

Preservation Achievement Awards: The Best of the Best over the Decades

By Haley Wilcox

The music swells, the curtain opens, and a dancer emerges, hopping en pointe, her tutu bouncing as she interprets a sugarplum fairy. Perhaps it's her skill, perhaps it's Tchaikovsky, or perhaps it's the feeling in the room—the magnificent, gilded opulence that is the Boston Opera House—that sends chills up patrons' arms. Every person in this room is captivated by the theater's magnificence: the orchestra and ballerina merely assist in cast-

ing the spell. The layers and layers of gilded plasterwork, plush velvet drapery, and glistening chandeliers fit for Versailles, transport theatergoers to an earlier, illustrious time in Boston's history. When the doors opened, in 1929, the Opera House, then called the B.F. Keith Memorial Theatre, was a glorious venue for vaudeville, film screenings, and plays. For sixty-two years this theater served as a landmark in Boston, until the day came when

its upkeep was too cumbersome. The theater closed, falling into severe disrepair. Paint peeled, draperies faded, and the once grand theater stood as a lackluster reminder of its once glorious past.

Boston fought back. Mayor Thomas M. Menino co-sponsored a charrette in 1996, which helped organizations, including the Preservation Alliance, inspire preservation and re-use (*continued on next page*)



The 2010 Preservation Achievement Awards were held at Suffolk University's newly restored Modern Theatre
PHOTO COURTESY OF CINDY BRENNAN


A Note from the Executive Director

By Sarah D. Kelly

The Alliance's Preservation Achievement Awards recognize individuals who have taken on immensely challenging preservation, rehabilitation and compatible new construction projects throughout our city. Award winners exhibit the extraordinary vision, tenacity, and technical capability necessary to make these complex projects a reality. This issue of the AllianceLetter gives special recognition to our 2010 honorees, and touches on the impact and meaning of the Awards program over time.

I also encourage readers to take a look back at the exceptional projects and people who have been honored over the past five years by visiting the Alliance's new website at www.bostonpreservation.org. Individually, and certainly collectively, I am sure that they will delight and inspire you.

Looking forward, I have no doubt that the Alliance's Awards program will only grow and strengthen. If you know of a project that you believe is worthy of recognition, please don't hesitate to contact us at the Alliance. Our 2011 nomination process will begin in early February of this year.

On behalf of the Alliance, I'd like to congratulate our 2010 Award winners once again. Your accomplishments will surely be celebrated for years to come. 

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Preservation Achievement



A sell-out crowd of over 200 people gathered to celebrate the 2010 Preservation Achievement Awards
PHOTO COURTESY OF CINDY BRENNAN

(continued from front page)
projects. Preservationists, architects, and citizens lobbied to have the building placed on the National Trust's Most Endangered List; a major step toward its rehabilitation. The work paid off in 2002, when the Opera House reopened its doors after a multi-million dollar restoration, complete with gilded scrolls and velvet drapes. Bostonians packed the house for its first post-rehabilitation performance of *The Lion King*. The theater was alive again, casting its spells on a new audience.

To honor this achievement, in 2004 the Boston Preservation Alliance awarded David Anderson of Clear Channel Entertainment with a Preservation Achievement Award. The Alliance's Preservation Achievement Awards recognize efforts that preserve Boston's architectural and/or cultural heritage, and reiterate the importance of preservation in one of America's most historically rich cities. Roger Tack-

eff, a Boston Preservation Alliance Board Member for twenty-five years and Awards Committee Co-Chair, sees the awards as an "opportunity to thank those people who had the courage and perseverance to make projects possible. We hold people on a pedestal who have dreamed the dream and made it happen."

Since 1988, the Alliance has recognized preservation achievement in many facets and different types of projects. One of this year's awards recognizes "a funky little firehouse in East Boston," which is now the headquarters of ZUMIX, a non-profit cultural organization dedicated to building community through the arts. The firehouse, which was vacant for over 30 years, now boasts an auditorium, recording studios, soundproof rehearsal rooms, and a radio station. The Alliance is showcasing the property as Erica Lindamood, the education coordinator, is managing a Neighborhood Preservation Workshop series in the

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Awards: The Best of the Best Over the Decades



Tim Love and Mimi Love, both from Utile, Inc., chat with Madeleine Steczynski of ZUMIX
PHOTO COURTESY OF CINDY BRENNAN

neighborhood: “It’s taking an old building that has fallen into disuse, and turning it into an environmentally sound, technologically advanced facility, that serves a vital community need and gives kids a real sense of community engagement, while giving them opportunities to be leaders in that community.”

