



COLT PARK MASTER PLAN

(Image Courtesy of TO Design LLC)

Colt Park Improvements

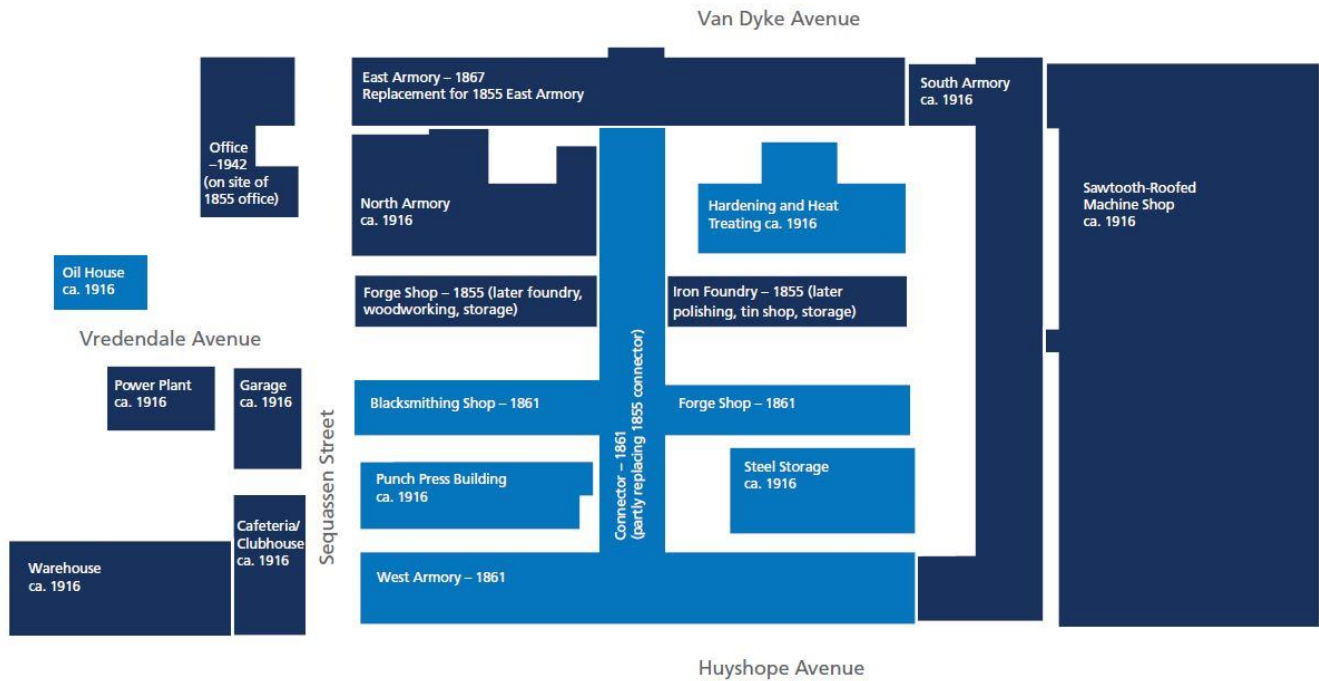
Over \$3.5 Million dollars in development are coming into Colt Park in the next few years.

Over the summer Congressman John Larson (CT-1) held a press conference announce the award of a National Park Service Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant of \$750,000 dollars, this will be matched by the State of Connecticut for a total of \$1.5 Million (Photo). The grant will rehabilitate highly used key softball and baseball fields as well as general improvements to many of the park fields, including construction of a new pavilion and completing the north walk. All of these improvements are in accordance with the Colt Park Master developed by local stakeholders and the Friends of Colt Park.

In addition to the LWCF grant, the renovations at Dillion Stadium are moving forward. This \$10 million dollar state project is being overseen by the Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA) and is planned to include \$2 million for Colt Park improvements. How these funds will be utilized and how much funding will be available has not been finalized. These two programs will bring the total Colt Park improvements to \$3.5 million.



(Photo Courtesy of Tom Swarr)



(Schematic plan of Colt Industrial buildings. Dark blue buildings are still standing; light blue buildings have been demolished. Some minor buildings are not shown. Image Courtesy of NPS)

North Armory Renovations

This summer, Colt Gateway LLC, the main developer of the Colt Amory Complex, began the final stages of the renovation of the historic district. The North Armory is the last structure to be refurbished. The five story building was originally constructed as part of a WWI expansion in 1916, which included many of the current buildings.

