Faneuil Hall Marketplace: Sustaining the Results

Following the historic reopening of the market house, extensive news reports gave details of the gala event. Newspapers carried feature stories, and television and radio stations aired coverage of the streams of curious Bostonians filing into the market house through the afternoon and evening after the lunchtime crowd had returned to work. By the end of that first day, the media estimated, more than a hundred thousand people had visited the newly restored market house. "A 150-year-old granite Greek Revival market place reopened amid jovial crowds, bagpipers and jugglers as the latest in this city's remarkable downtown renaissance—selling meat and produce," the New York Times wrote on Friday, August 27, 1976. "The area, called Dock Square, was the city's marketplace from its beginning, where the ships unloaded their cargo and the farmers brought their produce. Bagpipers wailed, stage bands played on, and actors dressed as vegetables."

All through the following day, people from around the city converged upon the market house, determined to discover for themselves what was causing such local and national media attention. Those who simply expected to see a refurbished old building were amazed to find that an architectural, historical, and triumphal example of urban renewal had finally been accomplished. They may or may not have been aware of the similarities between the birth of the marketplace and its rebirth. "Once again, the reopening of the market house became the paradigm of public and private partnership, a watershed event for real estate development activity. By 1976, Boston's attractiveness as an urban center became manifest." Aware or not, they had
heard that, the day before, after many downtown offices had closed for the summer weekend, the market house had been crowded with late-night activity. The cafés, pubs, taverns, restaurants, and eateries were filled to capacity and many had waiting lines stretching past midnight.

During that late-August weekend families from around greater Boston came into the city to experience for themselves the “Festival Marketplace.” “If history runs in cycles,” one newspaper later said succinctly, “then Boston’s waterfront has come full turn. The same area that once spawned a revolution in urban renewal has returned to its former glory. The people are reveling.” There was spontaneous entertainment along the pedestrian concourses that featured street shows, promotional activities, jugglers, magicians, and musical performances. The marketplace displayed a world of lively banners, balloons, streamers, brightly colored kiosks, and American flags waving to pay tribute to the bicentennial. Also saluting America’s independence was the gallery in the market house’s east wing presenting the bicentennial exhibit “Boston 200: The Revolution—Where It All Began.”

Although there was an unexpected variety of eating and shopping, the most surprising innovation was the reintroduction of the pushcarts—especially in the section under the glass canopies, now called the Bull Market section. Once an outside fixture at the old market house, the pushcarts of forty-three independent merchants acted as a welcome to the arcades of the new “Festival Marketplace.” Another twenty-five stood just outside. Unlike bygone-era pushcart peddlers who hawked only foodstuffs, the new pushcarts sold merchandise like jewelry, sweatshirts, novelty items, leather goods, sweaters, stationery, books, scarves and gloves, and souvenirs. Dozens of young artisans and craftsmen also used the pushcarts as a springboard to launch unique and untried arts and crafts. “Originally, many of the specialty shops incubated items off these pushcarts to embellish their own inventory because the things being sold were so remarkable. People just couldn’t get enough of many of these novel creations.”

The long colonnade resembled an indoor street with more than seventy concessions selling fish, meats, fruits, farm products, cheeses, wines, flowers, and specialty foods that had both regional and international flavors. There were merchants selling a variety of prepared foods mixed in with the meat vendors who sold beef, pork, veal, sausages, poultry—plain, barbecued, smoked, and cured. Other edibles being offered were candies, ice cream, fried foods, salads, and baked goods. As one news-
paper commented, “Quincy Market, the monster calorie center, is done up with Greek revival style, with 108 [sic] white columns standing at attention along the hall. Some of them are from Mayor Quincy’s day. If this is the cradle of liberty, the hand that isn’t rocking the cradle is surely shoveling in the grocers.” The food was displayed in a world of sights, sounds, and aromas. Many of these products weren’t mass-produced and none of the produce was wrapped in paper or plastic. Jane Thompson said it well: “The natural pageantry of foods—of meat, fish and crops from the fields—the things made and the things grown, all to be tasted, smelled, seen and touched, are the prime source of sensations, experience and amusement in the daily lives of whole populations—were and still are, in most nations.”

Although the market house still functioned in a way that was similar to its early days, when food products were the only items sold, the modern version was also transformed into a retail gallery. From behind other colonnade countertops, vendors displayed and sold a variety of merchandise or food-related items such as gourmet pots and pans, baskets, cutlery, and wares related to preparing, cooking, serving, and eating food. Many of these products consisted of unconventional merchandise or exotic spices and preserves intended to create an atmosphere that Ben Thompson called “instructive, historic, amusing and restful.”

