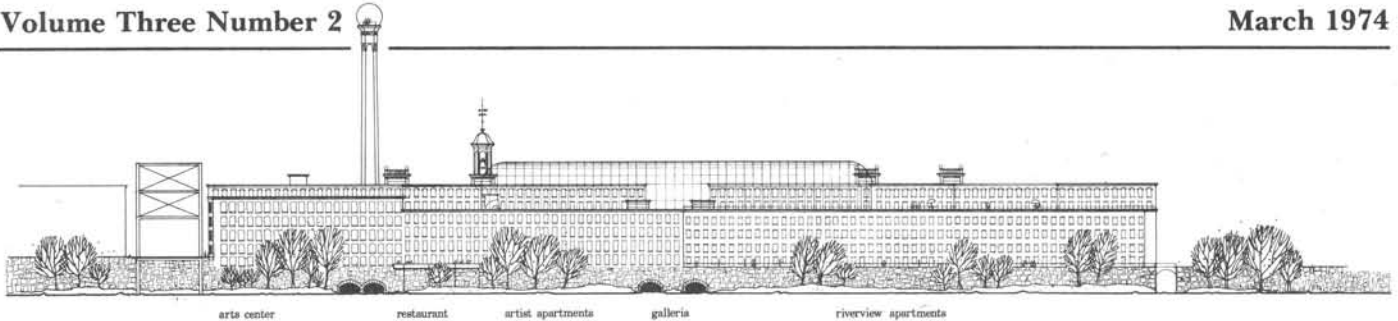


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BOOTT MILL AWARD

A proposal for the adaptive use of the Boott Mill (1835+), Lowell, MA as a cultural center community has won *Progressive Architecture's* design award for architecture. In discussing the award made to Michael & Susan Southworth, Boston architects, the jurors emphasized that their concern for old buildings was not a romantic notion or nostalgia, but that they viewed them as a resource, a possible answer to current socio-economic problems. For this reason, and because this is regarded as one of the country's most important architectural competitions, the awards may indicate a trend toward energy-saving, modest-budget buildings, and toward the conversion of old structures to new uses as a way of avoiding new construction costs. The PA award, in addition, has brought national attention to this new preservation philosophy—especially as it relates to IA sites.

Lowell (100,000 pop) began in 1822 as an experimental mill city and flourished as a model industrial community until its ultimate decline. In 1972 the city commissioned the Southworths to create a plan for revitalization of the former cotton mills. Their proposal: a new community to be housed in one of the existing mill complexes, to be called "Boott Mill Cultural Center Community." It was intended as an important element in their already proposed "Lowell Discovery Network," an urban national park [SIAN 1:4:4] incorporating historic mills, locks and 5 mi of power canals into an integrated educational & recreational facility.

The Boott Mill is a complex of 9 interconnected, long & narrow brick buildings, 3 to 6 stories high, surrounded by power canals, on the right bank of the Merrimack at the edge of the city's central business dist. Under the Southworth scheme 750,000 sq-ft of floor space, 2 major courtyards, the clock & bell tower, and the smokestack will be restored. In the self-supporting complex will be arts workshops & library, concert hall, theater, dance studio, cinema, exhibit galleries, festival courtyard and a roofed galleria—all to be administered by a community cooperative. Additional facilities will include artists' studios & apts, family apts & duplexes, student housing, a hotel (the "Lowell Inn"), and professional office space. This thoughtful proposal has resulted in a design for re-using available space that meets community needs, providing cultural facilities that do not exist and housing and office space now in short supply. Info: Michael & Susan Southworth, City Design & Architecture, 419 Boylston St., Boston 02116.



Boott Mill Yard c1880. Not sentry boxes—fire-hose houses. Soc for the Pres of New Engl Antiquities.

THE BELKNAP MILL AFFAIR

The press on the Belknap Mill, Laconia, NH, declared the best remaining example of a brick mill in New England, continues to make sorry reading. At the SIA Troy Conf, April 1973, when restoration architect Paul Mirski revealed that 3 yrs of preservation efforts had not for certain saved the 1823 mill from the threat of demolition, his list of complaints included public & political apathy; urban renewal clearance proposals; partial demolition; arson; court battles; and lack of an effective economic feasibility study [Suppl No 4].

Since then, for Laconia's *Save the Mills Soc.* (SMS) [SIA], the muddy waters have become muddier yet: last spring city council (a succession of them have been cold to lukewarm on preservation) applied for HUD grant (\$92,000) on behalf of