NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

OFFICE OF CHALLENGE PROGRAMS

Narrative Section of a Successful Application

The attached document contains the grant narrative and selected portions of a previously funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the current guidelines, which reflect the most recent information and instructions, at https://www.neh.gov/program/climate-smart-humanities-organizations-0.

Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Office of Challenge Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: Historic Past, Carbon Neutral Future: Planning for Climate Action at Historic New England

Institution: Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities

Project Director: Benjamin K. Haavik

Grant Program: Climate Smart Humanities Organizations

Humanities Significance and Impact

Historic New England, founded in 1910 as the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, is the oldest and largest regional heritage organization in the United States. Our mission is to save and share New England's past to engage and inform present and future generations. We explore and interpret New England's culture and history through our house museums, landscapes, archives, and objects, engaging more than 200,000 visitors annually. We focus on five core areas:

- **Homes, Farms, and Landscapes**: Historic New England's most visible public faces, including thirty-eight historic sites comprising house museums, farms, exhibition spaces, event spaces, and 1,374 acres of historic landscape.
- **Artifacts, Archives, and Stories**: Our unparalleled collections of 125,000 household objects and 1.5 million archival records that tell the region's stories.
- **Community Engagement and Leadership**: Capturing history as it happens, this includes wide-ranging community partnerships to save and share the stories of New England.
- **School and Youth Programs**: Historic New England's field trips, in-classroom programs, and outreach experiences enrich student learning and are tailored to local and state curriculum standards.
- **Preservation Services Outreach**: Resources for homeowners, communities, professionals, and students to partner in and advocate for historic preservation across the region.

To advance excellence in the humanities, Historic New England:

- Makes our collections and archives of New England cultural and architectural history accessible to scholars and the public.
- Awards an annual Book Prize to recognize works that advance the understanding of New England life by examining architecture, landscape, decorative arts, preservation, photography, and related areas.
- Pioneers new research at the Historic New England Study Center through academic partnerships, internships, and fellowships to share New England's diverse history with today's audiences and expand our engagement with and accessibility for inclusive audiences.
- Tells the stories of 20th century life in New England and captures history as it happens in diverse communities through the *Everyone's History* initiative.
- Models and innovates historic preservation practice, including work in the field of climate resiliency.
- Convenes a transdisciplinary audience of more than 600 participants from across the region and beyond at the Historic New England Summit to address urgent challenges and opportunities facing cultural institutions, strengthen our collective network, and pursue solutions for creating more inclusive, sustainable, and livable communities.

Historic New England is governed by a 21-member Board of Trustees and advised by a non-

governing Board of Advisors and a Council. The staff leadership team carries out the organization's mission by managing day-to-day operations and programs.

Our proposed project will produce an institutional Climate Action Plan (CAP) and detailed, ambitious, and actionable project plans for achieving carbon neutrality at two key Historic New England sites: Casey Farm in Saunderstown, Rhode Island, and Pierce House in Dorchester, Massachusetts. Implementation and completion of these project plans will have impacts that reverberate across our organization and the communities that we serve by laying the groundwork for improvements that reduce or eliminate our greenhouse gas emissions, engage our communities, and advance climate justice and energy equity goals.

Adapting to the changing climate is becoming an imperative for all institutions, but as preservationists our challenge is multifold: we must adapt and proactively mitigate climate impacts while still adhering to the principles of our preservation philosophy. By completing the organization-wide Climate Action Plan and developing implementation projects at high-profile, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century historic sites, we will demonstrate to our audiences – including other, likeminded organizations – that preservation and adaptation are not incompatible objectives. To our visitors, members, and historic homeowners throughout the region, we will emphasize the scalability of the activities in our plans and how they may be translated into residential projects. We look forward to interpreting each site's environmental impact from a "full circle" perspective: they were carbon neutral when built and will be carbon neutral again.

Strategic Goals and Institutional Commitment

Since 2004, Historic New England has been building the foundation for a comprehensive climate action strategy. As we experienced a significant uptick in property care emergencies related to severe winds, inundation rains, and localized flooding, we acknowledged that these episodes were worsening as a direct result of our changing climate. We began proactively planning projects and implementing strategies to reduce the risk of climate-related impacts on our properties, focusing first on arbor care, gutters, and site drainage.

Beginning in 2008, we systematically inventoried our trees and woody shrubs and invested in their maintenance, leading to dramatic reductions in dropped limbs and trees. In 2010, we developed white papers for site drainage and began implementing small site improvements as well as holistic site-wide drainage projects that reduced localized flooding episodes. In 2018, with the support of a grant from the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, we analyzed the carrying capacity of eight historic gutter systems in context with historical precipitation data and current data on rainstorm intensity and determined that our gutters are severely undersized and no longer capable of efficiently shedding water away from our historic buildings. This finding has led us to implement both minor adjustments to gutter systems and wholesale replacement of systems at the most problematic sites.