The terrace restaurants under the glass canopies were as entertaining as they were functional. Patrons sitting in these restaurants could look out at the North and South Market buildings across the pedestrian concourses, where they could see passersby and the variety of ground-level shops that would soon be opened. The outside concourses also allowed space for several restaurants to provide alfresco dining, their territory marked by granite bollards with chains.

Outdoor space adjacent to Faneuil Hall was integrated into the overall plan with greenhouse kiosks that became the focal point of the outer sidewalk scene. Faneuil Hall Flower Market, started in 1936 by Henry McCue with a single push-cart selling flowers, operated twenty-four hours a day and was designed to allow blossoms to be viewed year-round.

The magnificent rotunda, now the focal point of the pavilion, became the primary gathering place inside the market house; people ate at benches, tables, and counters both at the colonnade level and around the second-floor balcony. The restored decor of Alexander Parris’s rosette-embellished dome rising three and a half stories, from the colonnade floor to the skylight, contributed to the rotunda’s wondrousness.
As the year 1976 came to an end and the bicentennial celebrations concluded, the “Boston 200” exhibition in the market house's second-floor east wing was replaced with the Alexander Parris Room, a banquet hall business operated by Ben and Jane Thompson. By that time, the market house was fully occupied with permanent merchants and vendors drawing crowds seven days a week. Some of the market house merchants doing business included Aris’ Barbecue, Aegean Fare...
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By early 1977 the newly reopened market house had become an established eating and shopping destination for many city workers, city residents, and suburban visitors. By the following summer, even while the North and South Market buildings were still being rebuilt, the “Festival Marketplace” had also become a popular attraction that strengthened the tourist industry in Massachusetts. The construction workers found themselves faced with a new dilemma: how to do their jobs around the increasing crowds that were drawn to the market house each day.

The South Market building was reopened a year after the market house—on August 26, 1977. Once again, there was a gala champagne reception—this time highlighted by a 2,500-pound cake, which replicated the original South Market building and which was devoured by more than five thousand spectators. The interior of South Market was redesigned to accommodate 80,000 square feet of retail space constructed in the basement, street level, and second floor. Because of the success of the “Festival Marketplace” concept, fashionable clothing, accessory, jewelry, and gift shops were instantly drawn to space at South Market. Some of these retailers included Louis’s Berkeley Shop, which offered quality men’s and women’s apparel, and Crate and Barrel, which provided trendy home furnishings. Other shops sold sporting goods, crafts, and imports, or had studios with art galleries. Four additional five-star restaurants served distinctive food in relatively small spaces—Café Cybèle, La Strada Restaurant, Cricket’s, and Seaside Restaurant and Bar. Since the restaurants were positioned at the east and west ends of this building, the curiosity of the customers walking past the ground-floor shops was naturally aroused.

The remaining 80,000 square feet on the upper levels were divided into office suites with a historic ambience that had once been almost lost. The suites were provided with every modern convenience but retained the original granite-encased window frames, the cumbersome wooden beamed ceilings, and the exposed brick walls. A number of established downtown Boston firms relocated to offices at South
Market; one of the first to move from a modern high-rise tower at One Boston Place was Bay Colony Properties, the former Land-Trust division of the international real estate firm Cabot, Cabot and Forbes.

At the North Market reopening on August 26, 1978, the markets’ earlier failing reputation was completely exonerated. The popular conductor Arthur Fiedler enthralled a nationwide television audience by leading the Boston Pops Orchestra in an inspiring repertoire. Once again, there was a champagne reception highlighted by a 2,500-pound replica cake of the original North Market building. North Market was smaller than South Market by 40,000 square feet. When finished, North Market was leased to retailers in much the same way as South Market (with the exception of Durgin Park, which, as an original tenant, owned its units). Shops situated between the basement and second-floor levels included boutiques, home furnishings and accessories, personal services, fast-food eateries, taverns, and more quality restaurants. The Landmark Inn (owned by Ben and Jane Thompson), the largest multilevel restaurant in the Marketplace, opened at the west end of North Market. It had an eatery situated on each level: the Flower Garden Café, Thompson’s Chowder House, the Wild Goose Rotisserie, and Bunch of Grapes Tavern.

Inside both the North and South Market buildings were corridors that linked the upper-floor shops both horizontally and vertically and that allowed strollers to be sheltered from the elements when walking from one shop to another. No longer following the tradition of the past’s individual stores, renovators had broken through the brick party walls that had separated the units. This not only accommodated the inside passageways to access upper-floor retail space but also allowed larger office suites on the upper floors to expand between one original store and the next. One consequence of this renovation was that all the remaining fireplace openings were bricked up and sealed off for good.

Like the South Market building, the remaining upper levels of North Market were remodeled into office suites. Each warehouse/store building had a greenhouse-like extension protruding from its west end, which allowed for glassed-in dining: South Market’s glass shed was built upon part of the former Merchants Row; North Market’s over a portion of the once-notorious Roe Buck Passage.11 And in both buildings double sets of skylights were added to every section of the gable roofs.

