

For Immediate Release

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## N.H. Preservation Alliance Recognizes Innovative Community Development Projects Eleven Projects Win Statewide Achievement Awards

On May 10, the N.H. Preservation Alliance announced eleven awards for outstanding historic preservation projects. The 2016 awards showcased small towns accomplishing enormous tasks, small businesses saving and re-using old seacoast farms, examples of exceptional community engagement, and innovative preservation strategies. Special guests and past winners who helped with the presentation included Governor Maggie Hassan, Alex Ray of The Common Man Restaurants, Bill Binnie of Binnie Media/NH 1, and Lorraine Merrill, N.H. Commissioner of Agriculture, Markets & Food.

The awards recognize individuals, organizations, and businesses in the categories of restoration and stewardship, rehabilitation, compatible new construction, public policy, and educational and planning initiatives across the state. “We welcome this opportunity to recognize outstanding projects and while hopefully inspiring others,” said the Preservation Alliance’s Executive Director Jennifer Goodman. “These are the kinds of places we can’t imagine New Hampshire without,” she said, “and we want to recognize the people who have worked to save and revive these landmarks.” It is the Alliance’s 27<sup>th</sup> year of honoring preservation achievement.

“Awards this year showcased investments by developers and municipalities that have transformed buildings and provided jump-starts to communities,” said Kathy Bogle Shields, the chair of the Preservation Alliance’s board of directors. “These projects show how investment in our past can yield real benefits in the future, making old buildings viable with innovation and rethinking landmark buildings as key to our economic growth.”

Three small towns (with a combined population of less than 3,000) displayed exceptional vision, energy and resources to plan and execute large, complex “blue-ribbon” efforts. The Town of Langdon revitalized and restored their Meetinghouse, which has hosted town meetings since 1803, longer than any other existing building in New Hampshire and maybe the country. The Town of Stark rehabilitated their deteriorated, unusable Covered Bridge, one of the most photographed and painted spots in New Hampshire and one of only 20 Paddleford truss bridges remaining in the world. The Town of Rumney added an addition to their historic Byron G. Merrill I Library to provide barrier-free access for this well-loved and well-used community gathering place.

Farms are part of the history and identity of New Hampshire, and two award winners in North Hampton are outstanding examples of new uses that bring vitality to old places: the rescue

and re-use of Hobbs Farm for Throwback Brewery and the rehabilitation of the Drake Farm for Hubbingtons Furniture.

Three projects exemplify the power of community engagement. The large-scale Brewster Memorial Hall rehabilitation kept a major downtown Wolfeboro building in use and reopened the long-shuttered second floor to community use thanks to private/public partnership. Major community advocacy led to rehabilitation of town-owned Watson Academy in Epping; a UNH professor and his students developed an engineering solution to save this Queen Anne landmark damaged by a small earthquake. The African Burying Ground project, in a downtown Portsmouth neighborhood, commemorates the resting place - and contributions - of the African and African-descended people from Portsmouth's earliest days. Many partners worked together in a long project to protect and rebury exhumed human remains, stabilize the archeological resource, protect the site from further degradation and restore a sense of sacredness and honor.

Awards for projects in Concord, Newmarket and Portsmouth highlight inspiring examples of businesses, volunteers, and municipalities finding new solutions to challenges, using advanced building science techniques and helping to revitalize neighborhoods. The rehabilitation of the N.H. Historical Society in Concord tucked new energy efficiency and climate control systems into their headquarters building that has one of the most elaborate and intact interiors in New Hampshire. Timothy Nichols' revitalization of a rare, long-vacant blacksmith shop along the Newmarket waterfront adds new vitality to the mixed office and residential spaces downtown. Strawberry Banke's Heritage House Program upgraded 10 museum buildings for new museum, office and residential uses to meet enhanced economic and civic goals. "The program has benefited the City in many ways," said John P. Bohenko, City Manager, City of Portsmouth. "It has continued the museum's efforts to pursue high-quality preservation projects and has added residential and office tenants who have contributed to the vitality of the business district. In addition, the program adds to the Museum's viability, which in turn helps to ensure its long term future and continued access to quality programming for Portsmouth," he said.

Goodman noted that the Langdon, Epping and Wolfeboro projects had been on the Alliance's *Seven to Save* list of endangered properties in the past, and emphasized the tenacity of the private developers and community advocates as well as the importance of investments by the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program, N.H. Housing Finance Authority, N.H. Community Development Finance Authority, and the N.H. conservation and heritage license plate grant program in several of the projects.

Generous awards program sponsors include Mountain View Grand, TMS Architects, Sheehan Phinney and The Common Man Family of Restaurants as well as AECm, Christopher P. Williams Architects PLLC, The H.L. Turner Group, Hutter Construction, Lyme Properties 2 LLC, Meridian Construction Company, Milestone Engineering & Construction Inc. and The Rowley Agency, Inc.

The New Hampshire Preservation Alliance supports and encourages the revitalization and protection of historic buildings and places which strengthens communities and local economies. Current priorities include providing assistance to community leaders, helping owners of long-held family farms and promoting the use of easements, barn preservation and tax incentives.

The list of winners:

- Town of Langdon for the rehabilitation of the Langdon Meetinghouse
- Town of Stark for the rehabilitation of the Stark Covered Bridge
- Town of Rumney for the addition to the Byron G. Merrill Library
- Peter Rhoades for rehabilitation of Drake Farm for Hubbingtons Furniture, North Hampton
- Throwback Brewery for the rescue and re-use of Hobbs Farm, North Hampton
- Town of Wolfeboro for the rehabilitation of Brewster Memorial Hall
- Town of Epping for the rehabilitation of Watson Academy
- City of Portsmouth for the African Burying Ground project
- N.H. Historical Society for the rehabilitation of the N.H. Historical Society Building, Concord
- Timothy Nichols for the rehabilitation of the Lang Blacksmith Shop, Newmarket
- Strawberry Banke Museum, Elizabeth Durfee Hengen Award for its Heritage House Program

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Photos, award winner contact information and additional information on winners available.