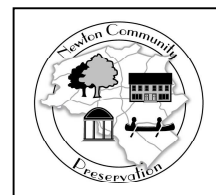




David B. Cohen
Mayor

**Newton, Massachusetts Community Preservation
Program
Fiscal 2010 FUNDING PROPOSAL**

Date
received:



Alice E. Ingerson, Community Preservation Program Manager
Newton Planning and Development Department
1000 Commonwealth Ave., Newton, MA 02459
aingerson@newtonma.gov 617.796.1144

Project CONTACTS

Newton Historical Commission
City of Newton
1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, MA 02459

*Brian Lever, Senior Preservation Planner
Planning and Development Department
City of Newton
1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, MA 02459
617-796-1129

**Project
TITLE**

Historic Building Design Guidelines

LOCATION

City-wide

**FUNDING
CATEGORIES**

*CHECK ALL
THAT APPLY.*

**COMMUNITY
HOUSING**

**X HISTORIC
RESOURCES**

**OPEN
SPACE**

RECREATION

BUDGET

CP FUNDS REQUESTED:

OTHER FUNDS TO BE USED:

TOTAL PROJECT COST:

ATTACH DETAIL
SEPARATELY.

\$55,000

\$55,000

SUMMARY

The Newton Historical Commission is proposing the creation of a set of detailed design guidelines intended to facilitate the preservation of Newton's historic buildings and assist residents as well as their contractors as they plan changes and/or additions to their historic homes. The proposed design guidelines booklet will build and expand upon previous efforts. It will identify the architectural styles in Newton and provide examples using photographs of actual Newton buildings. It will also clarify the project review submission requirements for the Historical /Historic District Commissions and include detailed examples of both historically appropriate and inappropriate submittals. Included with each architectural style will be a set of key features and preservation recommendations. By highlighting the design and detailing of the styles, it will serve to increase public awareness of the quality and diversity of Newton's historic homes and in turn assist in their preservation. The proposed guidelines booklet will contain general information that will be applicable citywide as recommendations only. It will also update and expand the existing guidelines for buildings and homes with historic preservation regulations such as properties within Newton's four local historic districts, City Landmarks, and properties with preservation restrictions. The proposed guidelines will be based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation.

A document, such as is being proposed here, will bring Newton into parity with other communities in terms of the quality and depth of information provided regarding the preservation and rehabilitation of historic buildings. We anticipate these guidelines also being useful to other organizations including the Urban Design Commission when reviewing projects. When completed, they will be posted on the City website and copies placed at the Newton Free Library and the Newton History Museum.

Products will include 1,000 hardcopies of the design guidelines booklet, available free to the public and a digital editable version of the guidelines for the City website and future printing. At present there are over 800 properties in Newton with historic preservation regulations on them, hardcopies will be available for each owner and other interested parties. A consultant under contract with the City will create the design guidelines booklet working with the historic commissions, Alderman, and Planning Department staff. It is anticipated that the project will take one calendar year to complete.

1. HOW WILL CP FUNDS BE USED?	Check all that apply.	COMMUNITY HOUSING	HISTORIC RESOURCES	OPEN SPACE	RECREATION LAND
	acquire				
create			NOT ALLOWED		
allowed IF resource was acquired or created with CP funds	preserve		X		
	support		NOT ALLOWED	NOT ALLOWED	NOT ALLOWED
	rehabilitate/restore				

2. CITYWIDE NEEDS:

[Goal] 5: Promoting the Broader Use of History in Planning & Development

Planning with and for history requires making history a useful and useable tool for all City departments, as well as all nonprofit and for-profit organizations, involved in planning and development. Newton Comprehensive Plan, Cultural Resources, pages 9-16.

Referring to the outdated design guidelines:

“It is recommended that these Guidelines be made widely available to the public, perhaps in the form of an updated, compiled volume so that property owners will have the collection of resources to consult in any rehab project they may take on....Copies of the updated versions of these materials should be made available to the Newton Planning Department, the Newton Housing Rehab Fund, the Newton Public Library, the Jackson Homestead, the Chestnut Hill and Upper Falls Historic Districts and all other organizations/agencies that would be able to distribute them to Newton residents.” City of Newton Preliminary Historic Preservation Plan 2002, page 53.

