

The following are the 2004 Maine Statewide Historic Preservation Honor Awards, presented to people and communities by Maine Preservation to honor the work done to help safeguard our heritage. Below are brief stories about the recipients:

- ∞ The Camden Public Library (*Camden*)
- ∞ The Baxter Memorial Library (*Gorham*)
- ∞ The Captain Phineas Griffin House (*Searsport*)
- ∞ The Captain Charles Ranlett House (*Thomaston*)
- ∞ The Cornish (former) Texaco Station (*Cornish*)
- ∞ The William Hoit House (*Portland*)
- ∞ 11 Houlton Street (*Portland*)
- ∞ The Hallowell City Auditorium (*Hallowell*)
- ∞ The Maine Friendship House (*International Award, Jaffa American Colony, Tel Aviv, Israel*)
- ∞ The Buxton-Hollis Historical Society (*Buxton*)
- ∞ The Maine Downtown Center (*Statewide*)
- ∞ Arron Sturgis (*Preservation Trades Award*)
- ∞ Senator Olympia Snowe (*Preservation Champion Award*)

Camden Public Library
55 Main Street
Camden, Maine 04843
for Renovation

Preservationists often talk about what defines a local landmark – a special gathering place unique to a neighborhood – a place where people feel comfortable catching up on news and seeing friends. In this case, the local landmark is the Camden Public Library.

The Camden Public Library first opened its doors on June 1, 1928. Beautifully located on a hill near the head of the harbor, it was built almost exclusively through fund-raising efforts from residents. The need for an expansion required a superior design strategy that resulted in an innovative belowground solution that preserved the integrity of the historic structure and the cultural landscape.

Baxter Memorial Library
71 South Street
Gorham, Maine 04038

James Phinney Baxter donated the Baxter Memorial Library to the citizens of Gorham and had it built on land next to his birthplace (which is now the Baxter House Museum). When it opened in 1908, complete with quoins and fluted Ionic columns, it was the *perfect* design and an ideal size. Over the decades, however, space became increasingly cramped, so much so that an effort to remove the building to construct “bigger and better” began to take shape.

Enter “The Referendum” and a great deal of local advocacy to restore the building and add on to the rear. The voters did the right thing and the fundraising campaign began to grow. Slowly and carefully the restoration of the historic edifice took place, and it is now nearly complete. The rear addition is now hyphenated to delineate old from new.

Captain Phineas Griffin House
Searsport, Maine
For Rehabilitation and Restoration

The rehabilitation and restoration of the 1860 Captain Phineas Griffin House in Searsport is a true example of teamwork and dedication. Two noted sea captains once called this place home – a home that was nearly destroyed in a devastating fire on December 11, 2002, caused by a cracked chimney liner. But seven months of incredibly hard work, research and commitment to historic preservation by owners Mark and Linda Bradstreet and their construction team resulted in a successful rescue of one of Searsport’s most beloved local landmarks. Keith Tremblay Builder managed the restoration and repair, master paperhanger Hans Plessner restored the antique wallpaper, and Barry Crawford of Colonial Plastering did all the plaster restoration. Floors, windows, shutters, moldings, doors, siding – even the slate roof – was repaired or restored with careful attention to detail.

The results were amazing. Less than one year from the date of that fire, the Bradstreet’s opened the Captain Griffin House to the Searsport Historical Society for a meeting and tour. Instead of listening to those who said “tear it down”, the owners listened to their own hearts and did the right thing.

Captain Charles Ranlett House
Thomaston, Maine
For Restoration and Stewardship

The 1848 Captain Charles Ranlett house is located on Main Street in the Thomaston National Historic District. Over the years, the owners, Emile and Mary Ann Anderson, have carefully stewarded this exuberant Greek Revival house, strictly adhering to the Secretary of the Interior Standards. This is the first significant residential restoration in the district to successfully meet the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit requirements. The project included extensive restoration of a carriage house structure. The owners took a holistic approach in the exterior restoration of the carriage house and main house with the services of Les Fossel and Restoration Resources. The results are stunning and have inspired others in Thomaston.

Cornish (Former) Texaco Station
Cornish, Maine
for Adaptive Use

Take an old 1930s Texaco station, a downtown village and add three women with vision and you get an adaptive use project that Maine Preservation is proud to honor this year in the Commercial category. After nearly 70 years of operation as a gas station, the business closed and left the property a derelict. But Kathy Carr, her daughter Laura and their friend Ramona saw charm in the unique cottage-style building – a place they decided would be ideal for their gallery featuring the work of local artisans. Armed with a 1952 photo of the building, they went to work. The ancient in-ground tanks were removed and they tackled decades of grime with cleaning supplies. It was “thick with dirt, blackened with grease and oily exhaust - a sad little building...”

A dilapidated barn at the rear was removed for parking. The openings were retained, they added new doors, an awning, flower boxes, and lots of color, the original frosted glass was cleaned and restored, and new signage in the original Texaco lettering style was added. The results are amazing! Now, downtown Cornish is even a better place to visit, and the Local Color Artisans’ Gallery should be your first destination when you visit this York County community.

