its emphasis, the interpretation, its funding sources, and its typical visitor. This information should serve as a basis for communication between the museum and the public.\cite{175} Furthermore, both supervisory staff and guides need to be able to inform visitors about local transportation, other places of interest in the area, and information about the surrounding community.\cite{176}

**The Interpretive Plan**

Before embarking on an interpretive plan, the mission statements of each house must be reviewed and updated, as necessary. Goals need to be set with objectives clearly outlined. Romanticized views of the houses and their former occupants need to be avoided; therefore, it is imperative that all existing research from primary and secondary sources be re-examined, repositories be re-explored, descendants be questioned, and recent publications be reviewed.\cite{177} In short, every property should have an historic structures report (HSR). An HSR will collect all information for the house, for both the building and the occupants, with a particular emphasis on the chronology of the building. It should supply a written report based on the documentation as well as photocopies of its

\marginnote{175} Adams, *Museum Public Relations*, pp. 3-5.


primary source documentation with its bibliographic information recorded. It should also include a complete bibliographic list that is divided between primary sources, secondary sources, and negative research. However, even if a site does have an existing HSR, there may still be a need to investigate historic finishes, develop a furniture plan based on inventories or photographs, and research social, religious, and event history associated with the house and the period. Oral histories, if taken, should be regarded skeptically and cross-checked against primary source documentation and the recollections of others. Once these reports are in place, they should provide the following information to develop an interpretive plan:

- 1) the roles of the former occupants in the family and in the community and how they related to neighbors, servants, and employees,
- 2) the family's economic status, whether it changed over time, and how it affected them,
- 3) the family's social values and political views and the extent of their involvement in them,
- 4) the family's religious beliefs and their connections to local churches, synagogues, and other religious institutions and their connection to others in the community as a result,
- 5) the size and extent of the family unit and the reasons behind it,
- 6) the family's social customs, connections, clubs, and standing.

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178 It is particularly important to cite the name of the collection and the word association used in the card catalog for primary source documents found at institutions such as the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Experience has shown that information is not always cross-referenced and that all possible names and categories be searched in the card catalogues. A master list should be created of all word associations used to check the card catalogues of such institutions.

7) the family's use of rooms and placement of objects and what this reveals about them socially and religiously,

8) the proximity of children's rooms to adults and servants and what it indicates about our culture,

9) the changes in technology through the history of the house and how it affected the occupants,

10) the events that took place at the house and their effect on local, state, or national history and the house itself,

11) the architectural style of the house, why it was chosen, and how the style developed in the region,

12) the community response to the house and its style from its construction to the present,

13) the furnishings and what they say about the values of the time,

14) the common styles of decoration of the period and what they indicate about the people who used them,

15) the original gardens and plantings surrounding the house and grounds and what influenced their design and variety,

16) the artistry and craftsmanship of the period compared to that of today and the changes in technology that have changed our architecture and our furnishings, and

17) the aesthetic focus of the house and how it reflects the period's attitudes, culture, and social views.¹⁸⁰

Since few of the Park houses contain furniture that is original to the house, some may want the core of their interpretation to be about the time period rather than on past occupants. Inventories, wills, bills of sale, journals, and other such primary evidence should be meticulously followed for interpretations based on a particular family. If they

are not, this should be explained to the visitor. It is appropriate, however, if these documents are not available for the particular family in question, to use others of the same date and social standing. Further, in the case of Lemon Hill where most of the interior millwork was brought from other sites during the Fiske Kimball's occupancy and stripped of its original finishes, it appears as though the house will retain its current "colonial revival" finishes. If this continues to be the case, it should be made clear to the visitor what the interpretive intent of the house is. The point is that the visitor should not be mislead, for it is these misunderstandings that create myths and negatively impact the reputation of the organization.

The Guide Program

Many of the Park houses are fortunate to have paid "guards" to give tours, while others are dependent solely on the goodwill of volunteers. But even those who are fortunate enough to have "guards" may find themselves needing additional people to give tours on a regular basis. Often, organizations like house museums tend to believe that volunteers are the answer, but, in many cases, there are many hidden costs and other pitfalls of having a volunteer workforce. It takes a great deal of time, money, and opportunity costs, which represents what could have been accomplished instead, to "recruit, train, schedule, supervise, locate back-ups, and organize appreciation events." Since volunteers tend to only work a few times a month, it may take approximately twenty-eight volunteers to maintain regular hours that could be accomplished by one or

181 Ibid, pp. 196-207.

two paid staff members. Further, volunteers are more likely to not show up, have higher turn-over rates, and be less motivated. This can result in inconsistent visitor experiences, unfinished projects, lost information and proficiency, and frustrated supervisory staff. Paid staff, on the other hand, tend to be more loyal, feel more responsible, and have a vested interest in the museum's success. As a result, they have a much higher level of knowledge, which significantly enhances the visitor experience. This type of staffing situation will help insure against the "I don't know -- I'm only here on Fridays" syndrome. It is for these reasons that paid staff is preferable to volunteers. While the P.M.A. has been fortunate thus far with their Park House Guide volunteers, some of the other houses have not had similar success.

Regardless of whether they are paid or are volunteer, it is vital that the guide program comprise of long-term planning that incorporates the mission, goals, and objectives of the Park, have support from all parties, and have a personnel structure that is appropriate to everyone involved. While each Park house will need to tailor the Park-wide program to its own needs, it is important that they share some basic characteristics. During the planning process for such a program, the planning committee should be devised from members of the Commission and the Sites Council to determine how the guides should help the Park achieve its mission. They will need to study external and internal factors that affect and will affect the guide program to adjust it accordingly. Short- and long-term goals should be set and a policy and procedural manual should be written to clarify job duties, professional standards, and recruitment strategies. The committee should seek a consensus among the affected steward groups, the Commission staff, and the Commissioners with each group adopting the program into their long-term

\[^{183}\text{Mary Miley Theobald, Museum Store Management (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1991), p. 27.}\]
plans. The Commissioners, the Commission staff, and the steward groups must be supportive of the guide program in order for it to work. This should not be a problem since all of these groups will have a creative hand in its formation and implementation. To make the program successful, the Commission staff needs to create a respectful environment, recognize its stewards and guides as a vital part of the success of the Park, and foster a sense of teamwork for the good of the organizational whole. The guides, in turn, must recognize that to be involved is a privilege, not a right, and that they must adhere to professional standards for the protection and reputation of the houses and their collections. The stewards must understand that the Commission has the right to institute policies and maintain some control over the guides and to protect itself and its property from liability from federal, state, and local laws as well as standards of museum ethics, which, in many cases, are more stringent.\(^{184}\)

Each guide should receive a manual which outlines the policies and procedures of both the museum and the guide program. It should include a welcoming statement, an overview of the museum and the program, the benefits and rewards of volunteering, a calendar outlining training sessions, meetings, and special events, requirements and procedures, expectations of ethical standards and professional conduct, sample forms, fact sheets outlining both the museum's and the program's history and activities, general facilities information, and an organizational flow chart.\(^{185}\) The role and responsibilities of the guide needs to be clearly outlined. This is particularly important for houses which may choose to have their guides assist in other areas of the museum. The clarification of their role and duties will give guides a sense of direction and purpose. It enables both guides and those who supervise them to understand how vital they are to the success of

\(^{184}\) Kuyper, *Volunteer Program Administration*, pp. 13-17.

\(^{185}\) Ibid, pp. 61-64.
the house and the Park as a whole.\textsuperscript{186} While the manual may be highly regarded for its thoroughness, it will not prove helpful if it is too long for anyone to want to read. Therefore, it is imperative that the manual be concise,\textsuperscript{187} use bullet points, and provide clear delineations of subject matter including sub-headings.

While all of this background material is important to the success of the program, it is equally important to select guides, whether paid or volunteer, that will not only follow the mechanics of the system, but will be competent, sincere, friendly, and enthusiastic. All guides must maintain a high level of professionalism, and those who do not should not be retained.\textsuperscript{188}

**Volunteer Training**

In order to be committed and motivated, guides must understand the museum, how to perform their duties, be informed of opportunities for further professional development, and must receive recognition for their efforts. Generally, museums provide four types of training for their guides including a preliminary orientation to the site and the guide program, a general training that outlines their responsibilities, a specialized training for specific tasks, and an advanced training for leadership roles and in-depth knowledge.\textsuperscript{189} From the outset, the guides must understand that "no matter how many years a person has worked for a historic site, he[or she] cannot possibly know all there is

\textsuperscript{186}\textit{Butcher-Younghans, Historic House Museums}, p. 226.

\textsuperscript{187}\textit{Kuyper, Volunteer Program Administration}, p. 64.

\textsuperscript{188}\textit{Butcher-Younghans, Historic House Museums}, p. 217.

\textsuperscript{189}\textit{Kuyper, Volunteer Program Administration}, pp. 59-60.
to be known about its historic events and personages, the way of life it represents, its decorative arts, architecture, gardens, and everything else associated with it.\textsuperscript{190}

For both the orientation and general training, new and returning guides and staff in supervisory roles attend these sessions. For new guides and supervisors, it is considered a requirement, whereas returning guides may be encouraged to attend to refresh their knowledge. The specialized training would include the above groups with an emphasis on those guides changing their role in the museum. Advanced training is reserved for returning volunteers to increase their base of knowledge about specific subjects and new developments in the field. Prior to each session, the learning objectives must be specified, the number of attendees ascertained, the content of the curriculum, the format, the lecturers, the materials needed, the title of the program, and when and where it will take place. Role playing, group activities, demonstrations, and discussions should be incorporated in the day to make it more fun and enjoyable.\textsuperscript{191}

One organization that utilizes these principals is the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. Like Fairmount Park, SPNEA has numerous sites and relies on the support of both paid and volunteer guides. Every spring, the SPNEA staff has an initial orientation at the each site to outline guide responsibilities, to give a tour of the site, and to provide materials about the site's history. This is usually followed by Interpreter's Training Day in which all of the new and many of the returning guides from all sites are trained together in general guide expectations, policies, and professionalism. Activities include watching skits of appropriate and inappropriate behavior, creating sample tours in


\textsuperscript{191} Kuyper, \textit{Volunteer Program Administration}, pp. 60-61. For in depth information about planning and executing these sessions as well as "The Top 25 Methods to Retain Volunteers," see pages 64-72.
small groups, and illustrating the effects on collections of sunlight and mishandling over
time. Then, the specialized training begins, which may include several sessions, to
develop and critique one another's tours as well as to learn site-specific policies. There is
also an advanced training called Interpreter's Professional Day in which all returning
guides and supervisory staff are expected to attend, regardless of tenure, to learn about
specific topics in more detail, review standard policies, introduce new policies, reveal new
research, and motivate one another for the upcoming summer season. This type of
program would greatly benefit Fairmount Park.\textsuperscript{192}

Once guides are secure in their training, they need to be evaluated periodically as to
their performance. This should begin with opportunities for self-evaluation, followed
by an evaluation by a supervisor. This should be mixed with informal praise and
constructive criticism to maintain enthusiasm and improve performance. Above all, this
should be a positive experience for both the supervisor and the guide. These evaluations
should include not only questions regarding the guide's performance in completing tasks,
but also the training and supervision that he or she has received. This will help in
addressing both individual and general problems so that they can be corrected.\textsuperscript{193} If a
video recorder is available, guides should have their tours taped so that they can have a
better understanding of the visitor experience and improve their guiding techniques. A
less expensive technique is a hand-held tape recorder. It will not provide visuals, but it
will illustrate voice tone, rapidity, and clarity. Both of these methods will allow the guide
to experience firsthand any negative patterns that should be corrected.\textsuperscript{194}

\textsuperscript{192}Lincoln, Massachusetts, Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, Codman House,
"Interpreter's Training Day," Attended by the author, 21 May 1995; and "Interpreter's Professional Day,"
Attended by the author, 5 May 1996.