Existing Comprehensive and Historic Preservation Plans support the use and expansion of design guidelines as preservation tools. The Historic Preservation Plan specifically calls out the need for updated guidelines. It is anticipated that this project will address the needs discussed and be a valuable preservation tool for future planning and development.

3. OTHER FUNDING:

The Newton Historical Commission has no funds with which to provide matching funds or defray a portion of the project cost, but members do intend to volunteer their professional expertise in architecture and building design. We ask that this donation of time be considered in the application review in lieu of monetary funds.

4. STEWARDSHIP:

This project is intended to be editable and updated over time in order to maintain its effectiveness. The Newton Historical Commission will engage in a review process of the guidelines on a biennial basis. As the City will own and retain authorship of the guidelines, it is anticipated that updating them will incur a minor cost of volunteer time.

5. COMMUNITY CONTACTS:

Michael Kruse, Director Planning and Development Department	617-796-1130
Donald Lang, Newton Historical Commission	617-969-8400
Zack Blake, Newton Historical Commission	978-337-8287
David Morton, Newton Historical Commission	617-512-2902

Letters of support have been received or are expected from:

- Auburndale Historic District Commission
- Newton Upper Falls Historic District Commission
- Newtonville Historic District Commission
- Urban Design Commission
- Chestnut Hill Historic District Commission
- Newton Historical Society

Draft Project TIMELINE

Project TITLE: Historic Building Design Guidelines				
STEPS	ASSISTANCE REQUIRED	START	COMPLETE	COST
1 Draft RFP	Consult with Purchasing Department regarding City bid process. Planning Department and Newton Historical Commission assistance for review.	Winter 2009	Spring 2010	Some volunteer time and 5,000 total worth of staff time for project management.
2 Issue RFP and award project	Consult with Purchasing Department regarding City bid process. Planning Department assistance for review. The Planning Department, Newton Historical Commission, Law Department and the Purchasing Department will approve the contract for the consultant.	Spring 2010	Spring 2010	Some staff and volunteer time.
3 Monitor consultant(s) progress	Planning Department and Newton Historical Commission assistance.	Summer 2010	Summer 2010	Some staff and volunteer time.
4 Review draft guidelines provide comments for revisions	Planning Department, Newton Historical Commission, and historic district commissions assistance for review and comments.	Fall 2010	Fall 2010	Some staff and volunteer time.
5 Accept final guidelines	Planning Department, Newton Historical Commission, and historic district commissions assistance for review and comments.	Winter 2010	Winter 2010	Some staff and volunteer time.

ATTACHMENT A: Budget

Historic Buildings Design Guidelines	
PROJECT BUDGET	
<i>USES</i>	<i>SOURCES</i>
	CPA grant
Preservation consultant fee, includes drafting guidelines, photography, graphic design of booklet, and printing costs.	\$50,000
Planning staff project management	\$5,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$55,000

ATTACHMENT B: Project Manager's Qualifications

Brian Lever

City of Newton
Senior Preservation Planner

Newton, MA
2007-present

Mr. Lever has nine years of experience in historic preservation including assessing effects to historic resources by federal and state permitted construction projects, documenting historical sites and structures, as well as archaeological excavation. Mr. Lever has also engaged in surveys of historic resources and completed National Register nominations.

Education:

Harvard University
Graduate Student, Extension School, Master of Liberal Arts Anthropology/Archaeology

University of Connecticut
Master of Arts, 2002, American History

University of Massachusetts
Bachelor of Arts, 2000, History
Bachelor of Arts, 2000, Anthropology

ATTACHMENT C: Historic Resources Checklist

The proposed project involves generating guidelines for historic buildings. Newton has at present one National Landmark (Fessenden House), 152 properties individually listed in the National Register, and approximately 1,600 properties in 35 National Register Districts. National Register listing is recognition of a property's historic significance, but provides no protection from alterations made by private property owners. While some of these properties are located in Newton's four local historic districts or have other historic preservation regulations placed on them, many have little or no protection from alterations. Those properties with restrictions also benefit from the expertise of the City staff and Commissions that oversee exterior changes. For others, it is up to the property owners to preserve them and without technical preservation guidance or guidelines, this is a daunting task.

