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2025 Rhody Awards for Historic Preservation winners to be honored on Oct. 19 at WaterFire Arts Center

September 12, 2025 - Rhode Island



Sheryl Hack

Providence, RI Preserve Rhode Island has named the 10 recipients of the 2025 Rhody Awards for Historic Preservation. Each year, Preserve RI celebrates the remarkable achievements of individuals and organizations for their efforts in utilizing historic preservation to strengthen their communities, improve quality of life, and address social challenges. Awardees span from Westerly to Pawtucket to Tiverton, showing that preservation efforts impact communities across the state.

This year's recipients are being honored for work that includes:

- protecting and restoring iconic landmarks that enhance the state's tourism industry and connects Rhode Islanders to their shared history
- converting abandoned mill buildings into much-needed housing and commercial spaces for local businesses and restaurants
- creating community spaces that help build local economies

An independent jury of historians, architects, developers, community leaders and preservationists had the difficult task of narrowing down the nominations to only 10 finalists.

"I am incredibly impressed with the achievements of these awardees. This year's slate of projects and people demonstrate preservation excellence. It's an honor to celebrate them," said Sheryl Hack, executive director.

The 17th annual Rhody Awards will take place at the WaterFire Arts Center in Providence on Sunday, October 19th from 4 to 7pm.

The 2025 Rhody Awardees are:

Newport Collaborative Architects - Frederick C. Williamson Professional Award

Celebrated for their transformative impact on Rhode Island's built environment through a sustained ethos of creative collaboration grounded in historic preservation. Once the largest architectural firm in the state, the firm closed earlier this year after the three principals — Mike Abbott, Glenn Gardiner, and John Grosvenor — retired after 44 years working together. Their work includes restoration of famous Rhode Island landmarks such as the Providence Performing Arts Center, the Providence Arcade, Barrington Town Hall, and the Audrain Auto Museum.

Margaret Whitehead - Frederick C. Williamson Professional Award

Awarded for her remarkable 34-year career as Curator of Blithewold Manor, Gardens & Arboretum in Bristol, R.I. She was involved in the formation of Save Blithewold, Inc., a non-profit created to prevent Blithewold from being sold to private developers. As curator, she helped bring new attention to the historic house and the family that lived there by authoring two books, expanding the collection, and leading the effort to convert Blithewold's third floor into a state-of-the-art archive.

Matthew and Carly Callahan (Westerly) - Homeowner Award

Matthew and Carly Callahan purchased a Greek Revival home (c. 1840) with the hope to inspire others in Westerly to preserve and celebrate the historic charm and unique character of the town. The exterior, now fully restored, will last for another 100 years.

Independent Man (Providence) – Community Impact Award

After discovering damage to the marble cupola on which this treasured icon stands, the State quickly stepped in to ensure the statue's protection and safe removal from the top of the State House. To engage the community during the restoration of the Independent Man, the statue was placed in the rotunda of the State House, drawing crowds from 47 of the 50 states and countries ranging from Australia to Venezuela. Nearly 12,000 people visited the State House while the Independent Man was in residence, almost double from the year before. The statue was then re-gilded in alignment with its historic design and now stands sentry atop the State House once more.

Stedman & Fuller Manufacturing Company Complex (Providence) - Preservation Project Award

This adaptive reuse project has transformed a deteriorated industrial site comprising over two acres of brownfield lots and an entire city block into a thriving commercial and residential complex in Providence's West End. Using both state and federal historic tax credits, the project has added much needed housing to Providence with 64 residential units, while also providing space for local businesses across 20,000 square feet of commercial space, including studios, a restaurant, and offices.

Track 15 Food Hall (Providence) - Preservation Project Award

Marsella Development Corp. undertook a \$25 million project to transform part of the former Union Station train terminal into what is now the Track 15 Food Hall. At 18,000 s/f, the project not only preserved the building's historic character, but has created a lively community space that showcases seven independent Rhode Island-based food vendors.

Isaac Bell House (Newport) - Preservation Project Award

From November of 2023 to July of 2024, the Preservation Society of Newport County conducted a \$3.3 million restoration of the Isaac Bell House. The scope of work included replacing all exterior shingles, restoring the shutters and windows, repointing the lower-level brick and chimneys, and more. A National Historic Landmark, Isaac Bell House is one of the best surviving examples of Shingle Style architecture in the country.

Fire Station #1 (Pawtucket) - - Preservation Project Award

After closing in 2017 due to environmental hazards, the 1912 building laid vacant for years. The community urged town leaders to replace the station to support the west side of town. Fortunately, the city of Pawtucket elected to restore the historic station rather than build a new one. To accommodate present day needs, a sensitive addition expanded the square footage from 6,000 to 7,500 s/f, and accommodates a ladder truck—an essential addition for modern fire response. The station has returned as a point of pride for the Woodlawn neighborhood.

Tiverton Four Corners (Tiverton) – Preservation Project Award

Tiverton Four Corners' historic charm is a delight to anyone passing through town, but that wasn't always the case. While many had a hand in its transformation starting in the 1960s, when Jim and Roz Weir arrived in the early 1980s things really started to take off. Over the next 40 years, they restored or built 13 buildings, adding a traditional style Meeting House for arts and education and a sculpture garden open to the public. Curating shops that would draw foot traffic and create a vibrant town center, the project was viable thanks to the Weirs' vision, determination, and ingenuity.

Poplar Point Lighthouse (North Kingstown) – Stewardship Award

In 1966, Russell Shippee's parents fulfilled a lifelong dream by acquiring the decommissioned Poplar Point Lighthouse (1831) as their residence. When Russell and Cathy Shippee eventually moved in, they restored the exterior and interiors, maintaining historic details while upgrading the home to modern living. Situated on a peninsula overlooking Wickford Village, the Shippees were often asked why the lighthouse was dark. With the help of David Zapatka, who helped them navigate the process, the lighthouse was re-illuminated last December for the first time in 142 years.

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