



NEWS

William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

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Boston, Massachusetts 02133

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June 18, 2019

SECRETARY GALVIN PRESENTS 2019 PRESERVATION AWARD TO THE STATE SENATE CHAMBER OF THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE HOUSE

Secretary of the Commonwealth William F. Galvin, Chair of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, has announced that the State Senate Chamber in the Massachusetts State Senate Building on Beacon Hill in Boston has received a 2019 Massachusetts Historical Commission 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 recognizes this year are particularly diverse and represent the many creative ways that significant historic resources are being preserved across the Commonwealth. The sensitive restoration and upgrading of the State Senate Chamber was an incredibly complex and detailed project and certainly worthy of this award.”

The Massachusetts State House—as well as the Senate Chamber within it—was designed by Charles Bulfinch and built in 1795. The Senate Chamber originally served as the hall of the House of Representatives. Three major campaigns in the 19th century made various changes to this space, and following the final renovation, which was completed in 1898, the room became the meeting place of the State Senate.

Specialists analyzed historic finishes and construction materials to help inform the recent restoration. The sensitive installation of modern material included the placement of thin, sound-absorbing panels between the recesses of the dome ribs to significantly improve the room’s acoustics; the introduction of an air-intake system in some of the 19th-century “snowflake” grills in the ceiling; the substitution of LED lights in the restored grand chandelier; and the insertion of diffused LED light panels in areas where the original skylights had been covered over in previous renovations.

In addition to these careful modern upgrades to the existing historic fabric, a number of accessibility improvements were made to the public galleries, to the restrooms (which were also made gender neutral), and to the President’s Rostrum. The Senate chose



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to install a quotation by Frederick Douglass in a prominent location, to serve as inspiration to all: "Truth, Justice, Liberty, and Humanity will ultimately prevail."

The completed project has brought the Senate Chamber into the 21st century while masterfully preserving and restoring its fine historic features. The result is a public space for the Massachusetts Senate that ensures its use by the Commonwealth and its citizens for decades to come.

This is the 41st 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 Lifetime Achievement and Local Preservationist. Secretary Galvin serves as the chair of the 17-member Massachusetts Historical Commission.



Secretary Galvin is pictured presenting the award for the State Senate Chamber at an afternoon ceremony on June 6, 2019, at the Massachusetts Archives Building at 220 Morrissey Blvd., Dorchester (left to right: Susan Nicholl, Ron Ferrara, Amanda Gorey, Susan Greendyke, William Rinaldi, Vincent Cirigliano, Secretary Galvin, Stephen



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Walnut, Alison Hart, Scott Gentilhomme, Mike McKeown, Fabrizio Caruso, Laurie Lebbon, Chris Coios, Jay Mitchell, Francis Colantonio, and Richard Bertman. Photo by Goodnough Photography.).

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