



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

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**SECRETARY GALVIN PRESENTS 2017 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD
TO THE NORFOLK HOUSE IN DEDHAM**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William F. Galvin, Chairman of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, announces the selection of the Norfolk House in Dedham 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,” 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. This challenging project successfully guarantees a place for Norfolk House in Dedham’s future.”

Originally built in 1801 as a two-story, Federal-style single-family home, the Norfolk House was quickly converted into a tavern after the completion of the Norfolk and Bristol Turnpike in 1805. Its location on the turnpike and across the street from the Norfolk County Courthouse made the tavern not only a favorite stopping-off point for the many daily coach passengers traveling south through Dedham from Boston, but also a gathering place for local politicians engaged in the business of running Norfolk County.

The property continued to be operated as a tavern until 1866, but business gradually tapered off after the opening of the Dedham Branch Railroad in 1834 and a decline in stage travel. The growing influence of the mid-century temperance movement was also a factor in the tavern’s loss of business. Subsequently, St. Mary’s School and Asylum used the building as an orphanage until 1879. Following this, the building served as offices and as rental apartments, generally falling into a state of disrepair.

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State House, Room 337, Boston, Massachusetts 02133

In 1905, the building was converted back into single-family use and restored under the supervision of architect Frank Chouteau Brown, a noted preservation advocate and practitioner. The Norfolk continued as a single-family home into the early 21st century, but was only sporadically and partially occupied.

Over time, the Norfolk House expanded from its original floor plan. In 1820, three bays were added to the north end of the main block, another bay and a large ell were put onto the rear elevation, and a third story was added. During the 1905 conversion, an additional bay with a covered porch and arcade was added to the rear ell.

The recent rehabilitation using state and federal tax credits focused on retaining important and distinctive historic features while transforming the single-family house into six apartments, meeting the needs of the current neighborhood. The exterior entryways and windows underwent extensive rehabilitation. Work included repairing the two east entry doors, installing a patio in the footprint of a non-extant front porch, and rehabilitating the south entryway into the main entrance. The historic wood windows were repaired and reinstalled, as were historic paneled and louvered shutters. In order to meet code requirements, a new egress was tucked into the northern elbow between the main block and the ell, and a clapboard vestibule was added to allow for rear egress from the main house and basement. When the project began, the interior retained much of the ornamental detail from the 1905 rehabilitation; the features restored in the new apartment units included historic wood trim, surrounds, fireplaces, doors, door hardware, and a domed ceiling, giving the units an elegant and unique feel.

The rehabilitation process was not without its challenges. Severe structural deficiencies found during construction meant that the entire support structure for the main block and rear ell needed to be replaced. Another challenge resulted from a two-alarm attic fire caused by the embers from the structural work. Fortunately, the fire was contained in the attic, with little fire or water damage extending to the historic fabric of the lower floors. Either of these challenges could have ended the rehabilitation, and the successful completion of the project reflects considerable perseverance and sensitivity. After more than fifteen years of vacancy, there was a possibility that the Norfolk House would be lost. Restored and rehabilitated, the Norfolk House will now continue to play an important role in Dedham's architectural and cultural history into the future.

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,

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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 Norfolk House in Dedham is one of 11 projects to be honored.

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