



City of Newton, Massachusetts  
Community Preservation Committee



David B. Cohen  
Mayor

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Board of Aldermen  
FROM: Community Preservation Committee  
DATE: 30 March 2005  
RE: **CPC Recommendation For CPA Funding**

**PROJECT TITLE:** War Memorial Stair Restoration (Design/Study)  
**CPA PROJECT ID:** CPA-FY05-9  
**CPA CATEGORY:** Historic Preservation

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The applicants, the Commissioner of Public Buildings and the Newton Public Buildings Preservation Task Force, request \$19,250 to secure the services of a structural engineer and a restoration consulting company with expertise in stone restoration and treatment. These services are needed to prepare construction documents for the necessary repairs to the monumental entrance staircase of the Newton War Memorial, located at City Hall. Completed in 1932 along with City Hall as part of an Olmsted-designed landscape, the War Memorial pays tribute to all of Newton's sons and daughters who have dutifully served our nation in times of crisis.

In submitting this proposal, the applicants expressed the hope that by combining this project with the Civil War Monument design/study project the total cost might be reduced by as much as \$5K each.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the CPC recommends allocating \$15,000 for the services described above. If this design work is funded, the applicants plan to submit an application in FY06 for implementation of the necessary repairs. The CPC would consider such an application independently at that time.

**FINDINGS**

**Community Preservation Act (MGL c.44B)**

Historic Preservation

MGL c.44B defines an **historic resource** as "a building...that is listed or eligible for listing on the state register of historic places or has been determined by the local historic preservation commission to be significant..." Newton's City Hall and its grounds, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, are listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places. As part of City Hall, the Newton War Memorial is also listed. A building listed on the National Register is automatically listed on the state register.

In accordance with §5(b)(2), the proposed designs would provide a scope of work to **preserve** and **restore** the entrance staircase to the Newton War Memorial. Conducting such a study complies with the *US Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, Standards for Preservation*. Standard #6 states "The existing condition of historic features will be evaluated to determine the appropriate level of intervention needed..." The scope of work is expected to include disassembly and rebuilding of the piers at the bottom of the stairs along with the last five or six steps. In so doing, the condition of the underlying structure

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<sup>1</sup> Proposals for both the Civil War Monument Restoration and the War Memorial Stair Restoration call for the services of a structural engineer as well as a stone conservator. Performing the required tasks of these projects in conjunction with one another will result in a reduced total cost for the combined projects, as stated by the applicants.

and supports can be examined and repaired as necessary. Additionally, repointing of the stair's lower portion will take place, with spot pointing of the entire stair structure completed as necessary.

### Newton Community Preservation Plan

#### Overarching Goals

1. Contribute to the preservation of Newton's unique character, boost the vitality of the community and enhance the quality of life for its residents.	Yes
2. Serve more than one CPA category.	No
3. Demonstrate the highest cost/benefit value relative to other proposals.	See below
4. Leverage other public and/or private funds.	See below
5. Preserve a resource or opportunity that would otherwise be lost.	Yes
6. Create incentives for other private projects to occur.	No
7. Show that a project is the most reasonable available option to achieve the objective.	Yes, see below
8. Demonstrate strong community support.	See below
9. Serve to equitably distribute CPA funds throughout the City.	Yes, see below

Additional comments on selected goals:

Goal 3: Projects received during the October funding round included a high CPA request of \$1,000,000 and a low CPA request of \$19,250. Since the CPC is recommending a reduced amount of funding for this project due to the cost-savings anticipated as described above, the CPA cost for this project is \$15,000. The relative benefit for this project is the preservation and restoration of the War Memorial Staircase, an element of the War Memorial at Newton's City Hall Complex. This property is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In terms of CPA cost related to all other historic preservation projects previously approved or currently in front of the Board of Aldermen, this project ranks 11<sup>th</sup> out of 13 total (of those historic preservation projects seeking funds for studies or designs, this project has the lowest cost along with the Civil War Monument project). The following table illustrates the comparative costs of historic preservation projects.