\textsuperscript{193}Kuyper, \textit{Volunteer Program Administration}, pp. 83-86. For sample evaluation forms, see pages 87
and 88.

\textsuperscript{194}Alderson and Low, \textit{Interpretation of Historic Sites}, p. 138.
If there is a guide that continues to disregard policies, he/she should be dismissed. There is more potential harm to the museum's reputation by retaining such a person, than in terminating him or her. Not only do the museum visitors witness the behavior and spread negative word-of-mouth publicity, but other guides may view the behavior as acceptable and, thereby, undermine the entire program. However, before such a person can be dismissed, there must be written documentation that the person received a job description, performance evaluations, and other support of poor performance such as complaints or incident reports. There must also be an appeals process in place and documentation that it was offered to the dismissed guide. The same holds true for all staff.195

The Tour Itself

The main purpose of the guides should be to provide interesting, educational, and enjoyable tours to the public. The tour is the fundamental experience of most visitors with the site. It will often determine the visitor's future participation in programming, fundraising, membership, repeat visitation, and word-of-mouth publicity. Further, studies have shown that many of today's visitors have been to other house museums and expect to experience a professional interpretation. They tend to be increasingly more sophisticated and more familiar with current scholarship.196 It is for all of these reasons that it is imperative to have well-documented information about the property, its contents, and its previous owners as well as well-trained guides.

The fundamental aspect of the tour is the concept of interpretation, which is seen as both a program and an activity. The program defines what a museum wants its visitors

195 Kuyper, Volunteer Program Administration, pp. 86-89.
196 Alderson and Low, Interpretation of Historic Sites, p. 25.
to carry away from the site, and the activity is the means by which the information is conveyed. It is important that the visitor understand the reasons behind the house's existence from the standpoint of its former owners, but they must also understand context surrounding it. By using "a variety of sensory and intellectual perceptions gleaned through the quality of restoration, authenticity of furnishings, and effectiveness of exhibits,... [t]he goal [of effective interpretation] is achieved when the visitor gains an understanding of the reasons that historic site is important to the community, state, nation, world -- and most of all to the individual visitor."197

When laying the groundwork for the tours themselves, it is important to compose a standard tour for the general audience with specific message the visitor should grasp. Although every guide will explain specific, basic points, each should be given the flexibility to use different anecdotes, vary word choice, and adapt each tour to the interests and demographics of each visitor. Guides should attempt to vary their tours frequently so they do not come across as though they have memorized a script.198 However, guides must be sure to present information in a logical sequence with clear transitions between rooms. Guides need to be enthusiastic and should avoid expressionless recitations of what might appear to be dull, monotonous historical facts. The tour should be presented in a way that stimulates the visitor to ask questions and draw comparisons that relate to their own lives. Information should be presented in a clear, audible voice, and guides should make eye contact with the visitors during the entire presentation. Guides should never speak or answer questions in a patronizing or condescending tone or manner. If a guide does not know the answer to a question, they

197 Ibid. pp. 3-5.
198 Ibid. p. 23.
should admit to it and offer to find the information for the visitor after the tour. A guide must never make up information.199

SPNEA recommends that each tour begin with a quick, polite request to refrain from touching objects or taking photographs. This is followed by a brief statement about the organizational history and a brief explanation of the importance of the house, its context, and its previous occupants. It is important to clarify the significance of the house to the visitor straight away and build upon that information as the tour progresses. SPNEA recommends that, in each room, two to three major educational themes be supported by objects and laminated photographs and illustrations. These themes are woven together and reemphasized throughout the house, and logical transitions are provided between rooms. They strongly discourage "inventory tours" that list the objects in the room by their date, maker, and origin.200 The American Association for State and Local History mirrors SPNEA's many interpretive philosophies. They, too, emphasize detailed research, analysis, accuracy, usage of using thematic points, avoidance of using subjective words such as "pretty" or "attractive," and the avoidance of the sensational or the vulgar.201

It is important that each house present a balanced view that explains the way everyone associated with the house experienced life. Guides should not hide unpleasant, factual information. Nor should sensational information such as a murder or suicide become the emphasis of the interpretation.202 It has been shown that, regardless of why


201 Alderson and Low, Interpretation of Historic Sites, pp. 28-31.

202 Butcher-Younghans, Historic House Museums, p. 216.
a visitor has chosen to tour a site, "what seems to interest visitors most is people. They are inordinately curious about how people of an earlier era lived, what they ate and wore, what they worked at, what they did for entertainment; how, in short, the lives of the people who were associated with the site compare with the life styles of today."203

Tour themes can vary widely at each site. It is recommended that tours should be multifaceted and broad in their scope to appeal to a wide audience. Not only should tours explore the lives of past owners, they should include the views and lives of servants, gardeners, neighbors, and ministers who were associated with the house. Rather than simply stating events that happened at the house, the consequences of the events for all classes, both regionally and nationally, should be included in the interpretation. Relationships should be drawn to connect the visitor between the "views, products, language, behavior, politics, economics, law, and geographic delineations" of the past and present.204 It is from all of these topics that multiple tours can be designed for each house. For example, tours could be based on professions, politics, technology, events, children, servants, or objects. This enables the visitor to choose a topic that interests him/her and encourages that same visitor to return for other tours. This also enables a guide to mix and match tour information depending on whether there are diverse interests for larger groups. However, regardless of the major themes of the tour, the basic introductory information should include a brief description of how their particular house links to at least one other house, either by associations of former owners, architectural style, or land development. This will add to the context and perhaps encourage a visitor to tour an additional house. Of course a visitor should be asked which houses they had

203 Alderson and Low, Interpretation of Historic Sites, p. 28.
204 Butcher-Youngans, Historic House Museums, p. 184.
seen recently so he or she would know which information to give so as not to be repetitive and yet, draw references from the other properties.

**Self-Guided Tours and Information Sheets**

Two effective ways to enhance the visitor experience are through self-guided tours and information sheets. Clear, concise self-guided tours should be developed and made available to both guides and visitors. They provide a firm foundation for guides to learn the basic information about the house, its contents, and its previous occupants. It also allows a Park house that has gone through guide turnover to provide a solid, educational opportunity for its visitors. This way an inexperienced guide can still take visitors through the house. Self-guided tours should be used as tools for these types of situations, not to replace the traditionally verbal tour. The tour sheet should be one piece of paper with information on both sides written in a manner that still conveys the style of a verbal tour, mentioning two or three major points with supporting evidence in each room, rather than a list of facts or an inventory of objects. It should be laminated for continuous use and updated periodically.205

In order to provide continuously updated information, "information sheets" should be written monthly on various subjects to expand the knowledge of the guides. This way, guides are better able to answer visitor questions in depth and to periodically alter their tour so that they remain interested and enthusiastic. These sheets can be used introduce new research, to correct previous mistakes made in guide training, or to eradicate myths that have been picked up at other house museums. They also provide

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consistency for the visitor experience. These sheets can also be laminated and provided to visitors to review.

**Educational Programming**

Once the improved interpretation and guide training is in place, the Park houses can begin to expand their educational focus. After all, museums that provide interesting educational programming and activities usually enjoy greater support from the local community. Programming can be aimed at certain target audiences in both content and scheduling. These events can be held both on or off the site. Programs may include lectures, children's workshops, walking tours, and conservation demonstrations.

Because of the lack of space or need to move the collection in many of the Park houses, it would be advisable to hold a lecture series in Memorial Hall. The lectures should be designed to peak the interest to visit a particular house or group of houses. The highlighting of houses should be done on a rotating schedule so as to be fair to all of the museum houses. If feasible, an optional tour of a designated Park house could follow for lecture attendees. The purpose behind a lecture series is not to raise large sums of money, but to continue to develop a strong, local base of support for the Park and to increase the academic reputation of the Park in the museum field and in preservation circles across the country. The Park needs to increase the exposure of the public to all of its resources and continue to build the impression, and the reality, of the Park as a united force. The purpose should be maintained throughout all of the Park's educational programming.

The childrens' workshops could be undertaken as a separate series. They could be offered at Memorial Hall as well. The conservation demonstrations would be more site specific and would be undertaken at the discretion of the site and the professionals

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206 Ibid.
involved. The demonstrations could be incorporated into the lecture series at Memorial Hall or could be undertaken at the site for a specified, limited number of attendees.

The walking programs should be developed with both local residents and tourists in mind. Each program could be developed to run for several years at a time or could be rotated with new tours. The important thing is to keep each tour running as long as it is popular and to introduce new ones to maintain the level of enthusiasm for both the guides and the public. Walking tours could be designed to incorporate many of the sites that are in close proximity to one another. They could have varying themes such as the historic landscape, the Centennial Exhibition, or changing tastes in architecture and interiors. They could be used to explore surrounding neighborhoods and their history, like SPNEA's "Magnificent and Modest" Beacon Hill walking program. These programs could be developed in conjunction with the Foundation for Architecture or the Preservation Alliance along with local community leaders. It may also be advisable to form partnerships with outside organizations for specific programs because of their location or architectural similarity such as Knowleton, Maxwell Mansion, or Cliveden. This would allow for the sharing of costs, the broadening of the support base, and the building of valuable relationships.207

It must be remembered that planning special events is time consuming. It requires determining the organization of the activity, the target audience, the desired lecturers, the examination of the potential gained from collaborating with other institutions, the required resources, and the staff time and costs involved for the entire process.208 This is another reason why it is crucial to involve all of the houses to distribute the work load. To ensure the professionalism and support of these programs, perhaps the duty of interpretation

207 Ambrose and Paine, Museum Basics, pp. 49-51.

208 Ibid, pp. 51-52.
should be transferred from the Trust to the Conservancy, because of their financial and personnel situation. They also have a direct stake in the quality of the educational programming because of potential effects on donations. For this programming the Conservancy should consult the various house committees\textsuperscript{209} as well as the Historic Preservation Officer for their input in developing annual themes for a lecture series that would highlight specific houses on a rotating basis, which includes all historic structures. The program coordinator in the Conservancy may wish to form a committee made up of representatives from each house chosen to be included in the series to develop the specific lectures and topics. In order to be fair to all houses, the principal of rotation must be diligently maintained through the years with records kept so that no one house gets more than its fair share of promotion. This is not only for the interest of equality among the houses, but also to avoid repetition for the attendees and to build a loyal following. The same should be done with the childrens' workshops.

