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PLAN FOR PORTLAND MARKET GOES AGAINST GRAIN

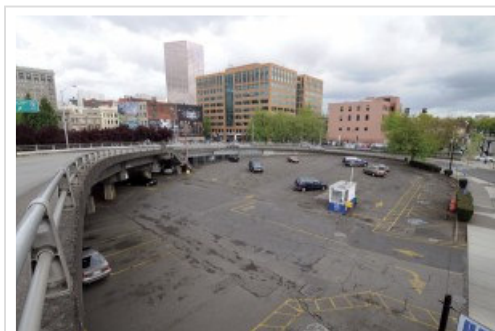
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Plan for Portland market goes against grain

POSTED: Monday, May 3, 2010 at 04:18 PM PT

BY: Nick Bjork

Tags: Melvin Mark Brokerage Company, Project for Public Spaces, Ron Paul



The 3-acre lot at the foot of the Morrison Bridge may become the home of the long-awaited James Beard Public Market. Representatives of the market are planning to building new after failed attempts to move into a historic building downtown. (Photo by Dan Carter/DJC)

There has long been a structured formula for creating financially feasible public market halls - repurposing large, historic commercial buildings into bustling year-round indoor marketplaces.

“Indoor markets need to be open and flexible while maintaining a relatively low lease rate,” said **Kelly Williams**, assistant planner with the New York-based **Project for Public Spaces**. “So, old warehouses and large industrial facilities work nicely.”

In Portland, however, developers of the long-proposed **James Beard Public Market** are breaking the mold. They tried multiple times to lease space in a historic building before settling on a plan to build a new, sustainably-minded facility at the foot of

the Morrison Bridge in downtown.

That is a departure from the successes achieved by some of the most popular public markets around the country, such as Pike’s Place Market in Seattle, Reading Terminal

Market in Philadelphia and Ferry Plaza Market in San Francisco. All are located in repurposed historic buildings.

Williams noted that of the 100 indoor public market halls in the United States, she is not aware of a single one that had a building constructed for it.

“When people come to us they usually have an existing space already in mind,” she said. “The reason is that people tend to use markets as a way to revitalize an area, not develop a new one.

“Also, market halls are usually started by nonprofit organizations because they aren’t big moneymakers for building owners. The organizations usually have limited budgets and building new is not an option.”

But this is not the case for the backers of the James Beard Public Market. After failing to lease space at the Central Fire Station Building in Ankeny Square, Union Station and the 511 Federal Building, developers teamed up with **Melvin Mark**, owner of Melvin Mark Cos. Mark has since been leading fundraising for the project, increasing the feasibility of building new.

Multnomah County commissioners last week decided to speed up the process in sending out a Request for Proposals on the county-owned Morrison bridgehead property. The James Beard Market board and SERA Architects will be submitting a proposal for a mixed-use development that will include a 55,000-square-foot bottom-floor space for the market and housing or office space above.

Williams noted that while historic buildings often provide character and uniqueness, a market really only needs to reflect its surroundings and customer base. That’s why the creators of the James Beard Market are focusing on sustainability.

Ron Paul, consulting director for the James Beard Public Market, said the team is looking at every practical way to make the new building sustainable. This would include green walls with vegetation to catch rainwater and a climate-influenced temperature management system, he said.

“All the major downtowns in the U.S. were created around where the market was because it was where everyone met,” Williams said. “So, a market can become a destination but it really needs to have synergy with what’s around it first.”

Paul noted that the developers like the current tract of land because it’s more of a crossroads than a cul-de-sac. Not only will the new market be in the same vicinity as the markets of the 19th and 20th centuries, but it also will be within walking distance to Portland Saturday Market, the downtown shopping districts and some east-side districts, he said.

“We always encourage people to find a location next to an outdoor market or a farmers market,” Williams said. “Sales increase at both locations when an indoor market is put next to an outdoor market.”

Other new public market halls around the state are sticking with the standard formula.

In Tillamook, a revitalization committee restored and repurposed the 94-year-old Independent Order of Odd Fellows Building into an indoor market with room for 20 vendors year-round. The market is slated to open later this month.

In Astoria, developers **Brian Faherty** and **Paul Caruana** are renovating and repurposing the Astor Hotel Building into a mixed-use development. They plan to turn the 3,000-square-foot lobby into a retail market for arts and crafts.

