

Rowlesburg Ontrac Design Site Visit Report

Discussion during meeting of priorities to address:

- Hollis Building
- WPA wall deterioration
- Tray Run Viaduct pull off area
 - Very significant historic site for interpretation and tourism development in town and county.
 - Identified the need for this.
 - Not within the downtown core Ontrac area, other organizations should take lead on this.
- River walk from east side of post office to river and railroad. All agreed that this was an important item to highlight and plan for. See discussion later.
- WPA walls deterioration in the downtown area. Walls in other location do not seem to be as deteriorated.
 - Veneer is pulling away from wall
 - In front of store, large cracks have developed.
 - Stair at end is deteriorated
 - Rail at stair is deteriorated
- WPA walls in other areas
 - Cemetery
 - Walker Evans photographed the cemetery
 - develop an exhibit of the photographs, history of the walls, history of WPA in Rowlesburg and in State
 - Location for exhibit.
 - Funding for exhibit
 - Tar Hill
 - Observe and repair as needed.
 - On Main Street, across from high side/tall retaining walls.
 - Repair as needed, though not as critical as other side of street. Include in overall streetscape repairs/improvements.
- Funds for repairs of walls
 - T21
 - Historic Preservation Office bricks and mortar grants/development grants
 - Use Historic Preservation Moneys for planning also as a predevelopment grant.
- General discussion of plantings and gardens. Excellent program in town and very successful. Results create a very attractive place.
- Discussion of Historic District and the necessity to encourage preserving the remaining contributing buildings to the historic district. There have been some lost since the nomination and it is imperative to not lose any more.
 - See Assessment Team Report for discussion on encouraging rehabilitation.

- Possible to apply for grant to develop master plan for historic district, or to develop guidelines/rehabilitation assistance recommendations for buildings in district. See Kingwood Main Street's master plan (contact Robyn Hess)
- Possible grant sources: Historic Preservation Office; USDA; TEA21, only as part of a streetscape project; local foundation(s).

Walking workshop segment of site visit

- Hollis Building



- We reviewed with the owner rehabilitation techniques. They appear to be doing a admirable job of maintaining and repairing the building. The major issues include:
 - Rising damp on the side. Insure the grade is sloped away from the building and drains.
 - Point the damaged portions of the masonry. Follow Preservation Brief No. 2 for guidance on these.
 - If the rising damp becomes more of an issue, consider excavation and installation of French drain at the base of the side walls.
 - Future work: Replace inappropriate siding in transom area in center of storefront with transom or other appropriate element.
 - Return left side storefront to original appearance with display windows, recessed entrance and transoms.
 - General repair and maintenance of building.
 - Any rehabilitation should follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.
 - See National Park Service Web Site for the preservation briefs and other technical information.:
<http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/presbhom.htm>

- Cheat River Tavern Building



- This is a very significant historic resource and should be rehabilitated. It is currently vacant and is in poor condition. There are major areas of deterioration. It is still possible and desirable to rehabilitate the building.
- It will be necessary to mothball the building properly for the current time period, until a subsequent owner can rehabilitate it. Mothballing should be done carefully, to protect the building from further deterioration, water and moisture damage, and vandalism etc. See Preservation Brief no. 31.
- The left side wall is the most deteriorated, with much of the siding either missing or damaged. The sill on the side is also damaged in a few locations, leading to structural concerns. Treatments to mothball the building include:

- Install sheathing or siding where it is missing or there are major holes or gaps in the siding that allow water, the elements, insects and animals in. As a temporary measure it is acceptable to use plywood or other material. The long term solution is to install new siding on the entire wall to match the original. Insure that flashing and a sheathing and underlayment are installed at that time.



- Install supports and sections of sill where the sill is missing or deteriorated. Remove the severely deteriorated sections of the sill to accommodate this.
- Install skirting beneath the sill to keep vermin etc. out. Since the building is unheated and unoccupied, allow ventilation in the crawl space to remove moisture.
- Install gutters and downspouts and either connect them to storm sewers, or turn them away from the building and grade the ground away from the building.
- Inspect the roof and install new roofing or patch it as needed.
- For damaged joists or other structural members it is possible to sister, add a "helper" section alongside the existing, damaged sections to strengthen the structure.
- Follow all Secretary of the Interior's Standards in repairs, rehabilitation etc..
- Possible sources of funding:
 - Historic Preservation development grants
 - Transportation Department TEA21 Grants
 - USDA grants/loans



- WPA Walls on Main Street



- The walls are concrete retaining walls, with the sidewalk poured integrally to the walls. Originally, the sidewalk overhung the walls and provided a drip edge for water on the sidewalks. At some time repairs to the walls included parging and pouring new concrete on the face of the walls, and installing a curb at the top edge with the pipe handrail on this. one problem with the curb is that it is trapping water at the junction of the sidewalk and the curb allowing the water to enter between the two. this then causes deterioration through erosion and freeze thaw cycles.



