

INTRODUCTION

On November 29, 1988, Keast & Hood Co. received a Request for Proposal from the Lehigh County Historical Society for an engineering study of the David O. Saylor Cement Industry Museum in Coplay, PA. Work proposed was to assess the need for immediate repairs to stabilize the structure and to develop a long term preservation plan.

The RFP called for a structural engineer and a mechanical engineer. Because of the nature of the project, it was our opinion that an architectural conservator was also needed.

Arrangements were made for an orientation visit to the site on December 9. Our team consisted of Neale Quenzel, of John Milner Associates, Carl Baumert, of Keast & Hood Co., and Herman Vinokur, of Vinokur-Pace Engineering Services, Inc. We met with Ms. Susan Haas, Assistant Director/Museums and Collections, of the Lehigh County Historical Society. Following our visit to the museum complex, we discussed the scope of work proposed, possible means for obtaining information, and available documentation. It was determined that funding for the study was limited.

Our collective proposal was submitted on December 23. Recognizing the funding constraints, we proposed that the study be conducted in two phases. The first encompassed immediate repairs to stabilize the structure, and the second was the development of a long term preservation plan. After a slight modification of the scope in Phase I to come within the available funding, that part of our proposal was accepted by Ms. Carol Wickkiser, Executive Director, on March 3, 1989.

A copy of drawings and specifications for the museum structure were furnished to us for reference and familiarization. These documents had been prepared by Bond Miller Seibert Ferreira Schlichting in October, 1975, and proved to be of much help in understanding the nature of the complex and its current state.

The David O. Saylor Cement Industry Museum is composed of nine Schoefer vertical brick kilns and the interconnecting concrete museum structure. The kilns were constructed in 1892 by the founder of the Portland cement industry in the United States, and continued in use by the Coplay Cement Co. into the 1970's. It is the only restored industrial site in this country devoted to the history of the cement industry. As such, it bears considerable national and international significance. The site is on the National Register of Historic Places.

We wish to acknowledge the cooperation and assistance extended to us by the following personnel of the Lehigh County Historical Society.

- Ms. Carol B. Wickkiser, Executive Director
- Ms. Susan D. Haas, Assistant Director/Museums and Collections
- Ms. Gloria McFadden, Collections Manager
- Ms. Janet Surrent, Curator of Collections

Partial funding for this project was provided by the Bureau for Historic Preservation, Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, utilizing grant-in-aid funds from the National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior. The contents and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, or the Commission, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior or the Commission.