

Appendix A – CPA Preliminary Proposal

[CPC Use Only]	Date Received: 10/22/24	Received By: Katie Berry	Assigned CPC #: 2026-9
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This form may be copied. Please type or print clearly, answer all questions, use "N/A" if not applicable. Use additional paper as needed.

1-A Applicant Information

Last Name: Theall	First Name: Aubrey
Organization(s)(as appropriate) Groton Historical Commission	

1-B Regional Project? YES NO If YES, Town/Organization:

2 Submission Date: 10/24/2024

3 Applicant Address

Street: 197 Maple Avenue	City: Groton	State: MA	Zip: 01450
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4 Phone: 617-314-5755 Email: aubreytheall@hotmail.com

5 CPA Purpose (Check all that apply)

Affordable Housing: <input type="checkbox"/>	Community Housing: <input type="checkbox"/>	Historic Preservation: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Open Space: <input type="checkbox"/>	Recreation: <input type="checkbox"/>	

As per MA General Law Chapter 44B, proposed historic projects that are not on the structures listed on the state's Registry of Historic Places require a determination by the Groton Historic Commission that the proposed project is of historic significance.

6 Project Address/Property Owner's Name: N/A

7 Project Name: Bancroft Castle Preservation Phase 2

8 Community Preservation Plan Objectives – Use codes from SECTION 5 to indicate all that apply

This project conforms with 5.12.
The Groton Historical Commission has made a prior formal determination as to the historical and architectural significance of the structure as part of Phase 1.

9 Proposal Basic Description

The Groton Historical Commission is seeking funding to repair and stabilize Bancroft's Castle on Gibbet Hill, based on a preservation plan funded by the CPC last year, to ensure its preservation into the future."

The "Castle" on Gibbet Hill, one of Groton's most recognizable landmarks, was created starting in 1904 for Gen. William Amos Bancroft, a Groton native who became president of the Boston Elevated Railway in 1899. It was intended to be the stables and carriage house for his Shawfieldmont estate, an adjunct to the mansion planned for the crest of the hill but never built. Despite its old-world appearance, the castle contained plumbing and electricity, and was built with modern formed concrete. In 1906, Bancroft had parts of the interior finished off to be used as a seasonal residence for his family.

Bancroft sold the property in 1912, and two years later, the castle found a new use as a long-term recovery hospital run by Dr. Harold W. Ayres, which focused on tuberculosis patients, and after a government contract in 1920, on World War I veterans. The hospital closed in 1928, and the next year, the property was rented to the elite Groton Hunt Club for use as their clubhouse. However, on the evening of July 4, 1930, trespassers on the property set off firecrackers, catching the castle on fire, and the wood portion of the structure was a total loss.

In 2000, Groton residents Steve and Nancy Webber purchased the castle along with Gibbet Hill to preserve it from development. In 2002, a conservation restriction and easement were placed on the property, which allowed the castle to be open to the public. Although minimal restoration was done to the ruins at the time they became accessible to the public, ongoing deterioration of the structure has continued for more than 90 years since the fire in 1930. As the site has become a popular attraction in North Central Massachusetts, the danger of both the site being further damaged and/or of someone being injured continues to grow. The dangers were most recently highlighted in the winter of 2022-2023, when a tree fell on and destabilized the northeast corner of the structure, which has been cordoned off for public safety.

Without intervention the remains will continue to deteriorate and eventually its significant features will be lost.


The Groton Historical Commission ("GHC") thanks to a FY24 grant by the CPC has engaged Cirrus Structural Engineering to assess the condition of and determine what reasonably and economically can be done to preserve the remaining structure. That preservation plan will be delivered before the end of calendar 2024.

The Historical Commission will also utilize this process as an opportunity to have the Castle inventoried in the Massachusetts Historical Commission's MACRIS system.

Initial Estimated CPA Cost

\$100,000

10 Signature

Applicant Signature: 	Date: 10/22/2024
Co-Applicant Signature:	Date:
Co-Applicant Signature:	Date: