

## News Release

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## **Maine Preservation Celebrates 12 Exemplary Revitalization Projects, Preservation Champion Renys, Inc. and the Isle Au Haut Lighthouse Swimmers with 2019 Honor Awards**

On Wednesday, November 20, Maine Preservation announced winners of the 2019 Honor Awards, celebrating outstanding examples of historic preservation and revitalization statewide and recognizing the owners, professionals, preservationists and partners who make them possible. The 2019 Honor Awards, held in front of 160 attendees at Portland Country Club in Falmouth, recognized 12 projects, plus Renys Inc. for its commitment to Maine's downtowns and the Isle Au Haut Lighthouse Swimmers for their innovative approach to fundraising for preservation.

"Taking vacant and underutilized historic buildings and adaptively using and updating them is an essential ingredient for community revitalization and vitality," said Maine Preservation Executive Director Greg Paxton. "When completed these buildings lift the economics of the areas around them and the spirits of the citizens benefitting from them. These projects recall the history of their surrounds and our predecessors that built and used them, while preparing the buildings to meet current needs. And these well-built buildings can be feasibly rehabilitated, economically operated and energy efficient. Maine Preservation is pleased to recognize these people and projects and the many benefits to Maine they provide."

More detailed information on the 2019 Honor Awards winners, including citation, video presentation, and images of the projects are available [www.mainepreservation.org/honor-awards/](http://www.mainepreservation.org/honor-awards/).

**The full list of Maine Preservation 2019 Honor Award Winners** (citations for each follow the list):

- **Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr. Preservation Champion – Renys Inc.**

- **Spirit of Preservation Award – Alison Richardson & Molly Siegel, Isle Au Haut Lighthouse Swimmers**
- **Augusta, Hartford Fire Station**
- **Biddeford, 17 Alfred Street**
- **Bridgton, Webb House Rufus Porter Museum**
- **Edgecomb, Merry Barn**
- **Hallowell, Stevens Hall, Maine Industrial School for Girls**
- **South Paris, Mildred M. Fox School**
- **Portland, Jose Block, 80 Exchange Street**
- **Portland, Butler School & Payson House**
- **Portland, The Sawyer Building, 2-6 Exchange St. / 395-399 Fore St.**
- **Saco, Notre Dame de Lourdes / Cutts Avenue Apartments**
- **Surry, Old Surry Village Schoolhouse**
- **Yarmouth, Grand Trunk Railroad Depot**

## **CITATIONS**

(images & video presentations available at [www.maine Preservation.org/honor-awards](http://www.maine Preservation.org/honor-awards))

### **Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr. Preservation Champion – Renys Inc.**

In October 1949, Robert H, or as he was known, R. H. Reny opened a store in Damariscotta. While that fall he did well; when winter came, shoppers became scarce. So he loaded merchandise into his old Hudson, and hit the nearby roads. He went door-to-door talking, drinking coffee and selling items out of his car. He made a lot of new friends, and when the weather warmed up, they came to the store. And the business has grown ever since. His philosophy remains the same formula Renys Inc. uses today: make great buys of quality merchandise and pass the low prices onto customers.

Today with 17 stores across Maine, Renys is a universally well-known and admired staple of the Maine economy, with 500 employees. Yet during the 70-year lifetime of this business, a lot has changed in towns across the state. Many businesses, especially those with multiple stores abandoned downtowns for locations in strip centers and malls. Renys chose a different path in its locations. Of those 17 stores, 11 are in downtowns housed in 13 historic buildings. And a 14<sup>th</sup> historic building was donated to a nonprofit organization. The family's commitment to downtowns was also illustrated by Mary Kate Reny's long volunteer service on the Advisory Council of the Maine Downtown Center of Maine Development Foundation.

Using its buildings as part of its marketing strategy, Renys has rehabilitated two buildings using historic tax credits, updating those buildings in conformance with preservation standards and is about to begin a third historic tax credit rehab. When planning was underway to make repairs to the Farmington store in 2009, Maine Preservation's former Field Service Manager Chris Closs helped with their first tax credit project. Chris suggested using the credits as well as moving the elevator inside, resulting in savings that permitted repairing and opening additional square footage in the store, increasing its economic viability and that of the downtown in Farmington.

Greg Paxton, Executive Director noted: "As I recently stood outside the Gardiner Renys store for a short time taking photos, several cars and pedestrians drove or walked up and went in. I was reminded that just one store that is a destination helps the viability of all the other businesses around it as it attracts customers. As global warming increases, the pedestrian friendly and oriented businesses located in downtowns, where we give our cars a rest and use our feet, are more important than ever."