From an opulent theater to a neighborhood firehouse, the Preservation Awards honor a variety of preservation projects in Boston. One of the most notable was the adaptive reuse of the Charles Street Jail at the edge of Beacon Hill to the luxurious Liberty Hotel. The prison, built in 1851, is regarded as one of the best examples of “Boston Granite Style,” and served as an international model for prisons in the mid-19th century. After housing some of Boston’s most notorious criminals for 120 years, the prisoners, seeing the increasing deterioration of the structure, sued and demanded better living conditions. In 1990 the last prisoners were relocated to another facility and the jail was closed. After sitting vacant for a decade, the jail was transformed into a luxury hotel. Now, the once derelict prison has a new life as one of Boston’s finest, most interesting hotels and serves as a “fantastic example of how a historic building can be given a new life that contributes strongly to our city,” says Sarah

D. Kelly, Executive Director of the Boston Preservation Alliance.

Perhaps the most distinguished and anticipated award, the Codman Award for Lifetime Achievement calls to attention someone who has “made an outstanding contribution to historic preservation in his or her lifetime,” says BPA President Susan Park. The award’s namesake, John Codman, is best remembered for his success in helping create the Beacon Hill Historic District, now one of the most famous and picturesque neighborhoods in the United States. Cod-

From an opulent theater to a neighborhood firehouse, the Preservation Awards honor a variety of preservation projects in Boston.

man possessed a passion for preservation in Boston and wanted Beacon Hill to be on par with other outstanding historic districts, specifically Georgetown, Washington, DC. In 1955, Beacon Hill was legally named Boston’s first Historic Landmark District, and was protected from change which would be detrimental to its survival. Because of Codman, Boston’s Beacon Hill is a pristine example of the city’s built heritage.

The Codman Award for Lifetime Achievement acknowledges someone who has followed his example by contributing

extraordinary effort to the preservation of Boston. It was first given in 1988 to Stephen Coyle, former head of the Boston Redevelopment Authority. His down-zoning proposals, preservation ordinance, and admiration for historic structures helped revitalize downtown Boston. The following year, Congressman J. Joseph Moakley was awarded the Codman for his preservation efforts. His work protected the beloved Boston Common from high-rise development. Susan Park comments, “How do you measure that? It’s just incredible.” Later work by the Congressman resulted in a sixty million dollar fund for Freedom Trail buildings in Boston. This remarkable feat came at a time when Boston was suffering a financial crisis and could not maintain these important structures. Congressman Moakley helped secure their future as landmarks for generations to come.

The long-lasting effects of the Awards are evident: Paige Academy, recognized in 2003, is a thriving Roxbury school operating in an 1859 Italianate double house. The school is now a treasured part of the community. Fenway Park, recognized in 2005 for a series of significant improvements, still stands as one of Boston’s most iconic structures. An abandoned chocolate factory in the Lower Mills community is now a state-of-the-art supermarket. The positive

results are endless. Clearly, there are people in this city who have the perseverance and vision to nurture the historic fabric of Boston. These awards not only recognize those who have achieved preservation success, but also pose a challenge to keep persevering in the effort to maintain Boston’s historic integrity through creative new construction, adaptive reuse, restoration, and preservation. With each award given, the Alliance calls attention to what it takes to keep the city’s history thriving, be it today, tomorrow, or one hundred years from now. 🌟

2010 Preservation Achievement Award Recipients



PHOTO COURTESY OF PETER VANDERWARKER

PARAMOUNT CENTER

SIGNIFICANT REHABILITATION/RESTORATION

545 Washington Street

Owner/Developer: Emerson College

Architect: Elkus Manfredi Architects

Built in 1932, but closed since 1976, the historic Paramount Theatre underwent an extensive renovation led by Emerson College. The former cinema space of 1,700 seats has been adapted into a 590-seat live performance venue, and historic finishes were restored. Features from the Art Deco architectural details and features from the original theater were repurposed and incorporated into the new complex.

The Paramount Center also houses a student residence hall, Black Box Theatre and screening room, along with rehearsal, classroom, and office space, a sound stage, scene shop, and a restaurant. This mixed-used development along Boston's Washington Street is a key component in the revitalization of Boston's Midtown Theater District.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRUCE MARTIN

AMES BUILDING

SIGNIFICANT REHABILITATION/RESTORATION

One Court Street

Owner/Developer: Normandy Real Estate Partners

Ames Hotel Partners LLC – Eamon O'Marah, Rich Kilstock, Seth Greenberg

Architect: Cambridge Seven Associates

Built in 1890, the Ames Building on Court Street was designed by Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge and blended Romanesque and Byzantine architectural styles. In 1974 the Ames Building was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

After purchasing the building in 2007, Normandy Real Estate Partners and Ames Hotel Partners transformed the empty building into one of Boston's newest boutique hotels, all the while keeping the historic character of the building. The project included skillful restoration of the exterior masonry façade, window surrounds and moldings, and careful restoration of the lobby's vaulted mosaic-tiled ceiling.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARK FLANNERY

CONGRESS STREET BRIDGE SIGNIFICANT REHABILITATION BY A PUBLIC AGENCY

Owner/Developer: City of Boston
Engineer/Designer: STV, Inc.

