

# Appendix B – CPA Project Application Proposal

[CPC Use Only]	Date Received: 2/26/2025	Received By: Micaela Moore	Assigned CPC #: 2026- 09
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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 Historic Commission	

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

2 Submission Date: 02/27/2025

## 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 Town Committee or Boards Participating: Groton Historic Commission

7 Project Address/Property Owner's Name: Gibbet Hill Farm, LLC

8 Project Name: Bancroft Castle Preservation Work

**9 Additional Responsible Parties (If applicable)**

Role (specify)	Name	Address	Phone	Email
Property/Site Owner	Gibbet Hill Farm, LLC	32 Birch Hill Road, Newton, MA 02465		webberjosh@hotmail.com
Project Manager	<b>Aubrey Theall</b>	197 Maple Avenue Groton, MA 01450	617-314-5755	aubreytheall@hotmail.com
Lead Architect				
Project Contractor	TBD (may be multiple)			
Project Consultants	Cirrus Structural Engineering	19 Lower Woodland Terrace Columbia CT 06237	800-337-0200	cirrus@cirruseng.com
Other: Legal	TBD			
Other:				

**10 As appropriate, indicate if proposal requires:**

P&S Agreement:  Deed:  Option Agreement:  Memorandum of Understanding:   
 Other:  Describe: Historic preservation restriction

**11-A** Assessor Info (Map/Block/Lot ID(s)): **116/3/1//**

**11-B** Tax Classification Type: **1320**

**12 Permits required:**

Zoning:  Historic Preservation:  Other:  Building Inspector Has Confirmed no Building Permit Required

**13** Historic Commission Approval Signoff (When Required): **Obtained** Date: **1/22/25**

**14-A** Project Cost: \$ **\$170,000** Estimate:  Professional Quote:

**14-B** Requested from CPC: \$ **153,000** **14-C** Committed from OTHER Source: \$ **17,000**

If applicable:

Annual Anticipated Total Income: \$	<b>N/A</b>
Annual Anticipated Total Expense: \$	
Anticipated Net Income (Loss): \$	
Name of Estimator/Company:	

15 CCP Objectives - Use CODES from Section 5 to indicate all that apply

5.1.2

16 Project Timelines

Proposed State Date: 7/1/25

Projected Complete Date: 12/31/26

17

Estimated Delivery Date of Completion Report to CPC: 12/31/26

18 Project Description and Explanation (Attach Additional Sheets as Needed)

See attached narrative project summary.

19 Feasibility

See attached for examples of similar masonry preservation projects that have been successfully completed with CPA funding.

20 List of Attachments

Narrative project summary  
Letters of support from the Webber Family, Town of Groton, Groton History Center, Destination Groton and the Groton Conservation Commission  
List of similar CPA funded projects  
Project budget estimates from Cirrus Structural Engineering

**21 Additional Information**

See narrative project summary.

**22 Management Plan**

See narrative project summary.

**23 Signature**

Applicant Signature: <i>Aubrey Theall</i>	Date: <i>2/27/2025</i>
Co-Applicant Signature:	Date:
Co-Applicant Signature:	Date:

## **Introduction:**

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 permanent conservation restriction and access easement was placed on the property, which allowed the castle ruin to be opened to the public.

Although minimal restoration was made 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 one of the most visited tourist attractions in North Central Massachusetts, the danger of both the site being further damaged by weather and time and of someone being injured by unstable portions of the structure continues to grow. A case in point is that during the winter of 2022-2023 an encroaching tree fell on and destabilized the northeast corner of the structure.

With the help of Fiscal Year 2024 Community Preservation Act funding the Groton Historical Commission engaged Cirrus Structural Engineering to conduct a structural analysis of the remains of the Castle and to make recommendations for preservation work that can reasonably and economically be undertaken to stabilize the structure and slow the rate of decay. This report now also provides a valuable snapshot in time that will allow us to monitor changes in the structure going forward.

This professional engineering study has confirmed that the state of the castle is such that there present condition of the remains of the structure pose a safety hazard to visitors.

## **Proposal:**

The Groton Historical Commission ("GHC"), partnering with Webber Family (property owner) and the entities that hold the conservation restrictions on the property (the Groton Conservation Commission and Massachusetts DEP), working with Cirrus Structural Engineering and a to be determined masonry conservation contractor, propose to complete the work recommended in the engineering analysis. Due to funding constraints it is proposed that this project will be split into two phases. The first will address the most urgent structural and public safety concerns. The second (to be completed in future years) would include less pressing safety concerns and also complete various preservation work that would help slow the rate of decay of the ruin. The Historical Commission will also utilize this process as an opportunity to have the Castle inventoried in the Massachusetts Historical Commission's MACRIS system and either a historic preservation restriction or a grant agreement with a clawback provision (more likely the latter, which has been confirmed acceptable by the Community Preservation Coalition) would be negotiated and filed at the Registry of Deeds. The Webber Family, Groton Conservation Commission and MA DEP have all indicated they are agreeable to this project.