As with the trolley tours, income should be equally distributed among all of the historic properties in the Park through the Conservancy, primarily to improve educational opportunities at each site. It is particularly important that funds be made available for all sites because they will all contribute to the educational programming in the Park. The fundamental objective of joint programming is to expose all Park houses to the public and to gain support for the Park as a whole. It is to help Park houses that can not afford a full-time director the opportunity to participate in this type of programming and to help distribute the cash flow throughout the Park. Group programming should not preclude each Park house from developing its own set of programs and activities for their own financial benefit. Any well-received programming will benefit the Park in general. It is

\textsuperscript{209} This reads house committees rather than the Sites Council because not all museum houses are represented in the Council. If all houses were to be included in the Council, voting on tour themes may be appropriate in this forum.
hoped that after a few years as the revenues of the Park increase (and the popularity of
the programs increase) that a full-time professional will be hired by the Conservancy to
coordinate these efforts and institute new ideas with the continued help and support of
the all of the steward groups. The reason for the time delay is not only financial and to
ensure the professionalism of the endeavor, but also so that the Conservancy has had a
little time to gain the momentum of support necessary for the support of this type of
programming. According to Tom Doyle, the reason that the trolley program was so well-
received by the individual steward groups was because everyone involved benefited from
its services. The same principal must be incorporated to insure the future success of the
Park.\textsuperscript{210}

While the most innovative and enjoyable programming can be developed and
implemented, it will not matter unless people know about its existence. It is crucial for
press releases to be sent to local publications and news programs and notices sent to
members. Luckily, the Schultz & Williams recommendations for the formation of the
Conservancy includes a position for a "Marketing Manager who will be responsible for all
marketing, publicity and advertising on behalf of the Fairmount Park Conservancy."\textsuperscript{211}
The Conservancy should publish a newsletter to provide information of upcoming events
and to praise past events to both its members and the Park houses. Along with the
newsletter, eye-catching bulletins for upcoming events should be posted at all Park
houses for the benefit of visitors. Museum guides in all Park houses should include event
information at the end of each tour to maximize the dissemination of the information.\textsuperscript{212}

\textsuperscript{210} The Fairmount Park Commission, Thomas W. Doyle, Public Relations Officer, "The Public Relations
Department," Taped interview by the author, 5 March 1998.


\textsuperscript{212} Adams, \textit{Museum Public Relations}, p. 53.
Finally, all programming should be evaluated in terms of its success. Accurate records should be maintained so that, in time, popular series or segments of a program or series can be repeated, updated, or expanded. Information of past successes can be used to bolster support from donors and the media for new and updated programming.\textsuperscript{213}

\textbf{The Park Houses and the Philadelphia Museum of Art}

Many people consider one visit to a museum as enough or will delay a visit because they believe that the museum will always be there. Special events and exhibits, however, often encourage more frequent visitation on the part of the visitor. Limiting the time of an exhibit will make the need for the visit more urgent and will encourage news organizations to report the event. While this has proved highly successful for art museums, it has not worked as smoothly for other types of museums.\textsuperscript{214} However, the Fairmount Park houses have the distinct advantage of being linked to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The P.M.A. should work with \textit{all} of the Park houses during the planning stages of their special exhibits to customize the house tours to highlight specific objects related to the P.M.A. show or to create special exhibits of objects not normally on display. Such efforts could be advertised in the P.M.A.'s promotional material as well as in the Park houses and in their newsletter. While not all of the houses would be able to take advantage of such exhibits because of a lack of space or the nature of their collection, others may find this a worthwhile venture. For example, during the "Best Dressed: 250 Years of Style" exhibit, the Ryerss Museum and Library could have had a satellite exhibit of the shoes and clothing items from its collection. While the benefit of such promotion is obvious for Ryerss, the P.M.A. may have benefited too by reaching an audience in a

\textsuperscript{213} Ambrose and Paine, \textit{Museum Basics}, p. 53.

\textsuperscript{214} Adams, \textit{Museum Public Relations}, pp. 57-58.
different part of the City that would not have otherwise known about their exhibit or have been inclined to go. As with the Park houses, all of the institutions connected with the Park should consider themselves as part of a team and be willing to help each other.

The P.M.A. could further its assistance in building interest in the Park houses by displaying the names of particular houses from which objects are lent to the museum. As it is now, objects identification placards simply state that an object is on loan from the Fairmount Park Commission. It may prove helpful if these placards were updated identifying the specific Park house as well as if their are similar pieces on display at the house.

**Park House Presentation**

Not only does the information in the tours need to be accurate, but the presentation of the objects and the interior finishes of the houses need to accurate as well. It is frustrating for those involved in the museum field, and misleading and confusing for those who are not, to see inaccurate bed hangings and paint colors in the Park houses. The houses should make every effort to be in line with the current scholarship. If they are not, it undermines the integrity of the institution as a whole. Even venerable Colonial Williamsburg has realized its mistakes in the past and has completely reinterpreted its public presentation.

**Expansion of Special Tours**

As for the existing programming, the Philadelphia Museum of Art should consider expanding its Christmas Tours and its "Historic Houses in Flower" Tour to all of the Park houses used as museums, once it is determined that their presentation would be up to par with the other Park houses. While the trolley would be impractical for most of these
other houses, the advice and direction of the P.M.A. should be made available, at least at Christmas, for those who would like to increase their accuracy, professionalism, and name recognition. Not only would it make other communities feel involved, but it might generate renewed interest for visitors who have already experienced the traditional tours. Further, the dates should be expanded to two weeks, or at least over two weekends, to give a greater opportunity for the widest number of Philadelphians to attend.

School Groups

According to Peter Lewis, "any museum where school children are less than 20 percent of its total [visitation] is failing in its essential mission." While Park houses do enjoy fair patronage from local schools, this needs to be expanded into an aggressive, active program that encourages more school groups to include additional Park houses in their field trips, not just those currently offered by the P.M.A.'s Park House Guides. Because not all schools can afford the cost of the providing buses, grants should be sought to provide transportation from economically disadvantaged schools.

Information needs to be sent to schools at the beginning of the school year to inform teachers of the educational opportunities available at the houses. While the foundation for such a program may be a general tour of the house tailored to the respective age group, specific programs should be developed such as participatory activities, demonstrations, and tours that emphasis the lives of children of the past. Developing long-standing relationships with local schools may prompt educators to include units on the Park, the houses, and their previous occupants in their curriculum. This can either be achieved by the Park's educational staff providing sample units to the schools or by supplying accurate, well-documented information about the Park and its conflicts.

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houses for individual teachers to create their own units. 216 This strategy is intended to have the children develop a lifetime of interest in the Park as well as increase their parents' support, both politically and financially.

**Historical Societies and Associations**

In addition to area schools, Fairmount Park should target local societies and associations that sponsor field trips to local points of interest such as the Victorian Society in America and the Old York Road Historical Society. Not only do the members of these organizations appreciate the educational opportunities of such events, but they are prime candidates to be positive word-of-mouth communicators and potential special event, membership, and financial supporters.

**Further Possibilities**

Because of the historical authenticity of the Fairmount Park houses, the success of Colonial Williamsburg, and the former success of Laurel Hill's costumed guides, it has been suggested to use the Fairmount Park houses as living history museums, that is, to have costumed interpreters who perform tasks such as churning butter or making soap to create a better picture of eighteenth and nineteenth century life for the museum visitor. 217 Advocates of costumed interpreters believe that visitors can understand the realities of the past more clearly in terms of the amount of physical labor involved, the delineation of male and female family roles, and the similarities and differences of the products of the past and present. This type of interpretation is believed to more clearly illustrate

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216 Kuyper, *Volunteer Program Administration*, pp. 3-4.

American cultural history and is seen as highly enjoyable for the museum visitor. However, costumes require a significant amount of accuracy including hairstyles, watches, glasses, bussels, corsets, and other accessories in addition to the costume itself. It is only when a site can present costumes worn in an authentic manner that it should be considered.

While this format has proven to be highly successful for Colonial Williamsburg, it is not a guarantee that it would work in Fairmount Park, particularly because of the large expanses of ground that separate each house and the lack of dependencies and service buildings. This format would also require heavy staffing for demonstrations and guiding, tools and equipment, costumes, research for the historical accuracy of the methodology, debate over the potential recreation of service buildings, and so forth. Fairmount Park would need greatly to increase its staffing, financial and community support, and research and documentation efforts before such an endeavor could be undertaken. It is, however, possible to make this a long-term goal so that it may begin to reach the level necessary for this type of programming to become a reality.

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Chapter V
Membership

For many visitors who are familiar with other historic house museum organizations, it is surprising to see that Fairmount Park is not treated as one centralized organization, but that it is comprised of many different volunteer groups that have adopted either an historic house or section of the Park as their area of concern. While this may have been, and still is, beneficial to the Park, in some respects, it also has proved to stifle the concept of the Park as a singular organization and the many benefits that are possible as a result. A united organization has the ability to funnel the energy of all of these separate groups into its promotional, educational, fundraising, and sales efforts. Rather than seeing the unification efforts of the Park as a threat, it is hoped that these groups will recognize that they have a much better chance of achieving their goal(s) by being perceived as acting under one large, well-known organization as opposed to seventy-three small, separate organizations. One recognized way to achieve this is to offer memberships in Fairmount Park as a whole through the Conservancy.

The History of Membership in Museums

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, wealthy individuals were the sole contributors to Americas cultural institutions in both the construction of their buildings and in the establishment of their collections. However, when the progressive income tax system was initiated, these individuals found that they could no longer do it alone. Many institutions began to form groups of wealthy trustees that were expected to make personal donations to cover annual deficits. As operating costs grew beyond the capacity of the trustees, many museums began to offer membership for a nominal fee. While
organizations have needed to gain further support from government sources and foundations, membership programs offer a broad base of financial support and allow for a wider range of people to be associated with cultural institutions. They give the museum a dedicated support base for fundraising drives, positive word-of-mouth publicity, attendance for educational programming, a customer base for museum shops,\textsuperscript{220} and, in the case of Fairmount Park, political influence.

**The Membership Program**

Most membership programs provide benefits such as complimentary admission, discounts at the museum shop, and a magazine or newsletter. These benefits often preclude basic membership fees from being tax deductible. Memberships are often priced in different rate categories including individual, family, corporate, senior, and student. Newsletters, magazines, membership renewal solicitations, members-only events, and member discounts, coupled with public relation efforts, help keep members interested and involved.\textsuperscript{221}

When considering the benefits and fees that the Park should charge in their membership program, it would be best to model the program after leading cultural institutions in Philadelphia as well as like organizations throughout the country. The Philadelphia Museum of Art, in their 1997 membership program brochure, offers memberships to individuals for $40, students for $25, and households for $55. These categories provide free, unlimited admission, previews of new exhibits, 10% discounts for merchandise, a magazine, a monthly calendar, members-only guided tours, discounts on adult and children's educational classes, and free admission to Mt. Pleasant and Cedar

\textsuperscript{220} Adams, *Museum Public Relations*, pp. 64-65.

