



New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
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York Hall Rehabilitation Scoping Report Summary September 28, 2010

York Hall is a former auditorium building that was part of the Kings Park Psychiatric Center (KPPC) campus in the Town of Smithtown, Long Island. The building is located on property that was transferred to OPRHP in 2003, within what is now Nissequogue River State Park.

York Hall is currently vacant. Kings Park community groups have expressed interest in seeing York Hall restored to active public use as an auditorium to support arts, theatrical, and community events and programs. In 2009, OPRHP contracted with FST Engineers, a private engineering firm, to complete a conceptual plan and financial estimates of what it would cost to put York Hall back into active use (FST was selected through the state's normal public procurement process). This fact sheet summarizes the findings of the study.

Background

York Hall was constructed in 1932 to serve as an assembly hall within the KPPC complex. The building, which is 120 feet long and 73 feet wide, has an attractive exterior design featuring brick and stonework features. The interior is primarily a large open space with a stage at one end. It also includes a lobby, restrooms, changing areas, and support rooms. The building's floor space capacity exceeds 1,000 people. During its life it served as an auditorium, performance and movie theater, church, synagogue, and gym. York Hall was closed in 1996 (utilities were turned off at that time) and has been vacant since then.

Current Condition of the Building

Structurally, York Hall is in fair condition – the building's foundation, walls, and supporting structures remain in sound condition. However, due to its abandonment for 14 years, the building is experiencing deterioration. The slate roof and drainage system needs replacement. Water infiltration is occurring into portions of the interior of the building. Birds and other animals are gaining access to the interior, resulting in significant guano buildup. Cracks have appeared in places to the exterior brick and stonework. Although the building currently is boarded up, trespassers occasionally gain entrance to the building (to date vandalism has not been a major problem).

Restoration to Active Use (Estimated Cost: \$7.5 million)

The engineering study provides a comprehensive description of the steps that would be required to return York Hall to active use:

- Environmental Remediation. The building contains asbestos, lead paint, and biohazards (guano) that would need to be remediated prior to restoration work.
- Roof and Exterior Repairs. A new roof and drainage system would need to be installed. Cracked and deteriorated brick, stonework, and stairs would need to be repaired. All doors and windows would need to be repaired or replaced.
- Mechanical Systems. None of the buildings mechanical systems are reusable. All would need to be removed and replaced, including the electrical, plumbing, HVAC, phone and data service, and fire detection and prevention systems. Potable water, electric service, and a natural gas line would need to be run to the building (the nearest active connections are several thousand feet away). A new septic system would need to be installed.
- Interior Construction and Furnishing. Although much of the interior would be retained, various tasks would be required such as construction of new restrooms, plaster and tile repair, and painting. The stage would be rebuilt. All new furnishings would be required, folding chairs would need to be purchased, and new light and sound systems installed if the space is to be used for theatrical productions.
- Parking & Landscaping. Currently there is no parking at York Hall. Several new lots, sized to accommodate a maximum of 250 cars, would need to be constructed. The area surrounding the building and parking lots would need to be re-landscaped.
- Code Compliance. All work would be designed to comply with current building code requirements, including accessibility. The only major code requirement that would not be met under the proposed design would be restroom facilities (there is not sufficient space to install the required number of bathroom fixtures).
- Sustainability. Decisions would need to be made on whether to incorporate “green features” such as a geothermal heating & cooling system and pervious pavements in the parking areas. These elements would add to the base rehabilitation cost.

The engineering report contains detailed cost estimates for each required action. The total estimated cost of these actions is \$7.5 million. All work would comply with state requirements (competitively bid contracts, prevailing wages, compliance with environmental regulations, etc.). The addition of various elements (such as a geothermal

heating/cooling system, upgraded fire protection systems, etc.) would increase the cost from several hundred thousand to several million dollars.

The \$7.5 million estimate captures the capital costs of restoring the building. It does not include annual operating costs (utilities, maintenance, staffing) that would be needed to manage York Hall as an active facility.

Mothballing the Structure (Estimated Cost: \$1.725 million)

OPRHP also asked the engineering firm to develop an estimate for what it would cost to mothball the building for future use (stabilization actions would last for 10 to 20 years). The following actions would be required:

- Remediate asbestos and biohazards.
- Replace the slate roof and drainage system to prevent water infiltration.
- Provide for passive air circulation through the interior of the building.
- Install new steel exterior doors to prevent unauthorized entry.
- Replace existing plywood covers on all windows with new plywood.
- Address the most pressing exterior brick and stonework repairs.
- Remove trees and vegetation growing next to the building.

The projected cost of these stabilization actions is \$1.725 million.

Conclusion

OPRHP will share the results of the York Hall study with elected officials, community organizations, and the public.

OPRHP does not have capital funding that could be targeted at restoring York Hall. For context, the agency's statewide FY2010-11 discretionary capital budget is \$19 million, which is targeted at the most pressing health and safety needs of New York's 213 State Parks and Historic Sites. The \$7.5 million cost estimate for restoring York Hall is prohibitive.

Moreover, OPRHP does not have \$1.725 million in capital funding to mothball York Hall, nor does the agency expect that funding will be available in the foreseeable future to undertake a stabilization project.

If restoration or stabilization of York Hall is to occur, funding will need to be identified outside of OPRHP's normal capital budget. Absent the identification of designated funds, the agency will continue to monitor York Hall but no rehabilitation actions will be taken.