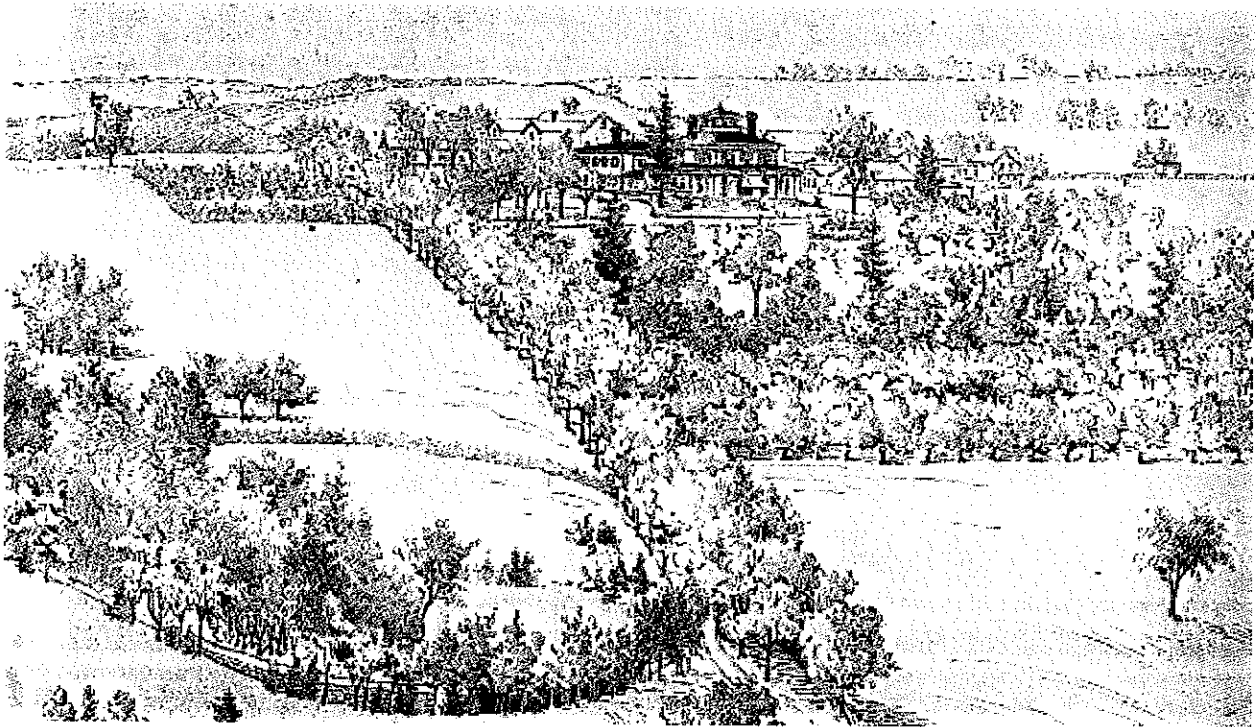


Hillside Farm Development Proposal

Boylston, Massachusetts
December 2019



Hillside Farm, Woodbury Birdseye print, 1900

Hillside Farm
Development Proposal

Introduction

In 2001 The Town of Boylston voted to enter into a historic preservation agreement with the Massachusetts Historical Commission to protect 12-acres of town owned property. The agreement protects what remains of the 1848 Hillside Farm, designated a National Historic Landmark (NHL) in 1975 (expanded in 2006).

Hillside Farm stands as a beacon of America's 19th century social reform era.

For the last 18 years the Hillside Restoration Project, Inc. (HRP) has stewarded the restoration of Hillside Farm, proud to have saved and historically restored significant features of this important town asset; Public and private contributions (\$1.8 M) were raised for the restoration work, which excluded town funds.

Today the community has an opportunity to adaptively re-use the site while preserving one of eight precious NHL in central Massachusetts.

The HRP and the Town of Boylston have formed a public private partnership to preserve the site and a coalition made up of a wide range of community partners and individuals has been formed.

Enclosed is a proposal outlining the scope of the project.

Proposal

Summary

The Hillside Restoration Project, Inc., (HRP) and the Town of Boylston (TOB) will partner to develop and adaptively re-use Hillside Farm, a National Historic Site in Boylston, MA. The site includes the John B. Gough House, a horse barn, a carriage house and 12-acres of landscape features, held in a historic preservation agreement approved by the town in 2001.

The town owned buildings will be leased to the HRP, Inc., a 501c3 non-profit organization, who will manage and oversee the development of the property; Hillside Farm will be stewarded by both parties through a public private partnership.