\textsuperscript{221} Ibid, p. 65.
The Contributor category, at $75, is the next highest level of membership and offers all the benefits listed above plus an invitation to special exhibition previews and two guest passes for admission to the P.M.A. Higher levels of patronage are also available.222

The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, which owns and operates thirty-three properties in New England, offers free admission to all of their houses, use of their library and archives, a quarterly newsletter, a comprehensive guide to their houses, invitations to special events, including members' parties and the annual meeting, advance notice of programs and events, and discounts on programs and merchandise to its members. Individuals are charged $25, and households are charged $35. Contributing members, for $50, receive household benefits plus four guest passes. Sustaining members, for $100, receive household benefits plus a one-year guest pass. Supporting members, for $250, receive household benefits plus two one-year guest passes. Appleton Circle members, for $1,000, receive supporting benefits plus invitations to special programs.223

The basic similarities of Fairmount Park and SPNEA would indicate that the Conservancy's membership program should closely follow theirs in terms of pricing structure and benefits. Although, having a reduced rate for students and seniors may prove beneficial.

The Conservancy should coordinate with the Sites Council and the Friends of Philadelphia Parks a quarterly or semi-annual newsletter which informs members of upcoming events and programs, features short articles about specific houses or


collections, and furthers the understanding of the Park's purpose. It is possible to produce this type of publication in house using a standard office computer program and a photocopier. Of course, a scanner and a true publishing program would improve the professionalism of the newsletter. However, it is best not to look overly professional or some members may begin to feel that their money is not funding what it should.

Providing newsletters and magazines often results in greater financial support from members. Therefore, it is also recommended that the Conservancy produce an annual magazine such as the Victorian Society in America's Nineteenth Century. Nineteenth Century features articles about "architecture, fine arts, decorative arts, interior design, life-style, clothing, and photography" as well as current activities and updates from their local chapters. The Victorian Society publishes approximately 2,000 magazines per issue which costs them anywhere from $7,500 to $14,000 depending on the amount of advertising, the length of the articles, and the number of color pages it includes. This cost is covered by each member in his or her membership fees, which are $25 for students, seniors, and libraries, $35 for adults, $45 for households, $100 for sustaining members, $250 for contributing members, and $1,000 for life members. Dues also include invitations to two symposia events per year, the annual meeting and tour, foreign study tours, and summer schools as well as discounts on selected books as announced in the magazine. In other words, unless a person regularly attends these

224 Adams, Museum Public Relations, pp. 73-74.


227 The Victorian Society in America, "The Victorian Society in America Benefits of Membership" brochure, [1990s].
other events, which can be fairly expensive to do, their members are willing to pay at least $25 to $35 for their magazine.

The regard with which Nineteenth Century is held in academic circles is no accident. They obtain most articles from free-lance writers whose only compensation is the publication of the article. When an article is submitted, it is sent to three members of the publications committee who are professionals in the field in which the article is written. The article is then returned to the author with recommended corrections by the committee members and the editor, which may include grammatical changes, the elimination of redundancy, or the request for better photographs. The author usually revises his or her work and returns it for publication. It is a tremendous effort for all of those involved, but it is rewarded by the magazine's reputation, the clout of the libraries who subscribe to the magazine, the level of scholarly work that is submitted, and the constant requests for back issues.228 Because of the expense of such an endeavor, the Conservancy should regard the publication of a magazine as a long-term goal. It should be considered as a tool to increase its membership and standing in the academic community and should only be undertaken if it will be a highly respected publication.

The Importance of an Up-To-Date Mailing List

Not only are the financial benefits from membership fees important, but the membership list offers an opportunity for direct mailings for membership renewals, program announcements, annual giving drives, pleas for support of specific projects, and museum shop catalogs. As it has been previously mentioned, foundations and

228 The Victorian Society in America, Bill Fischelis, Managing Editor/Advertising Editor of Nineteenth Century, "The Costs of Providing Nineteenth Century," Telephone Interview, 30 March 1998.
government agencies like to give to organizations that have broad public support as reflected in their admission, program, and donation statistics.

As shown in their 1996 Annual Report, SPNEA received income from membership dues of $109,200, programs of $205,793, unrestricted cash gifts of $447,090, restricted cash gifts of $774,262, museum shop sales of $162,692, and grants of $904,487.\textsuperscript{229} No doubt their success in gaining much of this support was due to their ability to contact members through direct mailings.

**Reciprocal Membership Agreements**

As a means of establishing goodwill, it may be prudent to establish reciprocal agreements with large, well-known organizations to offer each others members complimentary admission. This could gain positive word-of-mouth publicity nationwide, increase local interest, generate higher admission results, and increase merchandise sales. Organizations such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the P.M.A., and the Philadelphia Zoo would be likely candidates for this type of program.

**Friends Groups**

Because the houses have been treated as separate entities for so long, seventy-three community-based friends groups with 18,000 members have been developed to care for specific houses.\textsuperscript{230} While this proposed plan emphasizes treating the Park as a whole, the friends groups are still a vital part of the plan. They should in no way be discouraged if they are loyal, active, and helpful to the houses they serve. The more

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funding sources there are, the better. Friends groups are important for spreading positive word-of-mouth publicity, encouraging their neighbors to be involved, providing a volunteer support base, and informing their local politicians of how important the Park and its houses are to the community. 231 Strong community support is important to most foundations as well.

It should be noted, however, that some of the friends groups may have proven to be more trouble than they are worth. With some, there is an "us" versus "them" mentality with both sides feeling equally frustrated. The Fairmount Park Commission staff needs to recognize that some of these groups were formed before much of the current theories of preservation were known and many still do not understand them. If these groups are to be truly beneficial, the Commission, the Trust, and the Conservancy, in their area of expertise, need to begin to educate these groups on these issues, and, in some cases, redefine the roles and responsibilities of these organizations. Without this understanding, relations will continue to be rocky, and Park itself will lose in the end. The Commission also needs to be more forthright with what they are able to contribute towards the maintenance and operating costs of the Park and its houses in the current funding climate. Otherwise, the groups cannot properly assist the Commission. If these friends groups are unwilling to respect the property and its contents, or to be active fundraisers and lobbyists, then they do not serve their intended purpose, and it may be best to request that they disband. It should be made clear to the friends and steward groups that having a membership program for the Park as a whole does not preclude their ability to retain their own membership groups. The Victorian Society of America, for example, has their own local and regional chapters that raise money and hold events in

231 Kuyper, Volunteer Program Administration, pp. 10-11.
their area, and Lyndhurst, the flagship property of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, has its own membership group dedicated solely to their property.  

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232 The Victorian Society in America, "The Victorian Society in America Benefits of Membership" brochure, [1990s].

Chapter VI
Fundraising

According to Philadelphia lore, it was during a Board meeting of an Old Philadelphia institution that the members were discussing the need to raise money for a project when someone interjected that "a gentleman never asks his friends for money," to which one of his colleagues quickly added, "except for a good cause." There is not a week that goes by that local newspapers do not publish photographs from several charity events that were held the previous week. There are even some who devote entire sections to it. Philadelphians are, without a doubt, very generous when it comes to worthy causes. The trick is to convince them of the importance of protecting the cultural and natural resources of the Park and assure them that their money will go directly to that cause.

The Park's Recent Fundraising History

During the 1980s, the Park held events such as concerts for the benefit of the Park. However, in about 1990, it was determined that the Park should redirect its emphasis towards the basic mission of preserving open space and providing an area for passive recreational activity. As of this writing, there are no fundraising events for the Park as a whole. Although, most friends groups do sponsor events for their own houses such as flea markets, Christmas bazaars, and concerts.234

The one Park-wide event that the Fairmount Park Commission holds is its annual cleanup called "Philadelphia Cares about Fairmount Park," held on the third Saturday of

May, in which 1,200 volunteers contribute their time. The goal of this event is "to promote the image of the Park" and to remind people that "Fairmount Park is Philadelphia's largest playground. It's your backyard, and a big part of the quality of life in Philadelphia." It is hoped that this one event will drive home this message, for it is well understood that a lot of people take the Park for granted.\textsuperscript{235} While picking up debris and performing other maintenance tasks such as painting structures in the Park is worthwhile, and the contribution of the participants' time and efforts is quite valuable, it does not raise money for the Park or the Park houses. What is needed is for the Conservancy, as a separate public charity for the benefit of the Park, to build a repertoire of annual fundraising events for the benefit of special preservation and restoration projects in the Park for both the landscape and the built environment.

The Importance of Fundraising

In \textit{The Museums Profession}, Hugh Bradford argues that a museum's reputation is essential for building attendance, but building relationships with its \textit{donors} ensures its financial success. He treats visitors and donors as separate groups with the latter requiring special attention. He does note, however, that one curator in his study believes that there is a circular relationship between reputation, visitation, and financial support, and that the basis for a museum's success is sound management. It is management that ultimately determines the museum's reputation and gains the support of both the visitors and the donors. With this support, the museum is able to improve its services, which enhances its reputation and furthers the financial support from its visitors and donors as a

\footnote{\textsuperscript{235} Ibid.}
continuous cycle. In the case of Fairmount Park, both of these views are correct. Personal, professional relationships need to be cultivated with large contributors, government agencies, and foundations to ensure their long-term support, and the museum visitor needs to feel just as appreciated and essential through their museum experience because each visitor is a potential donor, large or small. Individuals and foundations prefer to associate themselves with and donate money to successful organizations with solid reputations where they know their money will noticeably benefit the public and have lasting value. Further, having such a broad base of financial support should help protect the Conservancy from fluctuations in the business cycle.

The 1998 "Fairmount Park Commission Development Assessment & Plan"

The Fairmount Park Commission recently retained Schultz & Williams, Inc., a marketing, development, and management consulting firm for not-for-profit organizations located in Philadelphia, to investigate the image and fundraising potential of the Park. In their study, they found that while the Park is highly regarded among the City's residents, residents are unaware of the magnitude of the Park's problems, have low expectations for Commission as a City agency, and recognize that the Commission, as a whole, lacks the drive to further the interests of the Park. Unlike the Boards of other not-for-profit institutions, the Commissioners do not feel that it is their responsibility to raise money for the Park. Much of the responsibility of awareness-building and fundraising in the Park has fallen upon the shoulders of the seventy-three friends groups who generally promote their own interests, rather than those of the Park as a whole. Because they act


237 Adams, Museum Public Relations, pp. 64-65.
independently, these groups duplicate each other's efforts rather than building on one another in order to gain momentum necessary for large-scale success. However, the Commission has been successful in gaining high-profile supporters such as the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society for projects like the Waterworks and the restoration of Logan Circle. The Commission tends to be reactive to immediate concerns rather than be proactive in the maintenance and care of the Park and in the establishment of an "organized, sustainable development program. Donor record-keeping systems, research tools, regular cultivation events and gift stewardship efforts -- requirements for an effective development program -- are not in place." The Commission lacks the staff, time, and budget to implement the foundations necessary to build a substantial, renewable donor constituency, by which to realize its fundraising potential. But, perhaps its greatest barrier is the reluctance of private supporters to give money to the Park without the assurance that the City will not lower its current funding levels regardless of the amount raised in private donations. Private individuals and corporations feel that they are already paying for the Park through their taxes and feel that the Park is a City responsibility. Potential donors would be most inclined to support special project fundraising and restricted maintenance-oriented accounts dedicated to the sections of the Park that they use. What seems to offer the best solution is the establishment of a separate 501 (c) (3) and 509 (a) (1) not-for-profit public charity whose sole purpose is to raise money for the Park to alleviate the misgivings many have of contributing money directly to a City agency.238