### **Costs:**

As previously referenced the Historical Commission has worked with Cirrus Structural Engineering to prioritize the needs of the structure into three categories. The first are critical safety and structural integrity issues. The second category consists of items that are believed to be reasonable in cost that will extend the lifespan of the structure materially. The third are items that could be done but that aren't urgent and/or items that will just be monitored for deterioration going forward.

Cirrus Structural Engineering has estimated the cost of the first phase of the project is \$150,000, including contingencies. A copy of the estimated budget for both Phases I and II is attached.

There will additionally be a need to engage legal counsel to draft, negotiate and file the historic preservation restriction or grant/clawback agreement. A total of \$20,000 is estimated for legal work, filing fees and unanticipated (non-construction related) costs.

The total cost of the first phase of the project amounts to \$170,000. The Webber family has committed to cover 10% of the project cost (\$17,000), therefore, the CPA funding request is \$153,000.

### **Management Plan:**

GHC members Aubrey Theall (Chair) and Joshua Vollmar would work with Cirrus Structural Engineering with Cirrus who will serve as consultant throughout the project.

The approximate project timetable is as follows:

-Negotiation of a historic preservation restriction or a grant agreement with a clawback provision to be (either would be filed at the Registry of Deeds). Either has been confirmed acceptable by the Community Preservation Coalition. (complete by 9/30/25).

- Engineer (Cirrus Structural Engineering) develops bid specs (delivered by 11/1/25)
- Bid process (to be completed by 2/28/26)
- Construction work (to begin after the ground firms up in spring of 2026 and the project completed prior 8/31/26, ahead of the busy fall foliage season).

During the construction phase the site will need to be closed to visitors. The duration of that closure will not be known until the bid specs are developed and the bid process is complete. The work will be undertaken in late spring or summer as winter temperatures and soft spring ground conditions would impair the work required. The site is busiest in the fall and the schedule has been developed to avoid construction work during that time. Access to the site for construction will be via. existing farm road (the Webbers have confirmed it is traversable by truck and that they will permit its use) and not at the Lowell Rd. trailhead as this is a congested location.

### **Previous CPA funded projects:**

The Groton Historical Commission has successfully completed numerous CPA funded projects, a listing of which is attached as Exhibit A.

### **Conformance to CPA allowable spending chart:**

"Section 2 of the CPA legislation defines historic resources, preservation, and rehabilitation. Under CPA, an historic resource is defined as a building, structure, vessel, real property, document or artifact that is either:

- listed on the State Register of Historic Places; or
- determined by the local Historic Commission to be significant in the history, archeology, architecture, or culture of the city or town.

CPA funds may be spent on the acquisition, preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of historic resources."

The sponsorship of this application by the Historical Commission serves as its determination of historical significance of the structure. A formal vote of the Historical Commission indicating support of this project was taken on January 22, 2025.

### **Summary:**

The Bancroft Castle is a widely known, frequently visited and beloved piece of Groton's history that has deteriorated to the extent that the unstable structure now poses a real time public safety hazard for visitors. This Phase I proposal seeks funding (in cooperation with and partially funded by the Webber family) to mitigate that hazard to the extent reasonably possible.

Respectfully submitted:

**Aubrey Theall**, Chair, Groton Historical Commission

aubreytheall@hotmail.com

**Joshua Vollmar**, Groton Historical Commission

joshua.vollmar99@gmail.com



**Exhibit B (similar successful CPA projects)**

**Gloucester, MA- Hammond Castle, 3/12/24**

Restoration, sealing of masonry building façade to stop structural damage.

**Grafton, MA- Stone Arch Bridge, 5/14/07**

Repair and restoration of a stone arch bridge in North Grafton.

**Fall River, MA- Oak Grove Cemetery, 6/23/15**

Repair of masonry and ironwork, historic granite entry arch at cemetery.

**Fall River, MA- Bank Street Armory, 8/11/20**

Urgent masonry repair and vegetation removal.

**Salem, MA- Fort Pickering/Winter Island, 6/19/16**

Masonry restoration and vegetation removal.

**West Bridgewater- War Memorial Park, 6/13/11**

Masonry repair in War Memorial Park

## Budgetary Estimate for Initial Stabilization Project

PHASE 1	Urgency	Estimated Cost
N1. Remove Unstable Concrete Lintel - 1 location	1	\$1,000
N3. Northeast Corner - remove free, remove north window jamb, buttress ea	1	\$7,500
T2. Additional Lintel Support for Cracked in Concrete Lintels	1	\$10,000
T3. Pin Cracks in Stone Lintels	1	\$17,500
T8. Reset 2x loose band courses corner stones	1	\$5,000
S3. Stabilize Cracked Cantilever Concrete Hearth	1	\$7,500
S5. Remove Cracked Concrete Chimney Cap	1	\$3,000
A2. Garage Addition - Remove tree and Buttress Leaning Wall	1	\$5,000
<b>Subtotal Urgency 1</b>		<b>\$60,000</b>
Subtotal + 25%		\$75,000
Contractor OH and Profit, 25%		\$15,000
Contingency - unanticipated conditions, 20%		\$15,000
<b>Total Budgetary Construction Estimate w/ Contingency</b>		<b>\$105,000</b>
Consultant Fees - Bid Docs (Dwgs and Specs)		\$15,000
Consultant Fees - Bid Admin*		\$5,000
Consultant Fees - Construction Admin / Review*		\$7,500
<i>*note that these are rough estimates; can be refined or eliminated based on need</i>		
<b>Total Budgetary Consultant Fee Estimate</b>		<b>\$27,500</b>
<b>TOTAL PHASE ONE PROJECT COST ESTIMATE (Rounded)</b>		<b>\$150,000</b>

PHASE 2	Urgency	Estimated Cost
G1. Remove Vegetation along Walls	2	\$5,000
G2. Remove Trees within 10' of Walls	2	\$20,000
N4. Tighten Masonry and Add Mortar Wash on Tops of Walls	2	\$16,250
T4. Cracks in Stone Sills	2	\$3,750
T6. Provide mortar wash @ open window and door sills	2	\$5,250
T8. Cut and Point Stone Band Course at Base of Crenellations, Lead T-Caps	2	\$17,000
S1. Tighten Masonry and Add Mortar Wash on Tops of Walls	2	\$14,875
S2. Windowsills Unprotected / Empty Joist, Plate and Nailer Pockets (at forr	2	\$3,000
A1. Tighten Masonry and Add Mortar Wash on Tops of Walls	2	\$10,000
<b>Subtotal Urgency 2</b>		<b>\$100,000</b>
Subtotal + 25%		\$125,000
Contractor OH and Profit, 25%		\$25,000
Contingency - unanticipated conditions, 20%		\$20,000
<b>Total Budgetary Construction Estimate w/ Contingency</b>		<b>\$170,000</b>
Consultant Fees - Bid Docs (Dwgs and Specs)		\$5,000
Consultant Fees - Bid Admin*		\$5,000
Consultant Fees - Construction Admin / Review*		\$7,500
<i>*note that these are rough estimates; can be refined or eliminated based on need</i>		
<b>Total Budgetary Consultant Fee Estimate</b>		<b>\$17,500</b>
<b>TOTAL PHASE TWO PROJECT COST ESTIMATE (Rounded)</b>		<b>\$200,000</b>

## Budgetary Estimate for Longer-Term Preservation Project

	Urgency	Estimated Cost
N2. Vertical Cracks below Windows	3	-
T1. Cracks in Concrete and Stone in Chimney Breast	3	-
T5. Cracked / Damaged Cobblestone	3	-
T6. Empty Joist, Plate and Nailer Pockets (at former wood framing)	3	-
T7. Deteriorated Concrete Copings at Crenellations	3	-
S4. Loose Masonry in Chimney Boxes	3	-



## TOWN OF GROTON

173 Main Street  
Groton, Massachusetts 01450-1237  
Tel: (978) 448-1111  
Fax: (978) 448-1115

## Select Board

Alison S. Manugian, *Chair*  
Rebecca H. Pine, *Vice Chair*  
Peter S. Cunningham, *Clerk*  
John F. Reilly, *Member*  
Matthew F. Pisani, *Member*

**Town Manager**  
Mark W. Haddad

January 13, 2025

Groton Community Preservation Committee  
Groton Town Hall  
173 Main Street  
Groton, MA 01450

Dear Community Preservation Committee Members:

I am writing to express my strong support for the Historical Commission's application for funding from the Community Preservation Fund for important and essential preservation work on the Bancroft Castle located on Gibbet Hill. This historic landmark not only holds significant cultural and architectural value but also serves as an important attraction for visitors from across the region.

The castle is facing numerous public safety concerns due to its deteriorating condition. Addressing these issues is critical not only to protect the integrity of this historic structure but also to ensure the safety of the many individuals who come to explore and appreciate its beauty. The proposed preservation work will not only help to slow the rate of decay but will also enhance the overall visitor experience. By securing funding for this project, we can implement necessary repairs, improve accessibility, and create a safe environment for all who wish to enjoy the castle and its surroundings.

