

City of Waltham Massachusetts Community Preservation Act Historic, Open Space and Recreation Funding Application WCPA-1



APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name of Applicant ⁽¹⁾ Gore Place Society

Name of Co-Applicant, if applicable ⁽¹⁾ _____

Contact Name Susan Robertson

Mailing Address 52 Gore Street, Waltham, MA 02453

Daytime Phone (i.e. of Proposal Applicant) 781-894-2798

PROJECT BASICS

Address of Project (or Assessor's Parcel ID) 52 Gore Street

CPA Category (check all that apply):

- ☐ Open space
- ☒ Historic preservation
- ☐ Open space recreation
- ☐ Community Housing (You must also complete Application WCPA-2)

CPA Funding Requested \$200,000

Total Cost of Proposed Project \$800,000

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Attach answers to the following questions. Applications will be returned as incomplete if all requested information is not provided. Include supporting materials as necessary.

GOALS: What are the goals of the proposed project?

COMMUNITY NEED: Why is this project needed? Does it address needs identified in existing City plans?

COMMUNITY SUPPORT: What is the nature and level of support for this project? Include letters of support and any petitions.

TIMELINE: What is the schedule for project implantation? Include a timeline for all critical items for their

GOAL OF THE PROJECT:

The goal of this project is to stabilize and restore the west wing laundry area of the 1806 mansion. Project activities will include repair of damaged ceilings, restoration of missing staircases, restoration of an exterior door, and construction of an accessible first floor bathroom and an outdoor access ramp. This project has the highest restoration and visitor services needs at Gore Place.

The location of the project work will be in the west wing of the Gore mansion. In the 19th century, this wing was used for laundry. Architectural research has revealed the original use and layout. In the early 20th century, when Gore Place Society took over the estate, the wing was remodeled to build staircases to a caretaker's apartment (now museum offices) and add public bathrooms in the cellar. The remodeling included many changes to the doors and walls in the west wing. This project will remove the 20th century staircase to the museum offices and, in its place, build a missing 1st floor storage room which, fortunately, is large enough to accommodate an accessible bathroom. The storage room was part of the original layout of the wing so it is appropriate to restore it. Gore era staircases will be restored to service the offices and the cellar. At the same time, the project will repair the heating pipes in the ceiling that are leaking and damaging the ceiling. The leak must be fixed before the damage causes the ceiling to fall and become a public danger.

The accessible bathroom on the first floor of the Gore mansion is of the highest need in visitor services at Gore Place. Presently there are two public bathrooms in the cellar that are reached by a long flight of stairs that can be a hazard for anyone who has difficulty with stairs. The stairs are particularly frightening to children, the elderly and those with low vision. The cellar bathrooms are also out moded. Gore Place can refurbish them but they will still be inaccessible. There are modern accessible bathrooms in the nearby newly restored 1793 carriage house but that distance is a 5 minute walk and not convenient for visitors in the mansion.

The outdoor ramp and accessible doorbell will enable disabled visitors to comfortably access the mansion at the main entrance door, assisted or unassisted. Gore Place presently uses a mechanical lift to raise visitors into the building if they cannot use the steps but the lift requires a

staff person with knowledge and strength for safe operation. A first time user could have difficulty. The project will also add ramp lighting for night use and designated parking nearby.

The architect for the project has designed the entire project to meet modern needs and meet current codes while restoring the missing features to be accurate to the Gore occupancy. The restoration of the original exterior door and missing stairs are important because they allow for additional egress in the event of a fire. The handicap ramp and first floor bathroom are important because they comply with ADA requirements in public buildings.

COMMUNITY NEED FOR THE PROJECT:

The community need that this project supports is twofold - the need to complete the restoration of all historically important buildings in Waltham in order to tell the "real story" and the need to make all public buildings accessible in Waltham. The Gore mansion is a historically significant American building and an important structure for the community. Although it is owned and operated by Gore Place Society, a 501(c)3 charitable museum, the 50 acre estate and two of the historic buildings are kept open year round for public visits and for community use as appropriate. (The farm manager's cottage is the residence of the Director of Farm and Landscape Operations and it is not open to the public.)

The 1806 mansion is the primary focus of this unique historic venue in Waltham. Residents regularly bring out of town guests, many of them elderly, for tours of the mansion. It preserves part of the historic fabric of the nation and the community and adds to a sense of place for the community. The museum schedules programs and events that allow visitors of all ages to explore and experience in a safe environment. The staff of Gore Place participates actively in community affairs. Gore Place is a valuable asset to community life.

