

MASTER PLAN

FOR

FORD'S THEATRE

AND

HOUSE WHERE LINCOLN DIED

CHAPTER 1, BASIC INFORMATION

THE LAND

THE VISITOR

Certify Accuracy

Lawrence C. Hadley

Date

9/30/65

T H E L A N D

LOCATION

Ford's Theatre is located at 511 10th Street, Northwest, Washington, D.C. and faces west midway in the block between E and F Streets, Northwest. The William Petersen House where Lincoln died is across the street at 516 10th Street, Northwest, Washington, D.C.

ACCESS

Access to the Theatre, which is in downtown Washington, is readily available by public transit and taxicabs. Parking facilities within the vicinity are extremely limited.

SURROUNDINGS

Population Centers

Ford's Theatre is a part of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area which had a population in 1960 of 2,001,897 persons. The population increased 36.7% in the preceding decade from the 1950 figure of 1,464,089 persons.

Characteristics

The area surrounding Ford's Theatre is essentially downtown commercial establishments.

Land Use

All adjacent lands are in private ownership. The headquarters office of the Potomac Electric Power Company is on the south and east boundaries of the area. Allen's Souvenir Shop is on the north boundary and the Metropolitan Theatre is on the north-eastern border.

Features of Interest

There are a number of features of interest concerning Abraham Lincoln in the Washington, D.C. area:

Lincoln Memorial - In West Potomac Part at the foot of 23rd Street.

House Where Lincoln Died - Structure across the street from Ford's Theatre is substantially unchanged since 1865 and has been refurnished as it was at the time of the assassination.

Emancipation Statue of Lincoln - In Lincoln Park at East Capitol Street and Massachusetts Avenue.

Kneeling Statue of Lincoln - At entrance to Crypt Chapels of Washington Cathedral, Mount St. Alban, Wisconsin Avenue and Woodley Road, N.W.

"Lincoln Chapel" in the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church - Lincoln worshipped here in private in a study adjoining the Chapel, 1313 New York Avenue, N.W.

Flannery Statue of Lincoln - In front of the District of Columbia Court Building it was the first statue erected after Lincoln's death.

Borglum's Head of Lincoln - In Statuary Hall in the Capitol.

A. W. Stern Collection of Linconiana at Library of Congress - More than 4,000 pieces in Rare Books Division, Main Building, Second Floor, East Side, First Street and Independence Avenue, S.E.

LEGAL FACTORS

Establishment

The area was acquired by the War Department under the Act of April 7, 1866. It became a unit of the National Capital Parks of the National Park Service by Presidential Proclamation on July 28, 1933.

Public Law 372, 83rd Congress, 1954 provided funds for a preliminary engineering study to determine whether it would be possible to restore the Ford's Theatre Building as it appeared on the night of April 14, 1865.

Additional funds were appropriated by Congress under the provisions of Public Law 86-455, 86th Congress, 1960 to carry out "preliminary architectural and historical research, the preparation of construction drawings and for exhibit planning."

Funds for the restoration of Ford's Theatre as it appeared on the night of April 14, 1865 were made available by Public Law 88-356, 88th Congress, 1964.

CLIMATE

See National Capital Park System Master Plan

FIRE HISTORY

There is no record of any fire at Ford's Theatre during the period of National Park Service ownership.

RESOURCES

History

The structure known as Ford's Theatre was used as a theatre for only a brief time during its long existence. In 1833, it was constructed as the First Baptist Church of Washington and remained a church until 1859 when the First Baptist Church was merged with another congregation.

On December 10, 1861, John T. Ford, a successful theatre operator in Baltimore and Philadelphia, leased the building for five years with an option to buy the property. From December 13, 1861 to February 27, 1862, Ford rented the theatre to Christy's Minstrels and on February 28 closed the theatre to begin extensive renovation and remodeling. The building was reopened on March 19, 1862 as Ford's Atheneum and after a successful season was gutted by fire on December 30, 1862.

In 1863 Ford constructed a new and more elaborate edifice to replace the burned-out, converted church building. From August 27, 1863 to April 14, 1865, Ford's Theatre presented some of the best theatrical and musical talent available on the American stage. The tragic climax of the history of Ford's Theatre was reached on Good Friday, April 14, 1865 when President Lincoln was assassinated in the Presidential Box during a performance of "Our American Cousin."