For its 70 years of steadfast interest and leadership in retaining and improving the viability of Maine's downtowns and its leadership in employing multiple historic buildings to house its high-quality low-cost approach to retailing, Maine Preservation is pleased to recognize Renys as our 2019 Earle G Shettleworth, Jr. Preservation Champion.

### **Spirit of Preservation Award – Alison Richardson & Molly Siegel, Isle Au Haut Lighthouse Swimmers**

Tackling preservation funding can produce watershed moments; and an innovative approach can be the key to channeling donations. This year, two young fundraisers took the plunge for preservation.

Molly Siegel, an Island fellow, and Alison Richardson, who works on the island, came up with a creative idea to shine a light on the plight of the Isle au Haut lighthouse, a still operating 1907 treasure that's an icon of the island and the Maine Coast. The lighthouse is in dire need of restoration estimated at \$500,000. Isle au Haut has just 60 full time residents, so funds need to come from a wider geographic area.

A lightning bolt of an idea from Alison served as the final push for their summer's fundraising efforts: "Why don't we swim around the island?," led to a snap campaign to raise \$1,000 per mile of shoreline. Over the course of August and September, in one-to two-mile legs, they became the first people to swim around Isle au Haut, starting and ending at the lighthouse. They swam 18 miles in all, in water temperature in the low to mid 50s and to date they've raised more than the sought \$18,000 for the cause.

Their efforts generated awareness and enthusiasm throughout the state for the lighthouse and its preservation. Molly and Alison are a terrific example of how passion and creative thinking can lead to preservation results and they are this year's winners of the Spirit of Preservation Award.

### **Augusta, Hartford Fire Station**

The Hartford Fire Station at 1 Hartford Square is the primary fire station for the City of Augusta and has served in this capacity since its design by the Augusta architectural firm of Bunker and Savage and construction in 1920. The station is named for George Huntington Hartford, an Augusta native and head of the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company, whose son donated the land upon which the station was constructed. When built, this Classical Revival-style facility incorporated all of the cutting-edge amenities of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century firehouse, including a fire alarm system with an air horn signal that could be heard throughout the city and accommodation of motorized vehicles as well as horses. It was the first fire station in the city to have these features. The Hartford Fire Station was entered into the National Register of Historic Places in 2017.

By the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the building could no longer accommodate the larger fire trucks used in modern-day firefighting; today's trucks are nearly three times the size and weight. The floors of the station were cracking under the weight of the trucks and vehicles could barely fit in their bays. Other serious issues included the entry of vehicle fumes into the living quarters and a lack of key amenities and safety features available in modern facilities.

In 2016, the City of Augusta approved a six-million-dollar bond to renovate and expand the Hartford Station in order to accommodate larger vehicles and a growing firefighting force. The City selected Brewer-based contractor Nickerson & O'Day to lead the design-build team. WBRC A/E led architecture and engineering, in collaboration with national fire station expert Bob Mitchell of Mitchell Associates Architects. Thornton-Tomasetti/Becker provided structural engineering expertise. Augusta's Director of Finance Ralph St. Pierre ably managed payments and change orders and U.S. Homeland Security provided grant funding for a back-up generator and compressor. Sutherland Conservation and Consulting provided historic preservation guidance. The teams were provided invaluable leadership by Fire Chief Roger Audette.

The work to improve the Hartford Fire Station ultimately included a design pivot to place all critical uses in a new 11,600 SF addition to the east of the station due to the prohibitive cost of foundation work on the historic structure. The project developed spaces typical of modern fire stations including training rooms and a designated turnout gear area separate from the living space. The new addition, built to match the character of the historic station, features the new multi-bay garage for the larger

vehicles on the first floor and the second floor contains the living quarters. The addition is technically a separate building, allowing Tier II standards on the original 1920 portion of the facility.

The scope of work in the 1920 facility included a total rebuild of the apparatus bay floor and some reframing of bays. A support beam and insulation were added to the second floor. Building-wide, the scope included envelope improvements along with new MEP systems, finishes and windows. An emergency staircase was added to the exterior west wall. The site and parking lot were also reconfigured and rebuilt and now serve the entire combined facility. The original station, which retained its historic appearance, still serves important functions, housing the smaller emergency vehicles, along with two dedicated gear rooms, EMS storage and a mechanic's room. Its reconfigured second floor comprises administrative offices, a training room with kitchenette, unisex restrooms, office support room, conference room and display space for historic memorabilia.

Creative thinking helped rejuvenate this 99-year-old community resource through a combination of rehabilitation and new construction that restored this landmark and brought it up to modern safety standards. From the outside, Hartford Fire Station remains much the same with its tapestry brick, stone trim and arched clock. The east-side expansion harmonizes visually with the 1920 structure and parking is more abundant. Inside, especially for emergency service professionals, the differences are profound. By combining old and new, Hartford Fire Station has reinvigorated a cherished landmark while providing a safer workplace for the men and women who daily put their lives on the line.