Gore Place is a National Historic Landmark with additional significance in American labor history. Gore Place is individually listed in the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The mansion is often referred to as "the Monticello of the North." The period rooms in the Gore mansion are shown by guided tours and are also used for museum education programs, community meetings, social occasions and private rentals. There are 12 period rooms on the first floor and 8 period rooms on the upper floors. The mansion displays a fine collection of early 19th century furnishings, paintings, textiles and books. It has the largest single collection of 18th and 19th century Boston-made furniture in an original 19th century house in the US. There is a video and a photo album of pictures of the upper floors for those who cannot use the stairs.

Gore Place participates in the Minuteman Library Pass Program for reduced price visits and also offers free tours on the estate during Historic Waltham Days.

Gore Place offers an inspiring place to learn, enjoy and refresh. The 50-acres of land is open free of charge year-round in a community that values open space for quality of life. The Gore estate is used for community recreation. Waltham families bring their children to visit the farm, ride bikes, picnic and fly kites on the open land at no charge. There is a free self-guided walking tour map and outdoor tour apps with an ESL track and a free story trail. The story trail displays pages of an illustrated book along a pathway. It is suitable for all ages and abilities to enjoy outdoors. It is accessible. Large outdoor open spaces are in short supply in such an urban setting. The Gore estate is used at no charge for large community gatherings such as the traveling Viet Nam commemorative wall (August 2005 and August 2016).

Gore Place generates economic activity for Waltham through tourism. In 2014-15, Gore Place had more than 31,000 tour and program visitors and more than 36,000 web visits. Audiences vary according to the program and include adults and families with an interest in history, antiques, farming, music, games or just the open land. The Sheep Shearing Festival in April, now in its 29th year, annually attracts 9,000 adults and children unless the event has bad weather and Circus Smirkus in July attracts more than 1, 200 ticketed for its shows. Gore Place staff play an active role in the efforts of the Waltham Tourism Council to promote Waltham as a destination. The Waltham Chamber of Commerce uses the tent for their annual business barbeque and the mansion for their annual scholarship breakfast.

The museum has a year-round calendar of programs and events to interest the entire community no matter their age or skill. Recently we have begun to focus on tours for visitors who are vision impaired. Staffs from the Perkins School and the Carroll Center for the Blind have assisted with the development of a multi-sensory tour for low vision visitors in the mansion. The multi-sensory tour provides touchable objects in every room. By including touchable objects throughout the mansion and the carriage house, we provide a more accurate story for all visitors. This is particularly important for vision impaired visitors who are best served by being able to use or touch features rather than to just listen to explanations. However, all visitors benefit from touchable objects and the addition of sounds and scents. By providing an access ramp and an accessible bathroom along with the touchable tour, we will encourage more visitors of all abilities to visit the historic estate. Each summer, Gore Place hosts high school

and college age interns in the house and on the farm. The Carroll Center sends at least one intern who is blind to prepare for a business career.

The American Disabilities Act calls for reasonable modifications and the removal of barriers to provide physical access to public buildings including historic sites, to the maximum extent feasible, in a manner that will not destroy the historic significance of the building. This project supports that mandate.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR THE PROJECT:

Gore Place has strong support from the Waltham community. Gore Place fosters civic engagement by looking for ways to involve the museum in community life. Maintaining the land as a community resource, participating with other community organizations in philanthropic efforts, keeping the admission price of our programs free or at low cost, and being aware of community concerns enables Gore Place to be an important part of the Waltham community. Gore Place is fortunate to have 900+ members and supporters who regularly contribute to its programs. More than 300 of these supporters are from Waltham. Many volunteer their time and assist the staff at Gore Place events, programs and the farm. Local businesses sponsor events and give in-kind contributions or offer memberships to their staff or clients.

The most recent historic preservation project at Gore Place, completed in 2014, was the relocation and restoration of the 1793 Carriage House. The project took four years and \$2.9 million. The funding included a \$250,000 grant from the City of Waltham Community Preservation Act (CPA) Fund. The remainder was from grants, contributions and Gore Place reserves. The project moved the building to a new foundation closer to its original location at the entrance, upgraded the electrical system and installed heating, fire detection and suppression. The committee that advanced this effort was composed of trustees and non-trustees from Waltham and around Boston. Among their number were several prominent local business people or their spouses, who have strong connections in the community. Their support was in recognition of the importance of the preservation of historic structures in the city and for the many ways that Gore Place contributes to the quality of life in Waltham.