The restored building is planned to be a combination of 36 market rate apartments, one full floor of commercial tenants, and commercial space



(North Armory)

On the first floor to tie in to the future visitors center of Coltsville National Historical Park (NHP) and other local vendors like the Hooker Brewery, Tom & Sam's Café, and the London Café.

Colt Gateway has been working on the renovation of the complex for years and will also be the generous donor of the two 1850's era brownstones, which will be the future site of the visitor's center for Coltsville NHP.



(North Armory under construction)

Colt Armory Fire

At 8:15am on the morning of Friday February 4, 1864 a fire was discovered in the attic of the East Building of the Colts Factory, near the main driving pulley for the machines. Workman tried to extinguish the fire and the fire department attempted to put it out but had problems with their water supply. The fire continued to spread, and by 9:00am the East Building was completely aflame. The widow Mrs. Colt arrived by this time and watched in horror as the Onion Dome caved into the burning building. The fire occurred during the middle of the Civil War, when the factory was running two shifts of 1500 employees. The cost of damage from the fire was estimated at \$1,250,000. Samuel Colt had not believed in insurance and never insured the factory.



(Colt factory after the fire in 1864)

Fortunately his wife Elizabeth did insure the factory after Samuel's death, and thus received funds to cover approximately a third of the loss. The burned East Building was replaced with a new "fireproof" four story building, complete with an Onion Dome.

The cause of the fire was never established. As it occurred during the Civil War, one theory has sabotage, but there was never any evidence and mill fires were common at the time.



(Rebuilt Colt factory in 1876)

Status of the National Park

The staff of Coltsville NHP are working diligently on the land transfer of the two 1850's era brownstones. This is the final barrier to the park's establishment. With the North Armory project proceeding at the armory campus, Colt Gateway has been able to reinforce their efforts in the donation. The process continues to be technical and complex, but progress is noticeable. The timing is fortuitous with the potential passing of the Restore our National Parks Act, which could see \$6.5 billion dollars going into park infrastructure over the coming years. The park staff are hopeful Coltsville will qualify for some of this funding to restore the buildings.



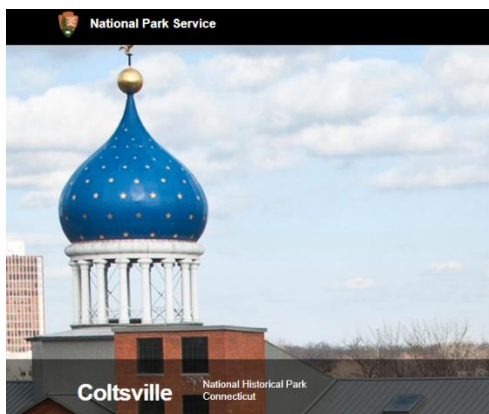
Keith Farrar, Acting Superintendent

Acting Superintendent



Superintendent James Woolsey transferred to Great Basin National Park in July. Mr. Keith Farrar has assumed leadership as the Acting Superintendent for Springfield Armory National Historic Site and Coltsville National Historical Park. Mr. Farrar is the Deputy Superintendent at the Delaware Water Gap National Recreational Area, a 70,000 acre park with a staff of over a 100 employees. He has also held positions at the New River Gorge National River and the Lassen Volcanic Park. Prior to joining the park service, Mr. Farrar has a strong background in the private sector and the military. Mr. Farrar's military experience includes Commander of the 1159th Medical Company (15 Black Hawk air ambulances) of the New Hampshire Army National Guard, Port Operations Officer for the US Coast Guard Reserve, and pilot in the US Army. Mr. Farrar has received numerous awards for his service, including the Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal and Air Medal. Mr. Farrar is a 1984 graduate of the University of Maryland. Mr. Farrar indicated that he is "excited about the opportunity to help establish Coltsville National Historical Park" and he "hopes that his project management and construction background will facilitate the next steps in the process".

Contact Us



Andrew Long

Management Assistant, Coltsville National Historical Park
Andrew_Long@nps.gov
413-271-3972

Keith Farrar

Acting Superintendent, Coltsville National Historical Park
Keith_Farrar@nps.gov
413-271-3980