There is no doubt that Newton has many historically significant buildings and the proposed guidelines will identify their key features as well as appropriate treatments. The proposed project seeks to identify historically appropriate and inappropriate changes to buildings using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards as a basis for review. We anticipate that the preservation of Newton's historic buildings will be greatly aided by the technical guidance within the proposed design guidelines. These guidelines will not only aid homeowners and design professionals, but also City staff and Commission members. They will provide consistent guidance for project review by historic commissions and alert property owners to the appropriateness of proposed changes before even applying for project review. Future CPA proposals will also benefit from these guidelines, as they will identify key features on historic buildings as well as appropriate treatments, which are required in the application process. The applicability of the guidelines will be based upon the level of review placed on the property. If the City maintains historic preservation review authority on the property, such as in a local historic district, the guidelines will be binding, but elsewhere they will only be recommendations. Even as recommendations, we anticipate that many homeowners and design professionals will benefit from the preservation guidance in the proposed guidelines.

ATTACHMENT D: Letters of Support, following this page

Dear Dr. Ingerson;

I am writing to you in support of the creation of new, updated design guidelines for Newton historic buildings and districts.

I have found that the Auburndale Historic District Commission has struggled at times with setting the direction for appropriate changes on certain types of projects: such as energy conservation measures, new building styles, or changes to heavily modified buildings, among others. While we have benefited from both the participation of a number of experienced commissioners, as well as the membership of some new but knowledgeable real estate professionals, additional guidance would still be welcome.

I believe that such a document would not only be of benefit to the various commissions but could also be a tool for the general public. It might save them time in design and pricing, reduce the uncertainty and anxiety of public hearings, and should thereby encourage the suitable preservation of our historic heritage.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely

Italo S. Visco
Chairman, Auburndale Historic District Commission

16 September, 2009

Dr. A. Ingerson
Newton City Hall
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton, MA 02159

Re: Newton Historic District Design Guidelines

Dear Ms. Ingerson:

I am writing to encourage you to support the effort to create new Design Guidelines for Newton's local historic districts.

As Chairman of the Newton Upper Falls Historic District Commission for the past four years there have been numerous instances where it would have been useful to have a document that elaborated the general goals of Newton's historic preservation as well as specific guidelines on the following issues:

- Vinyl Windows/Energy Conservation: We have had a large number of requests to replace existing single glazed wood windows with new double glazed vinyl windows. We have generally encouraged these applicants to look at other alternatives like refurbishing their existing windows or new clad wood windows. However, these alternatives have generally proved to be considerably more expensive and less energy saving than the vinyl windows. Also, in some cases, the sightlines for the vinyl windows more closely mimicked the existing wood windows than the new wood window alternatives.
- Solar Panels/Energy Conservation: This particular request has not yet come before our commission but I am certain that it will at some point in the future. As you know these panels have to face the sun and in many cases that means that the panels will probably be visible from a public way. Clearly solar panels are contrary to historic accuracy. Should energy conservation trump historic preservation?
- Direct TV Discs: Similar to solar panels these objects require a direct line of sight to a satellite. This means they cannot always be placed on the back of the house or in a place that is not visible from a public way. A local historic district, in order to continue in existence, has to have the support of the property owners within the district; if we start limiting the rights of people to embrace new technology will we eventually lose the support of those we are trying to help?
- Lesser of Two Evils: Recently we had an elderly couple on fixed income who wanted to re-clad their house with vinyl siding. The current siding on the house was asbestos siding and was not original to the house. The cost of removing the asbestos (a hazardous material) was prohibitive. We typically do not approve applications requesting the use vinyl siding but in this case we did approve a Certificate of Hardship in part because of the financial burden but also in part because we believed the vinyl siding would actually be a visual improvement over the asbestos siding.
- Storm Windows and Storm Doors: As currently written these items are excluded from review by the Newton Historic District Ordinance. As these items frequently obscure the windows or doors behind them I am not sure why we spend so much time trying to get residents to buy replacement window/doors that are more historically accurate. In terms of appearance are aluminum storm windows and doors any more historically accurate than vinyl windows?
- Incongruity vs. Historic Accuracy: We have had a least one request by an applicant to allow the use of vinyl windows because a portion of his house already had vinyl windows and he wanted all the windows in the house to look the same. Does historic accuracy trump incongruity?