This project has received approval from the Waltham Building Department and has received letters of support from the Waltham Disability Services Commission, the Waltham Historical Commission and the Carroll Center for the Blind. The Waltham Disability Services Commission is very pleased to support an effort to improve the accessibility of a publicly used building. The

Waltham Historical Commission is pleased to support the restoration of the Gore mansion. The Carroll Center for the Blind is pleased to support a local historic site that is trying to develop special tours for vision impaired audiences. They are an underserved audience. Carroll Center staff has been working with Gore Place staff to develop a multi-sensory tour for vision impaired visitors. These letters underscore the importance of this project. Gore Place is waiting on a letter of approval from the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Paul Holtz of the Massachusetts Historical Commission has agreed "to review and approve the report and report recommendations in advance of the development of the construction documents so long as it is made clear exactly what the nature of the anticipated restoration and reconstruction work will be."

Timeline: The Schedule of Completion is as follows:

2016	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Removals	x	x				
Bathroom		x	x	x	x	
Ceilings		x	x			
Laundry Walls	x					
Staircases		x	x			
Exit Door				x		
Ramp	x	x				

CREDENTIALS:

Gore Place is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, a national museum accrediting association. The Board and the staff have experience in managing capital projects as show by the recent work completed on the carriage house. The architect-in-charge of this project is Jeff Baker, a registered architect and a partner of Mesick Cohen Wilson Baker Architects of Albany, NY. He and his firm have extensive professional experience with the study and restoration of early 19th century buildings including Monticello, James Madison's Montpelier, Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest and previous restoration projects at Gore Place on both the 1793 carriage house and the 1806 mansion. He was contracted by Gore Place in 2003 to create the Master Plan for the Mansion which directs the restoration work on the building. Jeff has also conducted several studies at Gore Place to better understand the use of the mansion in the

Gore era and has uncovered significant information about the previously unknown household conveniences such as the Gore's central heating and their hot water shower.

The success of this project will be measured by the completion of each of the tasks and by the increased use of the mansion by disabled visitors as well as the reaction by visitors to the more accurate historic interpretation and the improved usage of the building for program and community activities.

BUDGET:

The budget for the project was developed in consultation with the architect-in-charge, Jeff Baker of Mesick Cohen Wilson Baker Architects. Mr. Baker worked with contractors to determine approximate costs. The budget for the restoration work utilizes appropriate materials.

Project costs

Accessible ramp, railings, doorbell	69,000
Restored exterior door & steps	68,000
Stair removal	46,000
Restored cellar stairs	75,000
Restored laundry room walls	31,000
Restored mezzanine stairs	93,000
Accessible bathroom	140,000
Fire safety system alterations	20,000
Exterior lighting for ramp	15,000
Ramp landscaping, parking	25,000
Fees – architects	58,000
25% contingency	<u>160,000</u>
TOTAL	800,000

Project funding

MA Cultural Facilities Fund	200,000 solicited
City of Waltham CPA	200,000 solicited
Hunnewell Fund at Gore Place	25,000 committed
Sunfield Fund	25,000 solicited
MA Preservation Projects Fund	35,000 solicited

Individual Contributions or other grants	265,000 projected
Gore Place Maintenance Fund	<u>50,000 committed</u>
TOTAL	800,000

If awarded, the \$200,000 City of Waltham CPA grant would be used toward the restoration activities of the project on the walls, doors and staircases.

MAINTENANCE: All of our three historic buildings require ongoing maintenance. Gore Place has a Capital Maintenance Fund that is funded from the operating budget and from a draw from endowment. The fund currently provides \$65,000/year for capital maintenance costs. Fortunately, the 1793 carriage house and the 1835 farmer's cottage are in good condition and their regular maintenance needs can be accomplished with this Maintenance Fund budget. For this project, however, Gore Place must seek additional revenues because the costs of the project are beyond the museum's financial resources.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

DOCUMENTATION OF OWNERSHIP – A copy of the deed is included with this application. A National Historic Landmark designation letter is included with this application.

CONSTRUCTION OR REHABILITATION – A floor plan is included with this application.

ZONING – N/A

CITY APPROVALS – Letters of support are included with this application.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS – The architect has found no evidence of hazardous materials.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS – The Massachusetts Historical Commission has permanent oversight on all restoration activities conducted at Gore Place. This oversight assures that all work will adhere to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

LEVERAGED ADDITIONAL BENEFITS – The improvements to the mansion will not only provide improved accessibility at the building but will also provide another improved meeting space in the city. We anticipate increased interest in using the building for meetings and events and we will continue to make it available at low or no cost to community groups or businesses engaged in improving the quality of life in Waltham.