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Boston Preservation Alliance names 2011 Preservation Achievement Awards

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The Boston Preservation Alliance has named its 2011 Preservation Achievement Awards. Short summaries of this year's award winning projects are included below. Visit for more information on the awards. <http://www.bostonpreservation.org/programs/preservation-achievement-awards.html>

Integration of Preservation and New Construction

Atlantic Wharf

Owner/Developer: Boston Properties

Architect: CBT Architects

Situated at the intersection of Atlantic Ave. and Congress St., three buildings - the Russia Building (designed by Peabody and Stearns), the Graphic Arts and the Tufts Buildings - served as a hub of mercantile trade. These monumental buildings, characterized by cast-iron storefronts, large shop front windows and decorative lanterns, eventually fell into a state of near-unsalvageable disrepair. The new Atlantic Wharf has incorporated the façades and other important architectural elements of these historic buildings into a modern, thirty-one-story skyscraper, which contains offices, residential units, and retail space. The new structure features original storefronts, complete with limestone and cast iron. The exterior has been completely refurbished, including the repair of crumbling brick and rebuilding neglected lanterns. Nelson Court, a passageway connecting the Russia and Graphic Arts Buildings, is now a glass atrium that serves as an entryway into the skyscraper.

Modern Theatre

Owner/Developer: Suffolk University

Architect: CBT Architects

Designed in 1876 by Levi Newcomb and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979, the Modern Theatre was a glorious, High Victorian Gothic style structure that fell victim to years of disuse. With meticulous attention to detail, the project team preserved the original façade from the theatre with each marble and sandstone block removed, numbered, and restored before being carefully reassembled. Inside, an auditorium was constructed, echoing traces of the old building. Narrow walls, neoclassical "movie palace" styling, and painted wall treatments by artist John Lee Beatty are all reminiscent of the original theatre's murals. In addition to the auditorium, the renovated building also contains ten stories of dormitory space for 197 students.

Maintenance of a Historic Neighborhood Landmark

Jamaica Plain Civil War Monument

Owner/Developer: City of Boston

Conservator: Daedalus, Inc.

Designed by artist W.W. Lumis and erected in 1871, the Jamaica Plain Civil War Monument stands as a memorial, both to Civil War heroes and to fatally wounded Union soldiers from West Roxbury

and "is one of the earliest large scale Civil War monuments in the city." Designed in the Gothic revival style, the monument features a four-sided marble tablet, sheltered by a vaulted arch. Atop the structure stands the figure of an anonymous soldier bowing his head and resting on his rifle. In 2010, the City undertook an extensive conservation effort, spearheaded by Daedalus, Inc. Decades of dirt, grime, and staining were removed through the careful cleaning of the granite and marble surfaces. Lead and mortar joints were repointed, and bronze finials were also cleaned and buffed.

Neighborhood Preservation

90 Smith St. - Basilica Court

Owner/Developer: Mission Associates II, LLC/Weston Associates, Inc.

Architect: Spalding Tougias Architects

A part of the former Mission Church complex in Mission Hill, the Mission School (90 Smith St.) was constructed in 1889 of Roxbury puddingstone and red brick in the Queen Anne/Georgian Revival style. Underutilized for decades, The Mission School was purchased by Weston Associates from the Redemptorist Fathers in 2003 as the first step in the redevelopment of the complex's lower campus. Exterior work included masonry restoration, new windows, roof, doors, copper gutters and downspouts to match the historic character of the structure. Masonry piers and iron fencing around the site were also restored during this meticulous restoration.

New Construction in Harmony with Boston's Built Environment

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Owner/Developer: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Design Architect: Foster + Partners

Executive Architect: CBT Architects

The recent construction at the Museum of Fine Arts is extensive, but upholds the integrity of Guy Lowell's Beaux Arts structure on Huntington Avenue, where the museum has stood since 1909. The new addition houses the Art of the Americas Wing and is constructed from glass and the traditional Deer Isle granite of the original exterior. The new construction has yielded a courtyard, a special exhibitions gallery, a visitor center, over fifty new galleries, plus classrooms, offices, and a seminar room, all aimed at strengthening links with the community by creating more open and accessible building.

New Parkland Added to Boston's Open Space

Fan Pier Public Green

Owner/Developer: The Fallon Company

Landscape Architect: Richard Burck Associates

For many decades, Fan Pier played an integral role in the shipping industry of South Boston, serving as the end-point for many industrial railway lines. By the late twentieth century, more efficient technologies rendered the Pier obsolete, and the area fell into disuse. In recent years, The Fallon Company has worked to transform Fan Pier into one of the most vibrant neighborhoods along the waterfront. Where an unsightly parking lot once stood, the Fan Pier Public Green has been established. An expansive lawn sitting amidst the Pier's modern hotels, residences and office buildings, the park was designed as a "urban theater," connecting the water to the city with lush grass, diverse flora, and an open view of the marina for pedestrians, athletes, and loungers alike.