### **Biddeford, 17 Alfred Street**

Located in the heart of Biddeford's downtown, 17 Alfred Street is a three-story wood and masonry frame building with a flat roof and Italianate details. Built ca. 1860, 17 Alfred St is deemed "an excellent representation of the mixed-use development that came to typify Maine's rapidly expanding industrial cities in the late 19th century." It originally housed three commercial shops on the first floor, the second floor contained offices and apartments, and the third floor was constructed as one great room with an ornate pressed-metal ceiling. This top floor room served as the headquarters of the Improved Order of Redmen, one of the city's eight fraternal clubs. Over the years, the building hosted the Imperial Cafe, a popular lunch counter; a milliner; a casket maker and a fruit seller.

17 Alfred Street was spared from the Main Street fire of 1911 but suffered like much of Biddeford in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century with the economic and social impact of the decline of the textile industry. In the 1980s, the first floor was reconfigured eliminating the large

double-hung windows and recessed entrances. One of the storefronts was blocked off from street view by drywall and the other two original storefronts had been demolished and replaced with a flat wall and small windows. Drop ceilings and an assortment of fluorescent lighting fixtures were installed. Parts of the second and third floor were used as rough apartment space, but the floors were otherwise unfinished and sparsely heated with a patchwork of repair jobs. Water damage was prevalent and the building's roof trusses were severely cracked.

The new owner, Seth Harkness, aimed to completely restore the late 19th Century building back to its original state. He worked with Coastal Enterprises, Inc. on a construction loan and partnered with them on the historic tax credits that were critical to the project's success.

Portland Builders demolished the original roof and replaced the entire roof deck and supporting trusses by crane. Caleb Johnson Architects created a plan for the storefronts to match the original design and the plan was executed by restoration carpenter, Lee Hoagland. The rest of the work was carefully planned and cleared with Maine Historic Preservation Commission before being built out by his trusted team of local contractors. Ron Haley constructed the two retail interiors and installed historic windows on the upper façade to replace vinyl ones. Haley and Barry Dumper built out six upper-floor apartments and restored the central stairwell along with some exterior work. Local artist Chris Clay spent more than a year painstakingly restored the tin ceilings that hang in the entire 3rd floor and in parts of the rest of the building that were uncovered during the project.

Today, professionals and medical students reside in the six market rate apartments and the first floor contributes two new businesses to an up-and-coming retail area. Part & Parcel, a market cafe and Leader Bag Co. The building has been 100% occupied in both retail and residential spaces since its completion in 2017. As an indication of the quality of the work, the National Park Service pictured this project on the cover of its Annual Report on the Economic Impact of the Federal Historic Tax Credit for FY 2018.

The 17 Alfred Street project took a blighted building that was in danger of "demolition by neglect" and transformed it into a thriving, handsome and contributing piece of downtown Biddeford's historic commercial district. It serves as a successful case study in historic rehabilitation for other local property owners. And, the new 17 Alfred Street is emblematic of the resurgence of Biddeford as a vibrant community.

### **Bridgton, Webb House – Rufus Porter Museum**

The Rufus Porter Museum in Bridgton uses its two historic houses to showcase the work of Rufus Porter and other New England folk artists. Porter, who grew up in Bridgton, was a muralist, a portraitist, an inventor and a writer, as well as the founder

of Scientific American Magazine. One of the Museum's houses is the John and Maria Webb House.

The date of construction of the house is unknown, but it appears to have reached its current form by the early 1840s. The house was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2013 for its architectural significance as an intact example of a residential building that exhibits a transitional mix of Federal and Greek Revival style features. The exterior and interior retain a great amount of integrity. It's also significant as an early remnant of Bridgton's past that escaped substantial alteration, relocation, or demolition.

John and Maria Webb owned the property from the 1830s until 1881, during which time the house was improved to its current form. John Webb was a blacksmith who operated his shop at the property across the street. A few years after John's passing, Maria sold the property to her daughter-in-law and the property left control of the family in 1925.

The Rufus Porter Museum acquired the house in 2011. The Webb House had suffered from long years of vacancy and significant structural repairs were required along with an extensive interior rehabilitation and exterior restoration; the building was veering close to condemnation and a portion of the building was fire damaged. As well as structural repairs, the roof was replaced and the exterior clapboards repaired. The interior rehabilitation included drywall work and installation of an upgraded electrical system and new HVAC, fire and security system. A noncontributing, mid-20th century garage and addition to the ell were removed. Finally, the museum has built a handicapped accessible deck connecting the Webb house to its other structure, the often-moved Nathan Church House, which has also undergone substantial rehabilitation work, in addition to moving the structure to create a cohesive museum campus. Much of the work was done at a discounted rate or in-kind or done by volunteers.