From that fateful night of April 14 until the hanging of the conspirators on July 7, 1865, Ford's Theatre was guarded by Federal troops. On July 8, it was returned to John T. Ford, the owner, but public resentment of Ford's announced intention to present stage productions caused the Government to lease and eventually purchase the theatre and convert it into a three-story office building.

Various branches of the War Department used the building from 1865 to 1893. Tragedy struck the theatre building again on June 9, 1893 when a section of the front of the building collapsed from the third floor hurling men and office equipment into the cellar, killing 22 government employees and injuring 65 others. After a Congressional investigation of the tragedy, it was decided not to use the structure as an office building, and from 1893 to 1931 it served as a publication depot for the Adjutant General.

In 1931, the Ford's Theatre Building was turned over to the Department of the Interior and in 1932 the Lincoln Museum was opened on the first floor with employee office space provided in the upper stories.

Note: For a detailed account of the history and architecture of Ford's Theatre, see Historic Structures Report, "Restoration of the Ford's Theatre", U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Capital Region, 1963.

LAND STATUS

Federal 0.18 acres, Ford's Theatre
0.05 acres, House Where Lincoln Died

THE VISITOR

Visitor Characteristics

Number

The projection of visitation at Ford's Theatre as prepared by the Branch of Statistics Analysis, WASO, indicates a gradually rising trend from 1967 on. This is based on the fact that the restoration of the theatre is expected to be completed by 1967. A limiting factor in the rate of increase is the shortage of automobile parking facilities in the area.

Origin

There are two basic categories of visitors in the National Capital Region: out-of-town visitors and resident visitors. Under normal conditions, the primary attraction of Ford's Theatre would be to out-of-town visitors. For the first few years after the restoration of Ford's Theatre renewed interest in the restored theatre should draw large numbers of resident visitors as well. According to the Stanford Research Institute Study completed in 1962, 66% of the out-of-town visitors to Washington came from the area within 250 miles of Washington, 14% from the 250 to 500 mile ring, 13% from the 500 to 1,000 mile ring, 7% from more than 1000 miles away, and 6% of the visitors came from foreign countries. The seasonal variation of out-of-town visits amounts to 30% in the spring, 31% in the summer, 21% in the fall, and 18% in the winter.

Types

Employees familiar with the daily visitor pattern have estimated that visitors can be classified as follows:

Families or individuals	60%
School groups	20%
Tour groups	20%
	<u>100%</u>

Visitor Activities

The Ford's Theatre diorama, a three-minute recording that is presented with it, and a slide talk on the assassination of President Lincoln were the interpretive devices used at the Lincoln Museum. In addition to this, in 1964, 30,214 persons were either individually contacted or heard two to five-minute talks presented by staff members. The same effort was made at the House Where Lincoln Died where 13,812 persons heard short group talks or received individual attention. There were no statistics available for 1958.