Vision

The vision for Hillside Farm is to be a unique, highly desirable destination for cultural, educational, recreational and social programming and activities. To realize this vision, we will partner with arts and cultural organizations, educational institutions and local and regional groups to realize the full potential of this National Historic Landmark property for the benefit of all.

Background

A Worcester / Central Mass Resource

Once restored, the Hillside Farm will be one of two National Historic Landmarks (NHL) in Central Massachusetts available to the public as a cultural resource and meeting facility.

Cultural Tourism Asset

The Hillside Farm is one of eight NHL in Central Massachusetts representing 19th century social reform in America and Worcester's history as a hotbed for reform in the mid-1800s. The property is representative of the region's rich agricultural heritage and the house is a rare example of Italianate style architecture-a bridge between colonial and modern styles.

Location/Proximity

The site is located at 221 Main Street, Boylston, Massachusetts at Town of Boylston office complex; 4 miles from Worcester line, access Rte. 70 or Rte. 290, 45 minutes drive from Boston, access Rte. 290, 3-5 minutes drive from Tower Hill Botanic Gardens, Wachusett Reservoir and Summer Star Preserve, 10 minutes drive from Rte. 495.

Site

The 300-acre Hillside property contains accessible nature and hiking trails, ecologically significant ponds, woodlands, and open space, in addition to archeological elements and features. The property also includes the historic Flagg Estate currently unoccupied and in need of significant restoration and rehabilitation.

Project Scope

In keeping with the vision to establish a place where the arts, culture and education can flourish, each historic building will provide opportunities to enhance the long-range vision:

The John B. Gough House will be a unique retreat center for educational, social, civic, corporate or private events. The first floor will offer historically preserved meeting rooms and a state of the art conference facility in the back of the house, as well as a full service-catering kitchen. The second floor will be available for lease by an anchor tenant, such as an institution of higher education or a compatible non-profit organization or institution.

Cultural and educational programming will include

School tours

Collaborative programming with anchor tenant

Seminars, lectures and symposia partnering with the cultural organizations/groups in the region

Writers retreat center

Artist presentations

Educational programming and workshops

Social & civic activities will include:

Meeting or event facility for town groups and organizations

Private social gatherings

Non-profit fundraising events

Corporate meetings and retreats

The Hillside Horse Barn, an integral interpretive feature of this National Historic Site, will be developed into an event and performance center. It will feature local and regional performing artists, as well as serve as a platform for new work from emerging artists and students. The lower level of the barn will be developed as an environmental and agricultural laboratory for Hillside's natural and ecological resources.

The full development and activation of the horse barn will protect a precious symbol of central Massachusetts's rich agricultural heritage, traces of which are disappearing due to sprawl and private development.

Cultural programming will include:

Concert series

Performing arts presentations

Speakers / storytelling programs

Arts and craft fair

Food & Wine/Beer festival (featuring low & non-alcoholic options)

Farm to Table dinners

Seasonal celebrations (Oktoberfest, holiday, winter solstice, May Day)

Dance & Yoga workshops

Pop Up events

Social & civic activities will include:

Weddings
Fundraisers / Galas
Corporate events
Town meetings and celebrations
Memorial celebrations

The Hillside Carriage House will be fully restored and utilized by the Town of Boylston; it will be included in future educational tours that interpret this authentic 19th century farm.

12-acre landscape features will be a strong consideration in future development to adhere to historic standards in the planning for adequate parking, outdoor event space and natural and environmental resources.

Activities will include:

Outdoor concerts and events
19-century gardening workshops
Community garden
Farmers markets
Outdoor rental facilities for private groups

Project cost estimates

John B. Gough House (5,200 SF) - \$3.5 million
Hillside Horse Barn (2,200 SF) - \$3-5 million
Hillside Carriage House - \$ 1 million
Landscape Restoration / Parking - \$2 million

Annual operating costs - \$500,000
Additional costs outside 12-acre site:
Nature trail restoration – \$100,000+

Potential funders

State / Federal

Federal and state historic tax credits
Massachusetts Cultural Council Cultural Facilities Fund
Massachusetts Historic Commission
Worcester Foundations Community
Land and Water Conservation Fund
Mass Development

Potential partners and collaborators

State / Federal

Congressman James McGovern
Massachusetts Energy and Environmental Affairs
Department of Conservation and Recreation

Regional

Worcester State University
American Antiquarian Society
WPI
Worcester Historical Museum
Preservation Worcester
Mechanics Hall
Worcester Cultural Coalition
Greater Worcester Community Foundation
Shepherd Knapp Alumni
Worcester Public Schools
Adcare Educational Institute

Local

Boylston-Berlin Public Schools
Tower Hill Botanic Garden
Boylston Library
Parks & Recreation
Conservation Commission