



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

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**SECRETARY GALVIN PRESENTS 2016 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD TO
BURNS BLOCK & SECOND BURNS BLOCK /HOTEL ON NORTH IN PITTSFIELD**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William F. Galvin, Chairman of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, announces the selection of the Burns Block & Second Burns Block/ Hotel on North, Pittsfield, to receive a 2016 Massachusetts Historical Commission Historic Preservation Award.

Secretary Galvin presented the award recently at a ceremony in the Massachusetts Archives Building, Dorchester. The Burns Block and Second Burns Block / Hotel on North is one of 12 projects, individuals, and organizations to be honored.

“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 completed rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the Burns Blocks demonstrates a strong commitment to preserving Pittsfield’s historic downtown structures, and will pave the way for the neighborhood’s further revitalization.”

The Burns Block and Second Burns Block are two adjacent and connected, multistory, brick commercial buildings constructed by James M. Burns to house his furniture store, warehouse, and small retail shops. Both buildings are listed in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Upper North Street Commercial Historic District.

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The Burns Block, constructed in 1883, is a four-story building with storefronts at the street level, large display windows on the second floor, regular fenestration above, and a flat roofline with a projecting cornice. Originally three stories in height, the Burns Block received a fourth floor following a 1914 fire that damaged the building. The Second Burns Block, constructed in 1890, is three stories in height and also has street-level storefronts. Its upper façade features ornate masonry details, including corbelled piers, arches, and brackets. From 1910 to 1994, the primary tenant was the Besse-Clark Company, a landmark department store. After 1994, the Burns blocks were occupied by a series of miscellaneous businesses.

In 2012, MM &D, LLC, principally owned by Pittsfield residents David and Laurie Tierney, purchased the buildings with plans to convert them into a unique, independently owned boutique hotel. The buildings were restored using state and federal historic rehabilitation tax credits.

Inappropriate 20th-century exterior sheathing was removed from the Burns Block, and more than 100 new, historically appropriate windows were installed throughout both buildings. Interior columns and brick walls were retained and exposed to view in guest rooms, and the original wood floors were restored. Original tin ceilings were repaired, and replaced where necessary with new tin ceilings matching the original design. The project team cut a new skylight atrium into the north building, and repurposed historic wood beams from the opening as fireplace mantels, bookshelves, and luggage carts.

The sensitive adaptive reuse of the two buildings created a hotel featuring forty-five guest rooms, a lobby with an art gallery that displays a rotating exhibit, a restaurant with a bar and lounge, a banquet room, meeting rooms, and an atrium gathering space. The first new hotel in Pittsfield since 1968, Hotel on North will potentially spur further economic development in the city. The project was honored with the Berkshire Trendsetters “Putting the Berkshires on the map” award, and was named by *Architectural Digest* as one of the best new hotels of 2015.

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*L to R: Patsy Harris, Michael Makes, Karen T. Hunt, Secretary William F. Galvin,
John Dickson, Michele Butler, David J. Tierney III*

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