The 2015 Preservation Burlington Annual Awards

Rebecca Reese and Liisa Reimann

The 2015 Preservation Burlington Annual Awards provided an evening of entertainment, education and history for the members of our organization and community. Held on the evening of Wednesday, February 17th, 2016, the awards took place at Main Street Landing with a great crowd gathering to enjoy discussions about our local awards and the state’s architectural wonders. The event was headlined by coauthors Glenn Andres and Curtis Johnson, who presented a visual exploration of their recent book, Buildings of Vermont. Andres and Curtis were a delight, as they enlightened attendants and broadened our understanding of Burlington and Vermont’s architectural treasures.

Last month’s Annual Awards event honored a total of seven individuals in six categories who, in 2015, expended considerable effort to either preserve and restore their buildings, or to improve the quality of life in our historically rich community. We were incredibly honored to host former Governor Madeleine M. Kunin, as she accepted the Institutional Award acknowledging the tremendous work undertaken in saving and reinstalling the Lost Shul Mural at the Ohavi Zedek Synagogue. The Residential Award was presented

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(LEFT) The Lost Shul Mural hangs in the entrance of the Ohavi Zedek Synagogue, as onlookers admire the cultural masterpiece. (Below) The crowd mingles in the Lake Lobby of Main Street Landing during a short intermission at the 2015 Annual Awards.
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to Michael Green and Sarah Muyskens for the painstaking restoration of their home on South Union Street. Chris Mason who brought the Gideon King House back to life, was honored in the Commercial category. The Outbuilding Award went to Richard and Robin Kawalski for the attention given to their now-stunning carriage barn on South Union Street. The Spirit of Preservation Award, which recognizes stellar stewardship rather than restoration efforts, was given to two recipients this year: the Colman Sharp Partnership for the 1875 Augustus Barrows House on South Union Street; and Linda Campbell for the Henry Smith House on North Winooski Avenue.

The Ray O’Connor Award, which recognizes individuals who have contributed to the betterment of community life, went to the Burlington Cemetery Commission. The tireless volunteer members of the commission not only manage internments and day to day tasks, they also oversee the upkeep and conservation of our city’s historic burial grounds. In 2015, they were also forced to battle for their very continued on page 3
The First Spirit of Preservation Award Goes To . . .

Marge Allard

361 South Union Street

This Italianate style brick home on the west side of South Union Street was built about 1875 for Augustus Barrows, a Burlington businessman who later developed the Covent Square area in the Old North End. Within five years the Barrows had moved to Battery Street, and by about 1883 Anson S. Johnson bought the house, apparently for his son-in-law John W. Jones. Jones family members lived there until 1919, extending the rear of the house and adding a wraparound screen-in porch to this section. In 1938, owner Ruth Reed commissioned plans from Freeman, French and Freeman to convert the house into four apartments.

When the present co-owner, Loraine Colman, took over ownership about fifty years later, the house had been seriously neglected. Overgrown shrubbery obscured the front of the house, and worse yet, raccoons infested the attic—chewing on the eaves. The roof leaked and the rest of the house, in comparable shape, was uninsurable.

Loraine worked out a deal with a local insurance agency, and enlisted the aid of Chris Sharp and John Mazuzan Jr., eventually forming a co-ownership with Sharp. The infrastructure of the house required all the usual specialists. The goal of the craftsmen was to rebuild the damaged porches, eaves and roof, but also to restore the spirit of the house. Luckily, original doors, mantel parts, a newel post and staircase spindles were found in the attic. The main hall was restored and panelled, the stairs rebuilt. The first floor apartment now has a beautiful parquet floor and the house has been maintained. Its owners truly deserve the Spirit of Preservation award and the board is thrilled to recognize the owners of 361 South Union Street.

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existence. Backed by a swell of community support, city officials conceded the commission’s ongoing importance. Following throughout the remainder of the newsletter, individual articles tell the complex and trying work that went into each award winning project.

Thank you to everyone who made the 2015 Preservation Burlington Annual Awards such a success, including all our speakers, presenters, award winners, Chris and Emily Conn for the delicious food, and Phoenix Books for selling copies of the much anticipated Buildings of Vermont. We look forward to continued partnerships and lasting relationships. Here’s to 2016 and the exciting projects a new year will bring. More information about all the award nominees can be found at preservationburlington.org.
Cemetery Commission Receives the Ray O’Conner Award

Ron Wanamaker

The Preservation Burlington Ray O’Connor Award recognizes an individual or group that has made a significant contribution to the betterment of our community life.