While taking these steps to improve our climate resiliency, we also began working to mitigate our carbon footprint. In 2012, we completed a large-scale energy efficiency and weatherization project at the Lyman Estate in Waltham, Massachusetts, that reduced energy usage at the site by 50% and received recognition from the Massachusetts Historical Commission for advancing sustainability goals while adhering to strict preservation standards. Over the past ten years, we have implemented the core findings of that project across our collection of properties, including heating system upgrades and the installation of appropriate storm windows. In 2021, we participated in the New England Museum Association's NEH-supported Culture Over Carbon program and tracked energy use at ten buildings on eight of our historic sites. Using those eight sites as a baseline, we are now identifying benchmark goals for reducing our carbon footprint. We compared our data to the aggressive targets in the City of Boston's Climate Action Plan and found that seven of the ten structures in the study already meet 2035 goals for carbon output – a statistic that inspires us to reach higher for full carbon neutrality.

These individual initiatives had positive impacts on our properties and internal capacity building, but they were implemented without a central vision for institutional climate action. That vision has begun to coalesce over the past two years, and our proposed project will formalize and expand on it. In 2021, Historic New England adopted a new strategic plan that emphasizes the tenets of inclusion, sustainability, and innovation. In the spring of 2022, we were chosen by the Boston Green Ribbon Commission (GRC) to join a Climate Action Planning cohort of eight cultural institutions. That process began uniting our varied work across the institution, and working collaboratively within our cohort, key Historic New England staff began developing a Climate Action Plan that focuses on resiliency, mitigation, and climate justice. Concurrently, the City of Boston announced that buildings in the city that are larger than 20,000 square feet must achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

Historic New England's Otis House complex meets that criterion. Following suit, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts announced that all buildings more than 20,000 square feet in the state must begin reporting energy usage data in 2024 and meet additional benchmarks for carbon mitigation. Three more of our sites will be subject to these reporting requirements. While these four sites will soon be required to meet regulatory benchmarks, our goal is to widen the lens and achieve institutional carbon neutrality by 2050 by applying the same standards to our entire collection of thirty-nine properties: thirty-eight historic house museums in five New England states and the Historic New England Center for Preservation and Collections in Haverhill, Massachusetts.

This goal, when presented in November 2022 to the senior leadership team, was met with full and enthusiastic endorsement. The Preservation Committee, our governance group dedicated to the care of the properties, also enthusiastically endorsed the goal. The goal will be presented to the full board of trustees this spring.

The Climate Action Planning process to date, due to staffing constraints and the sheer size of our property collection, has been a generalized approach. We will hire a dedicated staff person to continue developing the Climate Action Plan, adding context and detail encompassing all teams and

all properties. The collaborative CAP process is slated to be complete in June 2023, but with support from NEH, we will expand the document to fully reflect the complexity of our organization. Additional phases of work will allow us to dig deeper and to create site-specific strategic planning documents for achieving carbon neutrality**.**

Project Outline and Methodology

Our project includes two phases of work dedicated to expanding and completing our Climate Action Plan and the subsequent development of detailed project plans for achieving carbon neutrality at two of our most significant and mission-driven historic sites. The chosen sites, Casey Farm (c. 1750) in Saunderstown, Rhode Island, and Pierce House (1683) in Dorchester, Massachusetts, were selected because they represent vastly different contexts and challenges – one of large acreage in a rural setting and the other a small lot within a dense urban neighborhood. At the conclusion of the project, we expect to have detailed carbon neutrality plans for the two sites, which will allow us to prioritize and then implement capital projects. We also expect that the ideas and strategies generated by this process will be useful at other Historic New England sites and to other stewards of historic properties.

During Phase 1, our Sustainability Coordinator will support efforts to complete our Climate Action Plan, begin institution-wide baselining, and start building towards Phase 2 of the project. The Sustainability Coordinator will lead Historic New England's ongoing participation in the Culture Over Carbon initiative and the Boston Green Ribbon Commission's Climate Action Planning cohort. Through the Green Ribbon Commission process, the Sustainability Coordinator will complete an organization-level plan for carbon mitigation, climate resilience, and climate justice that aligns with the City of Boston's policy goals and regulatory targets. Boston's Climate Action Plan is one of New England's most aggressive and following their benchmarking goals will ensure that our plan aims for the highest possible standards across our entire collection of properties. The Sustainability Coordinator will continue to develop the plan beyond the June 2023 end date of the Green Ribbon Commission process, to ensure it truly represents the entire organization. One of the key elements of the work plan for the Sustainability Coordinator is gathering baseline energy usage information for all thirty-eight museum sites and our eight-story Center for Preservation and Collections.