Durgin Park, once nearly the sole occupant of the North Market building,
continued serving Poor Man’s Roast Beef, New England Clam Chowder, Boston Baked Beans, and a “Bale of Hay” at the same location it had occupied for 150 years. Together with its newest addition, a separate downstairs restaurant named Oyster Park, this enduring landmark business that had never made any claims about its unique style of seating customers at long tables, elbow-to-elbow, now served a new generation of customers in the same timeless fashion. At Durgin Park, with its stolid, unpretentious menu and its quirky, brusque wait staff, a side order of corn bread was readily served alongside its folklore. The only thing missing was the sawdust that once covered the floors.\(^{12}\)

Collectively, the three refurbished buildings provided about 430,000 square feet of space that consisted of 290,000 for retail and 140,000 for offices—enough room for two hundred tenants.\(^{13}\) The 1975 construction loan from Boston lenders, which mandated that the redevelopment proceed in three stages (despite Jim Rouse’s reluctance), became one of the most beneficial aspects of the project. By working on one building each year, the Rouse Company was able to refocus its marketing and merchandising strategies. The immediate success of the market house allowed the Rouse Company to seek higher rents at South and North Market and thereby upgrade the tenant quality. When all three buildings had been reopened, some of the merchants included Carol Ann Bake Shop, Rebecca’s, Pizzeria Regina II, Malben’s Gourmet, Fisherman’s Net, Pasta Plaza, the Prime Shop, Boston Tea Company, Belgian Fudge, Monogram’s, Eagerman’s Bakery, Baby Watson Cheesecake, Cardoos Spices, Boston Chipyard Cookies, Au Bon Pain Bakery, the Juicerie, the Jelly Shack of Cape Cod, Anna’s Fried Dough, Nutcracker, Salty Dog Seafood, Candlewick, Left Hand Compliments, Lucy’s Canvas, Bookbinder, the Poppy Shop, Wood Products, Concord Shop, Heidi’s Natural Poultry Company, Jennetta’s, Charcutrix, Karmel-korn Shop, the Great American Lobster Company, and Swensen’s Ice Cream.

Once construction was completed, Faneuil Hall Marketplace unified all the closed-off streets into a single pedestrian mall. Street fairs were regularly featured there, as were parades, puppet shows, jugglers, magicians, promotions, concerts, and dances. The concourses also provided easy access for daytime shoppers to patronize the many stores and nighttime revelers to move around between its restaurants, cabarets, clubs, and taverns.

The Marketplace was incorporated into Boston’s Freedom Trail (a published, self-guided tour of historic sites). Besides directing people to nearby Faneuil Hall,
this listing now brought people to the Marketplace as well, where sightseeing and fashions were just a few feet away from fresh flowers, fried dough, or filet mignon. Downtown office workers continued to contribute greatly to the Marketplace’s success by adding to the lunchtime crowds and after-hour entertainment. As Ben Thompson commented, “I’m satisfied that we achieved what we set out to achieve. The great challenge now is to maintain the quality and spirit of what we have.”

To do this, when the late-night establishments had closed and the evening crowds were gone, the Marketplace was thoroughly cleaned by a fifty-person maintenance crew. Under the watchful eye of the Rouse Company’s general manager, Jim McLean, the brick, granite, and cobblestone concourses were vacuumed and steam-cleaned. Inside the market house, the colonnade was cleared of the debris it had accumulated that day, and the oak floors were scrubbed, waxed, and buffed. “With so many people crowding the Marketplace daily,” Jim McLean said later, “security, maintenance, and sanitation were my major concerns. Cleanliness is what people notice. All that debris that’s left behind—like pizza crusts, chewing gum, discarded litter—I’d make sure there was no trace of it by the next day. People began calling me ‘Mac the Vac.’”

Each season, new arrangements of flowers and plants were added to the concourse planters under the honey locust trees. One of the most difficult maintenance problems was keeping the exterior brick, cobblestone, and granite-block grounds cleared of snow during the winter months.

McLean managed a staff of 110 that included four supervisors, two assistant managers, a comptroller, and an office manager. Legal, engineering, architectural, accounting, market research, and leasing services were provided at the Rouse Company’s headquarters in Columbia, Maryland. “At the time, we had fifty-page leases that required that the larger tenants provide the names of their attorney, accountant, architect, and contractor. There were strict lease restrictions that limited the variety of the agreed-upon goods they sold, their signs, window displays, how their interiors were built out, and that they remain open seven days a week.”