William Hoit House

Matthew Thayer Margaret Hazlett, Owners
62 Munjoy Street, Portland, Maine 04101
For Rehabilitation

The William Hoit House on Munjoy Hill is an excellent example of best practices in preservation. The 2 ½ story Greek Revival house originally dates to the 1790s. It was moved to its current location and remodeled in the 1850s. The owners took extraordinary care in their approach, which began by signing up for the very first *My Old House* workshop series, sponsored by Maine Preservation. It was during that class that they found and bravely made an offer on the Hoit House. They told their fellow students that “it was not in great shape but it seemed to have good bones and great potential.” They hired the best preservation specialists, built a highly skilled restoration team, scheduled an on-site consultation with Greater Portland Landmark’s Advisory Services and began to follow the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. They researched local deeds to confirm the date of construction and drafted a complete restoration plan that helped them preserve all historic materials and replicate those features that could not be preserved. They reversed unsympathetic changes made by prior owners and essentially met their goal: to maximize the preservation of original material.

Today the Hoit House stands as a proud example of what can and should be accomplished by sensitive stewards.

11 Houlton Street
Portland, Maine
For Rehabilitation

The 1850s house at 11 Houlton Street in Portland’s West End Historic District was a mere shadow of its former self. Its character-defining details had been removed over time - details such as the original windows and trim, doors and door surrounds, eave details and siding. The owners wanted a transformation within acceptable preservation standards to return the house to its 19th century appearance.

They hired preservation-minded architects who designed a small entry porch with decorative hood, door and sidelights, corner boards, eave details and fascia boards – all in keeping with the vernacular 1850s architectural period. Even the original window openings are discovered and restored. The “Before and After” photos tell the best story. This project is a great example of how a rather homely and severely altered historic home can once again regain prominence and economic and aesthetic value within a neighborhood.

Hallowell City Hall Auditorium
Hallowell, Maine
For Restoration

As part of Hallowell City Hall's ongoing restoration activities that began in 1996, all the key ingredients that make this project a success story were involved. They had a master plan, the work was phased, highly qualified architects and contractors were hired, and there was tremendous community and volunteer support.

In 1999 the City of Hallowell and Row House, Inc. received a Preservation Honor Award from Maine Preservation for the restoration of City Council chambers. Included in that first phase was the elevator installation, providing needed access to the auditorium. Phase 2 was finalized last year, featuring this auditorium that included technical equipment upgrades to support theater productions. It also included the restoration of all 49 windows, including the character-defining round-headed windows. Bagala Window Works carefully repaired, reglazed and painted the original wood sashes, and sash weights were improved to ensure effortless movement.

The plaster ceiling was repaired and recessed lighting was added, the sprinkler system was relocated to minimize the impact on the historic coffered plaster ceiling, and the electrical system was completely upgraded. The stage itself was enhanced with a restored proscenium

opening, new stairs and a new curtain. Paint analysis was conducted by master craftsman, Tony Castro, to determine and re-establish the late Victorian-era color scheme.

The combined cost of Phases 1 and 2 is \$937,000, of which some \$38,000 was donated from private sources. The City of Hallowell's commitment to this National Register treasure is an investment in the future.

The Maine Friendship House
Jaffa American Colony
Tel Aviv, Israel
International Award for Rehabilitation

This story starts down east in Jonesport in 1866, when the 3-masted *Nellie Chapin* set sail with 35 Christian families consisting of 157 people, and 22 sets of pre-fabricated Maine-made house parts. They were heading east across the Atlantic to build the first neighborhood outside the walled city of Jaffa, Israel. Their accomplishments were many as they led in developing the land with modern implements and established shipping with a Maine-built vessel. But slowly, as the Mainers left, in moved other immigrants and one by one these houses suffered deterioration and demolition. Jaffa became a neighborhood of sprawling Tel Aviv, and by the 1980s, only a handful of the colonist's original homes remained. Thanks to the advocacy work of Jean Holmes, a preservationist and building contractor, the municipality of Tel Aviv designated the area for preservation. Today, only four and a half of those original pre-fab homes remain in the Jaffa American Colony, and one has received the Preservation Award of the State of Israel.

In January 2002, while conducting a walking tour of the American Colony, Reed and Jean Holmes decided to buy a nearly fallen down wooden "half house". It was surrounded by a metal fence for safety reasons and had a cell phone number painted on the fence. Negotiations began and soon stabilization efforts were underway, followed by rebuilding and restoration. Preservation techniques and best practices had to be taught, since wood structures are rare there.

10 Auerbach Street, one of the original Maine homes, was coming back to life. And in a miraculous twist, Reed Holmes discovered through the restoration process that this was, in fact, the colonial home of his relatives, the Wentworths. It has now been rehabilitated to create an American Heritage Center, known as the Maine Friendship House, which houses a display, research center and apartment for staff.

