



New Strategic Plan to be Developed for John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site

DEAR FRIENDS,

Soon we will mark the 40th anniversary of the public opening of John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site (Kennedy NHS). On May 29, 1969, Rose Kennedy herself opened the doors of her son's birthplace as she gave this gift to the American people on what would have been his 52nd birthday.

As we observe this milestone, the National Park Service (NPS) is pleased to announce that we have received funding to prepare the first formal, strategic plan for the site. Our public is a key partner in this process. Together we will craft a vision for the site and a plan for its future that we will submit for official adoption by the Director of the NPS. The plan will guide the site for the next fifteen–twenty years.

A planning team of park managers, NPS planning staff, and consultants are preparing studies and gathering data. The plan will address many topics including preservation of the house and its contents, how best to serve the visitor, and how to engage most effectively with the Brookline community.

Your first opportunities for input into the planning process are coming up. Please join us at an **OPEN HOUSE on May 3** and at a **PUBLIC MEETING to discuss the STRATEGIC PLAN on May 6**. Details about these events can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

The NPS is honored to be the steward of this treasured site, the president's birthplace and home to Joseph and Rose Kennedy and their children from 1914–1920. We look forward to working with you to create a meaningful plan for its future.

Superintendent Myra F. Harrison



NPS/Peron

OPEN HOUSE

at John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site (NHS)

Sunday • May 3, 2009 • 2:00–4:00 PM

John Fitzgerald Kennedy NHS, 83 Beals Street, Brookline, MA

Learn about Kennedy NHS at an open house the Sunday before the public meeting. Tour the birthplace and meet park service experts who will answer your questions about the house museum, site archeology, the historic neighborhood, and the Kennedys in Brookline.

PUBLIC MEETING

John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site (NHS): Envisioning the Future: A Community Dialogue

Wednesday • May 6, 2009

Registration and Reception • 6:30 PM

Meeting • 7:00–9:00 PM

Edward Devotion School, 345 Harvard Street, Brookline, MA

Help plan the future for Kennedy NHS. After a brief presentation on the site and the planning process, we'll begin that process together: what are the "big picture" issues and objectives? Next we'll break into small groups to generate ideas for the plan. This will be an interesting and interactive evening and we look forward to seeing you there!

“We were very happy here, and although we did not know about the days ahead, we were enthusiastic and optimistic about the future.” —Rose Kennedy, 1969

The Kennedy Home at 83 Beals St.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site (NHS), located at 83 Beals Street, Brookline, MA, is the three-story, nine-room dwelling (c. 1909) into which Joseph P. and Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy moved immediately after their honeymoon in 1914 to establish their first family home. Here three of their first four children were born, including their second son who became President, and the family lived its earliest formative years.

A Gift to the American People

President Kennedy's birthplace was repurchased by the family in 1966 and established by federal law as a National Park Service site

Rose Kennedy with children Joseph, Rosemary, and John.



“When you hold your baby in your arms the first time and you think of all the things you can say and do to influence him, it's a tremendous responsibility. What you do with him and for him can influence not only him, but everyone he meets and not for a day or a month or a year but for time and eternity.” —Rose Kennedy, 1969

Rose Kennedy at the dedication of the national historic site in 1969.

in 1967. The house was restored to its remembered appearance in 1914–20 under the guidance of Rose Kennedy as a memorial to her son. Following restoration, the family donated the birthplace to the NPS, and it opened to the public in 1969.

A Treasured National Park

Remaining today with little change from the historic era, the Kennedy house, grounds, collections and the neighboring Brookline community allow us to experience the setting in which one of the nation's leading political families began their family life. Here we can explore the early influences

which helped to shape the character and ambitions of President Kennedy. When John Kennedy was three years old, his parents sold the house and moved to a larger residence nearby on Abbotsford Road, where they lived until 1927.

From May through September, the National Park Service presents guided tours of the house, with its display of household furnishings, photographs, and significant mementos personally collected by Mrs. Kennedy. Many pieces in the museum collection are original to the 1914–1920 historic period, reflecting the lifestyle and various interests of the Kennedy family.