Management also kept tight control over outside entertainment by scheduling performers at designated areas and appointed times along the concourses. This restricted merchant activity. Noticeably, there was no constant music played over loudspeakers, nor were there any supermarket-style shopping carts. Trash was continually removed to the nearby facility at the rate of twelve to fifteen tons every day.
The Rouse Company also staffed its own permanent security force, which employed at least one Boston special police officer. Boston Police maintained a presence by means of patrol vehicles, mounted policemen, and officers riding motorcycles around the nearby streets. The sight of so many security personnel and Boston police officers acted as a deterrent to potential crime.

The negative predictions by critics who had once insisted it would be impossible to lure people back into Boston from suburban shopping malls were proven wrong. When completed, Faneuil Hall Marketplace generated three times the retail revenues that were originally forecast. It attracted an incredible number of students, primary destination and secondary market shoppers, local residents, visitors, tourists, and conventioneers, “up to twelve million [visitors] in 1978 when the entire complex was finally open.” By 1978 Faneuil Hall Marketplace was viewed as one of the great economic success stories in America, a textbook example of twentieth-century urban renewal. Nationally, there were a number of urban redevelopment projects that preceded Faneuil Hall Marketplace. The Marketplace, however, was the first such spectacular revitalization of old commercial space into such a heavily food-oriented space, with retail and offices included. Faneuil Hall Marketplace had more restaurants, taverns, and eateries, more prepared food, produce, and other food-related merchants than the others. And at the time, the Marketplace was more successful than the others in terms of paying dividends to its investors and to the city where it was located.

The enabling mix of public money and private participation marked a shift in public opinion that established a watershed for preservation not only in Boston but in other cities as well. Like the original 1826 development, the Marketplace rapidly became the acknowledged national example of how an old city could incorporate the best of its heritage into the future. “The restoration is one of the stellar features of Boston’s exemplary downtown renewal, a remarkably sensitive synthesis of new and old, from Faneuil to City Hall.”

It was also popular. Within its first five years of operation, the Rouse Company “estimated that [6.5-acre] Faneuil Hall Marketplace attracted more than 14 million visitors annually.” This represented a greater volume of patrons per acre than Disney World in Orlando, Florida, with its more expansive grounds. And the Marketplace
had surpassed Disney World without a corporate structure. As Ben Thompson later put it, “The difference between Disney World and Faneuil Hall Marketplace [was] the multiple independent merchants who succeeded in making the redevelopment work. Whereas Disney is a corporation, the Marketplace is mainly tenanted by merchants who strive all year at making their businesses succeed.”

Now the envy of many American cities seeking to enliven downtown merchandising, its contribution was also recognized as a vehicle to restore confidence in declining urban areas of other cities such as New York, Baltimore, Miami, Los Angeles, Tokyo, and Glasgow. As Ben Thompson noted, “Quincy Market could well point the way for other cities in their replanning not only of major market centers, but of the lively subcenters and exciting streets that future cities need by the hundreds. The market concept is a matter of total attitude and works to sell apples and oranges, pots and pans, or sides of beef. The long-term program does not belong to public agencies but belongs inescapably to the people as a joint public-private constituency that affected the nearly deadly limbo that previously existed.”

Immediately after Faneuil Hall Marketplace opened, the downward economic trends that had plagued Boston for nearly thirty years began to turn around. The flight from Boston into the suburbs began to stop; it was no longer a mark of success to retreat from the city and live in the country. Architect Tad Stahl later related this change to the “success of the Marketplace idea [which] can only be measured by an unmeasurable event. At a certain moment, people in suburbia adjusted their behavior to include downtown. Years later, observers would credit Faneuil Hall Marketplace and its progeny with permanently shifting the balance between those lifestyles.”

There is no doubt that the Marketplace contributed to Boston’s retail recovery. After the 1976 bicentennial celebrations ended, visitors kept returning to Boston and the economic demand for further commercial space created business opportunities where they had never before existed, especially at the waterfront district. “As the latest in a series of renewal projects started in the early 1960s by Boston Redevelopment director Edward Logue, the full opening of the waterfront in recent months has instilled a new pride and rejuvenation in this city’s downtown, one of the most livable major downtowns in the United States.”

Some would argue that the reopening of the market house merely coincided with the area’s economic recovery. Tourists had already made reservations to partake in the 1975–1976 bicentennial celebrations, for example. There were, however, many
direct economic benefits. Mayor Kevin White put it well when he said there was “no question that . . . Quincy Market brought life back to the waterfront between North Station and South Station.”

Between 1974 and 1979, the Stahl idea of including residential space in the Marketplace began to be realized in some of its neighboring buildings. This was most noticeably seen beyond Faneuil Hall Marketplace at the waterfront district, where many old, empty buildings were converted into condominiums with commercial units on the street floors. Faneuil Hall Marketplace acted as a catalyst for other nearby areas: the Fulton Street shopping district, located within walking distance en route to the North End, was created; old buildings along Atlantic Avenue, which runs along today’s harborfront, were reconstructed, including the former Prince Spaghetti building; and Boston’s venerable North End was positively affected. Even the decisions to develop the nearby Marriott and Bostonian Hotels, on Long Wharf and in the Blackstone Street block, were influenced by the success of the Marketplace.