HUNDRED
THOUSAND



LINCOLN MUSEUM

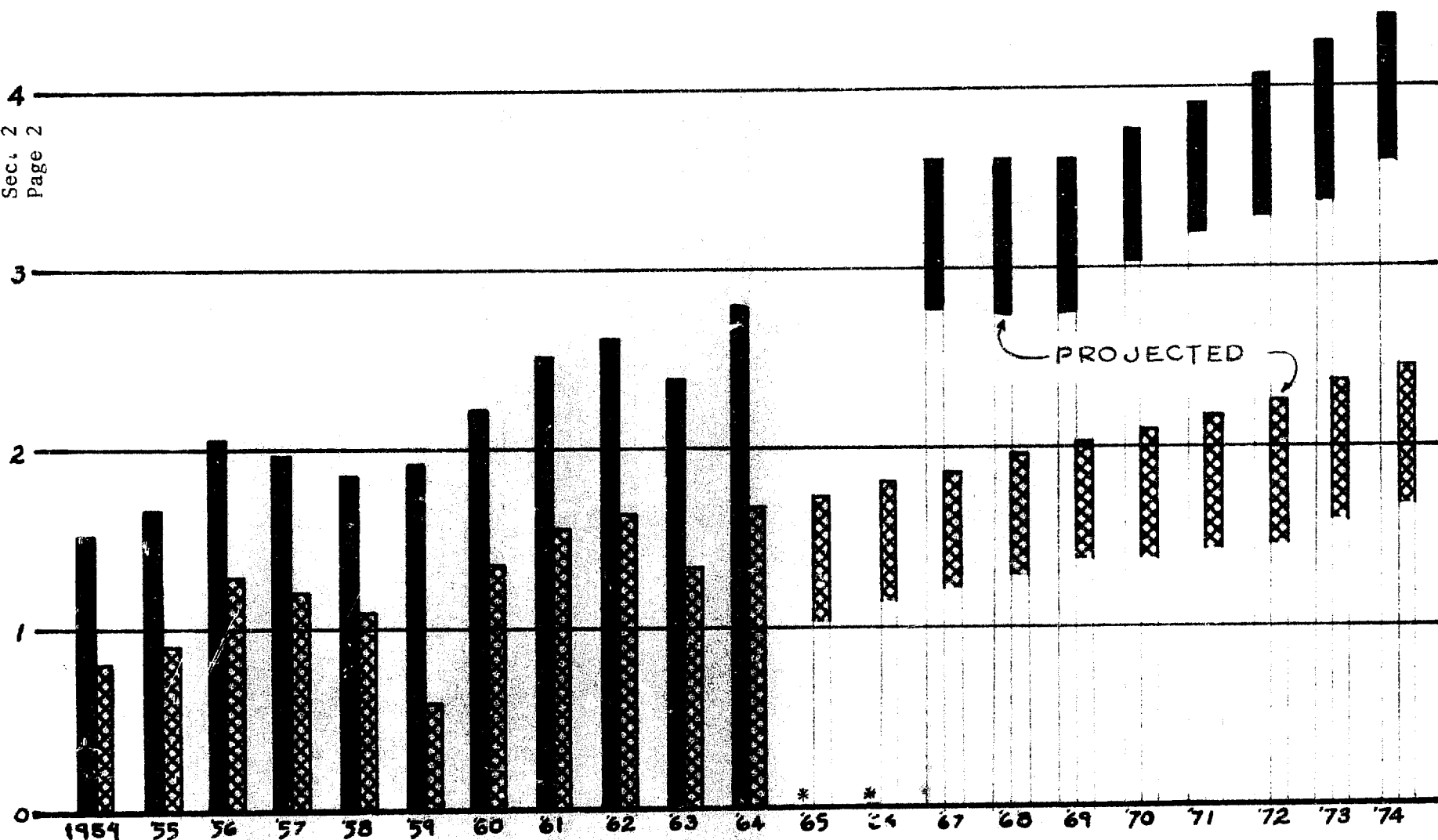


HOUSE WHERE LINCOLN DIED

* THEATRE CLOSED _f RESTORATION

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Chapter 1
Sec. 2
Page 2



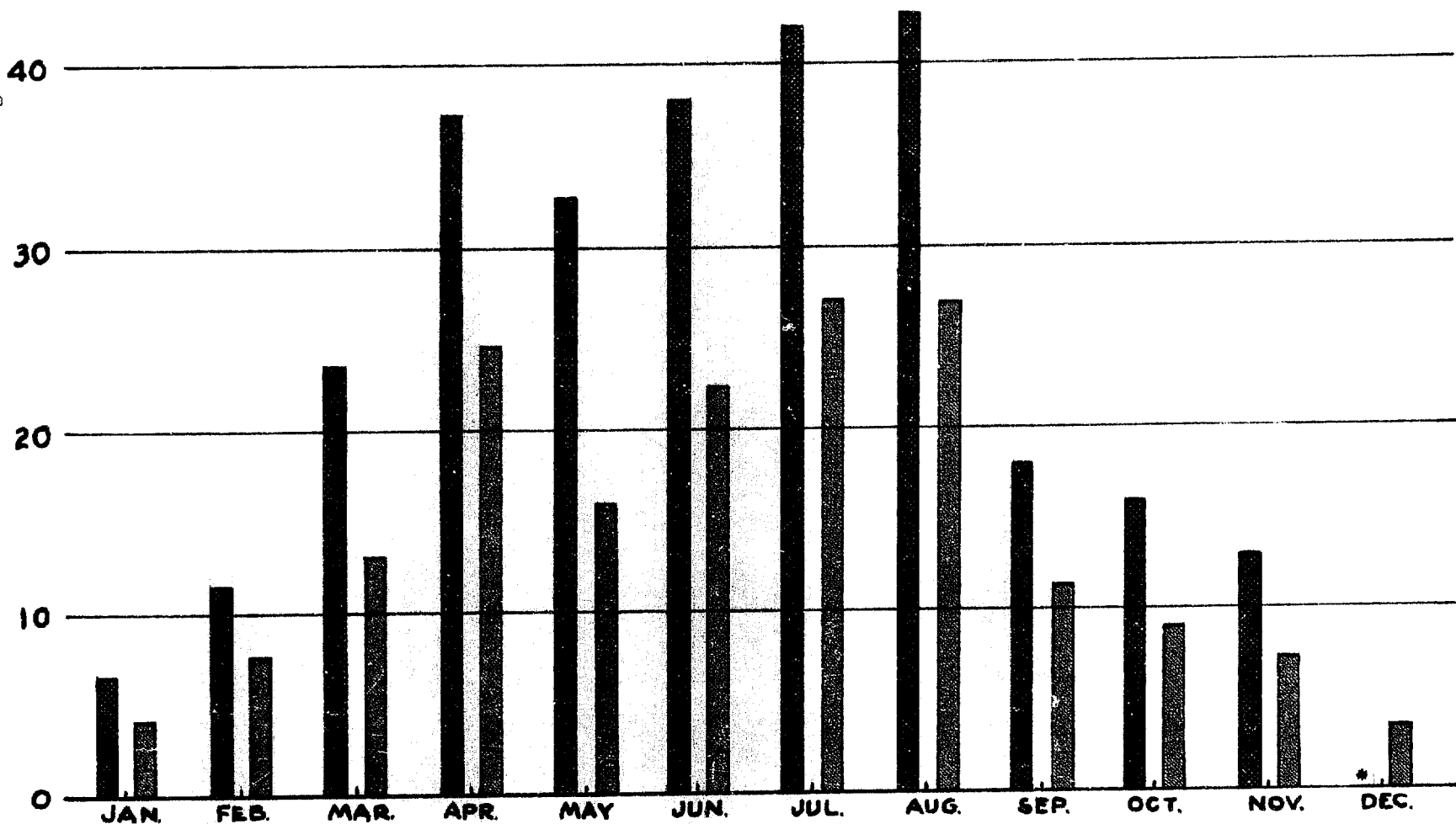
VISITATION AT FORD'S THEATRE and HOUSE WHERE LINCOLN DIED
for LAST TEN YEARS and ESTIMATED VISITATION for NEXT TEN YEARS

* THEATRE CLOSED for RESTORATION

THOUSAND
50

■ FORD'S THEATRE

■ HOUSE WHERE LINCOLN DIED



NUMBER of VISITORS per MONTH - 1964 - FORD'S THEATRE and HOUSE WHERE LINCOLN DIED

MASTER PLAN

FOR

FORD'S THEATRE

AND

HOUSE WHERE LINCOLN DIED

CHAPTER 2, AREA OBJECTIVES

Purpose

Management Category

Management

Prepared by: F. R. Mullaly, Historian
W. R. Pailor, Team Captain

Date 5-25-66

Recommended: 
Superintendent

Date 5-25-66

Recommended: 
Regional Director

Date 6/13/66

Recommended: Edward S. Peet
Chief, Office of Resource Planning, WSC

Date 6/16/66

Approved: Assistant Director, Operations

Date _____

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CHAPTER 2, AREA OBJECTIVES

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Management Category

Management

Prepared by:	<u>F. R. Mullaly, Historian</u> <u>W. R. Faylor, Team Captain</u>	Date	_____
Recommended:	<u></u> Superintendent	Date	<u>5-25-64</u>
Recommended:	_____ Regional Director	Date	_____
Recommended:	_____ Chief, Office of Resource Planning, WSC	Date	_____
Approved:	_____ Assistant Director, Operations	Date	_____

Purpose:

Ford's Theatre is a historic structure that memorializes one of the darkest moments in American history, the assassination of President Lincoln. Since history is a blend of glory, triumph, failure, and tragedy, the restoration of Ford's Theatre as a memorial within the National Park System is appropriate. Although the primary purpose of the restoration is to show the theatre as it was on the night of April 14, 1865, there is an effort made to portray facets of the life of Lincoln by means of artifacts and interpretive devices.

