



May 8, 2014

Community Preservation Committee
20 Centre Street
Middleboro, MA 02346

RE: Police Station Building Project

Dear Committee:

The request to the CPC for \$500,000 funding in support of preservation and restoration of the Colonel Peter Peirce Store. Constructed circa 1830, the building is a striking example of the Greek Revival style. According to architectural historian William Mackenzie Woodward, the Colonel Peter Peirce Store is “one of the most impressive general stores created anywhere, a monumental Doric temple of a scale and quality usually reserved for a community’s most important civic buildings.” The Greek Revival was an architectural movement that flourished in America from 1830 – 1850 and drew inspiration from classical forms. One of the style’s innovations and most distinguishing variants was a temple-front gable like the one so handsomely expressed at the Peirce Store. That such an important building was constructed for a general store is perhaps testament to the financial success and ambition of its builder, Colonel Peirce.

The historic significance of the Peirce General Store was underlined in 1934 when the building was surveyed by the Historic American Building Survey (HABS). The HABS documentation, which includes photographs, plans and elevations, is included in the appendix to this report.

A sensitive renovation by architect Joseph N. Fish in 1935-36, during America’s Colonial Revival (when classical forms were again embraced), converted the building to the Middleborough Police Station. The flanking barn and former carriage wings were modified to become two symmetrical 5-bay facades with period-appropriate detailing. The main block was completely renovated, with removal of the second floor to create a single open space for use as a courtroom and replacement and reconfiguration of the rectangular windows at both levels of the north and south elevations with single arched windows.

CPC funding will be used to preserve extant features of the 1830 building and its 1936 renovation and restore features lost or altered over the intervening decades.

In November 2012 the following recommendations were made with respect to treatment of the store building that would be in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.



- The Main Street (west) blocks and facade, including the Greek Revival main block and the Colonial Revival wings, should be retained and celebrated. The form, massing and defining architectural details should be preserved.
- The historic windows on the second level and attic of the main block should be preserved and protected by interior insulated storms. These are among the few remaining original early 19th century windows in the building.
- Maintenance of strong gable ends at the wings of the facade is important to the building's historic form and character. Removal of the shed dormer from the north wing would reinforce the character of this historic element.
- The window openings on the north and south elevations of the Greek Revival block (in the historic store/assembly space) should be retained. The traditional fenestration plan contributes to the building's historic integrity and allows for the generous admission of light into the space.
- The excavated foundations on both sides of the center bay alter the sense of scale and proportion, restoring original grade would re-establish the proper sense of massing for the store/courtroom space.

CPC funding is sought to achieve the goals above.

Please see the attached breakdown of preservation and restoration work.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Todd M. Costa", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Todd M. Costa, RA
Project Architect
Kaestle Boos Associates, Inc

In conjunction with:
Patrick Guthrie, RA
Project Architect
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