The Rufus Porter Museum truly is the little museum that can - due to the hard work and diligence of its volunteers. Through frequent staffing changes over the years, to having to come up with creative ways to raise money, the volunteers kept their eye on the prize - a museum campus, in the center of Bridgton, that provides educational opportunities for all ages. The honor award for the Webb House acknowledges the Rufus Porter Museum staff, the project participants and all of its dedicated volunteers.

### **Edgecomb, Merry Barn**

The Merry Barn has a rich history in Midcoast Maine. Built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century for the Merrys, a family of shipbuilders and captains. The barn is an impressive 2,200 square feet with several handsome neo-classical features, including a cupola and front-facing pediment. The barn was passed down through the generations of until it was

sold to Howie Davison. Howie converted this cheery, yellow barn into a popular dance hall in the mid-1950s. Crowds as large as 600 individuals, traveling from as far away as Lewiston, would pack into the barn for dancing - mainly square dancing with Howie doing the calling - transforming the structure into a genuine community landmark. The dance hall closed in the 1970s and since then the barn has had several different owners and uses including, notably, as a workshop for McSwain's steeplejack business. The barn was very well-built and has been lovingly maintained by all its stewards.

In 2015, Stephanie McSherry bought the barn with the dream of opening a literacy center in the space. Four years later, after a successful adaptive use rehabilitation project, Merry Barn Writers' Retreat & Educational Consulting, LLC opened its doors. Some highlights of the project to convert the barn for use as a literacy center include making the basement and first floor handicapped accessible, installing a well and septic system, and adding plumbing and bathrooms - increasing the utility of the building. Staircases were rebuilt to be code complaint, structural upgrades to the floor framing were completed to reinforce the space, partition walls were added for a first-floor classroom, and kitchen and heating and cooling systems were upgraded.

All work on the structure was executed with care so as to not disrupt the historic integrity of the barn. This care is evident when looking at the exterior of the barn which remains much the same as it did when the barn was converted into the dance hall over sixty years ago. On the interior, the wood flooring and wooden beam support-system were preserved.

Community support has been overwhelming. Past owners of the barn, including the Davisons, Ellinwoods, and McSwains, have been involved in the project and supportive of its mission. The Merry Barn Writers' Retreat officially opened on June 29 and is now hosting events for children and the community. People routinely stop by the barn to share their stories and express their gratitude that the barn has been brought back to life as a significant community gathering space.

### **Hallowell, Stevens Hall, Maine Industrial School for Girls**

The Stevens building is part of the former Maine Industrial School for Girls Complex (also known as the Stevens School Campus) in Hallowell. Designed by the Augusta architectural firm Bunker Savage and completed in 1938, it served as the infirmary for the school and was the final building constructed on the campus. The former Industrial School for Girls not only played an important role in the history of social reform in the state of Maine but also positively impacted the lives of many "wayward" young women who passed through its doors from its founding in 1874 until its closure. The building is a fine example of neo-classical design in an institutional setting. The 2-story building is the largest



structure on the campus at an imposing 4,700 square feet and it features an octagonal wooden cupola, a concrete portico and two-central chimneys.

After the school's closure in the mid-1970s, the Stevens Building was repurposed into state offices and the pre-release center for the Maine Department of Corrections. In 2003, the state put the campus up for sale, and it remained vacant until 2016 when Mastway Development purchased the entire complex for the redevelopment of the site into office space, senior housing, and student housing for the University of Maine at Augusta. At the time of its purchase, the entire complex of buildings was suffering from years of deferred maintenance and disuse.

The Stevens Building is the second building in the complex, now known as Stevens Commons, to be rehabilitated. Using state and federal historic tax credits, the owners have rehabbed the building to provide student housing for the University of Maine at Augusta with a first-floor café to serve the students and other residents and workers at the campus. Deteriorated exterior features have been restored and interior alterations have been made sensitively to retain historic character. The slate roof was repaired and new copper flashing and gutters installed. Historic wood windows were rehabilitated and low-profile storm windows added for efficiency. A few missing or severely deteriorated windows were replaced with appropriate new windows. New mechanical systems and an elevator were installed. Most of the original interior plaster and ceramic tile remains in place. The work was completed with guidance from Sutherland Conservation & Consulting.