In Medford, **Jake Husel** and **Crista Singley** converted an old, 12,800-square-foot industrial building into an antique collectors and artisan guild. It opened last weekend.



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COMMENTS

poncho says:

hopefully those cloverleaves are coming out

Posted on 05/03/10 at Monday, May 3, 2010

Robert Libkind says:

I wish Portland consumers well in seeking to create an indoor public market. But be aware that Philadelphia's Reading Terminal Market was not, contrary to the article's and Kelly Williams' assertion, located in a repurposed public building.

The Reading Terminal Market is located under what until 1985 served as the Philadelphia terminus of the Reading Company's railroad, familiar to all who have played Monopoly. When the Reading Terminal was built the plans specifically incorporated a space for vendors from two existing markets who were to be displaced by the construction of the grand railway edifice. Indeed, the Reading Terminal Market began operation in 1982 under the terminal's train shed months before the first train arrived upstairs the following year.

The Reading Terminal Market not only then housed space for 800 merchants in 78,000 square feet of selling space, but a half million cubic feet of refrigerated space (kept at 15-25 degrees for meat and poultry, 34 degrees for producing) using the brine and ammonia cooling technology of the time.

Hardly repurposed, the Reading Terminal Market was purposely built.

Posted on 05/04/10 at Tuesday, May 4, 2010

Robert Libkind says:

A little more perspective on “repurposing” and the Reading Terminal Market. It was the train shed above the market, not the market itself, that has been repurposed. Today the second level train shed where commuters caught the Chestnut Hill Local serves as the grand hall entrance to the Pennsylvania Convention Center.

Posted on 05/04/10 at Tuesday, May 4, 2010

Nick Bjork says:

Robert makes a very good point. The Redding Terminal Market has always been a market on the ground floor of the terminal. The upstairs (where the trains left from) was converted into a convention center and the market remained in the same location. So, the market is in a historic building (as it has always been) but the building wasn't repurposed for the market, it was repurposed for the convention center.

Also, Robert was just telling me on the phone about how the farmers would bring the things they sold in the market to town by train. That is why it was so convenient to have a market under the train station. If someone in town needed some supplies from the farmers, the farmer would just take the order and put it on the train for the person. It is interesting to note that the idea of placing market halls in a space that is more of a through-way than a destination has been around for centuries. That idea is still being used today.

Posted on 05/04/10 at Tuesday, May 4, 2010

Dave B says:

You need to do more research regarding your statement about the Pike Place Market. It was built SPECIFICALLY for use as a Farmers Market around 1907-11. The area occupied by the market today was open land at the turn of the last century and was designated as the market site. Wikipedia has all of this information and knowing this sort of blow a hole in your “thesis statement”. Remember the original market that stood where Waterfront Park is was also built SPECIFICALLY for use as a framers market....

Please, do some simple research on your subject before you make sweeping statements that really don't reflect the actual history of farmer's markets in the US....

Posted on 05/04/10 at Tuesday, May 4, 2010

Nick Bjork says:

Dave,

You are right that the undeveloped land was designated for farmers market use around 1907. As a result several different markets popped up over the next few years. For years attempts were made to combine all the various markets into one. In the 1970s, the original space was designated a historic property and was rennovated and restored to reflect the original appeal of the market. While the building wasn't re-purposed, it was rennovated to become a single, indoor market hall. While Pike's Place may fall out of the realm of repurposed buildings becoming markets, my thesis was that the James Beard Market would be the first newly constructed market hall in decades. Pikes Place, as is the case with several other historic markets in historic towns, has always been a market. But, if you look at towns that didn't have market halls, or the historic one was torn down, the new market hall was placed in a historically repurposed building. Thanks for reading and providing your input.

Posted on 05/04/10 at Tuesday, May 4, 2010

Jarred says:

I think everyone is forgetting the very obvious example of Granville Island Market in Vancouver BC Perhaps the most successful public market in North America built new buildings for the market on a former industry site next to downtown. Google granville island market and use google image search rather than web search...or better yet go visit, its an amazing place filled with life, multicultural venders , food stands, restaurants everything you can imagine. If Portland uses Granville Island as a model it will be a stunning success.

Posted on 05/18/10 at Tuesday, May 18, 2010

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