Phase 2, starting in November 2023, focuses on translating our Climate Action Plan from an institution-wide management document into action by looking in-depth at Pierce House and Casey Farm. Pierce House is a rare seventeenth-century survivor now situated on a half-acre of land in an urban environment. Already an active site for elementary-age education programs, the house is also currently the subject of a two-year project to significantly improve accessibility. The carbon neutrality plan for Pierce House will identify ways to achieve our goals on a small urban scale while still preserving the site's aesthetics and historic fabric. The layering of accessibility improvements and carbon neutrality will make Pierce House a scalable case study for urban property owners and other stewards of historic properties.

Casey Farm presents different challenges and opportunities. This 300-acre property and working organic farm has a robust program of use with museum and historic tours, education programs, a weekly farmers market, and a community supported agricultural program (CSA). The site has no shortage of carbon producing activities, from oil-burning heating plants for the farmhouse and greenhouses, to diesel-fueled tractors and irrigation pumps. But the site is an ideal location for the study and implementation of sustainable practices as it offers space to explore alternative energy sources such as solar, wind, and geothermal while minimizing impacts to the historic integrity of its buildings and landscape. As Historic New England's most visited site, improvements will also be highly visible to the public. We expect that this work will spark conversations with visitors about Historic New England's response to climate change within the context of the farm's long-term preservation and ongoing agricultural traditions.

Our partner on the carbon neutrality plans will be GreenerU, a Waltham, Massachusetts, consulting firm with deep experience working with institutions to decarbonize their buildings and campuses. To meet our mitigation, resiliency, and climate justice goals, we expect a comprehensive process that will include stakeholder outreach and convenings, strategic planning sessions, and the creation of an actionable plan with prioritized recommendations for capital projects. The plan will also explore the possibility of advancing climate justice goals through opportunities like community solar at Casey Farm. Using these recommendations, we will develop a scope of work for demonstration projects at Casey Farm and Pierce House that will reduce or eliminate each site's dependence on fossil fuels, proactively decrease carbon emissions, and prepare the sites for weather extremes while maintaining historic integrity and the visitor experience.

Work Plan and Budget

The project is divided into two phases. The first phase is from January 2023 through October 2023 and the second phase is November 2023 through December 2024. During Phase 1, Historic New England's Sustainability Coordinator will work with our core project team (identified and described in the Project and Fundraising Teams section below) on several different initiatives. The core of the work is participation in the Boston Green Ribbon Commission's Climate Action Planning cohort. The cohort meets monthly with additional open hours in between sessions to meet with the technical advisors. From January through June 2023, we will complete a draft of our institutional Climate Action Plan. This process will also include multiple points of engagement with staff throughout the organization. In January, we will conduct a series of brainstorming sessions to engage staff from all teams in ideation exercises.

Because of the complexity of our property holdings and operations, we expect baselining to start in January 2023 and continue beyond the June 2023 date established as part of the cohort CAP process. The Sustainability Coordinator will begin by reviewing utility analysis software packages to make analysis of our energy usage and carbon footprint more accessible. Our technical advisor, GreenerU, has provided us with three different software programs to review. Concurrently, the Sustainability Coordinator will begin collecting utility data for all our sites. Resiliency baselining will

also be incorporated through the completion of risk assessments for all properties based on climate change related weather extremes. The Sustainability Coordinator will work with staff throughout the organization to develop this data. They will also research and compile resiliency strategies being utilized or recommended by preservation organizations around the world so that we can build a reference library of options. Finally, our work with staff across the organization will extend beyond the brainstorming sessions in January to include regular check-ins and ideation sessions. We expect the Sustainability Coordinator to continue meeting with individual teams during the two-year process to advance targeted discussions and generate additional ideas for mitigating our reliance on petroleum-based products and leveraging our sites for climate justice.

Starting in May 2023, the Sustainability Coordinator will work with GreenerU to complete a comprehensive energy audit and site sustainability assessment (the "baseline") for all operations at Casey Farm. Our goal is to complete this baselining by September 2023 and begin to close out Phase 1 of the project.

Phase 2, starting in November 2023, is the proposed NEH-funded project and focuses on translating our CAP from an institution-wide management document into two site-specific implementation plans. By studying two properties, we hope to explore a wide variety of options that we feel comfortable deploying in the context of our own preservation approach, that will benefit the greater public, and will enable us to develop a framework for continuing this work with our other thirty-six museum sites.

