



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

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**SECRETARY GALVIN TO PRESENT 2008 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD TO
THE CHARLES STREET JAIL/LIBERTY HOTEL, BOSTON**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin, Chairman of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, announces the selection of the former Charles Street Jail/Liberty Hotel in Boston to receive a 2008 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 significant historic resources are being preserved across the Commonwealth. I commend the Liberty Hotel and Massachusetts General Hospital for their commitment to preserving this National Historic Landmark and congratulate them on their creative transformation of the former jail into a luxury hotel.”

The Charles Street Jail (Suffolk County Jail) was designed by architect Gridley James Fox Bryant and reformer Rev. Louis Dwight in 1851. At the time, with its high windows and natural light, it was considered a model prison. Charles Street Jail housed many famous individuals including Mayor James Curley and Ferdinando Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti. By the 1970s, however, the now overcrowded facility was declared unfit for occupation. After the last prisoner was transferred in 1991, Massachusetts General Hospital acquired the property. Recognizing the need for additional hotel space for the families of their patients, MGH sought a developer to transform the jail into a hotel. The Liberty Hotel opened in 2007. The hotel has incorporated the building’s history into many aspects of its design, including preserving jail cell doors in one of their restaurants; balconies from which guards once watched prisoners now connect guest rooms to conference spaces; exhibits highlight the building’s history; historic circular windows and wood trusses have been restored; and the signature cupola has been restored. The Charles Street Jail is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Secretary Galvin will present the awards at an early evening ceremony on Thursday, May 29, 2008 at the Massachusetts Archives Building at 220 Morrissey Blvd., Dorchester. The Charles Street Jail project is one of 11 projects and individuals to be honored.

This is the 30th 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, 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.

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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