A narrative audio tour produced by Mrs. Kennedy provides visitors with an evocative glimpse of family life in Brookline. Park Rangers offer tours of the nearby neighborhood which include stops at the second Kennedy home on Abbotsford Road, schools where the children studied, and Saint Aidan's Roman Catholic Church, where the family worshipped. Special educational programs are offered to local schools.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy NHS is located on less than .1 acre, and is jointly managed with the Frederick Law Olmsted NHS in Brookline and Longfellow NHS in Cambridge.

NPS seeks Public Input on Planning Issues for John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site

NPS/Perron



Kennedy NHS needs a strategic plan to address a range of questions and issues and to plan for long-term preservation of the historic resource while supporting visitor use, expanding useful partnerships, and remaining a responsible member of the Brookline community. The plan will include an evaluation of related environmental impacts.

A team comprised of staff of Kennedy NHS, NPS planners, and consultants is preparing the strategic plan. We invite you to an **open house on May 3**, and look forward to your input in the open

discussion forum of the **May 6 public meeting** and in subsequent months while the plan is being developed.

If you cannot attend the May 6 public meeting or the May 3 open house, you can send your ideas to: National Park Service, John F. Kennedy NHS, 83 Beals Street, Brookline, MA 02446 or through our website at www.nps.gov/jofi.

We would appreciate your sending us your email address at our website, so that we can more easily keep you informed about planning activities and other events.

Contemporary photo of the Front Hallway, John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site

PLANNING ISSUES FOR THE PUBLIC TO CONSIDER

In order to stimulate thinking, we offer a few suggested questions below. How would you address these issues? What other ideas should be considered?

Visitor Experience

- For some visitors, lack of parking is an obstacle, and we don't want to be a nuisance to neighbors. What are your ideas for how we can best balance this?
- The site is small, permitting only one tour at a time, twelve visitors per tour. This constraint, plus the lack of parking, makes it very difficult for tour groups to visit. What are your suggestions for how we might be able to serve larger groups of people without compromising the visitor experience or troubling the neighbors?
- We've received suggestions that the visitor experience would be greatly enhanced by a film about the site and by other exhibits, such as one exploring more about the

Kennedys' time in Brookline. But, as any visitor knows, the site does not have space for these things. Do you think a film and expanded exhibits would be beneficial, and if so, what are your ideas for how this might work?

- It has also been suggested that this site provide a "contemplative space." Do you think that this would be important? If so, how might it be achieved?

Historic Neighborhood

- A variety of other sites that were important to the Kennedy family are in the vicinity. How might we help visitors experience them without inconveniencing neighbors?
- Brookline residents and out-of-town visitors enjoy the historic ambiance of the Kennedy neighborhood. What are your thoughts about ways that this value can be balanced with the modern needs of the community?

Audiences

- A recent visitor survey showed that the Kennedy NHS has an unusually high percentage of foreign visitors, compared with other NPS sites. How can the Park best serve our international audience?

- How can we keep the birthplace legacy meaningful for those generations who have no personal memory of JFK?

Preservation

- How do we balance our need to protect this small house from wear-and-tear while encouraging people to experience it?

Partnerships & Public Outreach

- What would make this site a better member of the community?
- What organizations and institutions should the site be working with? To accomplish what? (e.g., with the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum we offer an annual conference on imaginative approaches to teaching history. Other ideas?)
- What are your thoughts about how we can leverage the site and its visitors to help support local businesses?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH for your interest in, and support of, the National Park Service and John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site. We look forward to many interesting and fruitful exchanges as we pursue this planning process together.

John F. Kennedy National Historic Site Strategic Plan Schedule

Organizing the Planning Process and Initial Research	2008
Public Outreach and Public Meeting	Spring 2009
Draft Plan Available to Public	2010
Public Meeting to Comment on Draft Plan	2010



courtesy John F. Kennedy Library Foundation

John and Joseph P. Kennedy at the Beals Street home,
Brookline, 1919.

This newsletter is a publication of the National Park Service, John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site, ©2009. For additional information please contact Superintendent, John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site, 83 Beals Street, Brookline, MA 02446, or call 617.566.1689 x216. Visit us on the web at www.nps.gov/jofi.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site
83 Beals Street
Brookline, MA 02446