Built in 1930 by the Strauss Bascule Bridge Company of Chicago, the Congress Street Bridge is the largest and most highly ornamented of the three Strauss overhead counterweight bascule bridges in the Massachusetts Highway Department Bridge inventory and serves as a vital link between the Fort Point Channel Historic District and downtown Boston.

To preserve the unique ornamentation and design of the bridge, preservation efforts included replacement of weathered and weakened materials, new utilities, and replication of the original lanterns. Exposed granite was cleaned, repaired or rebuilt to expose the aesthetics of the old piers. Traffic lanes on the bridge were reconfigured to accommodate bicycle lanes and sidewalks were replaced and modified to provide ADA-compliant accessibility.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANTON GRASSI / ESTO

FOLIO BOSTON NOTABLE NEW CONSTRUCTION IN HARMONY WITH BOSTON'S BUILT ENVIRONMENT

80 Broad Street
Owner/Developer: The Suffolk Company
Architect: CBT Architects

Folio Boston on Broad Street is the first residential structure to be built in the Financial District in the past seventeen years and provides 24-hour activity in an otherwise 9-to-5 district with a mixed-use approach of retail, parking, and luxury condominiums.

The project preserved and integrated a historic 1807 building by Boston architect Charles Bulfinch. This three-story building became the corner building between two taller towers and served as the architectural inspiration for the design and materials used in the complex. Designed to engage daylight, jutting metal windowpanes and sills protrude to capture the sun, activating the façade and enlivening the surface of the structure and the surrounding neighborhood.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DANIELE VAN ACKERE

LISA GREENFIELD SIGNIFICANT PUBLIC ART CONTRIBUTING TO BOSTON'S URBAN FABRIC

An artist and urban planner, Lisa Greenfield had her first major public art installation in Boston in 2001, a collaboration with Jennifer Moses, entitled "Redefining Open Space" which created a carpet of grass on the sidewalk of the Summer Street Bridge and drew attention to two definitions of open space: the city's sidewalk and the neighborhood's park.

Over the past decade, Greenfield has worked solo or in collaboration to create several more installations, all which strive to bring attention to issues facing Boston neighborhoods and to specifically use the medium of public art to call attention to Fort Point Channel as a thriving artist community.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CAROL M. HIGHSMITH PHOTOGRAPHY, INC.

JOHN W. MCCORMACK POST OFFICE AND COURTHOUSE

SIGNIFICANT REHABILITATION BY A PUBLIC AGENCY

5 Post Office Square

Owner/Developer: United States General Services Administration

Architect: Goody Clancy

Designed by Cram and Ferguson and completed in 1933, the John W. McCormack Post Office and Courthouse in Post Office Square is one of the finest examples of Art Deco architecture in Boston and was designated a Boston Landmark by the Boston Landmarks Commission in 1988.

The rehabilitation project preserved the defining Art Deco features of the building, including the decorative plaster ceiling, terrazzo floors with marble inlay, decorative bronze fretwork and grilles, and the exterior granite and limestone façade. Many green elements were also included in the project, such as a self-sustaining green roof covering twenty-five percent of the site footprint, daylight dimming systems and occupancy sensors, as well as new, Boston Landmarks Commission-approved, energy efficient windows.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRISTINE PIONTEK

NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY CAMPUS

EXCEPTIONAL MAINTENANCE OF A HISTORIC PROPERTY

290 Huntington Avenue

Owner/Developer: New England Conservatory

Architect: Wessling Architects

The New England Conservatory Campus renovation project concentrated on the exterior renovation of four buildings: Jordan Hall, 295 Huntington Avenue, 241 St. Botolph Street, and 33 Gainsborough Street, three of which are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Focusing on authenticity and sustainability and working closely with the Massachusetts Historical Commission, exterior materials were matched as closely as possible for color, texture, and appearance. New stucco, terracotta, and marble were installed and all façade masonry joints were either cut and repointed or given new sealants. Energy-efficient options included the installation of a white roofing system on Jordan Hall, as well as the replacement of failed windows with either new wood windows or insulated aluminum windows to match the historic nature of the buildings.



