

Preservation Maryland secures \$330,000 in funding for first phase of Annapolis Burtis House stabilization project

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Annapolis will receive more than \$330,000 in state and federal funding to begin stabilizing and rehabilitating the Captain William H. Burtis House, part of a major \$4.4 million renovation project announced earlier this year.

The National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Office, in partnership with Preservation Maryland, announced a combination of grants and capital appropriations this month that will go toward fixing up the historic 19th-century waterman's cottage that sits near the City Dock waterfront. The funding includes a \$100,000 grant from Maryland Heritage Areas Program, \$75,000 from the Maryland General Assembly and \$155,173 from the NPS Chesapeake Gateways program.

"The importance of saving a humble structure like this is it connects visitors and the community to the story of the working waterfront," said Nicholas Redding, president and CEO of Preservation Maryland, in a statement. "This project is not just a pilot for Maryland but also a demonstration project for the rest of the country. Anywhere you go in the world, historic resources sit at the water's edge; we must protect those resources, particularly those affected by an ever-changing climate and sea-level rise."

A [report published earlier this year](#) by Historic Annapolis and the National Park Service laid out a feasibility study for a [lengthy restoration and preservation process to protect the nearly 150-year-old building](#) from encroaching floodwaters. The effort could take years and an estimated \$4.4 million to complete, a large chunk of which would go to building an addition to increase floor space and elevating the original building to meet standards from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Under the plan, the building would be temporarily moved to an adjacent lot so a new foundation could be built. Additional protections known as mothballing would occur where modern electrical, lighting and fire suppression systems are installed and any archaeological studies are completed on the site as needed. The process could take about two to three years.

The plan would also return the building's exterior to the design and function of when it was built in 1879 and help integrate it in the City Dock area, which is expected to be heavily redeveloped in the coming years. The City Dock redevelopment will begin with the [rebuilding of Hillman Garage](#), followed by the construction of extensive resilience infrastructure around the waterfront and near the Burtis property on Prince George Street.

"This project reflects the values and interests of the Annapolis community to save the Burtis House as the last of its kind," said Wendy O'Sullivan, superintendent of the National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Office, in a statement.

Last November, the city [acquired the historic property from the state of Maryland](#) for \$1 as part of a restrictive covenant requiring the property to be used similarly to previous uses. Preservation Maryland recently named HD Squared Architects, an Annapolis-based firm, to begin the design phase of the project.

"The Burtis House carries the everyday history of Annapolis forward to today," Annapolis Mayor Gavin Buckley said in a statement. "We appreciate Preservation Maryland and National Park Service Chesapeake's effort to protect this historic house. We are grateful for this partnership at this time."

During the 2020 legislative session, the Maryland General Assembly appropriated \$75,000 for the Burtis project.

preservation and telling. I'm proud that we have all the right partners — the state, the city, Preservation Maryland, Historic Annapolis, the National Park Service and more — who are all dedicated to saving Burtis and turning it into a public asset.”

Three generations of the Burtis family lived in the house, in an area of Annapolis once known as Hell Point, part of a bustling waterfront packed with lumber yards, oyster houses and steamboat wharves. Capt. William H. Burtis bought the property and the docks that adjoined the property in 1882 and hosted a popular charter service for pleasure cruises in the Chesapeake Bay.

Over the years, as the surrounding area morphed from a working harbor to one focused on recreation, the house has been repurposed for a parade of tenants.

In the 1970s, Maryland Department of Natural Resources police occupied the building and used the docks for its boats. About 15 years ago, the National Sailing Hall of Fame began using the building before **leaving the property** in 2019.