The following are the recommendations that resulted from the Schultz & Williams study:

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1. to obtain the City's assurance that the Park's funding will not be reduced regardless of the amount of private money that the Park raises and gain the support of the Mayor and City Council for their endeavors,

2. to develop a new Master Plan, or at least update the 1983 plan, in order to "inventory and address the Park's major needs, goals and priorities" that would incorporate the opinions of community,

3. to develop a comprehensive marketing program to improve the Park's image to the public at large that would be linked to the region's tourism efforts,

4. to create a separate 501 (c) (3) / 509 (a) (1) organization called the "Fairmount Park Conservancy" to raise private support for the Park, (adopted by the Commission 8 April 1998)

5. to identify specific fund-raising projects, (adopted by the Commission 8 April 1998 with an agreement to discuss options in the June Commission meeting)

6. to develop an annual fundraising event, a long-term major donor program aimed at individuals that would result in planned gifts, an annual major gift program aimed at business and corporate donors, a sponsorship program, and a series of walks, runs, and skate-a-thons for the benefit of the Park.239

It should be noted that although the Schultz and Williams plan is weighted more heavily towards land issues (probably due to the concerns of those interviewed),240 their intent seems to be to portray a concern for the historic structures in the Park.241 This should not be forgotten. As it has already been explained, the historic houses are one of the principal ways that money can be generated for the Park, since the Park itself is free


241 Ibid, pp. 4, 6,10,12,17. These are pages where the term "historic houses," "historic sites," or "historical assets" are directly mentioned. There are several other examples where concern for the care of the Park houses is implied.
to the public. The houses are also a terrific way to gather the support and strength of the preservation community and those that simply like old houses for fundraising activities. The support for the land and the historic structures can enhance the success of the other.

Large Fundraising Events

Many successful not-for-profit organizations hold large fundraising events. It is important that the Conservancy not limit itself to a single major event. In their program for the 1997 Philadelphia Museum of Art Craft Show, their largest annual fundraising event, the Women's Committee reported that they have donated a total of over $4 million to the P.M.A. over the twenty previous Craft Shows, or approximately $200,000 a year.\(^\text{242}\) The Shipley School, located in Bryn Mawr, reported that for the 1996-1997 school year they earned a total of $148,098 from their fundraising events which include the Shipley Shops, a Christmas fundraiser ($57,173), the Alumni Association Sauce Sale ($4,552), the Secret Gardens, a tour of private gardens ($18,411), and the Auction ($67,960).\(^\text{243}\) While the Conservancy, initially, may not have the clout of the P.M.A. or the built-in support of the area private schools, it is located in a region whose citizens are more than willing to be active donors to charitable organizations.

It seems that nearly every spring, summer, and fall weekend there is a charitable organization in the Park sponsoring a run or a walk for the benefit a specific cause. Major employers rally their employees to participate and even hold friendly competitions with rival firms as to who has the best participation for their favorite causes. The Conservancy should follow their lead in establishing an annual walk or run for the benefit


of the Park, particularly for the Park houses. Current walk/run participants should be polled as to whether they would participate in an event aimed at general preservation and maintenance efforts in the Park, at specific projects in the Park, or at either of these in conjunction with another cause that would benefit both equally. For the latter, causes could be rotated yearly and would be completely separate from current efforts. This option should be chosen if participation would be significantly higher to be of greater benefit to the Park. However, the goodwill of such an effort, as well as gaining the support of certain constituencies, should never be underestimated.

A major annual event should be chosen to be the cornerstone of the Conservancy's fundraising effort. For this type of event, art, craft, and antique shows have proven to be popular. The art show, perhaps named "Art in the Park," could take two forms, that of a "starving artist" show or of a juried show. The former could be held annually at Memorial Hall where regional artists could sell their artwork that would be generally priced under a $1,000. Fees could be collected from the artists based on a percentage of their gross sales, entrance fees from the public, and the sale of refreshments. Overhead costs would be relatively low because there would be no building rental costs and Park staff could be used to monitor the event. As the event grew, tents could be erected to expand the space. A juried show could be modeled after the P.M.A.'s Craft Show. Participants would be from all over the world and would most likely require the use of the Convention Center. The cost of entrance and the cost of the art would need to be significantly higher. While a juried show might bring national attention, it may not bring higher entrance ticket sales or more artists. Fees for both would need to reflect the increase in overhead costs, thus alienating people from both sides and replacing them with more highbrow participants, which may not improve the bottom line. The benefits of both would need to be weighed before a course of action should be undertaken.
Other ideas for a major annual fundraiser are an antique show or a craft show. While there already is a very prestigious annual antique show in Philadelphia for the benefit of the University of Pennsylvania Medical Center every April, this does not mean that both the dealers and the audience would not be willing to participate in one held six months prior for the benefit of the Park. As already discussed, the P.M.A. sponsors an annual craft show. However, rather than a juried show, regional people could sell their crafts in a tailgate fashion in the Park modeled after Winterthur's Craft Show held over the Labor Day weekend. It might prove to be a nice compliment to the P.M.A.'s show. Both of these options should at least be investigated and weighed against the other options.

Another event that should be undertaken is an annual silent auction. Local businesses and individuals could donate items such as dinners for two, symphony tickets, and so forth that would be on display over a week or a weekend at Memorial Hall. Items would be assigned a minimum accepted bid to ensure proper bidding from the public. In order to achieve the maximum benefit, businesses would need to be convinced that their participation in such an event would gain them goodwill with the public, which should be clearly developed by the Conservancy's Marketing Manager, to maximize the effects. This type of event has tremendous sponsorship potential by local and national businesses.

After the Conservancy builds a successful membership base, an annual black tie event should be held for the benefit of the Park. Because of the large costs associate with such events, members should be polled for their willingness to participate and at what price. While it should not be a members-only event, the strongest base of support will most likely be from members. Because of the high price ticket cost usually associated

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with them, these events tend to be successful if an organization is socially well-connected. This should not be a problem for the Conservancy since the stewards of many of the Park houses are some of the leading women’s organizations in Philadelphia. Not only should their support in planning and attendance be attained before the event is announced, but the best situation would be to also find support in the business community to fund or provide the necessary services for such an event in exchange for promotional benefits and tax deductions.245

Another idea is to hold an annual golf tournament. This could be developed as either a single game at a single club or as multiple games held at multiple clubs simultaneously with the winners from each club playing a final round the following day or weekend. Players could form their own teams and would each pay an entry fee. Tickets could be sold to spectators at a price that would reflect the popularity of the event. Players would be given trophies and perhaps even cash prizes. Like the silent auction, each golf club would be assured of promotional goodwill and tax benefits.

While the Fredric R. Mann Center for the Performing Arts has its own financial problems,246 the group that leases the Mann, the Mann Music Center, Inc., should be approached to see if a deal could be struck between the Fairmount Park Commission, the City, and themselves to set aside one symphony concert a season for the benefit of the Park. The 10,000 tickets that are customarily free for each concert, instead, could be sold for $8, the same cost as a movie, with all proceeds to benefit a special project, such as the maintenance of the Park houses. Season ticket holders could be asked for a voluntary

245 Adams, Museum Public Relations, p. 72.

contribution the night of the concert. The Mann should, in turn, be allowed to do the
same thing for its own fundraising efforts. (This is now, reportedly, in the works.)

The Commission should also try to market the Park to groups that hold outdoor
festivals. There are many organizations such as historical reinactors, medieval pageantry
groups, religious concerts, and so forth that need large open spaces to hold their events.
These groups should be contacted and made aware of the availability of Fairmount Park
for such events. In cities such as Boston, there are annual food events such as the ice
cream festival and the Chowderfest. Events such as these could be held in the Park as
well. Even if there is no direct financial benefit to such events, there could be in terms of
positive word-of-mouth publicity and political support.

While not all of these events should be undertaken, they should give ideas for the
types of events that the Park should hold to further their financial support and their name
recognition. Most certainly, a wide range of events that will appeal to a wide range of
people should be selected.

**Site Specific Fundraising**

While many of the houses have been or are currently being used to hold special
events such as meetings, wedding receptions, and parties, this type of activity should be
strongly discouraged by the Fairmount Park Commission. The amount of damage
sustained by using or moving the furniture and objects, eating and drinking above the
carpets, or allowing activities that increase the risk of a fire, far outweighs the benefits
gained from holding these types of events.

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247 The Fairmount Park Commission, Amy L. Freitag, Historic Preservation Officer and Acting Director
of the Fairmount Park Trust, "Final thesis recommendations," Telephone conversation with the author, 9
April 1998.
Memorial Hall

While Memorial Hall is available for events such as wedding receptions and corporate parties, it has little chance of getting much of this lucrative business because of its lack of advertising and leaking dome roof. However, the Fairmount Park Commission is now in the process of reviewing bids for a private firm to use Memorial Hall for their catering and special events facility. The agreement would include repairing the roof, and the allowance of the Commission, (and assuming the Conservancy), to use the facility for a certain number of their own events each year free of a rental charge. Since so many ideas for fundraising events depend on the use of Memorial Hall, these agreements are crucial.

In the event that the above mentioned plan does not come to fruition, one of the first projects of the Fairmount Park Conservancy, or the Development Department of the Commission, should be to raise funds to fix the leaking roof. Wedding receptions, black tie events, capital campaign kick-offs, art shows, and so forth are all dependent on having a large, elegant atmosphere where there is no fear of the event being ruined because of rain. The amount of bad press and negative word-of-mouth publicity from such a disaster would certainly impede the success of all future events and undermine the efforts of the public relations department. Efforts should be made to submit a grant proposal to a major foundation for funding stating the intention of using the space to develop fundraising activities. Perhaps a foundation would see the merit in such a responsible, self-sufficient, forward-thinking plan of action.

Annual Giving

While the 1998 Development Assessment & Plan emphasized the need to cultivate support from corporations and wealthy donors, the Park should also look to its neighbors, both in the City and the suburbs. Afterall, it is not uncommon anymore to hear of people, who one would never expect to have any money at all, to leave millions of dollars upon their death as a result of the unparalleled returns of the stock market in recent years and/or their frugalness living through the Great Depression and World War II. It is through the establishment of a membership program for the Park as a whole that will help the Park reach a wide variety of potential donors. It is the members who act as a substantial, renewable donor constituency.

With an established membership base, annual giving is one of the important tools to meet annual operating expenses. Usually, donations are considered unrestricted, and, without donor recognition, they are difficult to obtain. The public relations department needs to balance messages in the media that the Park needs the support of donors, while emphasizing its successes. However, due to the misgivings expressed by those interviewed for Schultz & William's 1998 Development Assessment & Plan to donate to general operating expenditures, there should be multiple options on the form given for a donor to contribute to a special project or area of the Park as well as for general operating expenses.

