



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

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November 1, 2017

**SECRETARY GALVIN PRESENTS 2017 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD
TO THE OLD CHAPEL AT UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William F. Galvin, Chairman of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, announces the selection of the Old Chapel at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst to receive a 2017 Massachusetts Historical Commission Historic Preservation Award.

“The Massachusetts Historical Commission is proud to recognize the extraordinary accomplishments of this year’s awardees,” Secretary Galvin said. “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 preservation of UMass Amherst’s Old Chapel guarantees the campus centerpiece for future generations.”

The Old Chapel building at the University of Massachusetts Amherst campus is the university’s most iconic building and a lasting reminder of its early history as the Massachusetts Agricultural College. Designed by prominent Worcester architect Stephen Carpenter Earle and completed in 1885, it is a richly detailed Richardsonian Romanesque-style building. Two and a half stories in height, with a square footprint, the building features a four-story belltower, cross-gable roof, round-arched window and door openings, rough-cut gray Pelham granite blocks, and red-brown Longmeadow sandstone trim.

The construction of the Old Chapel marked an important milestone for the fledgling Massachusetts Agricultural College. As the school’s reputation continued to grow, the need for a library and classrooms became essential to firmly secure the college’s future as an academic institution. The Old Chapel was conceived as a multipurpose building, with a chapel for lectures

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State House, Room 337, Boston, Massachusetts 02133

and religious services and a library with reading room. Serving both spiritual and intellectual needs, the chapel quickly became the pride of the campus. By 1936, the ever-increasing number of students enrolled, combined with the opening of the Goodell Library, led to the renovation of the first-floor library into additional classrooms, seminar rooms, and a lecture hall. The Old Chapel served as a classroom building for the next 60 years, as well as the home of the Minuteman Marching Band in the 1960s, but it was closed in 1996 due to the deterioration of the tower as well as code and access deficiencies. Although not in use for almost 20 years, the Old Chapel's location at the heart of the campus meant that it was passed by most students in the course of the day, and continued to be a centerpiece of the university.

In 2014, a committee began the process of evaluating the building for both restoration and rehabilitation. Its goal was to find a design solution that met accessibility and code requirements while still keeping the building's historic integrity. Their solution, known as the "The Pavilion," creates an integrated, landscaped terrace with accessible ramps and a glass entry pavilion on the south elevation. "The Pavilion" also balances the addition of contemporary systems without disturbing the historic fabric. Creative interventions such as lowering the basement floor, adding an underground mechanical vault, and a strategic elevator insertion further solved code, access, and building performance goals while preserving the distinctive features of the building.

The careful balancing of historic preservation with contemporary needs has positioned the building as a sought-after venue for hosting programs that extend learning outside of the classroom, from lectures to presentations and special events. In between programs, the building functions as a student gathering place for groups and individuals to study, socialize, and relax. This restoration and rehabilitation project has returned the Old Chapel, with its distinctive stone tower, clock, and carillon, to its rightful place as the actively used, emblematic center of the UMass Amherst campus.

This is the 39th 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 November 2, 2017, at the Massachusetts Archives Building at 220 Morrissey Blvd., Dorchester. The Old Chapel at University of Massachusetts Amherst, is one of 11 projects to be honored.

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