The MBTA (Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority) saw increased revenues attributable to passengers traveling to stations and bus stops near the Marketplace. Revenues from area parking meters, municipal parking lots, and private parking concessions showed a marked increase. It is estimated that, during the first five years of operation, about half the Marketplace visitors arrived by car and the other half by public transit. And once the multilevel Dock Square parking garage was opened in 1980, the Marketplace finally had a permanent nearby parking facility for its patrons.

Within five years of the reopening, many of the creative products sold from Marketplace pushcarts grew into either a regional or a national business. Marketplace exposure probably contributed to that growth. According to Ben Thompson, the Rouse Company could have easily leased to merchants who sold low-end trinkets or inexpensive tourist-oriented goods—as many tourist areas did at the time—or even leased only to national franchises for eateries. Instead, they solicited high-end tenants with unique inventory and marketing know-how. Some of these merchants were Crabtree and Evelyn, Produce House, Pacos Tacos, The Original Freedman’s Bakery, Geppetto’s, Lord Bunbury, J. J. Donovan’s Tavern, Sweet Stuff, Boxes, Boston Scrimshanders, Celtic Weavers, Kreeger and Sons, Pavo Real Gallery, Pillow Talk, Bear Necessities, Fiorucci, and Butterfly Garden.
The private cost to develop Faneuil Hall Marketplace after three years was about $32 million, or approximately 35 percent more than anticipated in 1975. Public participation had reached $17 million, making the final public subsidy more than half of the private cost. This brought the total cost to about $49 to $50 million. The BRA claimed that the public cost of retaining the historic buildings in order to attract a competent developer was more than justified because private developers were compelled to work under strict restraints. During the first decade following the Marketplace’s opening, lease payments to the city continued to increase: “By the end of 1987, after nine years of full payments, receipts totaled $17.9 million. After accounting for the property taxes the city would have collected if the buildings had remained privately owned and unimproved, net lease revenues totaled $15.5 million, under base-case model assumptions about property tax assessments.”

In terms of profitability, it was unquestionable not only that the BRA secured the best deal for the city but that its staff gained invaluable experience that was instrumental in executing subsequent tax-lease arrangements in other Boston developments. The city put in about 17 percent of the $17 million of public money used to develop the market area. During development “the city took comfort in their financial advisor’s estimate that the project would generate annual revenues of $1.5 million by the mid-1980s. This was almost seven times what the old dilapidated markets yielded before renovation. In addition, the city faced no additional public expense because, under the terms of the lease, the Rouse Company was responsible for maintaining the streets and providing security for the marketplace.”

Twenty years later, analysts agreed that the ground sublease with the Rouse Company was financially favorable to the city. Over the first twenty years the Rouse Company also “paid $41.5 million in city real estate taxes . . . or just over $2 million annually.” And the “2,500 jobs generated by the Marketplace has meant $16.2 million in payroll taxes since 1976, plus $27.8 million paid by employees in personal income taxes. And on sales of $1.5 billion since it opened, the Marketplace has paid $62 million in retail sales taxes, or typically between $3 million and $3.5 million annually.” Although it is difficult to pull out of these numbers what part would not have existed if the Marketplace had not been restored as it was, it is clear that Rouse Company statistics show the creation of new money and new jobs for the city. Jim McLean later recalled that, during the first five years of operation, the Marketplace’s office space employed 750 to 800 people.
After its five-year honeymoon period, problems began to be acknowledged and solutions were sought.

The original merchant leases included a basic rent payment schedule plus a provision that tenants contribute a portion of real estate operating expenses, usually referred to as CAM (common area maintenance) fees. These fees were prorated by the area of leased space in proportion to the size of the Marketplace. Operating expenses included in the CAM fees were the maintenance costs, utilities expense, and real estate taxes. By 1982 CAM fees increased dramatically. The Rouse Company claimed that the costs to operate the Marketplace had continued to increase with the growth in the Marketplace’s popularity. The newly formed 150-member Faneuil Hall Merchants Association (FHMA) disagreed and charged that the Rouse Company was increasing CAM fees unfairly. Claiming they were being overcharged, FHMA initiated a lawsuit against the Rouse Company to recover what the merchants saw as unsubstantiated CAM fees. Three years later, a $3 million settlement was paid to FHMA.

In 1989 the BRA and the Rouse Company took part in the Faneuil Hall Marketplace Revitalization Program. Unlike the efforts made in the 1800s to keep up with growth and change, the late-twentieth-century improvements were made with at least some oversight by groups to keep up with the wear and tear caused by the volumes of people flocking to the marketplace during its first ten years.