The result of this project has been to restore and repurpose a prominent building on the Stevens School campus, following on the work that began with the Administration Building (a 2018 MP Honor Award winner). Work is now underway to rehabilitate three more of the historic campus buildings using historic tax credits. These will be used for professional offices, senior housing, and additional student housing for the University of Maine at Augusta.

Building by building, Mastway Development, with the support of the City and citizens of Hallowell, is slowly transforming this once derelict campus into a space that serves the diverse needs of the community and respects the original designs of the buildings.

**Portland, Jose Block, 80 Exchange Street**

The Jose Block is one of several buildings built on Exchange Street in the mid-19th century by Horatio Jose, one of Portland's most prominent businessmen. Constructed after the great fire of 1866, the Italianate-style structure has a stone facade and arched windows. Notable features include a gambrel roof, which is unusual for an office building of its time, and iron pilasters on the first-floor facade. Constructed to house shops on the first floor and offices on the second, the third floor was finished as a performance space and for a number of years was used by a local music group, the Rossini Club, which is still active today. The Jose Block is a contributing building within the Old Port Historic District and is well known locally, in part for a large tromp l'oeil mural on its southern elevation adjoining Tommy's Park.

Over the years, the building experienced some significant visual changes. The storefronts were reconfigured, the original arched sash windows were replaced with square casement windows, and, in the 1960s, yellow stucco was added to the Exchange Street facade. It also survived two fires.

In 2018, the Jose Block was bought by developers Jim Brady and Stev Parker. Since then, the owners, in consultation with the City of Portland and working with Warren Construction, restored and rehabilitated both the interior and exterior of the building. The upper three floors have been updated to Class A office space, with The Grill Room Restaurant remaining on the first floor. The yellow stucco was removed and replaced, and the storefronts were restored to their original layout and setback. The inappropriate casement windows were replaced with new, arched, sash windows based on the originals. Two new modifications were made to the structure: first, at the rear of the building, two dormers on the rear elevation were expanded into one continuous dormer, which is minimally visible from the street; and windows were added to the southern elevation.

The final challenge of this project was the famous mural on the south elevation overlooking Tommy's Park. Investigation revealed that the masonry behind the mural was failing and that the required repair would destroy the mural. The decision was made to replace the mural after repairing the wall. The developers and Julie Larry of Greater Portland Landmarks formed a committee to review design proposals and chose Will Sears, who created an abstract design inspired by the colors of Portland. The final design was reviewed and approved by the Historic Preservation Board. The mural was partially funded by a Kickstarter campaign.

The rehabilitation of the Jose Block made updates and improvements while reinstating the building's architectural and historic significance. The building is now home to high quality office space, and hosts successful restaurant and other businesses as well as Fathom Companies as tenants. Inappropriate updates have been reversed, and the

facade has been restored to its former elegance. All of this is made complete by the new mural facing Tommy's Park.

### **Portland, Butler School & Payson House**

"Everyone Deserves a Place to call Home" is the tagline that Avesta Housing has used to describe the newly rehabbed Butler-Payson Apartments. And what a home it is! Consisting of two separate structures, the Butler School and the Payson House, both designed by Francis Henry Fassett who had a strong impact on the look of Portland, the apartments date from 1879 and 1877 respectively. Exhibiting the leading architectural trends of the era, the Butler School is a keen example of the Victorian Gothic style while the Payson House, at its core, is an Italianate structure. Originally, the Butler School was constructed as a grammar school while the Payson House was originally a private home before being converted into a hospital in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Both buildings were converted into apartments in the early 1970s and were used as housing until 2011 when Avesta purchased the buildings for conversion into affordable, senior housing. The buildings had inefficient mechanical systems, poorly sealed and insulated envelopes, and outdated life safety features that needed to be upgraded to ensure the ongoing health and safety of current and future residents. Determined to keep the historic fabric of both structures while upgrading both facilities to meet current safety codes and increase the buildings' energy efficiency, Avesta worked closely with Efficiency Maine to facilitate air sealing, insulation, and other efficiency upgrades that were acceptable from a historic perspective, exceeded code, and would have the desired impact on building operations. Avesta teamed with Hebert Construction, Goduti/Thomas Architects, Structural Design Consultants, and Tremont Preservation Services to ensure that the rehabilitation of the buildings met the needs of all parties.

The envelopes of both buildings were significantly improved through air sealing, insulation, and replacement of windows. Structural improvements in both buildings ensured their stability, which was especially necessary in Payson House due to the piecemeal construction and additions over time. The brick exteriors of both buildings were repointed, slate roofs repaired, copper gutters replaced, mechanical systems were upgraded, and life safety issues were addressed throughout both buildings. In some cases, window openings were enlarged to allow the installation of windows more reflective of those that were originally designed by the architect. Overhead utilities were also buried at both properties, thus improving the historical accuracy of the overall site. The flagpole memorial to Harold Andrews at the Butler School was also rededicated through the collaboration of the Rotary Club and City of Portland.

