



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
STEPHEN WILLCOCK HOUSE, WESTPORT**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin, Chairman of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, announces the selection of the Stephen Willcock House in Westport, also known as the Westport Town Farm, 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 Stephen Willcock House has preserved not only the building, but also the property’s nearly 300 years of associations with agricultural activity in Westport.”

Built for Stephen Willcock in 1725, this house sits on 40 acres of farmland. In 1824, the town acquired the property for use as a shelter for the town’s paupers, the infirm, and transients. The property served in this capacity for more than a hundred years, but fell into disrepair beginning in the latter half of the 20th century. To preserve the building, the preservation team closely followed the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. Unsafe stairs were deconstructed and reassembled with existing treads. The crumbling fieldstone foundation walls were repointed, and wet basement conditions were remedied with trench drains that serve an underground cistern, which captures rainwater for use in the garden. Hand-wrought hardware made by a local blacksmith replaced missing elements. Rotted sills and timbers were replaced in-kind. Original woodwork and masonry were preserved throughout the house. The team addressed universal access with a new, accessible route into the building including parking, entry, and a bathroom. The south apartment of the farmhouse was adapted into office space for The Trustees of Reservations and the Westport Conservation Land Trust, and a 99-year lease from the town ensures that the property will no longer be vulnerable to changes in the economy or municipal budget. The Trustees of Reservations established public access and a trail network and opened a community garden on the property, which has contributed hundreds of pounds of food to local food banks since 2008. In the summer, the Conservation Youth Corps program hires Westport youth to work the farm and engage in learning and recreational activities.

This is the 35th 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 Stephen Willcock House 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).

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