I would like to know how other Newton district commissions have dealt with some of the same issues. I believe a document with more specific Design Guidelines would help to achieve more consistent actions between districts and thereby help Newton to achieve a more consistent approach to historic preservation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
Lawrence C. Schwirian
Chairman, Newton Upper Falls Historic District Commission

cc. Katy Holmes

To: Members of the Community Preservation Committee

City of Newton

From: Newtonville Historic District Commission

Date: 1 October 2009

Subject: Historic Buildings Design Guidelines CPA Application

The Newtonville Historic District Commission would like to express enthusiastic endorsement for the proposed CPA project "Historic Buildings Design Guidelines" for the City of Newton. We understand that creation of the Historic Building Design Guidelines will be funded through monies supplied via the Community Preservation Act, and this Commission feels this is an excellent allocation of Newton's CPA funds.

The creation of the Historic Buildings Design will benefit the homeowners and the Historic Commissions of the City of Newton. Homeowners are in need of more descriptive guidelines for the preservation of their homes to help preserve the diverse nature of Newton's architecture. The Newton Historical Commission and all Historic District Commissions will benefit from the existence of Guidelines that (a) provide detailed preservation guidelines to assist the applicants in planning their submissions to the Commissions and (b) facilitate the discussion and decisions during Commission meetings.

Thank you for your consideration of the Historic Buildings Design Guidelines application.



David B. Cohen
Mayor

CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Urban Design Commission

Telephone
(617)-796-1120

TDD/TTY
(617) 796-1089

Fax
(617) 796-1142

E-mail
bsolomon-schwartz@newtonma.gov

To the Members of the Newton Community Preservation Committee:

The mission of the Newton Urban Design Commission is to foster “the preservation, improvement and development of the physical environment of the city” as specified in the Newton City Ordinances. We are writing to support the CPA application of the Newton Historical Commission for the creation of a set of design guidelines for pertaining to historic buildings within the City. The guidelines are intended to promote the preservation of historic buildings by assisting City residents as they plan to modify or add to their historic homes. Rather than instituting an additional review process, these guidelines will provide information that helps residents improve their own projects.

It is evident that much of the character of the City of Newton derives from the historic character of its neighborhoods. We support guidelines that will reinforce these unique neighborhoods by providing information to people considering making changes to their properties or their homes.

The Urban Design Commission supports guidelines that will support the vibrancy of our historic village centers and the important role they play within the Newton community. The streetscapes in and around our village centers have a special character rooted in the era they were developed. There is continual danger in this character eroding due to developments that are not compatible with their historic context. Design guidelines will minimize this danger by encouraging consistent and appropriate site layout, as well as complementary interfaces of developments with adjacent buildings. We recommend that the drafters of the guidelines take full advantage of city resources, such as documentary materials at the Newton History Museum.

We particularly support guidelines for design elements that we often examine, including signage, lighting, and façade design. These details matter greatly in creating environments that affirm the City’s historic character and support the quality of life for residents of and visitors to the City.

Once again, we strongly support the creation of historic design guidelines and recommend that the Community Preservation Committee approve this application. We welcome the opportunity to assist in this project in any way possible, and we are particularly interested in reviewing any drafts of the guidelines as they take shape.

Sincerely,

Rich Griffin, Chair
Jim Doolin
Michael Kaufman
Trudy Reilly