The Casey Farm carbon neutrality plan will be developed from November 2023 through March 2024. Working with GreenerU, our project team expects to develop specific goals, strategies, and actions for complete sustainability at the farm. The planning process includes meeting with the Casey Farm operations staff, including the site managers, farm managers, and longtime farm support staff, the head of education at Casey Farm, and key long-term educators. We also expect to engage key members of the community, including representatives of local government, farmers market vendors, members of our community supported agricultural program, educators, social service providers, and others. GreenerU will then work with the project team to review stakeholder input and feedback, write and design the plan, and create an implementation work plan with cost estimates.

In spring 2024, we will begin the Pierce House component of the project. GreenerU will work with our Sustainability Coordinator to develop the baseline and then follow a more streamlined planning process, as the site is significantly less complex and has fewer internal and external stakeholders than Casey Farm. There will be a public component to solicit input from community members and site users. GreenerU will then develop an implementation plan including site assessment, recommendations, and specific action items for achieving carbon neutrality. The goal is to have this component complete by October 2024, so that we may use the last two months of the project period to work on final deliverables and disseminating reports.

Award funds will be spent strictly in Phase 2 on two project components: consultant costs for Pierce House planning ($25,161) and associated Historic New England staff time (approximately 386 hours; $22,868).

Fundraising Plan

Historic New England's financial sustainability is strong, having weathered the pandemic without any lasting negative impacts to our fiscal health. We maintain a broad base of support from 8,233 member households in 44 states, 6,749 individual and institutional donors, and more than 200,000 annual visitors. In FY2022, our top sources of revenue were investment return ($6 million), individual gifts and grants ($3.5 million), government grants ($2.5 million), rental income ($1.1 million), and program and admissions revenue ($556,000).

In recent years, Historic New England has been diligently pursuing funding to address climate action planning and resiliency projects. Our success in this area includes raising more than $600,000 from the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources and other funders for a large-scale weatherization and energy efficiency project at the Lyman Estate in Waltham, Massachusetts, and obtaining $163,500 from the van Beuren Charitable Fund for resiliency improvements at Watson Farm in Jamestown, Rhode Island.

Our work to date attracted the interest of the 1772 Foundation, which awarded us $200,000 in November 2022 to fund Phase I and Phase II expenses of this project as identified in our budget justification. Thanks to this recent award, all matching funds to complete the project are secured.

Project and Fundraising Teams

Making our properties more resilient and energy efficient is not a new priority for Historic New England and, as described above, we have been steadily building capacity in this area for the past decade. As we begin to take a more holistic look at our collection of sites and our operations, we are ensuring additional capacity for success by hiring a dedicated Sustainability Coordinator and working closely with partner consultants.

The Sustainability Coordinator manages the organization's effort to complete our Climate Action Plan and to develop a scope of work for achieving carbon neutrality at two of our thirty-eight historic sites. The Sustainability Coordinator is supported by GreenerU, a Waltham, Massachusetts, consulting firm dedicated to helping institutions achieve climate neutrality and sustainable operations.

GreenerU provides Historic New England with technical support for the Green Ribbon Commission's collaborative Climate Action Planning process and staff have benefited from their expertise in this format. Their contribution to this project will be both technical and faciliatory. They will complete a comprehensive energy audit and site sustainability assessment (the baseline) for both Casey Farm

and Pierce House. This assessment will go far beyond the typical parameters of a single-building energy audit to include review and analysis of site-wide greenhouse gas emissions, water efficiency and wastewater management, indoor air quality, and community engagement and programming. Upon completion of each assessment, GreenerU will facilitate the development of a detailed plan for achieving carbon neutrality. The Sustainability Coordinator will lead Historic New England's participation in this process, which will include stakeholder outreach and convenings, strategic planning sessions, and the creation of an actionable plan with prioritized recommendations for capital projects at each site. At the conclusion of the process, the Sustainability Coordinator will also produce a framework for analysis and sustainability planning that can be applied to other Historic New England sites, another critical step toward increasing our overall institutional capacity to pursue carbon neutrality.

The core **internal** team will be made up of three staff members:

Benjamin Haavik, Team Leader Property Care. Role: Project Director. Mr. Haavik has been in this position since 2004 and has overseen the development of the Climate Action Plan to date. Mr. Haavik has a master's degree in historic preservation from the University of Pennsylvania and is a Professional Associate of the American Institute for Conservation (AIC). Recently Mr. Haavik was sought out to peer review an article on climate action planning for collections storage by the *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation*. During his eighteen years at Historic New England, Mr. Haavik introduced a system for strategic prioritization and management of Historic New England's properties, spearheaded system-wide initiatives to understand their environmental systems, developed a weatherization and energy efficiency framework, established best practices for house museum security, and is currently engaged in an effort to make Historic New England's sites accessible. He will be involved in guiding the project, providing feedback, ensuring the project meets institutional and preservation standards, reviewing deliverables, and supporting fundraising.

