

Project Title: *

Preservation and Partnership at the Shaker Church Family Site

Is this a new or existing project? *

New

Project Description: (500 word limit) *

Since 1977, Shaker Heritage Society (SHS) has stewarded the site of America's first Shaker settlement, Watervliet. The Shakers occupied the village from 1776-1924, and Albany County has owned the property since 1925. The Meeting House, Barn complex, and Drying House are venues for SHS exhibits, offices, and public activities including craft fairs, art installations, agriculture programs, and facility rentals. Several other buildings on the property have been vacant for decades.

In 2020, SHS and Albany County signed a long-term lease with a 50-year term. This lease encompasses 25+ acres and all nine surviving Shaker structures on the site. Following this accomplishment, the SHS Board of Trustees approved a three-year strategic plan in 2022. The board identified community partnerships as key to our mission of preserving the site and sharing Shaker history and values through art, agriculture, and skills-based education in traditional American crafts.

To this end, SHS aspires to rehabilitate the 1858 Shaker Wash House into a new education facility in partnership with the Northeastern Woodworkers Association (NWA). We request Community Projects Funding to complete necessary exterior stabilization and restoration work and prepare the building for adaptive reuse. We also request Community Project funding to fully preserve and rehabilitate the nearby Ministry Building.

The Wash House was the Shakers' laundry facility. Today, the structure is used for County storage. The proposed education center would house woodworking shops, classrooms, and a resource library. We aspire to combine historic rehabilitation with sensitive new construction in the footprint of a demolished Shaker Cannery.

When constructed, the Ministry housed workshops for Shaker leaders. In the 1980's the building was adapted to serve as a residential house for nurses of the Ann Lee Nursing Home with bedrooms, kitchen, bath, and communal living rooms. In the immediate term, rehabilitation of the Ministry will provide additional space for SHS and NWA programs and offices. As our capacity grows, we envision the Ministry building becoming a residence for a live-in caretaker for the property.

We are seeking separate funding to complete a Historic Structure Report and develop concept drawings for the Wash House proposal. However, the pressing need for exterior rehabilitation is already well-documented. A Master Plan was completed for the entire property in 2008, and an updated Preservation Plan including construction documents was produced for the building envelopes in 2020.

Rehabilitation of these two buildings will launch an exciting new era for the Church Family Site. We envision this investment as the model to attract new commercial and nonprofit partnerships. Through historic rehabilitation, we aspire to transform this property from a hidden gem with great potential, into a vibrant center for skills-based education and recreation just steps from the Albany Airport.

Requested Amount: *1,480,000

Total Project Cost: * 1,480,000

Please describe in detail how the requested federal funding will be used by the grantee: (200 word limit) *

Bricks and mortar construction will follow the recommendations of a 2008 Master Plan developed by Argus Architecture and Elmore Design, and a 2020 Preservation Plan and construction documents developed by Easton Architects. Construction documents for exterior restoration have already been developed and reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Office. All work will adhere to the Secretary of the Interior's standards for preservation and restoration. Tasks at both the Ministry and Wash House will include correcting grade around the foundation to address water drainage issues; masonry repairs to address cracks, open joints, and spalling; window restoration and/or replacement as required; cornice and roof repairs; and restoration of other architectural details appropriate to the Shaker era of occupancy. The final result will be a historically appropriate restoration that stabilizes and seals both buildings against the elements in preparation for the next phase of adaptive reuse. In the Ministry, additional rehabilitation work will be undertaken to restore the interior to livable conditions to serve as a caretaker's cottage.

Please provide a budget breakdown: *

Construction Costs: \$1,200,000

Wash House Building: exterior stabilization: construction costs: exterior mortar repairs to foundation and walls; cornice patch and replacement, window restoration and replacement; drainage correction

Ministry Building: exterior stabilization: slate roof, exterior mortar repairs, paint removal, demolition of non-historic porch; rehabilitation of interior including any necessary lead/asbestos abatement

Design/Permitting: \$280,000

Describe how the project will benefit the 20th District and/or U.S. Government: (100 word limit) *

The proposed education center will support new opportunities for hands-on, skills-based education in our community. From traditional Shaker crafts to modern historic restoration workshops, the facility will link local history and regional workforce development.

The SHS property includes cattle pastures, a historic apple orchard utilized by a local beekeeper and Nine Pin Cider, and a demonstration medicinal herb garden that served as a model and teaching resource for the Albany School of Pharmacy. Securing long-term care for the property will protect a unique historic resource in the Capital Region by strengthening these partnerships and facilitating new ones.

Explain why the project is a valuable use of taxpayer funds: (100 word limit) *

This project preserves the past with an eye towards the future. Only 22 Shaker communities were established in the United States, making each surviving site a unique treasure. In its day, the Watervliet Shaker Site was a bustling village built on a foundation of innovation, communalism, equality, and sustainability. To honor this history and reflect these values, we seek to not only preserve these historic structures, but to adapt them to serve the public as facilities for education, art, hospitality, and entrepreneurship. This project will be the first step towards building a true cultural campus for our community.

Has the project ever previously received federal congressionally directed funding? *

If so, when were the funds received and how were the funds spent? (Please provide a detailed list of expenditures and project costs)

List all other prior funding received for this project including federal, state, local and private sources, such as grants or donations. Please list the amounts, dates received, source and uses of funding. Please list all of this information to be considered: *

We are requesting separate funding in the amount of \$20,000 through the Preservation League of New York to complete a Historic Structure Report to assess the feasibility of the Wash House concept.

A portion of a \$500,000 Regional Economic Development Council grant was allocated to repairs on the slate roof, patching of cornices, and emergency stabilization of a brick wall of the Wash House in 2022.