This year we’re pleased to acknowledge Burlington’s Cemetery Commission for all they do behind the scenes to protect and preserve our historic cemeteries; Green Mount, Elmwood, and Lakeview.

Not only do the members of this Commission manage internments and all the finances related to our cemeteries, setting schedules and pricing. They also oversee landscape, preservation, and new constructions in the case of vaults, fountains and other projects throughout all three cemeteries. In addition, they famously restored the Luisa Howard Chapel to serve the Burlington community well into the future.

The current administration sought to do away with the Cemetery Commission and absorb all of these responsibilities into the Parks and Recreation department for dubious efficiencies sake; thereby, diminishing citizen participation and oversight of such an important city asset. As the Commissioners voiced their concerns, neighbors rose objections and the Chittenden County Historical Society weighed in on the valuable and important work that the commissioners do for this city, all free of charge. Our City Council agreed and we can all rest easy knowing these good folks are giving of their time and talents for all of us.

We thank Rita R. Church, Helaine Rappaport, Barry Trutor (VC), Allison Curran, and Donna L Waldron (C).

Preservation Burlington looks forward to working with the Cemetery Commission on volunteer days and future walking tours to raise awareness and promote preservation of these special places.

Lost Shul Mural Continues to be Recognized for Exemplary Work

Daniel Goltzman and Rebecca Reese

Preservation Burlington recognized the work done to restore and move the Lost Shul Mural by presenting the Ohavi Zedek Synagogue with the 2015 Institutional Award. While our organization has the great opportunity to bring attention to outstanding preservation work in our city, this particular project represents a truly unique undertaking and the rare example where we are able to recognize a local effort with repercussions nationally, internationally and culturally.

In addition to the international ramifications of the project, Vermont’s own former Governor Madeleine Kunin attended the 2015 Annual Awards to accept the Institutional Award on behalf of the synagogue. Preservation Burlington was honored to host Governor Kunin and touched by her appreciation of the project and community.

The mural portrays an exceptional and unique piece of Jewish European folk art, a tradition of painting murals directly on the walls of wooden synagogues, that was nearly wiped out during the Holocaust. Burlington is lucky to preserve, display and cherish one of the few such works left in the world. This project further proves that our little corner of the world has an exemplary tradition of multicultural awareness and acceptance.
Owners Michael Green and Sarah Muyskens Win Residential Property Award

Matt Viens

276 South Union Street

This elegant 2½-story Greek Revival structure was built circa 1845. The building, with a gable-front orientation, features a semicircular lunette with radiating muntins. The front sidehall entrance features a six-paneled door with sidelights and multi-paneled transom. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the South Union Street Historic District, the property was aptly described in the nomination materials as having “a commanding, temple-like presence at the top of Adams Street…”

The home was built by Adelia Augusta Moody, the widow of Dr. Robert Moody and daughter of Francis Montressor Buchanan Allen, the second wife of Ethan Allen. After her husband’s death, Adelia sold their home on College Street and moved to South Union Street, which at the time was practically considered living in the country because of the absence of surrounding homes. There Adelia raised her five daughters, four of whom were married in the house. Adelia died at her home in 1884 at the age of 83.

The interior of the home had undergone restoration in recent years by its current owners, Michael Green and Sarah Muyskens. It was not until the summer of 2015 that the exterior of the home underwent much needed repairs. According to Thomas Corr of Liszt Historical Restoration, the job was one of “the most comprehensive” residential projects he has worked on.

The project began with a thorough review of the exterior of the house to determine what work needed to be done. The house had been sandblasted by a previous owner, resulting in the removal of its hard outer surface. Due to its exposure to weather over the years, and the deleterious effects of the improper use of Portland cement in previous repairs, the weakened brick had begun to fail. Many areas of the brick were cracked and in some areas the outer layer had completely fallen off. Liszt replaced bricks and rebuilt portions of the exterior walls with historically appropriate brick salvaged from a South Burlington farmhouse, all the while removing Portland cement and repointing the house with lime mortar. They rebuilt jack arches over a number of the house’s windows and did extensive work on the foundation, including replacing failed foundation material/stone. After thoroughly washing the exterior, Liszt applied a penetrating water sealant to replicate the original outer layer of the brick.

276 South Union Street stands beautifully at the top of Adam Street, after an extensive restoration effort repaired years of poor care and maintenance.