Marissa Mayo, Property Care Operations Manager. Role: Project Manager. As operations manager, Ms. Mayo is engaged in nearly all aspects of planning for our properties, and as the primary contact for the Culture Over Carbon program, has gathered energy usage data for our collection of sites. She will supervise the work of the Sustainability Coordinator and ensure overall consistency of approach.

Sustainability Coordinator. Role: Project Coordinator. The Sustainability Coordinator is envisioned to be an emerging professional in the planning, environmental science, or preservation field, with knowledge of environmental and climate related issues and a demonstrated interest in a sustainability-focused career path. This position will be filled in January 2023. The Sustainability Coordinator will play an active role in the day-to-day work of all phases of the project.

Additional staff members contributing to the project include:

Katherine Pomplun, Institutional Giving Officer. Role: Fundraising. Ms. Pomplun researches and develops grants to support the activities of the property care team. Ms. Pomplun ensures all obligations to the funders, including program compliance, reporting, and press, are fulfilled.

Peter Gittleman, Team Leader Visitor Experience. Role: Project Team Member. Mr. Gittleman manages all operations and visitor interactions at the historic sites including administration, tours, programs, events, education, and function rentals.

Elizabeth Paliga, Preservation Services Manager. Role: Project Team Member. Ms. Paliga's experience working with our communities and historic homeowners across the region will inform our outreach to external project stakeholders.

The core **external** team will include experienced professionals from GreenerU, the project's lead consultant. Primary among these are:

Chris Lewis, Vice President of Engineering. Role: Technical Support. Mr. Lewis has a master's degree in engineering management from Tufts University and more than fifteen years of varied experience in the energy efficiency arena. At GreenerU, he focuses on the development and implementation of energy efficiency capital projects. Mr. Lewis will lead baselining activities and assist with navigating the technical challenges involved with site-wide decarbonization.

Jennifer Haugh, Director of Planning and Customer Engagement. Role: Planning, Writing, and Design. Ms. Haugh has a master's in public administration from Harvard Kennedy School and master of design from Harvard Graduate School of Design. She will facilitate our strategic planning sessions for each site, engage internal and external stakeholders, and develop and design the deliverable carbon neutrality plans for Casey Farm and Pierce House.

Deliverables, Dissemination, and Next Steps

The project will produce three primary deliverables: an institutional Climate Action Plan for Historic New England, a Carbon Neutrality Plan for Casey Farm, and a Carbon Neutrality Plan for Pierce House. The institutional Climate Action Plan will articulate and formalize Historic New England's commitment to achieving organization-wide carbon neutrality by 2050. The carbon neutrality plans will include sustainability and baseline assessments, recommended scopes of work, and cost estimates for implementation. Historic New England expects sufficiently detailed documents that can be shared with the broader public and translated into a fundraising campaign focused on climate action.

Additional deliverables to be produced by the Sustainability Coordinator include an internal carbon neutrality planning framework that may be applied to other Historic New England sites, and dissemination of project findings at the Historic New England Summit in fall 2023 and 2024.

Historic New England is the country's largest regional heritage organization and a leader in preservation practices. We conduct and share our research and experiences widely with professionals, historic site stewards, and the public. Recent white papers, all available free of charge on the organization's website, include guidance on climate change, environmental conditions, security, and energy efficiency with case studies in accessibility soon to be published.

Historic New England has already begun sharing its approaches to resiliency and energy efficiency widely and we will continue to leverage our professional relationships and network to elevate the topic of climate action planning within the museum sector. We will disseminate the results of this project as broadly as possible. We expect to continue to leverage and share findings locally, regionally, and nationally at conferences and meetings for entities ranging in size and scope from single house museums to large professional membership organizations. Our historic homeowner program, which lectures frequently on weatherization and mitigation based on the work we have completed to date, is eager for more data and examples with which to discuss the topic. In 2022, Historic New England launched the Historic New England Summit, a two-day, multi-disciplinary conference focused on urgent topics affecting cultural resources and organizations. Sustainability was a major focus in year one, and we expect it to remain a prominent feature of the program as we continue to present this regional annual conference. The Summit will provide an additional forum for us to discuss this project and its results. The next Historic New England Summit will be held November 2-3 in Providence, Rhode Island.