PHOTO COURTESY OF KARA CHISHOLM

OLD SOUTH MEETING HOUSE TOWER CLOCK RESTORATION

RESTORATION OF AN ICONIC BOSTON LANDMARK

310 Washington Street

Owner/Developer: Old South Meeting House

Architect: McGinley Kalsow & Associates

Created in 1766 and installed in 1770, the Tower Clock is a prominent icon of the Boston cityscape. The year-long restoration process started in 2009 and brought together many expert preservationists to carefully restore the North clock face and replicate the South clock face.

Along with the exterior, the clockworks were carefully disassembled, cleaned, and replaced when necessary. After the restoration process, the clock faces were reattached with a new, more secure attachment system and the faces of the clock now appear in their earliest known vibrant black color, made with a traditional smalting process.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRISTINE PIONTEK

THE POWER STATION CREATIVE PRESERVATION OF AN HISTORIC STRUCTURE

540 Harrison Avenue, South End
Owner/Developer: 540 Harrison Avenue Realty Trust
Architect: Grassi Design Group

Designed by William G. Preston and built from 1889 to 1892, the West End Street Railway Central Power Station on Harrison Avenue served to power the company's electric trolley cars which ran all over the city of Boston and after 1899 the station supplied power to the Boston Elevated Railway.

The Power Station building was purchased by 540 Harrison Avenue Realty Trust in 1998 and the structure underwent a thorough restoration of the massive front arches, multiple peaked roofs, handsome buttressing, and Longmeadow brownstone accents. Brick façades were repointed and cleaned, new windows were installed to match the original glazing, and the building's six roofs were restored using the original slates.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANTON GRASSI/ESTO

PARK STREET CHURCH SUCCESSFUL ADAPTATION TO ACCOMMODATE ACCESSIBILITY

One Park Street
Owner/Developer: Park Street Church
Architect: Mills Whitaker Architects

Designed by architect Peter Banner and built in 1809, this prominent Boston landmark underwent renovations to make the church more accessible to parishioners and visitors, as well as improve deteriorated exterior conditions.

An open space Welcome Center was created to connect the historic Tremont Street and contemporary Park Street entrances and accessibility-related improvements included the rebuilding of a central elevator and an upgrade of the public entrance on Park Street. Exterior work consisted of masonry repairs to brick and brownstone façades, replacement of deteriorated roofing and gutters, and the removal of abandoned fire escapes.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ZUMIX, INC.

ZUMIX ENGINE 40 FIREHOUSE SIGNIFICANT NEIGHBORHOOD REHABILITATION

260 Sumner Street, East Boston
Owner/Developer: ZUMIX, Inc.
Architect: Utile, Inc.

Built in 1923, the Engine 40 Firehouse originally serviced the Jeffries Point neighborhood of East Boston and eventually housed the Boston Fire Boat. Purchased in 2005 by ZUMIX, Inc., extensive renovations re-established the building as a prominent fixture in the neighborhood and created a 9,000 square foot facility for ZUMIX students.

The interior was masterfully adapted to house a state of the art performance center, sound studios, practice rooms, classroom space, a recording studio, and administrative space, with a few reminders of the firehouse, including the pipe banisters in the stairwells and the original fire pole. The exterior boasts custom made, red firehouse doors, Tudor styling, and the station badge in cast stone on the front of the building. The project is also pursuing a LEED Silver Certification.

(continued on back cover)



PHOTO COURTESY OF JUDY SELWYN

CODMAN AWARD FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

DR. JUDITH SELWYN

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After graduating from what was then the largest public high school in New York, Judy Rosenkranz went on to study chemistry at Brooklyn College. National Science Foundation Undergraduate research fellowships provided her with opportunities for summer research at Brooklyn College and then at MIT where she enrolled as a graduate student in physical chemistry and subsequently received her PhD.

After enrolling in the newly started preservation program at Boston University, Dr. Selwyn was hired out of the classroom by the instructors and she joined the consulting staff at the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, giving her the opportunity to work with some of the true pioneers in the field of architectural conservation. In 1978, she formed Preservation Technology Associates, Inc. to provide architectural conservation services to architects, government agencies, non-profits, and others responsible for historic properties.

Specializing in masonry conservation and historic roof restoration, “Dr. Judy” has participated in more than 1,000 projects over her distinguished career. Her projects include the Boston Athenaeum, the Old State House, the Massachusetts State House, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Harvard’s Memorial Hall, Touro Synagogue and the Carnegie Museum, as well as numerous churches, public and academic buildings. Dr. Selwyn serves on MIT’s Corporation Committee for the Chemistry Department and she has been a long-time member of the Brookline Preservation Commission. Earlier this year, she was honored by Preservation Massachusetts with a Paul E. Tsongas Profiles in Preservation Award.

Dr. Selwyn and her husband Lee live in a one hundred year-old house in Brookline and their family includes three grown children and two grandsons. [f](#)

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