



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

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**SECRETARY GALVIN TO PRESENT 2012 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD TO
CENTER METHODIST CHURCH / PROVINCETOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY, PROVINCETOWN**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin, Chairman of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, announces the selection of the Center Methodist Church in Provincetown, to receive a 2012 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 and adaptive reuse of the Center Methodist Church as the new Provincetown Public Library has restored a landmark building on the town skyline, and has reinstated it as a vital resource for its community.”

When it was built in 1860, the Center Methodist Episcopal Church was reputed to be the largest church of its denomination anywhere in the United States; at the time, Provincetown’s large congregation could support a grand church. By 1958, however, upkeep of the building was becoming a problem, and the diminished congregation opted to construct a smaller building in a new location. Walter P. Chrysler, Jr., son of the founder of the Chrysler Corporation, bought the building and converted it into an art museum, which he ran until 1970 when he relocated his collection to Virginia. The building then operated briefly as a center for the arts before being acquired by the town for the Provincetown Heritage Museum, which was run on a seasonal basis by a dedicated group of volunteers until 2000. Museum visitation declined beginning in the 1990s. At the same time, the Provincetown Public Library was outgrowing its own small building, and the town decided to adaptively reuse the former Methodist Church as a new library. On April 2, 2001, the building was conveyed to the Board of Library Trustees. The year before, the building’s deteriorated belfry had been removed for repair, and the front façade was also removed to make structural repairs. As funding was not then available to completely restore the façade, a covering of plywood and battens was installed temporarily, and some of the building’s wooden architectural elements were stored for future reference. Unfortunately, the temporary repairs failed and water penetrated the building, damaging interior walls and fixtures. The belfry was restored in 2005, and the façade was again temporarily weatherproofed, in 2007, with the help of a Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund grant. Careful restoration of the exterior was completed in 2011. Ten years after they had been removed, salvaged façade elements were restored and used to replicate missing pieces. Paint analysis was performed to restore the original exterior color. Interior renovations included excavation and selective underpinning of the lower level, restoration of the railings on the dual entry staircases, and careful installation of new building systems.

This is the 34th 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.

State House, Room 337, Boston, Massachusetts 02133

Secretary Galvin will present the awards at an afternoon ceremony on May 30, 2012, at the Massachusetts Archives Building at 220 Morrissey Blvd., Dorchester. The Center Methodist Church 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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