TABLE 1: CPA Project Costs (Historic Preservation)

<i>Project Name</i>	<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Total CPA Funds (for preservation portion only)</i>
Historic Burying Ground Restoration – Phase IIa	05	\$257,395
Newton Corner Library	03	\$236,129
Historic Burying Ground Restoration – Phase I	03	\$188,277
YMCA	05	\$160,273
City Hall – Balustrade	03	\$150,660
Washington Park Lighting	05	\$131,035
City Hall – Lighting	03	\$121,200
City Hall – Windows	03	\$119,400
248 Elliot Street/Linden Green	05	\$63,290
Brigham House – Phase I*	03	\$20,000
<b>War Memorial Stairs*</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>
Civil War Monument*	05	\$15,000
Historic District Signs	04	\$2,000

\*Denotes projects requesting CPA funds to conduct a study or produce design documents in preparation for a larger preservation project.

Goal 4: Although this portion of the project (the design/engineering portion) does not include matching funds, other funding will be sought in addition to CPA funding for the construction phase, as outlined in the conditions the CPC recommended (see conditions below).

Goal 7: Combining this design work with the applicants' request to prepare designs for the preservation of the Newton Civil War Monument will save considerable money, as the specialists required to create both designs are the same. As such, the proposal represents the most reasonable available option to achieve the goals described in the application.

Goal 8: At the 16 November 2004 Public Hearing held by the CPC, no objections were expressed. The Newton Public Buildings Preservation Task Force includes members from the general public representing the historic preservation interests of the community. Charged with identifying Newton's preservation priorities, a certain level of community support is implied in projects the Task Force earmarks for funding.

Goal 9: The FY05 applications include funding requests for projects in Nonantum, Newton Corner, West Newton, Newtonville, Newton Upper Falls, Newton Center, Newton Highlands and Waban, as well as city-wide projects. The Civil War Memorial is part of the City Hall Complex, located in Newton Centre.

#### Historic Preservation Goals

1. Support the preservation and restoration of privately-owned properties that are on the National or State Historic Registers, or that have been landmarked or found to be "preferably preserved" by the Newton Historical Commission.	No
2. Support the preservation and/or restoration of municipally-owned resources that are on the National or State Historic Registers, or that have been landmarked or found to be "preferably preserved" by the Newton Historical Commission.	Yes
3. Encourage protection of resources that retain their historic integrity, in terms of location, context, design, style, workmanship, and materials.	Yes
4. Enable access to the resource by the public.	See below
5. Support the objectives and priorities of local historic preservation organizations, such as the Newton Historical Society, the Jackson Homestead, local historic districts, and other such organizations within the City of Newton.	Yes, see below

Additional comments on selected goals:

Goal 4: The War Memorial is a public resource that is already open to the public. This project will result in design documents for the preservation and restoration of the War Memorial stairs, and therefore does not address issues of accessibility directly. Should the physical restoration occur at some point in the future, however, by definition it will further ensure public access to the resource as the stairs leading to the War Memorial will be able to withstand future use.

Goal 5: The Newton Public Buildings Preservation Task Force is comprised of individuals representing the interests and concerns of various historic preservation organizations throughout the City of Newton, including the Newton Historical Commission and the Newton History Museum. The Task Force has identified the War Memorial Stair restoration as the highest priority preservation project remaining for City Hall and the War Memorial.

#### **CPC RECOMMENDATION**

The proposal is consistent with the CPA criteria and many of the Plan's goals, as described above. Therefore, the Community Preservation Committee voted unanimously to recommend funding this application to support the preservation and restoration of the War Memorial Stair by appropriating and transferring \$15,000 to be expended under the direction and control of the Commissioner of Public Buildings for purposes of this project as detailed in the application (dated 15 October 2004), subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to submitting an application requesting CPA funds for the restoration project, a legally enforceable mechanism protecting the CPA investment must be in place (e.g., a Preservation Ordinance for City-owned properties that requires the Newton Historical Commission to approve all major alterations).
2. Consideration of CPA funds for the restoration project will require the demonstration of a good-faith effort on the part of the applicants to substantially leverage other funding sources.
3. Work shall commence no later than 31 December 2005 and shall be completed no later than 31 December 2006 or such other date(s) as may be approved in writing by the Director of Planning and Development. In the event of failure to meet the project start or completion dates as stated herein or as approved by the Director of Planning and Development, any remaining funds in the project account shall be returned to the Newton Community Preservation Fund.
4. The funding recipient shall submit a status report to the CPC on a quarterly basis that describes work that is complete, work remaining, expenditures, and target completion date.
5. Any portion of the grant not used for the purposes stated herein shall be returned to the Newton Community Preservation Fund.