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Preservation Honor Awards

Buxton-Hollis Historical Society

Buxton, Maine

For Organizational Excellence

Two years ago, the all-volunteer Buxton-Hollis Historical Society came up with a bold idea and ran with it. Actually, they walked and drove with it, over every road in Buxton - at least once. This core group of volunteers, including many Board members, recognized the serious need to conduct a comprehensive reconnaissance survey of every building over 50 years old in their town. The Comprehensive Plan was being updated and the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission was offering to GIS map the entire town, including all its resources, natural and historic. The brave historical society, who had never done anything like this, approached the Town Selectmen with a funding request of \$5,000 to match the \$7,000 survey grant they were applying for through the Maine Historic Preservation Commission. The funding was needed to hire professional help to train them and “ride herd” over the details. Requests for Qualifications were called for and Andrea Strassner of Barba Architecture and Preservation was selected. Soon, the core survey team of 15 people had learned the difference between Colonial, Federal, Greek Revival and the Victorian era styles, and could recite classical order components in their sleep! And did they get excited! Armed with forms, film, and work shirts that said *BHHS Survey Team: Got History?* they hit the streets and made the news. The town of 10,000 was divided into quadrants each with a team captain, and over the period of one year the survey was completed. The results astonished even the staff at the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, who had never seen so many forms delivered to them in one huge box – over 750 and another 120 barn forms! In the end, the work was completed on time and within budget, and language was added to the Comprehensive Plan requiring consultation with the Society for all new development within proximity of a surveyed historic resource. Potential historic districts emerged and over 75 buildings were determined to be potentially eligible for the National Register.

The Buxton story shows how valuable and essential the survey process is, and how it can be accomplished in any community in Maine. Through this process the Buxton folks learned how to become advocates for their town’s architectural heritage. Many of them said “they will never see a historic building in the same way again.” Congratulations to the Buxton-Hollis Historical Society, its members and volunteers for their efforts and especially Board President Brent Hill and his wife, Jan, for their exceptional accomplishment and leadership.

Maine Downtown Center for Organizational Excellence

During the late 1990s, a large collective effort was underway to establish a downtown revitalization program in Maine. Up until then Maine remained one of only a few states that had not become involved with the National Main Street Center. Finally, the genesis for what became the Maine Downtown Center emerged from an annual Preservation Roundtable meeting, hosted by Maine Preservation and thanks largely to the collective vision of big thinkers like Peter Cox, Evan Richert and Henry Bourgeois and the support of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission and Maine Preservation.

Soon, the collaboration grew as did the advocacy efforts, and in 2000 the State Legislature established the Maine Downtown Center. The Maine State Planning Office, The Department of Economic and Community Development and the Maine Development Foundation were charged with coordinating its efforts. The Downtown Center is now housed at the Maine Development Foundation, is supported by a mix of private and public funds, and is led by a multi-faceted Advisory Board with working committees in each of the four points of Organization, Design, Promotion and Economic Restructuring.

In just a few short years, the Maine Downtown Center has emerged as an important catalyst to historic preservation and community revitalization. Under the direction of Craig Freshly, first, and more recently, Darcy Rollins, the Center's objectives are being met. Training and technical assistance is being provided, awareness has been built about the importance of vital downtowns, and a clearinghouse has been established. In 2001, the center designated four Main Street Maine communities: Bath, Gardiner, Saco and Waterville. In 2002, Eastport and Norway were added.

Preservation Trades Award
Presented to Arron Sturgis

Since 1987, Arron Sturgis, owner of Preservation Timber Framing, Inc., has led the way in the structural repair of historic timber framed buildings in New England.

His projects list is impressive, continuing for many pages and includes National Historic Landmarks, National Register properties, local landmarks and beloved barns and steeples across Maine and the region. Properties such as the First Parish Churches in Brunswick and Gorham, the Colburn House Museum in Pittston, many buildings of Berwick Academy, the Sabbathday Lake Shaker Village in New Gloucester, the Elder Grey Meeting House in North Waterboro, the Proprietor's Meeting House in Buxton (one of Maine's Most Endangered Historic Properties) and barns too numerous to mention here. Arron and his crew are doing the hard, specialized work that is rapidly becoming a dying art form in our society – and they are doing it well.

But that's not all. In addition to actually rescuing timber framed buildings, in his spare time Arron advocates for preservation legislation by providing testimony at the State House whenever asked. He was also largely responsible for coordinating the first ever northeast regional barn alliance meeting in 2001 - an all day think tank attended by government and private-sector barn preservationists from Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York. He's been a member of the faculty in our *My Old House* winter workshops and barn conference.



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Preservation Champion Award

Presented to Senator Olympia Snowe

This is the coveted Preservation Champion award, and is presented each year to an individual or individuals who exhibit leadership, commitment, passion and talent in the field of historic preservation.

This year, Maine Preservation is particularly honored to present this award to one of Maine's most recognized and effective leaders in Washington, Senator Olympia J. Snowe. Her leadership in national preservation issues has been exemplary.