



City of Newton, Massachusetts
Community Preservation Committee



MEMORANDUM

David B. Cohen
Mayor

TO: Honorable Board of Aldermen
FROM: Community Preservation Committee
DATE: February 16, 2006
RE: **CPC Recommendation for CPA Funding**

PROJECT TITLE: 248 Elliot Street Clapboard Restoration
CPA PROJECT ID: CPA-FY04-11
CPA CATEGORY: Historic Preservation
RECOMMENDED CPA FUNDING: \$43,600

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant, Citizens for Affordable Housing in Newton Development Organization, Inc. (CAN-DO), requests a total of \$43,600 to fund additional historic restoration on the previously funded CPA community housing and historic preservation project at 248 Elliot Street, also called Linden Green. The funds would be used to restore elements of the structure's façade, which was revealed during the project's deconstruction. Part of the original restoration plan called for replacement of the exterior shingles. After work began on the house, the architects discovered that a layer of clapboards lay beneath. Research was conducted with the Newton History Museum and it was discovered that some elements of the house were older than previously thought. In order to conduct proper historic preservation, CAN-DO requests additional funding to complete the work. The original \$63,290 estimate for historic preservation at the site is insufficient to complete the restoration. Both the Newton Upper Falls Historic Commission and the Newton Historical Commission support this application.

The scope of the additional restoration includes removing and disposing of existing cedar shingles. Beneath the shingles, the existing clapboard siding will be inspected, repaired and replaced. The structure's dormers will be properly flashed to the roof. The front porch ceiling will be replaced to match the uncovered beaded ceiling revealed on the side porch. Exterior doors will be upgraded to reflect the raised four-panel style of the original doors. Sections of the fieldstone foundation will also be examined for necessary cleaning, repointing and sealing of joints. The contractor is committed to the price of \$43,600 for this work. Altogether, this historic restoration would help make the 248 Elliot Street/Linden Green redevelopment more historically accurate.

FINDINGS/PROJECT EVALUATION

Community Preservation Act (MGL c.44B)

The project complies with §5(b)(2) allowing the CPA to fund the acquisition, preservation and *restoration* of historic resources. The house at 248 Elliot Street is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is located within the Upper Falls Historic District. It therefore meets the CPA's definition for historic resources, defined 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..." All properties listed on the National Register are also listed on the State Register.

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, see below |
| 6. Show that a project is the most reasonable available option to achieve the objective. | Yes |
| 7. Demonstrate strong community support. | See below |
| 8. Serve to equitably distribute CPA funds throughout the City. | Yes, see below |

Additional comments on selected goals:

Goal 3: The following table illustrates the comparative costs of historic preservation projects, excluding studies. The 248 Elliot Street Clapboard Restoration request is modest. The house was initially constructed in 1832 and has many features typical of its day, which cost more money than modern building materials to replace.

| <i>Project Name</i> | <i>Fiscal Year</i> | <i>Total CPA Funds (for preservation portion only)</i> |
|--|--------------------|--|
| Historic Burying Ground Restoration – Phase II | 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 | 05 | \$63,290 |
| 248 Elliot Street – Clapboard Restoration | 06 | \$43,600 |
| Millhouse Commons | 05 | \$41,653 |
| Historic District Signs | 04 | \$2,000 |

*Denotes projects requesting CPA funds to conduct a study in preparation for a larger preservation project.

Goal 4: The applicants have applied for a grant from HGTV for this restoration work. However, the grant program is extremely competitive, especially in New England. Any CPA funding will be reimbursed if the applicants win the HGTV grant.

Goal 5: The historic preservation work will ensure the building's long-term vitality and will add authenticity to the original project. The original project contained funding to replace the shingles laid over the clapboard. However, the original material of the structure was the clapboard. If the applicants do not receive additional funding, they cannot afford the additional preservation.

Goal 7: At a public hearing on the proposal, no public opposition was noted. The initial community housing and historic preservation project garnered support in many letters and in a neighborhood petition.

Goal 8: The FY06 applications include funding requests for projects in Nonantum, West Newton, Newtonville, Oak Hill, Newton Centre, Chestnut Hill, Newton Highlands, Auburndale, Newton Upper Falls as well as citywide

projects. 248 Elliot Street is located in Newton Upper Falls.

Historic Preservation Goals

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|---|----------------|
| 1. Support the preservation and/or restoration of municipally owned resources that are on the National or State Historic Registers, or that have been landmarked, found to be “preferably preserved” or historically significant by the Newton Historical Commission. | N/A |
| 2. Support the preservation and restoration of privately owned properties that are on the National or State Historic Registers, or that have been landmarked, found to be “preferably preserved” or historically significant by the Newton Historical Commission. | Yes |
| 3. Encourage protection of resources that retain their historical integrity, in terms of location, context, design, style, workmanship and materials. | Yes, see below |
| 4. Enable access to the resource by the public, including access by disabled residents. | No |
| 5. Support the objectives and priorities of local historic preservation organizations, such as the Newton Historical Society, the Newton History Museum, local historic districts and other such organizations within the City of Newton. | Yes, see below |
| 6. Where appropriate, address the issues and goals raised in the forthcoming Citywide Preservation Plan. | See below |

Additional comments on selected goals:

Goal 3: The house will retain its integrity of original character and materials. The context of the house as a contributing structure to the Upper Falls Historic District cannot be overlooked. Features such as the clapboard siding and beaded porch ceiling are significant to the style and design of the house and should be restored and preserved. The materials to be used in the restoration and the plans the restoration have been approved by the necessary historical commissions.

Goal 5: The Newton Historic Society and the Newton Upper Falls Historic District unanimously support this proposal.

Goal 6: The City’s Preservation Plan has not yet been finalized.

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 7-1, with Moss dissenting¹, to recommend funding this application to undertake additional historic preservation measures at 248 Elliot Street by appropriating and transferring the requested \$43,600 to be expended under the direction and control of the Director of Planning and Development for purposes historic restoration, subject to the following conditions:

1. The house shall have a historic preservation restriction placed on it in perpetuity to be enforced by the Newton Historical Commission. The Newton Historical Commission may choose to grant enforcement power to the Newton Upper Falls Historic District Commission.
2. The applicant is required to continue pursuit of the HGTV residential preservation grant. If the grant application is successful, CPA funding will be reduced to the full extent of any monies received from HGTV.
3. Promptly after substantial completion of the design work, the applicant shall submit to the Community Preservation Committee a final project development cost statement. Any portion of the grant not used for the purposes stated herein shall be returned to the Newton Community Preservation Fund.

¹ Moss stated that she does not believe CPA funds should be used to fund projects on private property.