I urge you to support the Historical Commission's application for funding. This project will ensure that Bancroft Castle remains a cherished landmark for years to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mark W. Haddad  
Town Manager

MWH/rjb



Groton Conservation Commission  
Groton Town Hall  
Groton, MA 01450

January 15, 2025  
CPC# 2026-09

Members of the CPC-

Please accept this letter from the Groton Conservation Commission in support of the Historic Commission's CPC application, 'Bancroft Castle Preservation Work', for FY2026.

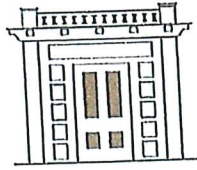
One of the most impressive and recognizable landmarks in the Town of Groton is Bancroft's Castle atop Gibbet Hill. The castle has a rich history dating back to 1904 and is enjoyed today by residents, photographers, bird-watchers, and history enthusiasts across the region. However, the castle is rapidly deteriorating and in need of restoration work to ensure that this historic landmark remains safe for recreation.

The Groton Conservation Commission is pleased to submit this Letter of Support for the Groton Historical Commission in favor of CPA funds to restore and preserve Bancroft's Castle and the surrounding site. We believe that restoration of Bancroft's Castle is a worthwhile and necessary investment of CPA funds, which will ultimately result in the preservation of a historic landmark for the Town of Groton for generations.

The commission unanimously supports the allocation of CPA funds to the Historic Commission for FY2026. This is clearly a worthwhile investment of CPA funds.

Thank you for your time and consideration.  
Sincerely,  
Groton Conservation Commission

*Bruce H. Eason*



GROTON HISTORY CENTER

*Learning our story*

January 14, 2025

Groton Community Preservation Committee,

On behalf of the Groton Historical Society Board of Directors I respectfully submit this letter confirming our full support to the Groton Historical Commission for their grant application to complete high priority masonry preservation work for Groton's Bancroft Castle.

The Castle is an important and frequently visited historic landmark on Gibbet Hill in Groton. Preservation of the structure is critical to allow for continued public access and to ensure that the structure is properly protected for future generations.

The Groton Historical Society enthusiastically supports this grant application to stabilize Bancroft Castle. We applaud the Historical Commission for their stewardship of this significant historic structure.

Sincerely,

Richard Chilcoat  
President



**Town Manager**  
Mark W. Haddad

## TOWN OF GROTON

173 Main Street  
Groton, Massachusetts 01450-1237  
Tel: (978) 448-1111  
Fax: (978) 448-1115

## Destination Groton Committee

Gregory M. Sheldon, *Chair*  
Jeff Gordon, *Vice Chair*  
Julie Platt, *Clerk*  
Joni Parker Roach, *Member*  
Brian Bolton, *Member*



January 15, 2025

Ms. Anna Eliot, Chair  
Community Preservation Committee  
173 Main Street  
Groton, MA 01450

Dear Chair Eliot and Community Preservation Committee Members:

At our January 15, 2025, meeting, the Destination Groton Committee voted unanimously to support the Groton Historical Commission's CPC request for \$325,000 to repair the Bancroft Castle. These funds would address three critical restoration and preservation challenges: tree and vegetation removal, masonry work, and structural reinforcement.

The Destination Groton Committee supports the Historical Commission's continuing efforts to showcase Groton's wonderful rich history in a remarkable landmark facility – the Bancroft Castle – right in the center of town, welcoming both residents and visitors alike.

Sincerely,

*Gregory M. Sheldon*

Gregory M. Sheldon  
Chair

February 24, 2025

The Groton Community Preservation Committee  
Groton Town Hall  
173 Main Street  
Groton, MA 01450

Attn: Preservation Committee

I am writing this letter in support of the proposal to use CPA funds to repair the "Bancroft Castle" at the top of Gibbet Hill. It's hard to imagine that it's been over 20 years since the Town of Groton, The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Webber Family came together to protect Gibbet Hill, Angus Hill and Brooks Orchard. Looking back, the work we did was more successful than I ever imagined. Over 500 acres was protected from development, preserving the open space; trails were created throughout the properties, giving the public access to the land and views many had not seen before; and the Gibbet Hill Grill was created providing the Town with a local gathering spot for many and a place of employment for others. It has been a privilege to be the stewards of this land for all these years and we are proud to have participated in the preservation of this land for the public enjoyment.

Over the years we have seen a steady increase in visitors to the trails and the park at the top of Gibbet Hill, and activity in and around the Castle has spiked. As one could image after all this time, the Castle is deteriorating, and repairs are needed for the safety of the visitors and to ensure that this beloved structure remains for future generations to enjoy.

The Webber family is in full support of this effort and, if approved, is willing to contribute 10% of the cost of the entire project. We sincerely hope the Town approves the remaining funds and we look forward to the public enjoying the trails and views for years to come.

Sincerely,

Josh Webber

On behalf of the Webber Family