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Kaplan Construction's work on the Pierce Building earns awards from the Boston Preservation Alliance and Preservation Massachusetts

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Dorchester, MA According to Kaplan Construction, a WBE general contractor and construction management firm, the Pierce Building has been honored with two preservation achievement awards from the Boston Preservation Alliance and Preservation Massachusetts.

The Boston Preservation Alliance's 35th annual Preservation Achievement Awards honored the iconic building's full renovation and rehabilitation, which was designed by Boehm Architecture and owned and developed by Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corp., a community development organization. Seven other projects were also recognized for "making history more accessible for Bostonians."

The project also received the Mayor Thomas M. Menino Legacy Award from Preservation Massachusetts. The annual Preservation Awards celebrated preservation projects that are “transformative, catalytic, embrace the community, create partnerships, and revitalize the best of the past to make something good for the future.” This year’s award program commemorated the 20th anniversary of the Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax (MHRT) Credit program, and the honorees were chosen in the context of their connection to the MHRT program.

The Pierce Building project involved the renovation and rehabilitation of the building’s interior and exterior, part of an ongoing plan to revitalize the city’s Upham’s Corner. Starting in 2020, the project was completed in two phases over four years. Phase one focused on the exterior restoration, including repairs to the deteriorated structural steel and replacement of the decorative cast iron cladding. Phase two involved a full interior renovation of the four-story brick and marble Classical Revival style building. The existing first floor retail space was gutted to create new commercial space, and the second through fourth floor were transformed into offices, common spaces, and shared bathrooms. Kaplan installed all new mechanical, electrical, and plumbing (MEP) systems, lighting, sprinkler systems, paint, and finishes. Accessibility improvements included a new wheelchair lift and the rehabilitation of the existing 100-year-old elevator. Wood floors were restored and the project team collaborated with the Mass. Historical Society to ensure all new windows were historically accurate. The second phase also included continued efforts to restore the exterior, including brick pointing and cleaning, stone replacement and repairs, and all new storefront and surrounds.

Several structural columns were found to be deteriorated, requiring the building to be shored for repairs. An Impressed Current Cathodic Protection (ICCP) system was implemented to monitor and protect the remaining columns from corrosion. The building is now occupied by JPMorgan Chase’s Community Center branch on the first floor and two local nonprofits on the second floor, while the upper floors remain the home of Dorchester Bay EDC.

“Upham’s Corner is experiencing a period of revival, and it’s crucial to the community that its history and character remain accessible in the landscape as new buildings emerge. Dorchester Bay itself is an anchor of the community, and the Pierce Building’s restoration maintains a tangible connection between people and place in this thriving neighborhood,” said Alison Frazee, executive director of the Boston Preservation Alliance.

“The Pierce Building is a manifestation of Dorchester Bay’s commitment to building a strong, thriving Upham’s Corner. Our investment in the restoration of this neighborhood asset marks a turning point in the long-planned revitalization of Upham’s Corner as an arts and innovation district,” said Kimberly Lyle, CEO of Dorchester Bay EDC. “This was our third project with Kaplan Construction and we knew the importance of working with partners that have experience in historic renovations, for this building holds so much history and future potential. Kaplan has demonstrated this experience through their numerous previous awards for their preservation work from the Preservation Alliance and Preservation MA.”

A landmark of Upham’s Corner, the Pierce Building was once owned by Samuel Bowen Pierce, who

sold crockery and varied goods throughout New England during the 1800s. Following World War II, the building experienced decades of deferred maintenance until Dorchester Bay EDC purchased it in the early 1980s with the goal of rehabilitating it. Following the project, the building will be placed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Upham's Corner Historic District.

The project team members include:

- Owner/developer: Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corp.
- Owner's representative: Anser Advisory
- Construction manager: Kaplan Construction
- Architect: Boehm Architecture
- Structural engineer: Structures North
- MEP/FP engineer: Wozny Barber

Bestowed annually since 1988, the Preservation Achievement Awards honor outstanding achievements in historic preservation and compatible new construction in Boston. Celebrated for their positive impact on the city's built environment, winning projects are looked upon as models for future preservation work.

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