Paul Liszt, owner of Liszt Historical Restoration, enjoyed working with Michael and Sarah throughout the project. Unlike with some homeowners, he remarked, “they wanted to do things right” even if that meant more time and money. Now that the project is done, the house is ready to stand for at least another 170 years!
Typically this column focuses on a Burlington building that is in extreme disrepair, slated for demolition, or about to be extensively modified to lose its historic character. The building we had selected in this edition, was going through zoning process to be demolished, however before the article could be written things changed dramatically. Yes, we can call this a victory.

Nestled in Burlington’s downtown core between the Cathedral of Immaculate Conception and the former Bove’s Restaurant, sits what the Vermont Register of Historic Places calls “the nicest barn on the street, and for that matter in the whole area” at 6 Pine Street. In an area decimated by urban renewal in the 1960s, only a small vein of historic Greek Revival and Victorian homes remain. Their connection to the city is cut off by parking lots and the blank faced monolith of the Burlington Town Center. The carriage barn is not just the “nicest” outbuilding in the area, but possibly the only one remaining.

In addition to being a rare outbuilding example in the area, a high level of Tudor style trim makes the Pine Street carriage barn significant. Built circa 1885, the barn’s street-facing gable features a pediment with opposing angled boards, while curved braces connect two upper windows and the hay door sill. Furthermore, amongst the clapboards run two horizontal bands of trim connected by short vertical runs of trim. Other structures of this nature do not typically display such ornate trim packages, making it an important piece of our history Preservation Burlington took note of when demolition was proposed.

Molly Walsh, of Seven Days, also had her eyes on the outcome of this project. On March 2, 2016, she released her article just a day after Hinsdale Properties decided not to demolish this State Registered property. The owner, Jacob Hinsdale has demolished several other outbuildings this year to make way for parking and felt he could do the same to the Pine Street barn. However he found that, “everyone else likes it and wants to keep it standing, so we’re going with that.” Molly Walsh also attributed Hinsdale decision due to lack of zoning approval. $15,000 has now been pledged by Hinsdale to stabilize the property for future restoration.

The question now turns to how do we move forward as a community? With intense development pressure, it seems open space or “under utilized” structures are considered for dramatic alteration. While financing is currently favorable, does rapid redevelopment allow the time and quality to improve the livability of our city? Should structures like this be torn down for parking or should they have money invested in them to create adaptive reuse housing? While city leaders, developers, and community members debate these questions, there is no harm in mothballing structures like the barn on Pine Street. Waiting for a time when a restoration project like this might be feasible and giving future generations a connection and grounding to their beautiful city.

Burlington’s Most Endangered:
Pine Street Barn

Karl Lukhaup
The Gideon King House Takes the Commercial Award for 2015

Britta Fenniman Tonn

33-35 King Street

Long believed to have been Gideon King’s house constructed in 1798, an 1829 survey of the property indicates that this building, now located at 33-35 King Street, was actually King’s barn. Renowned steamboat captain and entrepreneur Gideon Lathrop bought the property in 1835 and converted the barn into a dwelling, writing in his diary in 1840 that he “commenced bricking up the frame of the King barn for a house.” The building is a very late example of vernacular Federal-style architecture, distinguished by its prominent gable parapets and symmetrical façade. Gideon King was a legendary shipbuilder and shipping magnate dubbed the “Admiral of the Lake” in the early 19th century. King’s actual house, which he purchased with the barn in 1802, was located just west of this site and is no longer standing.

The house was in a very dilapidated state when it was first renovated with a matching grant from the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation in 1976. Beginning in 1985, a second round of renovations were completed which utilized historic preservation tax credits and the modern rear addition was constructed. Unfortunately, although the masonry, parapets, roof and dormer were repaired at this time, the current owner found significant water damage to these features which required extensive repair. The work completed between 2013–2015 by Christopher Mason of Champlain Industries utilized historically appropriate, high-quality and durable materials that would stand the test of time. This work included, but was not limited to: the installation of a new slate roof, copper snow belts, copper crickets, and copper gutters; rebuilding of all the parapets and chimneys which were capped with lead flashing and bluestone to prevent water damage; rebuilding of the dormers at the north and south elevations, which included the replacement of all the existing dormer siding and trim with slate and copper for added durability; repair and replacement of the wooden lintels as needed; replacement of all of the existing non-historic windows with energy efficient and historically appropriate Marvin wood clad units; replacement of the front porch entry with new Ipe decking and an iron handrail and balusters; masonry repairs and repointing at all elevations as needed; and the complete repainting of the entire building.