Rehabilitation by a Public Agency

Brewer Fountain

Owner of Fountain: City of Boston

Owner of Property: City of Boston Parks and Recreation Department

Architect: Carr, Lynch and Sandell

Installed on the Boston Common in 1868, the Brewer Fountain is the oldest public sculpture in the park. Situated at the intersection of Park Street, Tremont Street, it is one of the most significant pieces of public art in all of the parks in Boston. The fountain was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972 and became a National Historic Landmark in 1987. Addressing the prolonged deterioration of the fountain, restoration efforts focused on repair and stabilization, the modernization of fountain systems, and the establishment of a long-term maintenance program. The restoration process involved state of the art bronze cleaning, recasting, remounting, and restoration, as well as cleaning of granite and other stone elements. The fountain's infrastructure was also upgraded, and the supporting masonry repaired.

Rehabilitation of an Historic Industrial Space

Boston Renaissance Charter Public School

Owner/Developer: Boston Renaissance Charter Public School

Architect: HMFH Architects

The recently completed Renaissance Charter Public School in the Readville Industrial Area of Hyde Park revitalized a 19th century masonry mill and a midcentury warehouse. Built between 1889 and 1923, 1415 Hyde Park Avenue once housed the American Tool & Manufacturing Company's assembly line. The design of the school preserved significant elements of the historic mill building, including original Boston brick masonry, columns, and timber floors, and recycled other elements for reuse in the newly constructed wing connecting the two buildings. The new school is one of the first restoration projects in the historically significant Readville Industrial Area. The Boston Renaissance Charter Public School is the largest public elementary school in Boston, educating 885 of the city's most underserved students in grades K-6.

Metropolitan Waterworks Museum

Owner/Developer: Metropolitan Waterworks Museum

E.A. Fish

Architect: Gund Partnership

Built in 1888, the Chestnut Hill Waterworks High Service Pumping Station was designed by Arthur Vinal in the Richardsonian Romanesque style. Contained three massive steam engines, the building pumped water to homes and businesses at higher elevations in Boston, and illustrated the technological feats of Boston's Golden Age. After being taken offline in the 1970s, the site served as storage space and fell into disrepair. After receiving a Boston Landmark designation in 1989 and a National Register District designation in 1990, advocates for reuse of the site formed Friends of the Waterworks and the state's Division of Capital Asset Management (DCAM) worked with E.A. Fish to restore and conserve the historic High Service Pumping station along with its Leavitt, Worthington and Allis steam engines. The Metropolitan Waterworks Museum opened this spring and tells the story of one of the nation's first metropolitan water systems, highlighting the role water plays in public health, engineering, architecture, and social history.

The Watermill Lofts - The Lofts at Lower Mills

Owner/Developer: Winn Development

Architect: The Architectural Team

The Watermill Lofts, the final phase of the redevelopment of the 14-acre Baker Chocolate Factory complex, is a residential building containing 17 luxury loft units in the factory's former boiler building,

situated on the Neponset River. The final phase of the project is part of an ongoing redevelopment effort that began in 1985, after the factory had been left abandoned for nearly twenty years. The three-phase rehabilitation project resulted in creating a 318-unit mixed-income neighborhood, which has contributed to the revitalization of the surrounding Lower Mills area, which now contains destination restaurants, shopping, and luxury residential developments. The once deteriorating historic area has now become a lively revitalized community of families, artists, seniors, and mixed-income residents.

Rehabilitation/Restoration of a Religious Property

Tiffany Stained Glass Window Restoration at Theodore Parker Church

Owner/Developer: Theodore Parker Church

Conservators: Studio Restorations, Inc. and Julie L. Sloan

Built in 1900 by Henry Seaver, the Theodore Parker Unitarian Universalist Church stands as an icon in the center of West Roxbury. While the building itself is historic, the church also houses seven Louis Comfort Tiffany windows, which represent all major periods of Tiffany's designs and workmanship. Expressly designed for the church, by Agnes Northrup, the Landscape Triptych and its two flanking jewel medallion windows "represent the finest level of work produced by the Tiffany Studios," according to art historian Virginia Raguin. Over time, fatigue cracks in soldered joints and severe bowing put the windows in danger of collapse. In order to prevent water infiltration, mortar and capstone repair was needed, along with replacement of exterior protective glazing. Recognizing the importance of preserving these priceless windows, as well as the church as a whole, the 90-member congregation has raised almost half a million dollars towards restoration efforts, including grants from the George B. Henderson Foundation and Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Rehabilitation/Restoration Preserving Boston's Heritage

Georges Island Visitor Center

Owner/Developer: Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation

Architect: McGinley Kalsow & Associates

A National Historic Landmark and the main feature of Georges Island, Fort Warren served as a center of protective mining of Boston Harbor throughout WWI and WWII until the fort was decommissioned in the 1950s. In the fall of 2009, the former Mine Storage Building at the head of the pier was renovated and adapted as the Island's new Visitor Center, focusing on the Island's military role in protecting Boston Harbor over the last 300 years. In addition to the renovation of the Mine Storage Building, a new Shade Shelter was constructed on the foundation of the former Cable Tank Building, adjacent to the Visitor Center. The landscape around both structures was designed using historically-related materials, as well as benches and interpretive signage to help visitors understand the relationship between the Visitor Center, Fort Warren, and the island itself.

About the Event:

The Preservation Achievement Awards, are bestowed annually to honor outstanding achievements in historic preservation and compatible new construction in Boston. The Boston Preservation Alliance presents Awards to property owners and developers of exceptional preservation-related projects in order to celebrate their positive impact on Boston's built environment.