- Repair the walls by returning to the original design, where the sidewalk drains directly over the wall, or by installing scuppers to allow water to exit from the sidewalk.
- Install seals at the junction of the sidewalk and walls and sidewalk and curb.
- Install expansion joints to allow for expansion without damaging the wall or the sidewalk.



- Another issue is the handrails are set in the concrete and they are causing rust expansion and deterioration.
 - Repair and reinstall the rails in inert non-ferrous methods to remove rust damage.
- A third issue is cracking and age deterioration of the sidewalk.
 - Replace or repair the sidewalks as necessary. Consider using an aggregate finish in lieu of modern broom swept finishes and colored concrete or aggregate to match the appearance of the original.
- The stairs at the end of the wall are also deteriorated and erosion has damaged their supports.
 - Repair the stairs as above. Repair the rails on the stairs and meet current accessibility standards with the rails, such as to have them extend beyond the end of the stairs, size of railing etc.



- In all work maintain the original color texture shape and profile of the walls, any details that remain, such as access doors etc., and any identifying details, such as the WPA 1939 stamp.
- River Access, trail, platform etc.







- At the end of Main Street there used to be a concrete platform/deck that served as a river access platform. This is beneath the railroad bridge, and was destroyed in the 1985 flood when the bridge was destroyed. There are remnants left of the concrete pad, at the base of the bridge abutments. the river at this point is a gently flowing wide shallow spot that allows for swimming, boating fishing and other river activities. Just upstream from this area is a wide deep spot in the river that has been the town swimming hole forever. The town has grant to create and improve a fishing access trail at this location and is developing additional recreational activity sites adjacent to the river and the fire station.
- Easy access should be developed from Main Street to the river at this location. it can include stairs and a platform at the top with an informational kiosk, such as at a trail head.
- The concrete deck should be reconstructed to provide river use and recreation.
- The deck, and the Main Street access should be connected to the river trail system on the upstream side of the RR bridge.
- Signage and information should be developed.
- Parking areas can be developed for the swimming hole access.
- Easy river access, at this location, or at the upstream swimming hole should be developed for persons launching paddle craft (canoes kayaks etc.). Alternatively, a boat launch can be developed. insure the launch does not interfere with passive river use, the swimming hole fishing and other river activities.
- Protect and reuse or display in the museum the cast iron rail section found during the site visit. This may be the basis for design of rail balustrade details.
- Secure required permits, releases etc.
- Coordinate with the grant agencies to insure all work is compatible.
- Investigate participation in WV DOT River Trail program.

- General streetscape items
 - General repairs to sidewalks, sewer inlets, railings, curbs etc. is required throughout town.
 - Repair sidewalks with new sidewalks. insure all new work is accessible and meets all codes.
 - Repair or replace all inlet grates etc., especially those trench grates that are damaged. Insure all inlets are level with paving. Remove any dangerous situations.
 - Paint all fire hydrants as part of this streetscape beautification program.
 - Typical streetscape items also include:
 - benches
 - lights
 - trash receptacles
 - parking meters
 - wayfinding and other signage
 - gateways
 - parking lots

- Memorial
 - There was general discussion that it would be advantageous to construct a memorial to the WPA, especially the walls etc. in town. We discussed the location of such a memorial and its form, design etc. Some considerations to include when planning the memorial:
 - A location we reviewed during the site visit was at the stairs at the end of Main Street. This would be a good location and the specific placement of such an element is critical. A few possible design concepts and locations are:
 - A sculpture on the stairs or at the top of the stairs. This could be something such as one of the realistic statues of a visitor or a person walking up the stairs or sitting on the stairs. Care must be taken to insure it does not interfere with the use of the stairs or the private property at the top of the stairs.
 - A flag or other site at the top of the stairs. The same concerns as above apply.
 - A plaque on the wall in this or another location. The plaque can be purely interpretive, or it can be a bas relief type sculpture depicting WPA era scene(s).
 - An interpretive kiosk at the base of the stairs. This can be located in one parking space at the base of the stairs, so it would be approximately 10X20 feet in size. it could include interpretive panel signage that describes the New Deal, WPA etc. It could include historic photographs of the town and other activities during the WPA era. It could also include a sculpture, statue or other three dimensional element. A benefit of this placement is that it can be incorporated in the access to the bottom of the stairs and increase

the security here. See the attached example of such a kiosk for Mt. Hope.

- Lighting is important for any type of memorial.
- Investigate participating in the West Virginia Department of Tourism New Deal/CCC Trail program:
<http://www.wvcommerce.org/travel/thingstodo/history/historic-trails/newdealtrails.aspx>



Mt. Hope Park