Equally impressive are the energy efficiency improvements which were made to the building which clearly demonstrate that an historic building can indeed be a green building! In addition to the installation of energy-efficient windows, these included the replacement of all interior and exterior fixtures with LED lighting; the replacement of several furnaces with 95% efficient units; the installation of new low-consumption toilets and faucets throughout the building; the addition of spray foam and cellulose insulation at the attic crawl space and ceilings; and the installation of a cold climate heat pump for localized heating/cooling. These efficiency improvements resulted in a 70% decrease in electricity usage, a 50% decrease in annual gas usage, and a 200% decrease in water consumption!
And the Outbuilding Award Goes to Robin and Richard Kowalski

Emily Lee

391 South Union Street

This year’s Outbuilding Award recognizes Robin and Richard Kowalski for their careful restoration of the double-gabled, shingle-style carriage barn behind their home.

The main house was built in 1885 and is notable for being the home of A. J. Shanely, who worked at S. Huntington & Co. Book Store at the southwest corner of Church and College Streets, now occupied by Michael Kehoe. The Vermont Historical Sites and Survey Form for 391 South Union from 1977 specifically notes, “The house is particularly distinguished by its large double-gabled carriage barn which is falling down.”

The Kowalski’s purchased the property in 1993. At that time, the roof was caving in and the building’s foundation was off kilter. Their restoration work over the next 20 years included rebuilding the roof trusses, removing and restoring all the slate on the roof, repairing windows, clapboard siding and repainting the entire building. With their fine stewardship, this unique and charming outbuildings will be around for at least another 100 years for others to enjoy.

Upon receiving the award, Robin and Richard were sure to recognize Phil Delorme, their carpenter, for his enthusiasm, passion and fine craftsmanship.

The Henry C. Smith House Portrays the Spirit of Preservation

189 North Winooski Avenue

Linda Campbell has cared for and properly maintained her piece of Burlington history, earning her a Spirit of Preservation Award at the 2015 event. Campbell took ownership of the property in the mid-1980s and has kept the property in great condition without any major alterations, save for the conversion of the carriage house to a 2-story residence.

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Smith House
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Henry C. Smith built the home standing at what is today 189 North Winooski Avenue in 1875. Smith made his living as a livery stable owner (self advertised as having “careful drivers at all hours”) on Mechanic Street. The home stayed in his family until World War II.

Linda continues to retain the historic materials, windows, siding and architectural details of the home. Additional praise for the historic character and nature of the home can be found in the Vermont State Register of Historic Places, stating that the historic house buildings are “remarkably intact for their 100 plus years and city location.” Thanks to Linda and others like her, our city retains the historic character that makes it a unique and sought after city.

Burlington’s Historical (and Hysterical!) Women

As part of Women’s History Month this March, we are launching a new initiative to celebrate Burlington’s notable women—past and present. Our initial program entitled “Dear Diary: Burlington’s Historical (and Hysterical!) Women” will showcase words penned by local women. Along with readings from several diaries from the late 1800s and early 1900s, participants will be invited to read from their childhood journals.

Our hope is to also set the foundation for future efforts celebrating the often overlooked role of women in Burlington’s development. The event will take place at Fletcher Free Library on March 23rd. Check preservationburlington.org for more details.

Preservation Burlington Walking Tours

Burlington’s fascinating history and alluring architecture come alive through guided walking tours. Our knowledgeable guides will entertain you with stories of the past and introduce you to Burlington’s diverse architectural styles. We offer a number of different types of tours and cover a variety of Burlington’s neighborhoods.

Downtown Burlington Walking Tour: Uncover the intriguing history and architecture at the heart of Vermont’s bustling Queen City.

Waterfront Walking Tour: Explore Burlington’s thriving industrial and maritime past while taking in the beauty of the Lake Champlain shoreline.

Old North End Walking Tour: Experience Burlington’s most diverse neighborhood through an historic and architectural lens.

Willard Street Walking Tour: A gorgeous tour through Burlington’s stately hill section. Learn about the high-style architecture and influential Burlington residents of the Gilded Age.

Pine Street Walking Tour: Discover the commercial and industrial history of Burlington’s South End and pop into funky art galleries along the way.

Stay tuned for more information on our scheduled walking tours for 2016. Or contact us to arrange your own private tour! See you on the streets!
Preservation Burlington T-Shirts

Looking to the Future with Respect for the Past

Only $15. Available in Forest Green unisex adult sizes S-XXL
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Historic Building Markers

Preservation Burlington Historic Markers celebrate the age of your home!

Cost: $100 includes: basic research on your home, a marker, and one-year membership to Preservation Burlington.