Contractors A. Bonfatti and Company, together with architects Robert Wood Associates, completed a $5 million revitalization campaign, which focused on improving the concourses, making building repairs, erecting an information pavilion along the South Market concourse, and providing better outside lighting around the Marketplace. Additionally, the market house’s oak flooring was replaced with glazed tiles, suggestive of bricks and granite, that spanned the width and length of the colonnade. Several original wooden doors, complete with antique hardware, were restored and placed at principal entrances. The broad wooden railing atop the glass balustrade encircling the second-floor opening of the rotunda was replaced with metal. And in a decision to go with functionality over history and aesthetics, two newly designed curved metal stairways were installed inside the rotunda, so that visitors could access that space by means of permanent, wider sets of stairs. Also, around the ceiling opening of market hall, on the space below the glass balustrade, gold-leaf
lettering was inscribed that said: "This building has served the people of Boston as the central market of the city since its dedication in August, 1826. That same year, a gilded Quincy Market sign was suspended across each portico of the market house and gilded North Market and South Market signs were affixed to the end walls of those buildings. This was the first time in the 163-year history of Faneuil Hall Market that the name Quincy Market appeared on the market house.

It is difficult to maintain cutting-edge thinking in business, and Quincy Marketplace was no exception to the rule. Between 1980 and 1990, there was a gradual change in ambience at Quincy Market. The "Festival Marketplace" was taking on a more corporate feel. Some of the original meat, produce, and flower vendors were replaced with larger restaurants. The Disney Store moved in and displaced eleven smaller shops in the North Market building. The Nature Company, Waterstone's Book-sellers, and Warner Brothers stores soon followed, forcing many smaller family-owned businesses from their locations. By 1995 the Warner Brothers store, in particular, became a symbol of all that seemed to be going wrong. Architect Ben Thompson said in an interview at the time, "There's been a shift from local business to national chains and tourist shops. We warned in the beginning tourism would corrode, and it's come true. Tourism changes what merchants sell, and that affects the environment. Also, it's now run by a mall developer applying mall principles to what he once agreed would be a more delicate local environment. Bringing in Disney is trendy, but its out of context and makes Faneuil Hall like every mall in America." 33

By this time Jim Rouse had died, and the initial enthusiasm the Rouse Company had shown for quality seemed to be waning. Thompson went on to voice what many were feeling. "Most of the news I get about Faneuil Hall is not good. Architectural friends say the controls are not effective. Disney's there, which is too bad, because it's strictly tourist, and that's not what we had in mind. What would I have done differently? Well, I might have planted more trees." 34

Thompson's concern was also shared by preservationist Walter Muir Whitehill and BRA director Bob Kenney. In 1979, his last year as director, Bob Kenney made every effort to establish for the Marketplace a BRA committee, which he wanted to call the Market Oversight Panel and Design Control Committee. Such a committee had been one of the stipulations of the Rouse Company's sublease, but it had never
been created. If it had been, it would have been there over the years to approve or reject changes in the types of merchants represented at the Marketplace (along with any other proposed changes). Regulations governing physical changes to the buildings and streets, which had remained city-owned, had been mostly enforced. Bob Kenney later commented dryly of the Marketplace at the time, "Walter Muir Whitewhill would be rolling over in his grave at the thought of Disney and Warner Brothers stores occupying space at the historic markets."35

The reasons for this change were more complex than a total lack of oversight. The severe national recession during the early 1990s caused a downward trend in consumer spending. Many Bostonians stopped coming to the Marketplace and merchants had to begin to rely more heavily on tourists. This led to changes in the ambience of the Marketplace. "The problem is that tourists have more interest in trinkets and souvenirs. As these items proliferate, the character of the market changes. Locals regard tourists as obstacles. Already the effects are apparent. Butchers slide into fast food items, fruit cups and sandwiches. A florist sells soda pop, the produce man devotes more energy to takeout salads, and everywhere in America, the proliferation of T-shirts threatens to build the image of an underwear factory. We predict it will be as hard to maintain the Marketplace as a delightful ‘place’ to go as it was to create it."36

Although the number of tourists remained constant in Boston during this period, their spending waned and Marketplace retail sales flattened. Many shops at the Marketplace faced serious competition from sleeker suburban shopping malls built during the boom years of the 1980s. This worsening of retail sales and suburban competition caused vacancies at the Marketplace to increase.