Management Category

Historical Area.

Area Objectives

A. Visitor Use

1. Provision of Facilities: To provide facilities, properly located, to help visitors enjoy a meaningful experience at Ford's Theatre. Various items concerning President Lincoln would be sold at an information counter by a cooperative association or a concessioner. Public rest rooms would be included in the south annex of the basement floor of the theatre.
2. Transportation and Parking: To encourage visitors to make use of the proposed National Visitor Center--Tour Bus System as a means of getting to the area. Parking facilities are limited and the proposed Tour System which runs along the Mall is only three blocks from Ford's Theatre.
3. Park Capacity: To support the interpretive program with accurate measurements of the present, and potential capacity of Ford's Theatre and House Where Lincoln Died.

B. Resource Management:

4. Maintenance and Protection of Facilities: To maintain and protect the valuable and irreplaceable furnishings in Ford's Theatre from damage, neglect and vandalism.
5. Boundary Adjustments: To acquire and demolish the souvenir building on the north boundary of the Theatre. This land is needed

for access to the museum part of the theatre. Acquisition of this small parcel of land would also make it possible for the Service to meet fire safety requirements for Ford's Theatre.

C. Communications:

6. Interpretive Theme:

Primary: The events surrounding the assassination of President Lincoln at Ford's Theatre on the night of April 14, 1865.

Secondary: Exhibits, artifacts, and other interpretive media that illuminate various facets of the life of Abraham Lincoln.

7. Interpretation: To provide an interpretive program based on effective, creative, interpretive devices supplemented by personal contact.

8. Information: To make available at a suitable location within the area information about the many other features of interest concerning Abraham Lincoln in the National Capital region.

9. Cooperation with Government Agencies and Private Organizations:
To cooperate fully with other government agencies and private organizations that share with the National Park Service the desire to preserve and protect Ford's Theatre and the House Where Lincoln Died (Petersen House.) Among those organizations would be the following:

- (1) Downtown Progress, Inc.--has the eventual goal of closing 10th Street between E and F Streets to vehicular traffic and establishing there Lincoln Place which would provide an appropriate setting for Ford's Theatre and the Petersen House.
- (2) On May 20, 1965, Secretary Udall approved the presentation of occasional "live" theatre in the restored Ford's Theatre with the understanding that these productions should be confined to the period of Lincoln's time in the Nation's Capital. The productions would be presented in a way that would not conflict with the National Park Service interpretation of the theatre for the general public.
- (3) Lincoln Group of the District of Columbia. A private cooperative association interested in all matters associated with President Lincoln.

MASTER PLAN

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HOUSE WHERE LINCOLN DIED

CHAPTER 3, MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Prepared by:

F. R. Mullaly, Historian
W. R. Failor, Team Captain

Date

5-25-66

Recommended:

W. R. Failor
Superintendent

Date

5-25-65

Recommended:

s/ T. Sutton Jett
Regional Director

Date

6-13-66

Recommended:

s/ Edward S. Peetz
Chief, Office of Resource Planning, WSC

Date

6-16-66

Approved:

Assistant Director, Operations

Date

Historical Features

Existing

Needed

House Where Lincoln Died

The Petersen House where Lincoln died is across 10th Street nearly opposite Ford's Theatre. It has remained substantially unchanged since 1865 although extensive repairs were made in 1959 under the MISSION 66 program.

A Furnishing Plan and a Historic Structures Report should be prepared as soon as possible.

Ford's Theatre

Formerly known as the Lincoln Museum, Ford's Theatre is being restored to its original condition. The Department of the Interior Appropriations Act, 1965 which was passed by House and Senate on June 29, 1964, included Amendment No. 6 that designated the structure as Ford's Theatre. The target date for the dedication of the restored Ford's Theatre is the 102nd anniversary of the assassination of Lincoln, April 14, 1967. The Theatre will probably not be open for full public use before the summer of 1967. For complete details on the restoration see Historic Structures Report, Restoration of Ford's Theatre, G.P.O., 1964.