One way to gain support for annual giving is to list the donors in the annual report, placed in categories that reveal the level of support given to the organization. This


report would be sent to all donors as well as to members who did not contribute to reinforce the idea that they should. For the 1996-1997 fiscal year, the Shipley School reported that $582,323, 11% over their goal, was received through their annual giving campaign. They list donors by categories of support including Fellows ($5,000 or more), Benefactors ($2,500-$4,999), 1894 Founder' Associates ($1,894-$2,499), Sponsors ($1,000-$1,893), and Stewards ($500-$999). They list parents by class, alumni by class, grandparents, faculty and staff, parents of alumni, and friends so that all individual donors will be listed at least once as well as outright corporate and foundation gifts and matching gifts. While SPNEA does list the names of individual donors into several categories, including Appleton Circle Patron, Appleton Circle, and Individual, it does not reveal the amount that each of these levels represent and has far fewer categories. While this does allow for greater privacy, it is not as interesting to read or perhaps even as motivational. Before making the decision to include the amounts in the annual report, members should be polled as to their preference.

Capital Giving

Capital giving campaigns are aimed to raise a designated amount of money for specific projects such as replacing a roof or an outdated HVAC system. Usually, the museum's trustees are asked first to contribute because their contributions will comprise the largest percentage given. In the case of Fairmount Park, the Commissioners are not necessarily chosen because of their donating potential; therefore, instead, people who comprise the top donating category in annual giving should be approached before the


campaign is announced to the public. It is important to show the public that there is already a solid base of support before many of them will be willing to donate. The top donors traditionally are leaders in the effort to recruit more support. It is necessary to have a strong cause, effective leaders, conscientious staff, willing and able donors, and enough funds to finance the overhead of such effort in order to have a successful capital giving campaign.254

For major campaigns, it is recommended that between twenty-five and a hundred major contributors be contacted by an outside firm hired to do a feasibility study. The main goal of the study is to make sure there is support for such an endeavor. The potential donors would be asked questions about the public relations campaign, the current economic climate, how well the public is being served, the organization's strengths and weaknesses, and whether the organization is aware of its problems. If it is determined to proceed with the campaign, a statement outlining the needed improvement, the costs, the benefits, and strategies for the project is developed so that it can be released to the public through the media and by direct mail. Because of the expense, direct mail should be limited to specific target groups. It should be personal and friendly, perhaps even personally addressed and signed. It should peak the readers interest, create a sense of urgency, establish the importance of the project, and provide a return envelope and card that indicates how their name should appear on the donor list. It should be attractive, but not look expensive, and concise, appealing to both their intellect and their emotions.255

Once the initial support has been achieved, museums often sponsor a kick-off dinner to excite and motivate both the donors and the staff for the campaign. This

254 Adams, Museum Public Relations, p. 66.

255 Ibid, pp. 66-68.
provides an opportunity for the professionals involved to further the case for the project. At the conclusion of the campaign, events such as banquets to recognize the campaign staff and volunteers, dedication ceremonies, open houses, or an exhibition of the newly acquired object are appropriate.\footnote{Ibid, p. 68.}

**Special Gifts and Deferred Giving**

Other major categories of monetary donations from individuals are special gifts and deferred giving. These are the types of gifts that were strongly recommended in the 1998 Development Assessment and Plan.\footnote{Schultz & Williams, Inc., "Fairmount Park Commission Development Assessment & Plan," pp. 23-24} Special gifts are extraordinarily large donations that come in the form of endowments or are intended to be used for large projects such as erecting buildings. Deferred giving includes gifts from bequests, trust agreements, and life insurance programs. Both of these types of gifts are usually the result of a long-term commitment to the institution. Therefore, it requires that the Conservancy and the Commission effectively communicate the purpose of the museum, portray a friendly, comfortable atmosphere, and maintain relationships with potential donors. While traditionally many organizations did not know whether a person had included them in their will, increasingly organizations, including SPNEA and Shipley,\footnote{Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, 1996 Annual Report, p. 21.; and The Shipley Bulletin, "The Shipley School Annual Report of Voluntary Support 1996-1997," p. 21.} have begun to form special categories for people who do so in their annual reports.\footnote{Adams, Museum Public Relations, pp. 68-69}

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\begin{itemize}
  \item \footnote{Ibid, p. 68.}
  \item \footnote{Schultz & Williams, Inc., "Fairmount Park Commission Development Assessment & Plan," pp. 23-24}
  \item \footnote{Adams, Museum Public Relations, pp. 68-69}
\end{itemize}
Foundations, Charitable Trusts, and Government Agencies

It is well understood that in recent years available grant money has declined and competition for that money has increased, particularly from government agencies. The National Trust has lost its funding and the National Endowment of the Arts has come under increasing attack over the past few years. While applying to these types of organizations is important, it is also imperative that all other sources be explored, too. It is the efforts made to boost visitation, programming, and fundraising that attracts many foundations and government agencies to approve grant applications.

The Fairmount Park Conservancy should apply for grants from the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA), which are directed more towards special exhibits in art museums and work on a matching system only, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), which are obtainable for house museums because they deal with culture and mankind and usually require matching funds, and the Institution of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), which are usually general operating support and conservation grants given once a year that are limited to 10% of the total budget or a maximum of $75,000. Federal grants are not based on need, but on excellence. They are given by institutional type so that each applicant is competing against its peers. Once the Conservancy has obtained one of these grants, the best strategy is to leverage the success of one grant to obtain another. One is never enough because it can be turned into two or more. Another important thing to realize about NEH and NEA grants is that two are awarded per state each year -- having positive relations with the state senators can only help. The NEH has a program called "Challenge," as does the NEA; however, NEH grants, currently, are easier to obtain for historic sites. Once the Conservancy has a strong enough membership base and support from the business community, they should try for an NEH Challenge Grant, which is that the NEH will provide $1 for every $3
raised by the Conservancy up to a specific dollar amount for a specified period of time. The NEH front-loads (gives more money at the beginning) these grants so that it acts as an incentive to donors to give initially and again, near the end, under the fear that the NEH will take back their money if the goal is not reached. Donors may not want to give more, but they would rather do so rather than to see the Conservancy have to return the money. Each time the grant is given to an individual institution, the matching level is raised ($4 to $1, $5 to $1, and so on). It is best to spread out challenge and capital campaigns because an organization can not "skin the mink" too often or its donors become nervous.260

Another major strategy is, for any major project, to try first for a small technical assistance grant to hire experts to give their recommendations. Then, with the expert recommendations in hand, the money for the project should be sought from larger foundations. There is a directory published annually of foundations called the Foundation Directory. Each foundation is arranged by state and includes descriptions of what the foundation supports so as not to waste anyone's time. It is also important to know that all grant applications have a box to check whether the site(s) are on the National Register or a National Landmark. If the latter, the application tends to be put at the top of the pile. Therefore, a top priority should be to gain National Landmark designation for as many of the Park houses as possible.261

One foundation in particular, the Pew Charitable Trusts, has grown increasingly fond of sponsoring "high-profile, activist enterprises where the Pew impact can be felt and seen" under the leadership of Rebecca Rimel over the past decade. Rather than giving quietly to maintain the status quo, Pew has grown to demand much more from their


261 Ibid.
recipients. They want "the most leverage, the most impact from [their] investment." Recently, Pew required that Governor Ridge put up matching funds of $10 million for the Gateway Visitors Center at Independence National Park before they would commit their money. They also pulled their support from the Philadelphia Orchestra because they were running a deficit.\textsuperscript{262} These events are extremely important for the Fairmount Park Commission and its potential Conservancy. Not only does it emphasize that not-for-profits must understand the personalities of the foundations from whom they seek money, but it also points to a trend of foundations becoming more strict in gaining an even firmer commitment from the grantee for requiring matching funds and a consistent track record of fiscal responsibility and community support. According to Martha Wolf, the Executive Director of Bartram's Gardens, the key to success in obtaining grants is credibility.\textsuperscript{263}

**Corporate Sponsorship**

Under the tax code, corporations are able to donate up to 5\% of their income to charitable organizations. In 1980, the national average was only 1\%.\textsuperscript{264} Increasingly, corporations have been funding exhibitions at major art museums for the goodwill that it provides and the benefits to its corporate marketing efforts. Corporate sponsorship of museums has risen 41\% over the past three years, and is expected to reach $65 million in 1997. Compared with traditional forms of advertising on television and in print, the lower rates charged by museums to be a sponsor are significantly less and are far more


\textsuperscript{264} Adams, \textit{Museum Public Relations}, p. 70.
cost effective. While most sponsorship is aimed at large museums, these statistics do show the willingness of corporations to contribute to cultural institutions. Corporations that have a major presence in Philadelphia such as Sunoco, Corestates, Arco Chemical, and Comcast should be solicited for their support of major capital campaigns or exhibits done in conjunction with the P.M.A.

Corporations tend to give money to major national philanthropies such as the United Way first, then they usually give to major local institutions such as the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and then on down the line. One of the benefits of linking all of the Park houses and the Park itself together is that it creates a larger institution that will be ranked higher in the pecking order as it would otherwise be. Another important thing to know about corporations is that it does matter if a personal connection can be made with the CEO, Vice President of Corporate Affairs, or similarly situated person. The Conservancy should ask the Commissioners, Board Members, and steward groups if they have personal affiliations with such people to encourage them to ask these business leaders for the financial support of their companies. After all, a healthy Park can only help the quality of life in Philadelphia for both its residents and its business community.

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265 Ellen Neuborne, "This Exhibit is Brought to You By... Marketers Find That Museums Make Good Billboards," Business Week, 10 November 1997, p. 91.

Chapter VII
Merchandise Sales

There seems to be a general feeling among the public that museum shops raise significant amounts of money for their organization. While this may be true for places like the Metropolitan Museum of Art or the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, most house museums do not. The problem lies not with the merchandise, but with the lack of visitors that are attracted to the site. The Fairmount Park houses would need significantly to increase their annual visitation in order to sustain a profitable museum shop worth the time, effort, and money needed for such a capital intensive endeavor. Park house shops should be a long-term goal of the Conservancy to help raise the sophistication, the reputation, and the revenues of the Park houses.

The Philosophy Behind the Museum Store

Above all, a museum store should be educational and should be viewed as "an integral part of the museum that contributes to the institution's stated purposes both financially and educationally.... Educational priority is simply the recognition that merchandise is not selected on the sole basis of anticipated sales." The recommended way to integrate these two important factors is by:

1. limiting the merchandise sold to those that relate to the Park house's goals,

2. maintaining good inventory control, effective management, visually attractive merchandise, and a safe and pleasant working environment,

3. having a friendly and knowledgeable staff who contribute to the visitor experience and the Park's positive public image,
4. including the store management in the planning and development meetings for all aspects of the museum so that the store can move in a similar direction,

5. striving to attract all visitors into the shop and encouraging them to return,

6. identifying the target audiences and addressing their needs,

7. having a wide range of price points for merchandise to serve all visitors,

8. including written educational information for each product or product line either directly on the label or on a small sign in the display, and

9. being realistic in achieving the above mentioned goals.267

The Harsh Realities of the Museum Store

In her book, Museum Store Management, Mary Miley Theobald explains that history museums that expect 60,000 visitors annually should have a 600 square foot shop and have a gross income of $90,000; however, some may have two to three times this level of income. She recommends that a shop be no smaller than 500 square feet; although, she does cite a colleague who believes that a shop should be no smaller than 750 square feet in order to generate enough profits for a properly paid store manager and staff.268 This would mean that, before a museum shop can be developed and implemented, the Park houses would need to generate annual visitation rates of 50,000 to 75,000 at each site with a fully developed shop.