The Boston Sunday Herald wrote, "And the quirky, enchanting character of the place—a delightful Boston blend of eccentric goods and unique services—has been flattened. Quincy Market is turning into Anywhere—There’s A-Warner-Brothers-Store-USA. It was once the jewel of urban redevelopment when Rouse restored the granite marketplace during the Kevin White glory days. The posh, grand opening of Quincy Market became a national event carried on network television. Now the place that once epitomized prosperous pride and optimism has become a ratty tourist trap of bad restaurants, cookie-cutter mall stores and crime after dark."37

Between 1993 and 1995 the Rouse Company began to increase CAM fees without explanation and without justifying the increase. When these fees became
too costly for the smaller merchants, some were forced to leave and their space was rented to the regional and national chain stores typically seen in suburban malls and neighborhood shopping centers.

An intense acrimony again surfaced between the merchants and the Rouse Company. The Faneuil Hall Merchants Association claimed that the Maryland company had purposely forced out many small retail operators by ignoring the standards established by its now deceased founder, James Rouse.

The Rouse Company contended that shopping centers were always reinventing themselves and, by attracting the best and most unique tenants, the Marketplace could not sustain its expensive operating costs. The company claimed it was doing business with the best merchants, which included national chains, and “dismissed claims that smaller merchants were being systematically removed from the Marketplace, noting that 80 percent of the shops [were still] smaller businesses and locally owned.”38 The company also noted that “there [had] been 25 small shops added over the past three years, all with local owners who maintain[ed] only a Faneuil Marketplace store,” and that “statistics also reveal that 81 percent of the stores would fall into the category ‘small’ while just 19 percent are run by large, national operations. On a square footage basis, 54 percent of the space is occupied by the small stores, while 46 percent is run by the national behemoths.”39

By 1996 the Boston mayor’s office found itself in the middle of this fingerpointing between the merchants and the Rouse Company. As a result, members of the FHMA met with Mayor Thomas Menino, who in turn met with representatives of the Rouse Company. “For his [Menino’s] part, he would say only that he is concerned about the impact of large stores at the marketplace.”40 After meeting with the mayor, Rouse Company officials announced to the press that management would not displace any smaller merchants by renting to the larger stores. This was not enough to help the relationship between merchants and the Rouse Company.

Charges and countercharges reflected the deteriorating relationship between them. Unable to come to reasonable terms out of court, the FHMA filed a class-action lawsuit in federal district court against the Rouse Company, claiming that “the tenants accuse Rouse of systematically, secretly defrauding and gouging them by inflating fees for rent and maintenance. The lawsuit formalizes the frustration that merchants have felt for months and years.”41

The Rouse Company immediately filed a countersuit alleging that the mer-
chants weren’t abiding by the terms of their leases. “Beyond the lawsuit itself, Faneuil Hall Marketplace has also been under fire of late for supposedly deterring away from its original concept of small, specialty stores and for catering more to a tourist audience than the local Bostonian. The advent of large conglomerates such as Warner Brothers Studio store and Victoria’s Secret has, critics claim, given Faneuil Hall Marketplace more of a mall atmosphere than the unique operation for which it is famous.”42

A year and a half passed before the Rouse Company named Joseph “Skip” Coppola to the position of vice president and general manager of Faneuil Hall Marketplace in May 1997. He was the third person to hold that title. By hiring Coppola, the Rouse Company took its first step in bettering relations with the Faneuil Hall Merchants Association and in improving the company’s corporate image within the city of Boston. Skip Coppola later said of this step on the part of the Rouse Company: “I was brought in with the primary objective of resolving a major lawsuit between certain tenants and the Rouse Company, which had been lingering since 1996. By 1999 the lawsuit was resolved and part of the resolution was that the Rouse Company would renovate Faneuil Hall Market in accordance with a scope of work which the city, the tenants, and the Rouse Company had mutually agreed upon. This renovation would end up costing close to $20 million. An additional agreement resulting from the resolution of the lawsuit was a commitment by the Rouse Company to target local merchants to lease rental space as it became available. This challenge was met with some success in the immediate aftermath of this agreement.”43

Before the lawsuit was settled, as a gesture of goodwill, in 1999 the Rouse Company began major renovations in a three-year building improvement campaign. After twenty years of demands put upon the market house, the need to modernize parts of the building was apparent. The wear and tear on the copper-clad dome, repairs required for the glass canopies, and the need to provide better handicap access in accordance with the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act44 were just a few of the all-too-obvious issues that needed to be addressed. Elevators were rebuilt, handicap accesses to restrooms were improved, and the colonnade became fully temperature-controlled for the first time in its 174-year history. Under architects D’Agostino Izzo Quirk, the building improvements entailed the restoration of the market house’s
granite facades (once again, the same Chelmsford quarries at Fletcher Granite Company provided the requisite white granite); the installation of new outside lighting and new outside planters, furniture, benches, and granite seating; a new signage and identity program; the use of new specialty pushcarts; the restoration of the colonnade’s market hall; and a complete restoration of the copper-topped dome. In addition, four new major restaurants were planned for a 2001 opening, including Cheers, the Boston establishment made famous by a popular 1980s television series of the same name.

