



**William Francis Galvin**  
Secretary of the Commonwealth

Contact: Brian McNiff  
Telephone: 617-727-9180

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**SECRETARY GALVIN TO PRESENT 2013 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD TO  
NEEDHAM TOWN HALL**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin, Chairman of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, announces the selection of the Needham Town Hall to receive a 2013 Massachusetts Historical Commission Historic Preservation Award.

“The Massachusetts Historical Commission is proud to recognize the extraordinary accomplishments of this year’s awardees,” said Secretary Galvin. “The projects the Commission is recognizing this year are particularly diverse and represent the many creative ways that significant historic resources are being preserved across the Commonwealth. The restoration of the Needham Town Hall as it enters its second century has reinstated it as the civic and cultural heart of the community.”

Boston architectural firm Winslow and Bigelow designed the Georgian Revival-style Needham Town Hall, which was constructed in 1903 by Mead, Mason & Company of Boston. The building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The last town meeting was held in the second-floor auditorium in 1952. The auditorium was subsequently divided into small offices arranged along a central corridor, with a suspended acoustic ceiling installed eight feet above the floor level, drastically decreasing the volume of the space. In 2007, the town embarked upon a plan that would address overcrowding in the building, as well as the need for restoration due to years of deferred maintenance. Accessibility, outdated building systems, egress, and overall fire protection were all issues to be addressed. The community expressed a strong desire to restore the original auditorium, but a major challenge was accommodating office space that would be displaced by restoring the auditorium. The restoration of the Needham Town Hall included cleaning and repointing of exterior masonry, restoration of deteriorated and missing wood trim, and rehabilitation of original wood windows and doors. Slate and copper roofs were replaced, and the 80-foot-high clock tower and cupola were restored, including clock repair and application of gold leaf to the dome. Envelope performance was enhanced with the addition of insulation and interior secondary glazing. A three-story, 12,590-square-foot addition created new office space so that the auditorium could be restored to its original design and purpose. At the interior, modern partitions were removed to return the floor plan to the original 1903 layout. Historic photographic evidence and in-situ elements were used to replicate missing ornamental plaster features in the auditorium. Multiple layers of floor finishes were removed, and original wood floors restored. New, efficient HVAC, plumbing, fire protection, and electrical systems were installed in a manner respectful of the historic fabric. Underutilized basement space was improved by excavation, underpinning, and installation of a new floor slab. The building was rededicated on November 5, 2011, to coincide with the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the town’s founding, and on November 7, 2011, the first town meeting since 1952 was held in the restored auditorium.

This is the 35<sup>th</sup> year of MHC’s Preservation Awards program. Projects are considered annually for awards in the categories of Rehabilitation and Restoration, Adaptive Reuse, Education and Outreach, Archaeology, Stewardship, and Landscape Preservation. Individuals are considered in the categories of

Individual Lifetime Achievement and Local Preservationist. Secretary Galvin serves as the chair of the 17-member Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Secretary Galvin will present the awards at an afternoon ceremony on May 23, 2013, at the Massachusetts Archives Building at 220 Morrissey Blvd., Dorchester. The Needham Town Hall restoration project is one of 12 projects, individuals, and organizations to be honored.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission is the office of the State Historic Preservation Officer and the State Archaeologist. It was established in 1963 to identify, evaluate, and protect important historical and archaeological assets of the Commonwealth. Visit our website to learn more about the Commission's programs ([www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)).

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