

The Paul Revere Memorial Association (PRMA) is in the final phase of a \$4 million campaign to renew and expand the Paul Revere House historic complex for current and future audiences. The central component of this endeavor is the renovation of Lathrop Place, an 1835 structure abutting the Paul Revere House, into a 3,600 sq. ft. **Education and Visitor Center**. Successfully reaching our campaign goal will help ensure the timely completion of this crucial project.

After seven years of planning, fundraising, design, and initial construction, we have reached the final phase of this effort to make the complex fully accessible for all visitors, expand our free and low-cost programming for youth from Boston and surrounding communities, and increase capacity in every area of our operations. This is an extraordinary and transformative moment for an organization that has been in operation for 108 years and has provided more than 11 million schoolchildren, families, and adult learners with remarkable educational experiences.

This expansion enables the Association to more directly meet the community's needs, while enhancing the visitor experience, offering a wider range of interpretive programs, developing innovative programs for students and teachers, more effectively taking advantage of new technologies, and providing full accessibility. The 3,600 sq. ft. Education and Visitor Center will increase dedicated program space by nearly 400%, include basic modern amenities – restrooms, water fountains, and sheltered gathering places for orientation and brown bag lunches, as well as dedicated exhibition and program spaces. A major feature of the expansion project is the opportunity to add accessible entrances to both levels of the Paul Revere House. On the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, the courtyard will be re-graded to eliminate the stairs leading into the kitchen. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, a new balcony will connect Lathrop Place to the Revere House. Because the grade changes in our courtyard require extensive excavation and removal of unstable fill, this provides a timely and prudent opportunity to correct serious drainage issues that have caused water infiltration in both basements of our historic buildings, and to remove the steps and uneven pavement that made access for visitors with restricted mobility difficult. The project also enhances the character of our courtyard with a comprehensive new design that will include more accurate 18<sup>th</sup>-century plantings, restoration of original cobble paths, and interpretive signage.

To properly connect the Association's Education and Visitor Center to our existing complex our courtyard and garden areas needed to be completely redesigned. This provided not only the opportunity to make the Revere House fully handicapped accessible and correct serious drainage issues but also to re-imagine and renew our period gardens.

The current gardens were installed in 1983 based on a detailed plan by noted garden expert Ann Leighton. The presentation was essentially a sampler of 18<sup>th</sup> century herbs augmented with appropriate ornamentals (hollyhocks and bulbs) and local fruits (Concord grapevines, Bartlett pear trees and wild strawberries). However, over time and due to changes in sunlight with growth and removal of neighboring trees certain plants did not thrive. Working with Christie Higginbottom, horticulturalist and garden historian from Old Sturbridge Village, we assessed the existing scheme and determined that it would be possible to work towards creating gardens that more closely represent what the Revere family might have had in their large backyard. Though the family kept no records about their gardens, new research on 18<sup>th</sup> century urban gardens, some archaeological evidence (seeds and roots) and Paul Revere's known preferences from his Canton property (lilacs, pear trees and tulips) have guided our selections. The new design allows for a section of kitchen garden beds and a cobble path (based on a cobble walkway uncovered during archaeological excavations in 1983 and 2011). In fact we have continued to have an archaeologist monitor all excavations to preserve data and also to salvage actual early cobblestones for use in the recreated path.

Within the overall courtyard design by Kotteritz Land Design, a new scheme for plantings has been laid out by Ms. Higginbottom, who will work with staff on interpretive signs to explain the gardens and also the historic layout of the courtyard. Pumpkin Brook Organic Gardening will

provide garden soil, grow or locate approved varieties of plants and do the final installation of the gardens.

The new garden project is an integral part of our overall expansion, which will be completed in late 2015 or early 2016. This schedule allows us to install the new gardens next fall with additional planting, as needed the following spring. The gardens and the interpretation of the evolution of our historic property are a key aspect of what we share with our visitors as a way to help them understand the Paul Revere House and the Hichborn House within the context of the site and our neighborhood. The gardens will continue to meet our original goals of providing a green oasis for visitors who have walked along the sometimes unforgiving city streets; sharing insight into 18<sup>th</sup> century urban gardens; and offering programmatic opportunities for youth and family groups to explore culinary and household uses and herbal remedies.

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