Cliveden, a National Trust property, considered a leading house museum for its collection and visitation in Greater Philadelphia, is an appropriate example of the

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268 Ibid, p 15.
importance of visitation as it relates to the museum shop. Cliveden has annual visitation of 17,000 per year, 12,000 of which is from Mt. Airy Day and the annual reenactment of the Battle of Germantown, 2,000 is from groups tours, and 1,500 is from school groups. In a good year, their museum shop has a profit of $2,000.\textsuperscript{269}

Therefore, it is recommended that, when annual visitation reaches the necessary levels, there be a fully developed shop at Mt. Pleasant in one of its dependencies, because of the amount of square footage required, and that other sites sell only a few items that directly relate to their site or the Park itself. The carriage house at Ryerss should also be considered if both the Mt. Pleasant shop and the Ryerss, Glenn Foerd, Knowleton group tour partnership\textsuperscript{270} are successful. Developing a shop at the Convention Center or 30th Street Station would perhaps yield the higher sales than locations in the Park. This would, of course, act as advertising for the Park and as a prominent location for trolley ticket sales. Another option would be for the Park to form a partnership with the other cultural institutions in Philadelphia to have a combined store highlighting their best selling and promotional merchandise. This would foster a sense of camaraderie, act as an advertising tool, and allow for the sharing of overhead costs associated with the stores. Further, the Conservancy should try to persuade the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Philadelphia Zoo to dedicate a small area of their existing stores to sell merchandise that directly relates to the Park, from which the houses would benefit indirectly from the promotional aspects of those products.

When a museum shop is developed for the Park, all proceeds would need to go to a general fund to assist all Park houses through the Conservancy. As stated before, for all


\textsuperscript{270} These three sites are currently discussing plans to offer group tours of their sites, particularly to bus tour companies, and are hoping to begin offering this package, which would include a catered lunch at either Knowleton or Glenn Foerd, as early as the Spring of 1999.
of the individual groups involved with the houses to be supportive of this project, all must benefit equally.

The Museum Shop

While each Park House will need to be explored for potential locations for museum shops, a preliminary observation of the houses reveals that Mt. Pleasant is one of a very few houses that has the necessary space. Because of its placement of the dependency in front of the house, it is an ideal spot to sell house tour tickets as well as merchandise. Doing so would provide a waiting area for visitors and may encourage those who would not otherwise be inclined to enter the shop to purchase an item. For the staff, it allows them to service both incoming and outgoing visitors. Sites that have the potential for high visibility, visitation, and uninterpreted rooms, such as Lemon Hill, should be considered for smaller shops. Other sites may wish to sell a few items on a simple book shelf or table that would not significantly intrude on the interpretation or presentation of the house. These mini-sales stations should be located, if possible, near the entrance/exit of the building because most people who buy items tend to buy them at the end of their tour. The items should relate to the collection and should promote the Park houses. Other museum shops should be examined to make sure that the items are priced appropriately, to gain further ideas for items, and to avoid repetition.271

Before the actual development of the shop, the development committee should make a point to see as many museum shops as they can for the atmosphere, location, and range of items. Shops of particular note are those at Winterthur, the Newport mansions, Sunnyside, Lyndhurst, and Boscobel as well as many others. They should consider what they themselves would purchase and look for innovative ideas that would otherwise not

271 Ambrose and Paine, Museum Basics, pp. 59-60.
come to mind. Further, Theobald's book should be consulted on every level in the development and implementation process on an ongoing basis.

Small, inexpensive, promotion-based items should be available for sale. These would include postcards of the Park houses, including both exterior and interior views. Items such as coffee mugs, t-shirts, notecards, and totebags should also be considered. Higher end objects should be made available as well such as candlesticks, ceramics, jewelry, and gardening items. When designing or purchasing all items, those that are tasteful and reflect positively upon the professionalism and reputation of the organization should be considered. Those that will become dated or go out of fashion should be avoided.

Definitive works on the subjects of architecture, furniture, objects, interior design, finishes, and history should be sought to further the reputation of the Park; however, it should be understood that books usually carry a lower profit margin than other products, become faded and shelf-worn, and turnover less quickly. Two possible exceptions to this would be Roger Moss's *Historic Houses of Philadelphia*, available in June of 1998 from University of Pennsylvania Press, and a glossy picture book, yet to be developed, of the Park. This guide book should include both exterior and interior views of all Park houses, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Philadelphia Zoo, park statuary, the Boat Houses, and other impressive views. Along with these photographs would be descriptions of each of the major structures that is open to the public. This will allow for the books to be sold at all Park houses, the P.M.A., the Zoo, and maybe even in local bookstores. Care should be taken to avoid photos that will look dated before a new edition is estimated to be needed. Accordingly, such an endeavor should only be

undertaken when the educational staff of the P.M.A. and the Conservancy are sufficiently convinced that enough of the houses have been updated with the latest scholarship, particularly for the interior shots. Books such as Newport Mansions: The Gilded Age, Beacon Hill: A Living Portrait, and Lyndhurst: A Guide to the House & Landscape should be consulted for style, content, and price structure during the developmental stages of this project.273

Licensing Agreements

Licensing agreements should be sought with well-respected manufacturers for furniture, ceramic, textile, wallpaper, and glass reproductions of items in the collections of the Fairmount Park houses. However, this is a long-term goal that would be achievable only after other aspects of this plan are underway. The reason for this is that companies who engage in licensing are only interested in organizations that are nationally recognized. It only makes sense for a firm to involve themselves in ventures where they can appeal to a national audience and can further their own reputation by connecting themselves with those museums. This is also important because the royalties paid to the museum are not absorbed by the company, but rather they are passed on to the consumer as an increase in price for the object. Accordingly, people have to be willing to pay for the name in order for the product to be successful. The two exceptions are wallpaper and fabrics because they are often combined in a portfolio with a wide range of other museum-related samples.274


274 Theobald, Museum Store Management, p. 39.
Licensing agreements are attractive to museums because they do not have to share the costs of product development or merchandising. For lending of their name and providing of the use of their object as a model, the museum collects royalties, which "range from four to twelve percent depending on the manufacturer, the industry, and the museum's bargaining power." These royalties are tax free.275

SPNEA licenses their reproduction pieces under the name "Historic New England." Due to the efforts of their marketing department, articles were written about their "Historic New England" line in Architectural Digest, Colonial Homes, Country Living, Traditional Home, Early American Homes, and Old-House Interiors during 1996. They continuously introduce new lines through a wide variety of vendors including Southwood Furniture, Chelsea House, Bradburn Gallery, G. L. Sawyer, Brunschwig & Fils, Procreations, Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, and Pairpoint Crystal. They earned $59,607 in fees and royalties in 1996 and with the additions to their line with the above mentioned manufacturers, they expect to report even greater earnings for 1997.276

Catalogs

For a number of years, SPNEA produced a simple black and white catalog consisting of one sheet of paper folded into eighths equivalent to two double-sided sheets of paper. In November of 1996, they used this same format, but in color. Their newest catalog for 1998 resembles a small, standard catalog with twelve full-color pages of merchandise highlighting their reproduction Beauport Glass and Jewelry. After the membership base is fairly well established, Fairmount Park should follow the same


gradual plan and release their new catalogs in November, just as SPNEA does, in time for the holiday season.277

Other museums such as Winterthur have a much more sophisticated operation in terms of their shops, licensing, and catalogues; however, it must be remembered that it took time for their merchandising to become that developed. While the end goal should be to model the Fairmount Park house shops after such a well-regarded operation, it is simply not achievable overnight.278 However, steps should be taken so that it eventually will have the same amount of sophistication.


278 Theobald, Museum Store Management, p. 4.
Chapter VIII
Conclusion

As stated in the introduction, money generated by visitation, programs, merchandise sales, and rental fees will not be sufficient to cover the costs of operating and maintaining an historic house museum. Endowments, annual funding drives, and grants must provide the bulk of the funding. However, it is quite difficult to obtain the financial support of individuals, foundations, and corporations if visitation is so low that so few people will benefit from their generosity. Donors want to be associated with successful organizations and want to feel as though they have received a sufficient return on their money. Individuals need to have a positive learning experience when they visit the site. They need to see that there are programming opportunities; otherwise, there is little incentive to become members, let alone renew their membership or contribute to annual fund drives and events. They look for signals of a museum's success such as a museum store where they can further their support. They want an elegant location for large parties and often, would prefer to support a good not-for-profit cause, rather than a commercial establishment. A museum's success is interdependent on all of these components. However, an organization's potential is never truly realized if it is not promoted. A museum can have excellent collections, interesting and informative tours and programming, and the perfect gift or party facility, but if the public does not know about it then it is all for naught.

Organizational Structure

It is unfortunate, but with the current staffing levels, the Fairmount Park Commission is designed for mediocrity. The City should recognize that one person,
however dedicated, can not do the job of three or more people. While the Commission has been successful in gaining support of graduate students from the University of Pennsylvania and Temple University for work-study, class projects, and theses to make up for this deficiency, these students do not offer a continuum. One after another may fill the same position, but taking into account the learning curve and the limited information that can transferred in a few days from one to another during training, their effectiveness is limited. Not to mention the fact that they have higher priorities than their work-study job, especially when there is virtually no chance of permanent employment upon graduation. The same holds true for the six month seasonal positions offered by the Commission. By the time a person can get situated and become at all proficient in what he or she is doing, it is time for that person to begin to concentrate his or her efforts on seeking other employment. It is human nature not to do one's best when one is only to be there for a short period of time. Because of the Commission's civil service structure, it would be virtually impossible to combine these six month salaries into permanent, full-time positions, much less create ones from scratch. Therefore, the Conservancy should be the one to create full-time positions, either through the Conservancy or the Trust, to expand educational programming, to increase the preservation efforts of the Park and its houses, and to increase the level of professionalism throughout the Park. Otherwise, the Park will continue to have half-finished projects and never even begin to realize its potential.

Further, the Commission should seek an internal study of its current organizational structure to see how effective their current staffing levels and job descriptions are. This study would probably find that there is a need for more levels of employment, particularly at the entry or middle level, so that it frees the head of the department to be more effective. Since the Commission is in no position to create jobs,
perhaps seasonal workers and work-study students can help with some of the basic tasks, rather than having responsibilities that should be allocated to a full-time professional. For example, since the public relations department is so small, the Public Relations Officer spends much of his time answering questions about tree trimming services and similar functions. This could be more effectively done by recorded touch-tone information and the help of an intern. While the Public Relations Officer may be happy and enthusiastic to do it and see it as a public relations function because he is servicing the public, doing so prevents him from spending time promoting visitation to the Park. The study would probably also recommend either the placement of site administrators at each Park house that does not have an executive director or the need for three district directors under the Historic Preservation Officer who can concentrate on more of the day to day operations of the sites. While an executive director at each site would be ideal, it is not practical given the current circumstances. An Education and Program Officer with at least one Assistant would be prudent as well. Again, since the creation of jobs is so difficult in a City agency, the Conservancy should try to fund these positions because their bottom line will be directly effected by the quality of the visitor experience. The study may also find that a more effective use of its friends groups individually as well as the umbrella organizations should be sought in all areas.