With these modernizing renovations, the focus was not just improving the quality of life for people living in the homes, but also reincorporating these buildings into the historic

fabric of the neighborhood where the buildings have stood for almost 150 years. The historic preservation of Butler School and Payson House preserves affordable homes for 56 households on Portland's West End and affirms that safe, quality, and affordable homes can elevate and strengthen existing neighborhoods.

### **Portland, The Sawyer Building, 2-6 Exchange St / 395-399 Fore St**

This highly recognizable building is in the heart of the Old Port. An earlier building on the site was destroyed during the Great Fire of Portland in 1866 and only part of a wall remained after the fire. A new structure built shortly after the fire included the old wall. Throughout the decades, the building had several different owners. Harrison Hill Sawyer II bought the building in 1974 for retail, office and apartment use. It was one of the many buildings he purchased to grow his company. Flash forward to present day, Sawyer's grandson, Harrison Wirth, now sits next to the original wall in his office at H.H. Sawyer Realty.

After enduring years of drafty and foggy windows, the building owner, H.H. Sawyer Realty engaged Bagala Window Works to remediate the situation. Bagala performed an assessment and removed one of the windows, and realized the project was going to be a larger one than anticipated. The original windows were modified with insulated glass panels, which had structurally impacted the stability of the upper and lower sash. The jambs surrounding the sash were also weather worn on the exterior and many sills needed repair or replacing. Due to these conditions, the windows needed to be reproduced.

Since the building is in an historic district, and a highly visible, important part of the Old Port, the owner believed the right thing to do was to restore the building to its original glory. H.H. Sawyer Realty funded restoration project itself and used state historic tax credits.

Justin Smith, of New England Sash Company, crafted exact reproductions of the original sash with the original configuration, muntin ogees and stile and rail widths. The sash were made traditionally through mortis and tenon with wood pegs- no metal fasteners or glue used. The biggest challenge during this process was making the clipped corner and bowed sash. After the sash were fabricated, Bagala Window Works arrived onsite to remove the existing windows and begin extensive repair on the exterior jambs and sills. The wood sills and the mortar below the sills were deteriorated to the point of both needing replacement and reinforcing. Pete Chavonelle of Masonry Preservation Associates was consulted about using the right mortar products and new a brick mold was fabricated to match the existing. Victor Wright and his crew at Heritage Company, replaced the slate roof and copper gutter system and Bill Bunton reconstructed the dormers.

The building's original architectural details have been brought back to life with the window restoration work; the windows now feature single-pane antique reproduction glass, reinstalled weight balance systems, and metal interlocking weather-stripping to prevent air infiltration. The windows now operate smoothly and efficiently. The building now consists of four apartments, four offices and four retail stores. The new roof, dormers and gutter system cap off this project.

### **Saco, Notre Dame de Lourdes / Cutts Avenue Apartments**

The Notre Dame de Lourdes Church at 20 Cutts Avenue has seen many changes over the last 110 years, much like Saco itself. Built as a Baptist church and theater in 1910, by the late 1920s, the parish was reestablished as a Catholic Church, largely due to the influx of Franco-American mill workers to the area. In 1929, a school was added and it operated for 22 years in the church loft, attic, basement and convent. For over eighty years, the church served the needs of the community, however, a dwindling congregation led to the eventual cessation of its Sunday services and the last Sunday Mass was performed in 2009. For nearly a decade, the church, a handsome vernacular building with a striking rose window, sat idle, albeit still open for prayer. In 2013, the city of Saco proposed to buy the building and demolish the structure for a parking lot. Thankfully, the City revised its plan and in 2017, the structure was purchased by Cutts Avenue Apartments LLC for its conversion into apartments.

Converting a 100-year old church into 19 unique apartment units is no easy feat and Cutts Avenue Apartments worked in tandem with Hardypond Construction, Shields Architecture, Base Design Group and the City of Saco to ensure that the design of the Cutts Avenue Apartments did not diminish the historic character of the church.

The careful rehabilitation of the former Notre Dame de Lourdes married the needs of an apartment building while keeping the defining features of the church. This work included the demolition of the rectory which was determined to not be a character-defining feature in order to create a mandatory elevator shaft, the addition of five roof dormers, and creating 3 floors of rooms within the sanctuary. The existing timber frame roof trusses were used and much of the original character of the building remains. The existing windows were retained where possible and the stained-glass windows were repurposed in interior walls. The main stained-glass window was saved and protected in place. The wood from excess pews and paneling was used everywhere it could be to continue the historic feel throughout the building while also minimizing the need for new materials. The third-floor apartments have original detail painting on the ceiling that was discovered and retained. The building exterior was returned to its artistic wood siding and historic colors, enhancing the appearance of the street.

