



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

Contact: Brian McNiff
Telephone: 617-727-9180

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**SECRETARY GALVIN TO PRESENT 2012 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD TO
EUSTIS STREET FIRE HOUSE, BOSTON**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin, Chairman of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, announces the selection of the Eustis Street Fire House in Boston (Roxbury), 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 Eustis Street Fire House saved a building on the brink of collapse that had stood vacant for nearly fifty years, reinstating it as a source of pride for its community.”

The 1859 Eustis Street Fire House, designed by local architect John Roulestone Hall, is Boston’s oldest remaining firehouse. The brick Italianate building was constructed to house Torrent Six, a man-pulled, Roxbury-built Hunneman fire engine. A rear ell, added in 1869, housed stables. In 1919 the building, no longer a firehouse, became home to a local chapter of veterans of the Spanish-American War. In the 1950s, the City of Boston Parks Department used the firehouse briefly before seeking unsuccessfully to demolish it. By the late 1980s, the building was in a state of serious disrepair and leaned precariously towards the neighboring Eliot Burying Ground. The wooden stables collapsed in 1991, leaving the back end of the structure open to the elements; soon after, Historic Boston Incorporated (HBI), a nonprofit organization that rehabilitates at-risk historic properties, took interest in the building and helped design an innovative bracing system to save it from collapse. Intended to last two to three years, the bracing instead lasted for eighteen. In 2008, the City solicited proposals for redevelopment of the firehouse, ultimately selecting HBI. The comprehensive exterior and interior rehabilitation project utilized state and federal historic rehabilitation tax credits. HBI enlisted the North Bennet Street School’s preservation carpentry program to restore and preserve historic exterior ornamentation, and the original Torrent Six sign was re-created from photographic evidence. Before construction of a new wood-frame ell on the footprint of the former stable addition, UMass Archaeological Services, under guidance from MHC, completed an archaeological study and land-use history to establish whether the land under the firehouse had once been part of the neighboring burying ground. Investigations revealed two complete skeletons lying under the proposed addition. To avoid disturbing the remains, the project architect and engineer designed an alternate system of support. The firehouse is individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and also contributes to the Eustis Street Architectural Conservation District. The building now houses HBI’s headquarters, with the first floor leased to another nonprofit organization, the Timothy Smith Network of technology centers, serving residents throughout Roxbury.

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.

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 Eustis Street Fire 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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