

Worcester Auditorium opens doors; city seeking developers



Courtesy David DuBois

The Auditorium has hosted acts such as Prince and Jay Z.

By Sam Bonacci

In a push to spur redevelopment of the Worcester Auditorium, the city and Preservation Worcester will open the moth-balled building's doors this August to tours.

"The more people get into it and see how beautiful it is and dreaming about possibilities for it, the more likely something positive is going to happen there," said Deborah Packard, the director of Preservation Worcester, which will organize tours of the building in Lincoln Square this August along with the city.

The official tours mark a rare experience for the general public to get to tour the historic building, Packard said. In 2013, Preservation Worcester hosted its annual Ichabod Ball event that drew more than 500 people to the building; and the facility has hosted photo tours, but large openings to the public have not occurred. However, for the first three Sundays in August from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m., the organization will host tours of the auditorium that has hosted such big names as Jay Z, Stevie Wonder and Prince.

The building represents the final historical property in a trio that the city wanted redeveloped in Lincoln Square. Plans have been announced for the Worcester Courthouse

and the former Ionic Avenue Boys and Girls Club. The city has a request for interest out for the auditorium property in an effort to get developers.

"The city is really interested in getting the property into the hands of someone else who will bring new life into it," Packard said.

Both she and Preservation Worcester are open to a number of different re-uses but hope at least a portion of the historic property remains open to the public to enjoy.