



City of Newton, Massachusetts
Community Preservation Committee

DOCKET
ITEM NO.

32-11

Setti D. Warren
 Mayor

FUNDING RECOMMENDATION

DATE: 25 January 2011, *summary budget corrected 1 March 2011*

TO: The Honorable Board of Aldermen

FROM: Community Preservation Committee

RE: **EARLY ARCHITECTURE SURVEY, 1830-1840**

PROJECT GOALS & ELIGIBILITY

In 2010, the Planning and Development Department received a Massachusetts Historical Commission grant to survey Newton buildings from before 1830. As they began this project, staff realized that many properties it was expected to cover actually dated from after 1830. The proposed additional survey will use CP funds to document these mis-dated properties, as well as others already dated from 1830-1840. Both surveys have comparable costs, because Newton has about the same number of surviving buildings from the period up to 1830 as from the "Early Industrial Period," from 1830 through 1840.

Historic resources are eligible for funding under the Community Preservation Act if they are listed on or eligible for the state and national registers of historic places, or if they are "determined by the local historic preservation commission to be significant in the history, archeology, architecture or culture of a city or town." The proposed survey will provide exactly the kind of information the Newton Historical Commission needs to determine which of the City's oldest buildings are truly significant.

Finally, under the CPA, preservation is always an allowable use of funds and is defined as "protection from injury, harm or destruction." Newton's pre-1840 buildings are at risk of harm or destruction partly because they are smaller, less elaborate, and more scattered than the newer buildings concentrated in the village centers shaped by railroad and streetcar networks after 1840. This project will support more informed official, public preservation decisions about Newton's oldest buildings, but may also encourage voluntary, private preservation simply by helping more people recognize and appreciate these buildings.

RECOMMENDED FUNDING

On 15 December 2010 the Community Preservation Committee voted 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 3 absent (W. Bernheimer, M. Clarke, S. Fauteux) to recommend that **\$37,500** be appropriated for this project, to the control of the Director of Planning and Development. All funds should be drawn from the historic resources reserve of the Community Preservation Fund and be allocated 100% as historic resources.

| Newton Early Architecture Surveys, Project Budget | |
|--|-----------------|
| USES (including inventory forms, project reports, photography & printing) | |
| Survey to 1830 (Planning staff) | \$27,833 |
| Survey 1830-1840, includes | |
| preservation consultant | \$35,000 |
| Planning staff (drafting consultant RFP & contract, project management) | \$2,500 |
| TOTAL | \$65,333 |
| SOURCES | |
| MHC Survey and Planning Grant (rec'd fy10) | \$16,700 |
| Planning Dept. operating budget -- for staff time (fy10) | \$11,133 |
| CP funds (requested fy11) | \$37,500 |
| TOTAL | \$65,333 |

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KEY OUTCOMES

The Community Preservation Committee will evaluate this project based on the key outcomes identified in the proposal itself:

1. Surveys and reports are completed with 18 months after the funds are appropriated.
2. The City's historical commissions and the CPC itself use project results, particularly as integrated into the City's online Geographic Information System (GIS), to map properties at risk; to respond proactively to those risks; and to inform their own regulatory and funding decisions about surveyed properties.
3. The public has access to project results through the city's online GIS, the Planning Dept., the files and public programs of the Newton History Museum/Jackson Homestead, and the online Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS, <http://mhc-macris.net>).
4. Any portion of the Community Preservation Fund grant not used for the purposes stated herein will be returned to the Newton Community Preservation Fund.

ATTACHMENTS

(delivered to the clerks of the Committee on Community Preservation and Finance Committee)

All of the following documents are also available from the webpage for this project, linked to www.newtonma.gov/cpa/projects.htm

| <i>attachment</i> | <i>starting page</i> |
|--|----------------------|
| proposal | 1 |
| letters of support/community ltrs | 7 |
| public hearing presentation (w photos) | 11 |

DETAILED FINDINGS on Relation to Current Funding Priorities

Newton Community Preservation Plan

The Planning Dept.'s ongoing and proposed surveys of Newton's earliest surviving buildings address the following *Community Preservation Funding Priorities* for fiscal 2010-12:

Overall

1. Integrate planning for CP Funds with other citywide plans, including the *Comprehensive Plan* and *Heritage Landscapes Report*.
2. Give priority to projects that use CP Funds to leverage other funds.

Historic Resources

1. Require proposals to apply federal preservation standards.

These surveys will provide the analysis of historic significance and identification of significant features required by the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* as the basis for all preservation, rehabilitation, or restoration decisions.

Newton Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 9: "Planning for and with History"

These surveys of Newton's historic architecture will also help planners and citizens achieve several goals in the City's *Comprehensive Plan*, particularly in Chapter 9, entitled "Planning for and with History." That chapter identifies several key actions that would help Newton not only preserve the physical evidence of its past, but use historical information to make proactive choices about change of all types across the City, including:

5. Develop new tools and training to encourage the broader use of historical information by all City staff, nonprofit, and for-profit organizations involved in planning and development.
6. Support more systematic use of local historic sites and resources in Newton Public Schools.

7. Explore options for using Newton's Geographic Information System (GIS) to track and evaluate change over time; in short, to support using historical information to manage change, rather than simply oppose it.

Memorandum 4, an appendix to that chapter, calls for a "**living map**" to track change in the City by including more accurate historical information in Newton's Geographic Information System (GIS).

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Like most such systems, Newton's GIS currently focuses on providing up-to-date information, rather than tracking change through time. If a house built in 1834 is demolished and replaced by a house built in 2004, data about the 2004 house simply replaces data about the 1834 house.

Improved historic survey data will enable planners and citizens to map demolitions and other changes not currently tracked and thus to formulate more proactive strategies for managing change in the City's historic fabric, rather than wait to react when particular individual buildings are threatened.

NOTE: The full *Comprehensive Plan* is linked to the Community Preservation Program website here:

www.newtonma.gov/cpa/program.htm.