A Furnishing Plan is in progress and should be given high priority.

Lincoln Place

Downtown Progress Inc. hopes, at some future date, to develop 10th Street between E and F Streets in a manner that will provide an appropriate setting for Ford's Theatre and the Petersen House.

Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site

Ford's Theatre and the House Where Lincoln Died are included within the boundaries of the Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site which was designated by Secretary of the Interior Udall with the concurrence of President Johnson on September 30, 1965.

MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

The Visitor

Information-Interpretation

Existing

Information

At the present time information and orientation are provided only by the park guide on duty at the Petersen House. During the restoration process, Ford's Theatre is not open to visitors.

Needed

When the restoration is completed there will be an information counter in the building. If the souvenir shop building north of the Theatre is acquired and removed an entrance to the basement section of the building where the exhibits are located could be constructed with space for an information counter. The Star Saloon would be another possibility for a counter. This counter will be stocked with maps and other materials that will make it possible to answer most questions about Washington and vicinity. Primary emphasis would be on features of interest concerning Abraham Lincoln in the National Capital Region.

Introduction of the Visitor to the Area

The visitor would enter the Theatre lobby and proceed to the orchestra section of the Theatre. If the souvenir shop structure north of the Theatre is acquired, visitors may also enter the building through the exhibit section of the basement.

Interpretive Theme

The events surrounding the assassination of President Lincoln at Ford's Theatre on the night of April 14, 1865 constitute the primary interpretive theme.

MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

The Visitor

Information-Interpretation

Existing

Interpretative Theme (continued)

pretive theme at Ford's Theatre. The visitor is introduced to this theme after he buys his ticket and enters the orchestra section of the theatre. Presentations of a sound and light program are made at frequent intervals to groups of people during a 12-hour day (9a.m. to 9 p.m.). The performance returns the visitor to the night of April 14, 1865. Although there are no actors, films, or other visual presentation, the visitor relives the events of that tragic evening through a combination of sound effects and lights focused on the various points of action.

At the close of the theatre presentation, the visitor may go down to the exhibit area in the basement or he may conclude his visit.

The secondary interpretive theme is concerned with exhibits and other interpretive media that illuminate several facets of Lincoln's life. The exhibits would include manuscripts and other objects connected with Lincoln. There will be a speech lounge in the basement that will feature a 3/4 life-size statue of Lincoln surrounded by seats equipped with individual audio devices that will permit the visitors to hear some of Lincoln's greatest speeches.

Needed

The visitor traffic pattern will be arranged in a manner that will permit exhibit room experience and the Theatre experience to be separate visits where desired.

(Existing)

(Needed)

Interpretive Theme (continued)

After approximately an hour, which is the estimated average time for a visit to Ford's Theatre, the visitor may then cross 10th Street and go through the House Where Lincoln Died, which was the home of William Petersen. The visitors walk through the first floor of the building viewing the front parlor where Mrs. Lincoln spent a lonely vigil, the small bedroom where President Lincoln died, and the back parlor where members of the Cabinet conferred during the long night. The average time for this visit could be 20 minutes.

Visitor Protection

Law Enforcement

Park guides and guards will be responsible for normal law enforcement at Ford's Theatre and the House Where Lincoln Died. Serious violations would be referred to the U.S. Park Police or the Metropolitan Police.

Guards for night duty will be used to augment an automatic burglar alarm which will be installed in the restored Ford's Theatre.

(Existing)

Structural Fire

Emergencies and First Aid

Accommodations and Services

Since Ford's Theatre is located in downtown Washington all necessary accommodations and services are readily available in the immediate vicinity. Pamphlets, books, and other objects connected with the life of Lincoln may be sold by a concessioner at the information counter or some other suitable location in the building. There is no free parking in the area but there are a number of commercial parking lots within a three block radius (see map at beginning of Chapter 3)

(Needed)

Ford's Theatre will have a comprehensive structural fire prevention and control program. There will be an automatic fire alarm system.

