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Akin House: Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund Emergency Fund Request

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Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund Emergency Fund Request

1. **Elihu Akin House**

762 Dartmouth Street
Dartmouth, MA 02748

2.

A) Current Use and purpose of the property

W H A L E purchased the house from the Akin family for \$185,000 in November 2003. During fall of 2005 the Architectural Preservation Group began Phase I Stabilization of the property. Once completed, the house will serve as a Cultural Heritage Center – a powerful tool for education and an innovative way to tell the story of Dartmouth’s history. The Akin House will become a working classroom for children, residents, and visitors as well as a living example of post-and-beam construction of the 18th century.

B) Describe the nature of the emergency. What happened and when?

The Akin House was boarded and empty from the early 1980’s until W H A L E purchased it in November 2003. During this period the house sustained severe water damage because of a defective roofing and dormer system. During 2005 W H A L E raised \$57,000 including a \$9,000 Emergency Grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission which allowed the beginning of Phase I Stabilization. There is however a critical \$40,000 gap in our funding. As of January 12, 2006, work has been suspended on the project. This work stoppage leaves the Akin House vulnerable to further systemic damage. The project was within two months of Phase I completion. Work can not resume until W H A L E is able to raise the \$40,000 needed.

C) Describe the emergency situation. What needs to be done?

One of the few properties in the Town of Dartmouth to survive the American Revolution, the Akin House has been vacant since the early 1980's. In 2003 W H A L E purchased the house from distant members of the Akin family. Inspection of the property revealed substantial water damage as the result of the leaking roof. W H A L E took immediate steps to stop further damage by covering the roof with a construction grade tarp. Preservation consultant, Anne W. Baker, conducted a historic structure report and consults with our preservation contractor, the Architectural Preservation Group, on a daily basis.

Work began during fall 2005 with setting up emergency electrical and water service, insurance, a storage trailer, dumpster and Port-A-John.

We were well on the way to saving this 1762 house that is older than America. By January 2006, the Architectural Preservation Group has completed the following work:

- Numbering, wrapping and storage of architectural elements to be reused.

- Replaced rotted sills (west, north and east sides) with 7" x 7" oak.
- Repaired rotted areas on four corner posts (Rooms A, E, D and F) —scarfed and spliced with oak.
- Replaced rotted joists duplicating the originals; first floor room D, E, and F.
- Repaired rotted area of North end-girt —scarfed and spliced with oak.
- Repaired broken and rotted section of summer beam (room A). Scarfed and spliced with oak.
- Repaired rotted area of plate (room A). Scarfed and spliced with oak.
- Replaced rotted plate east wall—duplicating original.
- Daily documentation of work with drawings and photographs.

W H A L E is requesting emergency funds from the Massachusetts Historical Commission to complete the following items.

- Repair seven rafters.
- Repair the 6 foot section rotted area — chimney girt. (Room D)
- Repair four joist ends (Room D)
- Flooring. Buy and install flooring for rooms A, D, E, and F.
- Build 12 new window frames duplicating the originals.
- Repair broken window sash
- Install exterior trim; corners boards, fascia, cornice, rake boards two door casings, and flashing. Material and labor.
- Shingle roof — red cedar shingles. Material and labor.
- Shingle walls — white cedar shingles. Material and labor.
- Repair and re-point foundation and chimney. Material and labor.

All repairs will continue to comply with The Secretary of the Interiors Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. D) Is the property listed or eligible for listing on the State Register of Historic Places?

The Akin House is in the process of being listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A criteria statement has been approved by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. The house is now listed on the State Register of Historic Places and the National Register Nomination is being prepared. Since W H A L E submitted the original criteria statement in February 2004, new historical evidence has been found which will be submitted to the Massachusetts Historical Commission. The role of the Akin House in *Down to the Sea in Ships*, an important silent film starring Clara Bow and containing original whaling footage filmed on the National Historic Landmark ship, Charles W. Morgan will, we believe, raise its importance to that of national significance.

3. W H A L E is requesting assistance in the amount of \$40,000. A campaign for the Akin House began during summer 2005 and raised, including grants, \$57,000. Three major initiatives are planned for 2006 including a direct mail solicitation to all residents and businesses in the Town of Dartmouth; a showing of the silent film "Down to the Sea in Ships" starring Clara Bow, in which the Akin House is featured as the "homestead" in the 1922 movie; and a cocktail party fundraiser called *The Revolutionary Restoration*. All funds from these fundraisers will be deposited into a dedicated account for the conservation and reuse of the Akin House as a Cultural Heritage Center. Total project cost for all phases and new construction will exceed \$250,000.

4. Current Photographs detailing Phase I Stabilization are attached.

5. Preservation Restrictions are already recorded for the Akin House.

6. & 7. Applicant & Owner – Waterfront Historic Area League

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