

July 1, 2020

Community Preservation Act Committee  
City of Cambridge  
795 Massachusetts Ave.  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear CPA Committee,

The Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (CRA) is pleased to present this request for \$330,000 in Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding to support historic preservation at 93-99 Bishop Allen Drive. CPA funds would support a multi-million dollar renovation project of this site that the CRA plans to undertake during the first half of 2021.

The CRA purchased 93-99 Bishop Allen Drive in the fall of 2019, in order to preserve affordable office space in the heart of Central Square, for nonprofit organizations directly serving the community. The building was originally built as four stately row houses in 1855. It last saw a major renovation in 1965, when it was converted to nonprofit offices by Cambridge Community Services, now called Enroot, who still offers services from the building. Cambridge Community Foundation, also a tenant of the building since 1965, was also a key party to the building's conversion into nonprofit space, as well as a strategic partner in the CRA's effort to purchase the building last year.

The site is affectionately known as "Nonprofit Row" by providers and beneficiaries of services alike. Its 55-year long tenure as a center for social services in Central Square provides ease of access and familiarity for those visiting the building to seek services, volunteer, or build organizational partnerships, as well as a level of anonymity that is necessary for some clients. Nonprofits occupying the building today provide a range of services including; youth leadership education and tutoring, academic support for immigrant youth; arts programming for youth with chronic illnesses; low-cost, trauma-informed summer camp; counseling for survivors of sexual and domestic violence, experiential environmental education; classic film viewing; and funding, advocacy, and other supports for Cambridge's nonprofit and small business sectors.

While the building remains a bustling site for social services, it suffers from deferred maintenance. The CRA's multi-million dollar renovation is vital in order to create a welcoming, comfortable, sustainable and stable building that serves a range of organizational and community needs. However, the building's rehabilitation needs – including for historic preservation – exceed our originally intended budget.

The total project scope includes:

- Improvement and preservation of the historic façade.

- Accessibility and ADA compliance, including new bathrooms, new elevator and accessible front and rear entryways.
- Maximization of the use of internal space for social missions, including adding more shared meeting and event rooms.
- Upgrades to HVAC and electrical systems.
- Improvements to create compliance with current fire and safety codes.
- Improvement to the quality of the working and social service program environment.

Our plans for historic preservation include preserving the original 1855 elements as well as some of the 1965 improvements, which, together, tell the building's story over time. These plans are informed by our analysis of existing conditions, historic photographs, and multiple conversations with Charlie Sullivan of the Cambridge Historical Commission.

The building's historic preservation needs are estimated to cost \$910,210. This includes 100% masonry repointing, brick repair and infill, lintel repair, lintel replacement, and brownstone window sill repair and replacement. We will also spend approximately \$416,000 to remove the vinyl siding from the dormers that were added in 1965, repair areas of rot, and clad them in a sustainable material that better compliments the historic brick facade.

The CRA is requesting \$330,000 towards our historic preservation scope. This is the approximate cost of the full masonry repointing, but could be applied to any part of the scope. This award would ensure that the CRA will not need to triage our preservation scope. It will allow us to complete deeper and more comprehensive restoration and preservation that is possible with existing funds, preventing further decline of areas we otherwise cannot repair at this time, and preventing additional disturbance to tenants from future repairs.

The following pages include historic and current photos of the property. Our architects are now updating elevations illustrating the historic façade repairs and improvements, which we can forward in coming days.

Thank you for your work to apply Cambridge's CPA funds to create, enhance, and sustain vital City resources. We would deeply appreciate the opportunity to partner with the CPA Committee on this project. Please let us know if additional information about 93-99 Bishop Allen Drive would be of use as your process moves forward.

Sincerely,

  
Erica Schwarz  
Community Project Manager

PHOTOS AND MAP OF SITE AT 93-99 BISHOP ALLEN DRIVE, CAMBRIDGE



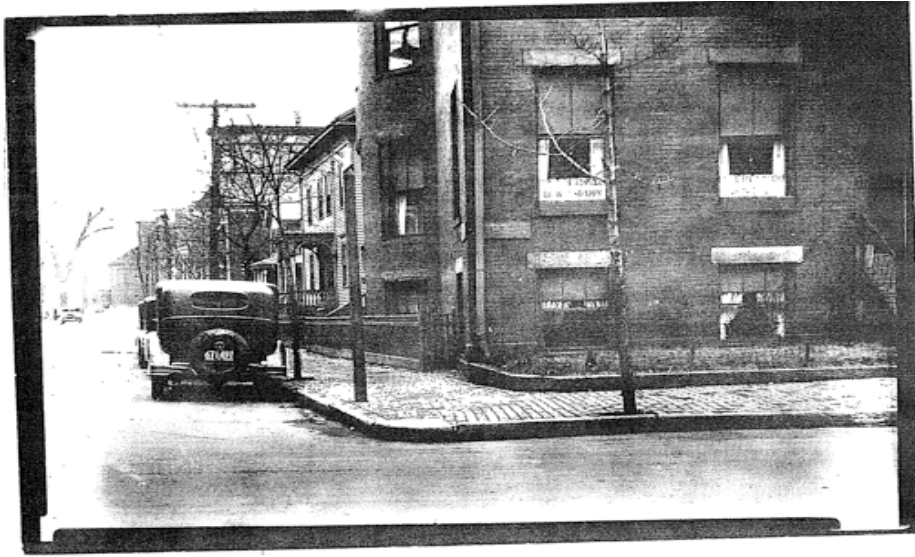
*93-99 Bishop Allen Drive, 2019*



*93-99 Bishop Allen Drive, circa 1970, after renovations*



**93-99 Bishop Allen Drive, circa 1930**  
Corner with Essex Street



**Map of 93-99 Bishop Allen Drive, Cambridge**