While it is obvious that the City will not suddenly realize the error of its ways when it comes to insufficient funding of the Park, the Park officials should always strive to make the Park a non-partisan issue that every administration values for the benefit of its residents and its visitors. They should see themselves as advocates of the Park and encourage the 18,000 Park volunteers to increase their lobbying efforts. These local groups have been effective in gaining support for their local concerns such as the
renovation of the playground and improved landscaping in Burholme Park last year. However, there is always room for improvement.

Visitor Needs

Another major component that the Commission needs to address is the need for improved visitor facilities. Providing clean, safe, and accessible toilet facilities is of the utmost importance. It is not enough to simply build the facilities. They must be maintained on a regular basis; otherwise, there is no point to waste the funds building them. Methods for accommodating physically challenged visitors need be further explored and implemented, if possible. As visitation increases under the proposed plan, there will be an increased need for seating for those waiting for a tour to begin. Locations for coats, hats, and umbrellas will need to be examined. Each site will need to identify where visitors can find refreshments that would be reasonably comfortable to reach, and in the distant future to develop concessions. Before beginning the process, visitors should be polled to assess if their needs are being met and to prioritize these improvements. Providing services and facilities that consider visitor needs are considered the principal responsibility of any museum.

Looking to Industry Leaders

The Commission, the Trust, and the Conservancy should make every effort to observe successful historic house organizations throughout the country such as SPNEA, Colonial Williamsburg, Historic Charleston, the Preservation Society of Newport County, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Cues should be taken from these


organizations to make Fairmount Park synonymous with the success of these organizations, if not to surpass it. All of these organizations have areas in which they can improve, particularly in their marketing and advertising. Fairmount Park could one day become a leader in the preservation field if only it could provide funding to hire well-educated, professionals to run all of the aspects necessary for success in its museums. By implementing the proposals in this thesis, Fairmount Park will be able to form the foundation for its future success.

Fairmount Park has advantages over many of these sites. Unlike SPNEA, Fairmount Park is located in one city. This should be a great enticement to tourists who come to Philadelphia. It also makes the administration of these properties easier. The Commission does not have to worry about overhead costs of long distance phone calls and travel expenses. In comparison to Colonial Williamsburg, Fairmount Park can market itself as real, rather than recreated. Historic Charleston has the disadvantage of being located in a mid-sized city, whereas the size of Philadelphia and the surrounding cities of New York, Baltimore, and Washington as well as nationally known attractions such as Independence National Park put Fairmount Park in a better position to draw visitors. While no one can argue that the mansions of Newport should be near the top of everyone’s list to see, Newport does not have a major convention center or the hotels to support one, and it is poorly situated away from a major airport. The National Trust properties are located throughout the country and are becoming solely dependent on themselves for their financial support, rather than the Trust. Some of their properties have locational problems as well. The Fairmount Park Commission should also realize its good fortune for being located in the same city as the top historic preservation program in the country offered at the University of Pennsylvania and being less than an hour away from the most prestigious material culture program in the country at Winterthur. If the
City would begin to recognize the Park's natural advantage and be supportive of the Commission in its budget allotment and its encouragement of its fundraising and promotional initiatives, Fairmount Park could become a leader in the industry.

Teamwork

While it is easy to blame the City for the current state of the Park, the Fairmount Park Commission needs to fully utilize the resources that it has. The Commissioners need to replace the "us" versus "them" mentality that exists between the Commission, the Sites Council, and the Trust with teamwork. As cliched as it sounds, it is the only way to truly realize the Park's potential. Each needs to recognize the other's contributions and develop coordinated long-range plans so each is working towards the same goal, rather than wasting valuable time, energy, and resources.

The Commission, with the expert advice of the Trust and the Conservancy, needs to take the lead by developing comprehensive guidelines for each site that should include all aspects of interpretation, interaction with the public, building use, collections care, and fundraising. The Sites Council needs to recognize that these policies are in the best interests of the collections, buildings, and the support of the public. However, the Council must be directly involved with developing and instituting these guidelines. This should ensure their enthusiasm for the plan itself as well as its implementation. Otherwise, they may feel threatened and unappreciated, and may not follow the guidelines. The Commission and the Sites Council also need to see the Trust for the valuable resource that it is. The Trust conservators must be treated as professionals with the knowledge that their skills can preserve these structures for the future. Fortunately, the technical assistance that the Trust has been providing to virtually all of the sites has helped to achieve this goal.
One of the great disadvantages of Fairmount Park proper is that it is surrounded by some of the most economically disadvantaged areas of the City. While some may say that this is a good thing because they, too, need the benefits of the Park, they are often more concerned with having enough to eat than enjoying passive recreational activities in the Park. This is not to imply any fault, but rather to point out that it tends to skew the statistics for the Park. In the "Mayor's Report on City Services" for fiscal year 1997, 71.3% of the responding households noted that they are very or somewhat satisfied with the Park, while only 7.8% are very or somewhat dissatisfied. These are impressive statistics until they are compared to the 62.5% who report that they do not use the Park at all. It is much easier to note that you are satisfied with a Park whose primary measure of success is the amount of acres of grass it mows each year if you do not use it or if your income hovers at the poverty line. Residents have low expectations for the Park Commission as a City agency. Usership should be the primary measure of success, not acres mowed. Philadelphia needs to think in terms of how the Park can help attract individuals, families, and corporations to remain or return to the City.

The more the Park is examined the easier it is to understand why the current administration has not included Fairmount Park in their tourism plan. The Park needs to provide more than just mowed grass to satisfy tourists who will be quick to compare it with New York's Central Park and Boston's Public Garden and Common. The recent William Penn Foundation grant of $26.6 million for natural lands restoration and educational programming is intended to improve significantly the Park's natural

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resources. If the Commission adopts the suggestions in the Schultz & Williams proposal and in this thesis, they will be well on their way to providing a place of picturesque beauty in addition to the sports fields that seem to dominate the Park today.

As Tom Doyle, Public Relations Officer for the Commission, has said, "you have to have something to promote." The Park needs to cultivate its resources that will supply funding for both its built and natural environment and make the Park a destination. But to do this, the public has to be provided with a product for which they are willing to pay, both by patronizing the Park houses and in the annual donations that they make to the Conservancy. Instead of putting money raised by the houses, the trolleys, merchandise sales, and fundraising into the hands of the City, or in a special fund that only serves to continue events, the money should go directly for the maintenance and improvement of the buildings and landscape through the Conservancy.

A Final Note

There is potential for the Park to become a major tourist destination, but there is so little funding, that at times it appears to be hopeless. One of the most frustrating things about writing this thesis is that the Park has received numerous recommendations for improvement that have been only partially implemented, if at all. From the 1983 "Master Plan" to the 1998 "Development Assessment and Plan" by Shultz & Williams, many voices have given their advice only to have it fall on deaf ears. While it is understandable that the Fairmount Park Commission has had to endure low priority funding from the City, it is heart-wrenching that they have not done more to build

renewable sources of income. It is hoped that mounting studies that have been done on the Park have finally become enough that the Commission will act, recognizing that it is their duty as well as their desire.
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Index

Arnest 1, 13
Bartram's Garden 10, 44, 46, 66, 119
Bellaire 11
Belleville 1
Belmont 1, 11
Bicentennial 9, 28, 58
Boelson 11
Boscobel 124
Boston Common 25, 135
Boston's Museum of Fine Arts 127
Boston's Public Garden 25, 135
Cedar Grove 10, 59, 67, 68, 95
Centennial Exhibition 7, 8, 14-15, 58, 86
Central Park 15, 16, 25, 135
Chamounix 1, 11
Christmas Tours 41, 45, 51, 59-60, 63, 69, 90
City Beautiful Movement 9
Cliffs 1, 12
Cliveden 86, 122, 123
Colonial Williamsburg 90, 92, 93, 132, 133
Edgeley 1
Egglestield 1, 12
Fairmount Park Conservancy 16, 23, 26, 32, 46, 62-63, 70, 87-88, 94, 96-98, 100, 103, 106-112, 116-119, 121, 123, 126, 130-132, 134, 136
Fairmount Park Council for Historic Sites 16, 18-19, 21, 23, 51, 54, 75, 96, 134
Fairmount Park Historic Preservation Trust 16, 19-22, 32, 70, 87, 100, 130, 132, 134
Fairmount Waterworks 2-3, 7, 44
Falls Road House 11
Fountain Green 1
Fox Chase Farm 10, 50
Friends of Philadelphia Parks 16, 23, 54, 96
George's Hill 1, 7
Glenn Foerd 10, 47, 53, 123
Green Valley Inn 11
Greenland 1, 12
Hatfield 1, 11
Hermitage 11
Historic Charleston 132, 133
Historic Houses in Flower 41, 45, 51, 59, 60, 63, 69, 90
Horticultural Hall 15

148
Japanese House & Garden 10, 59
Knowleton 86, 123
Lansdowne 1, 12
Laurel Hill 1, 10, 59, 60, 64, 92
Lemon Hill 1, 6, 7, 10, 59, 60, 65, 74, 124
Letitia Street House 11
Lilacs 1, 11
Loudoun 11, 12
Lyndhurst 101, 124
Mann Music Center 110
Maxwell Mansion 86
Mayor's Report on City Services 17, 135
Memorial Hall 14, 15, 44, 59, 85, 108, 109, 112
Metropolitan Museum of Art 121
Monastery 11
Mount Pleasant 1, 10, 27, 45, 59-60, 67-68, 95, 123-124
Museum of Fine Arts Boston 121
National Trust for Historic Preservation 99, 101, 117, 122, 132-133
Newport 124, 133
Ohio Building 11, 15
Ormiston 1
park movement 6
Philadelphia Flower Show 41, 44, 46, 51
Philadelphia Trolley Works 41, 46, 48, 49, 59, 61-63
Philadelphia Zoo 9, 25, 41, 59, 60, 99, 123, 125
Preservation Society of Newport County 132
pure air movement 5
Ridgeland 1, 11
Rittenhousetown 10
Rockland 1
rural cemetery movement 5
Ryerss Museum & Library 11, 26, 47, 89, 123
Sedgeley 1, 6, 12
Sesquicentennial 9
Shipley School 107, 114, 116
Shoomac Mansion 12
Solitude 1, 7, 11
Strawberry Mansion 1, 9-10, 27, 59, 60, 67, 69
Sunnyside 124
Sweetbriar 1, 10, 59-60
Verree Road House 11
Victorian Society 92, 97, 100
Waterworks 3, 6, 105
Winterthur 109, 124, 128, 133
Woodford 1, 10, 59, 60, 67, 68
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