There are several hospitals in Washington that provide emergency medical care. Some thought should be given to setting up a first aid room in the Theatre.

MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Staff Activities

Administrative Services

Existing

Needed

The restored Ford's Theatre and House Where Lincoln Died will be administrative units within the Central National Capital Parks and will receive most of its administrative services from park headquarters. Ford's Theatre will be under the immediate supervision of a park historian assisted by a park guide supervisor.

Training

Fire Control

Training sessions in the spring and the fall devoted to structural fire prevention and control will be required of all employees. Employees will attend a fire training course at the University of Maryland.

First Aid Training

All employees should have some training in basic first aid. There will be a first aid training program for all employees at least once a year.

On-the-job-Training

All employees, permanent and seasonal, will receive orientation on the operation of Ford's Theatre from line supervisors. Checklists on employee orientation and training will be maintained.

(Existing)

(Needed)

Responsibility

Administration

The Administrative Assistant of the Central National Capital Parks (CNCP), under the supervision of the Superintendent, is responsible for planning and supervision of administrative routines such as necessary paperwork in connection with personnel, fiscal and property management, payroll, etc.

Interpretation

The Historian at Ford's Theatre under the overall supervision of the Chief of Interpretation, CNCP, is responsible for the general operation of the Theatre. He assists in the planning, coordinating and operation of the interpretive program and, as time permits, gives interpretive programs to public and private organizations. He assists qualified scholars in doing research based on the Lincoln Library and other Lincoln materials in the Theatre. When it is necessary, he may be called upon to assist the Chief of Interpretation, CNCP with other historical duties.

(Existing)

(Needed)

Maintenance

The maintenance employees under the general supervision of the Chief of Maintenance, CNCP, and the immediate supervision of the Historian are responsible for the preventive and corrective maintenance of the buildings. In matters pertaining to the care of historic furnishings and objects they will be guided by the Regional Museum Curator.

Protection

All employees at Ford's Theatre share the responsibility for protection of the buildings and the visitors. They must realize that a constant vigilance is necessary to prevent hazards and accidents from developing. In the event that police protection is needed the U.S. Park Police or the Metropolitan Police are readily available.

ORGANIZATION

EXISTING

Historian (1)

Interpretation - Protection

Park Guide (Supervisory) (2)

Park Guides (11)

Park Guards (3)

Maintenance

Janitors (2)

Charwoman (1)

Seasonal (6)

NEEDED

Maintenance

Janitors (3)

Charwoman (1)

KEY: (1) Refers to
one man-year

Downtown Progress

Downtown Progress is a program set up in April 1960 by the National Capital Downtown Committee, Inc., a non-profit corporation formed by Washington business and civic leaders to prepare and carry out plans for the revitalization of Downtown Washington, east of 15th Street between the White House and the Capitol. One of the goals of this program is to close 10th Street between E and F Streets to vehicular traffic and establish there Lincoln Place which would provide an appropriate setting for Ford's Theatre and the House Where Lincoln Died.

Lincoln Group of the District of Columbia

This is a civic organization that is interested in all phases of the life of Abraham Lincoln and cooperates with the National Park Service and other public and private agencies that administer structures and collections concerning President Lincoln.

Live Theatre Productions

On May 20, 1965, Secretary of the Interior Udall approved the presentation of occasional "live" theatre in the restored Ford's Theatre with the understanding that these productions should be confined to the period of Lincoln's time in the Nation's Capital. The productions would be presented in a way that would not conflict with the National Park Service interpretation of the theatre for the general public. Organizations using the theatre for "live" productions would be required to obtain a permit as provided for in National Park Service regulations.

Although the restoration will provide space for facilities needed for "live theatre", money is not available for the facilities in the restoration appropriation. Additional funds will be required.

(Existing)

(Needed)

Staff Facilities

Administrative Facilities

Rooms for the Historian, park guides, and janitor as well as employee rest rooms and collections are on the first, second and third floors of the north wing.

MANAGEMENT SCHEDULE

A management schedule is not needed for the Ford's Theatre and House Where Lincoln Died Master Plan. When the restoration of Ford's Theatre is completed (Spring 1967) all management programs will be functioning.