The Cutts Avenue Apartments marry the 100-year-old look of a historic building with modern amenities, all while bringing vibrancy to the City of Saco. The conversion of the church into apartments is symbolic of the changing face of Saco itself. Once, a mill town, the city, along with its neighbor Biddeford, is looking to its future as a cultural and economic center in southern Maine. The Cutts Avenue Apartments play a part in this transformation -offering a unique housing experience to a new generation of Saco residents while honoring the city's storied past.

### **South Paris, Mildred M. Fox School**

The Mildred M. Fox School, also known as Brick School, has been an anchor of community life in Paris for 125 years; educating generations of Paris students until 2008. Originally built in 1883 as the Oxford Normal Institute in the Italianate style, the school was rebuilt and expanded significantly in 1940 pursuant to Philip B. Wright's design. It was renamed in 1967 to honor longtime principal Mildred M. Fox. This building is physical evidence of the shift towards consolidation of neighborhood schoolhouses into larger buildings. Its architecture is typical of schools of its era; a brick classical revival building with large windows. It was mostly unchanged since its construction, with the exception of updates and minor changes made in the mid-1960s.

For several years after its closure as a public school, the building was leased to a Christian academy, and then was vacant as the town considered the future of the building. Avesta Housing of Portland purchased the building in 2016 and undertook the challenging task of transforming the building into critically needed affordable housing for seniors. This project was supported by the town, which had the vision to save Fox School so it could be repurposed to benefit the community. The project was also supported by Norway Savings Bank, a key partner that facilitated the acquisition of funding and championed the project.

As is common with older properties, the building had environmental conditions that needed to be addressed, such as lead paint and asbestos, as well as early signs of deterioration, including rotting windowsills due to water infiltration. The rehabilitation project was done with both preservation and sustainability in mind; retaining key features wherever possible. Classrooms were converted to create 12 accessible apartment units, and an elevator was added. The original windows were retained, and storm windows were added for energy efficiency. Lighting and appliances were also chosen for their energy efficiency. The school's past was honored through the selection of interior and exterior paints, lighting fixtures and common area furniture consistent with the building's period of historical significance. The grounds were also re-landscaped.

The redevelopment of Fox School was a \$3.2 million project that will house seniors

making 60% or less of the area median income; enabling local seniors to age in place safely and affordably; the majority of the units are occupied by residents of Paris and Norway. This project has had a positive economic impact on the region, resulting in the employment of nearly 40 local service providers, subcontractors and suppliers, as well as local architects, contractors, engineers and other development team partners. The redevelopment brought Fox School to the tax rolls for the first time to the economic benefit of the Town of Paris and confirmed the school's place as a community landmark.

### **Surry, Old Surry Village Schoolhouse**

The Surry Village School has served the community of Surry in a variety of capacities since the two-story Greek Revival and Italianate schoolhouse opened its doors on 1872. The building, considered modern for its day, was built by Jesse M. Ray for the handsome sum of \$2000. The school served as both the primary and high school, until 1926 when it was decided that Surry would send its high school students to nearby Ellsworth. After years of increasingly expensive maintenance problems and a desire for more modern amenities, the school closed its doors in the spring of 1952. The following year the Surry Volunteer Fire Department took the property over and it was used as the town's fire house until it was replaced by a new fire house in 1987.

During its tenure as a firehouse, substantial changes were made: a cement floor replaced the maple flooring on the first floor and two large doors were installed to accommodate the fire trucks. The front stairway to the second floor was moved to the west side of the building. The fire department added a kitchenette on the second floor and two bathrooms and a furnace room on the first floor.

The building was next transferred to the Surry Woman's Auxiliary. This group returned the front of the building to its 19th century look, with one large room on the first floor and one large room on the second floor. The Auxiliary used the building as a meetinghouse until the Auxiliary disbanded in 2014 and the building was returned to the Town of Surry.

In 2015 the town officials pursued different options for the schoolhouse, including demolition and, amidst mounting concern over this potential outcome the school was added to Maine Preservation's list of Most Endangered Historic Places. The community galvanized to save this important local place and the Old Surry Village Schoolhouse Preservation Group was formed to help save the building. The town rallied to the cause and at a special town meeting in 2016 the town voted to officially form the Old Surry School Rehabilitation Project. At no cost to the taxpayers, the group would return the schoolhouse to its 19th century appearance. The team's goal was to identify, protect, repair and replace the necessary areas of the building while accommodating the

necessary changes that would make the building compliant with 21st century life safety and ADA requirements.