“At that moment in time, the Marketplace was positioned to implement a program which was intended to accomplish specific objectives agreed to by both merchants and the Rouse Company. The resolution of the longstanding lawsuit with certain tenants and a recent agreement with the tenants and the city on the much-needed renovation were the springboards from which we moved forward. The physical renovation in conjunction with the re-merchandising of the Marketplace, which had as its primary objective the upgrading of the restaurants in an effort to attract ‘the locals,’ progressed on schedule. Upon completion of this program, Faneuil Hall Marketplace was positioned to reconnect with the community at large while maintaining its position as the number-one tourist attraction in Boston.”

By the end of 1999 the copper sheathing of the market house dome was fully restored to its original appearance for the first time in its long history. The old copper sheathing was entirely stripped and the dome was clad with new copper provided by Paul Revere Copper, a company that dated back to its American patriot namesake. According to Peter “Pete” Leyden, project supervisor for Walsh Brothers Construction Company, which was overseeing the dome restoration, laser-guided levels were required to align the copper sheathing to its original contoured wooden planking. The exterior planking was still tight to the weather. And it was noted that the supposition about where the laminated supporting ribs for the dome had been assembled in 1825–1826 was correct: They had clearly been assembled on the ground, probably by shipbuilders of that era, and then hoisted into place. Other historical evidence was also noted: traces of smoke damage from the 1925 fire; wooden-beam reinforcement from the 1935 repairs; and the steel I-beams that had been inserted during the 1976 renovation.

Pete Leyden pointed out that, over the years since 1826, the weight of the elliptical dome had pushed out the pavilion’s exterior granite support walls by an aver-
age of four inches. The 1976 steel I-beam insertions, however, had compensated for this by fortifying the octagonal base with steel.

The space between the inner and outer domes was in remarkably good condition—there was no graffiti, no debris, no evidence of vandalism, despite all the years it had been left derelict. Work on the dome also revealed some historical data: the name J. Emery was neatly carved into the side of one of the laminated beams but it was undated. This same name was found listed in the ledger kept by the Committee on the Extension of Faneuil Hall between 1824 and 1826, with the indication that he had been paid $107.00 for his “bill of freight of lumber,” on September 14, 1825.47

After being reopened to the public for twenty-five years, the market house was designated an individual Boston landmark by the Boston Landmarks Commission.
Although Faneuil Hall Market was already listed on the National Historic Register, the city landmark status gave the market house additional protection by the city against future redevelopment that would alter its exterior. Any future redevelopment proposals would first have to be approved by the Boston Landmark Commission. Never again would “Quincy’s Market” be threatened with extinction.

In January 2001 Michael Kelleher replaced Joseph “Skip” Coppola as the fourth vice president and general manager of Faneuil Hall Marketplace. Kelleher’s immediate goal was to restore the Marketplace to the Boston Mecca it had been in the late 1970s. His retail-leasing strategy was to accommodate those local merchants who offered their own unique inventory. Additionally, he increased the seating capacity around the Marketplace by 125 percent and the lighting by 75 percent, and installed signage throughout the complex that would both enhance the complex and assist visitors. “The Marketplace had . . . lost some share of the downtown Boston office market during the recession,” Kelleher later explained, “and I was determined to recapture that share as another means of enhancing the local atmosphere around the complex.”

By spring of 2001 visible changes were evident. The new copper dome, the extensive landscaping and exterior seating, and the introduction of signage identifying parts of the complex were finally completed. New retail tenants and restaurants began opening, such as Rustic Kitchen, McCormick and Schmick’s Seafood Restaurant, Ned Devine’s Irish Pub, Local Charm, Head Games, Pinang, Jazz Café, Zoinks!, and the Bostonian Society’s Historical Museum Store. Kelleher later said of these results of his initial efforts, “It was good to see that the Marketplace was finally evolving back to what the Rouse Company had intended in 1976, but there is still much more to do in the near future. When the Central Artery is finally removed I plan to make sure that the Marketplace effectively interacts with the new recreational parks and other new waterfront attractions. My challenge will be to return Faneuil Hall Marketplace back to where it was [socially] located once before, back to the Boston waterfront where history, excitement, and enjoyment interact within this great area, in this great city of Boston.”

By the time Faneuil Hall Marketplace celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary during the summer of 2001, Warner Brothers, Waterstone’s Booksellers, the Disney Store, and other large retailers were gone or were scheduled to close. As part of its
commitment to the Boston community, the Rouse Company pledged to restore the
caliber of merchants that had existed when the Faneuil Hall Marketplace was first
reopened. Positive changes around the Marketplace were evidence that, 175 years
after “Quincy’s Market” first opened its doors, Faneuil Hall Marketplace was ready
to serve as yet another marketplace for another Boston.
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