



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

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**SECRETARY GALVIN PRESENTS 2017 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD
TO THE HARVARD LAMPOON BUILDING IN CAMBRIDGE**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William F. Galvin, Chairman of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, announces the selection of the Harvard Lampoon Building in Cambridge 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 restoration of the Harvard Lampoon Building demonstrates an exceptional attention to detail.”

Located just south of Harvard Square in Cambridge, the Harvard Lampoon occupies a unique building that was one of the last major works of prominent Boston City Architect Edmund Wheelwright. Wheelwright, himself a Harvard alumnus and a founder of the Harvard Lampoon magazine, one of the nation’s first college humor magazines, wanted the building to embody the comical nature of the publication. Completed in 1909, the Harvard Lampoon Building exhibits an unusual synthesis of the formal Gothic and early Renaissance styles, with Flemish architectural influences, and is marked by a whimsical, anthropomorphic tower at its main entrance. The success of the design is indicated by the fact that the building has become both the trademark of the publication and one of the most recognizable landmarks of its Cambridge neighborhood.

A century after its completion, the Lampoon Building still retained much of its original character and motifs, but was in need of functional, structural, and cosmetic work. The most

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significant challenge was the need for a secondary means of egress from the second floor to meet modern code requirements. The only feasible option was to add a new exterior door and fire escape on the Plympton Street façade, yet the prominence of this façade meant that any intervention needed to be thoroughly thought out and precisely executed in order to maintain the building's integrity. To that end, the design for the secondary egress included a new door with a limestone surround and Tudor hood molding, which were carefully integrated into the existing stringcourse. The new fire escape is shrouded with a decorative wrought-iron railing that runs the full width of the Plympton Street façade. Designed after a careful study of early 20th-century metalwork in Boston and Cambridge, the railing features distinct metal newels that complement the historic motifs of the building, including "HL" monograms, grotesques with jester hats, and three book-shaped cartouches that together spell out the Lampoon's original motto, "Vanitas."

Along with the insertion of the new means of egress, significant structural problems were addressed on the Plympton Street façade. A steel beam had rusted over the ground-floor entry and windows, resulting in severe cracking of the surrounding masonry. Once the beam was cleaned, reinforced, and waterproofed, the damaged area of limestone was patched and replaced as needed. Restoration of the masonry and windows at the building's east end was also undertaken. All exterior masonry was cleaned, and inappropriate replacement mortar from previous repairs was replaced with mortar matching the original in color and texture. Similarly, on the inside, the inappropriate replacement black mortar was removed and, after cleaning off dirt and soot, it was possible to match the original mortar's lighter color and texture. Leaded-glass windows, whose deterioration had been accelerated due to their covering by unvented storm panels, were cleaned and repainted once those panels were removed.

The planning, research, and attention to detail that went into the restoration of the Harvard Lampoon Building exemplify how restoration should be done. The playful style of the original design, as well as fine historic craftsmanship and materials, were all taken into account, and the overall project has made a positive contribution to the building's architecture and to its surroundings.

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.

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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 Harvard Lampoon Building, Cambridge, is one of 11 projects being honored.

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