The restoration efforts were meticulously executed by a group of dedicated volunteers who both tirelessly raised the substantial funds to pay for the materials and professional teams as well as providing countless hours of labor to bring the old schoolhouse back to life. The structure was found, to the delight of all, to be structurally intact so the largest part of the restoration effort was restoring the interior of the building. The work included installing a new subfloor and 2-inch maple flooring over the firehouse concrete floor to match the second floor and the stairway was returned to the front of the building. New 200-amp electricity was installed throughout the building and schoolhouse lights were returned to both floors. Traditional bead board and wainscoting sheathing as well as windows and trim were installed and painted on the first floor to match the second-floor features. The rehabilitation efforts were coordinated with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to ensure that all restoration complied with the Secretary of Interior's Standards.

In June 2019, with the final nail nailed and the last coat of paint dried, the schoolhouse opened to the public as a museum and community meeting space for lectures and events. The Maine Historic Preservation Commission has indicated that the property is eligible for listing in the National Register. With the love and labor of the volunteers with the Old Surry Village Preservation Group, the structure has been saved.

### **Yarmouth, Grand Trunk Railroad Depot**

The growth of Southern Maine in latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries is inexorably linked to the Grand Trunk Railroad. This railroad connected Canada to the port of Portland, allowing people and goods to reach the ocean when the St. Lawrence river froze during the winter months. While Portland was the end of the line of the Grand Trunk, the rail line traversed through Maine forging powerful connections between towns like Lewiston and Yarmouth and the rest of the world.

The Grand Trunk Depot in Yarmouth was built in 1906 and served as a passenger rail depot until shortly after WWII and closed entirely in 1960. In 1968, with the threat of demolition in the air, the Yarmouth Village Improvement Society purchased the depot from the Canadian National Railroad sparing it from the wrecking ball. The VIS leased the depot in 1976 to local florists who, in 2018, decided against renewing their lease. The society, recognizing the need for a new steward for the building, contacted Maine Preservation which, through our Protect & Sell Program was able to work with VIS to find a new owner for the property in Ford Reiche. He in turn partnered with Gorham Savings Bank which has made this depot its home in Yarmouth.



The rehabilitation of the former Yarmouth Depot into a bank was no easy task, even though the VIS had been vigilant in its stewardship. In addition to work required to modernize the building for a new use, unique complex legal issues regarding joint ownership, rights of way, and permitted uses had to be navigated.

Reiche worked closely with Gorham Savings Bank, including the bank's own team of architects, designers and contractors, CAP Services and JD Design, to complete the rehab work on the former station, ensuring that the exterior appearance and nearly all the original interior was preserved. The exterior of the structure was restored, with repaired running trim, original window sashes completely reglazed, and freshly painted. The interior of the structure was restored to its near original condition and configuration and the historic varnished surfaces were retained, with very little modification imposed on the building to accommodate the bank's occupancy. The most substantial undertaking, the installation of new mechanical and electrical systems was performed with the utmost care to ensure that these new systems meshed with the historic appearance of the depot. The team, in a nod to the building's historic semi-public status, hung artifacts from the Grand Trunk Railroad as well as Village Green Park along the building's walls creating a place for not only the community to do its banking but also a place where one can soak in the history of the structure.

Beyond the work of the design and construction team, the vital efforts of Sarah Witte, the landscape architect and coordinator of permitting and community insight; Nat Tupper, Yarmouth Town Manager; the entire Yarmouth Town Hall; and the Yarmouth Village Improvement Society which rallied community support and assisted with regulatory permitting must be recognized. Without these folks, this project would not have come to fruition.

Gorham Savings Bank made this remarkable restoration project financially and physically possible. While the restoration commitment was technically limited to the restoration of the depot, GSB also funded 50% of the cost of the park restoration and the bank used its inhouse teams to complete the incredible restoration. This is the second excellent historic preservation project executed by Gorham Savings Bank in the past few years. Its previous project, the last remaining building from the Grand Trunk Station in Portland received a Maine Preservation Honor Award in 2017. Their leadership in demonstrating how structures can be adapted for new purposes without compromising their historic origins is invaluable.

The result of all this care and dedication to preserve the Yarmouth Depot and the adjoining Village Green Park ensures that these spaces can be enjoyed by generations of Yarmouth residents to come.

**Maine Preservation** is the independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit member-based statewide historic preservation organization, that promotes and preserves historic places, buildings, downtowns and neighborhoods, strengthening the cultural and economic vitality of Maine communities.