

Boston Preservation Alliance to recognize eight projects

BY MARILYN JACKSON
STAFF WRITER

The Boston Preservation Alliance will recognize eight significant development projects for their historic preservation and compatible new construction in a ceremony Thursday, May 1, at the historic building at 179 Lincoln St.

The event also marks the organization's 30th anniversary, which works to preserve and promote Boston's unique architectural heritage and celebrates their positive impact on the built environment.

Two landmarks will be singled out for their significant renovations and restorations – the Liberty Hotel and the Boston Children's Museum.

Carpenter & Company, along with the firms of Cambridge Seven Associates and Ann Beha Architects, redesigned the old Suffolk County Jail on Charles Street and adapted the complex as a luxury hotel. Gridley J.F. Bryant designed the massive building of Quincy granite in 1851, and the jail was once considered an international model for prison design. After it closed in 1990, Mass. General Hospital acquired it and selected Carpenter & Company for the redevelopment, which included building a 16-story tower and razing the 18-foot-high prison wall.

"This is a fantastic example of how a historic building can be given a new life that contributes strongly to our city, said Sarah D. Kelly, executive director of the alliance.

The Boston Children's Museum, housed in a late 19th century former wool warehouse for nearly 30 years, undertook a major renovation that comprised rehabilitating

its 150,000 square feet of space and adding a 23,000-square-foot metal and glass-enclosed atrium that looks out onto Fort Point Channel. It is the first green museum in the city, said Kelly, who noted that it received a silver LEED certification. She said the alliance was thrilled that the project drew its inspiration from its industrial surroundings.

Three developments will be recognized as "notable neighborhood preservation projects."

In the Jamaica Plain/Mission Hill neighborhood, the American Brewery Lofts along Heath Street was converted to 79 condos. Commonwealth Ventures, the developer, and David Manfredi of Elkus Manfredi Architects blended a new contemporary building with the 1891 Queen Anne-style complex to create a distinctive development. This brewery was among the few breweries along Stony Brook Valley that survived Prohibition and had operated for more than 100 years.

Also to be recognized will be the East Boston Development Corporation, which took the shuttered Barnes School in East Boston and converted it to affordable housing for the elderly. Built in 1898, it had been the neighborhood's first high school. Today, some of its students call the Barnes School home.

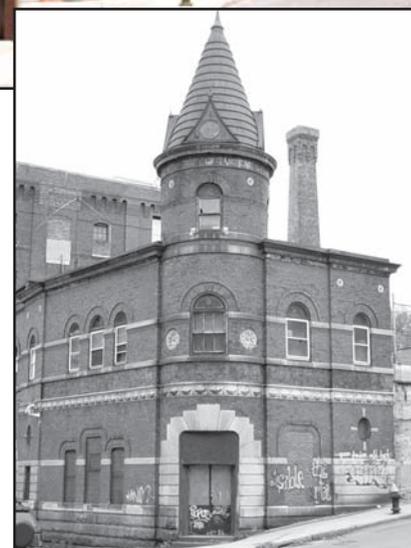
The third neighborhood project was the work of the Boston Neighborhood Network, which partnered with Urban Edge, to redevelop a former MBTA power station. The building had been vacant for 20 years after the Orange Line was relocated in 1986. Today, the Egleston Square building is called the BNN Charles J. Beard II Media Center.

The Dorchester Historical Society will be honored for its innova-



The American Brewery Lofts at 251 Heath St. in Jamaica Plain/Mission Hill has a rich history, architecturally and commercially. Three years ago the Queen Anne patterned brick complex was redeveloped and a new building added so that the complex would house 79 condominiums.

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The brewery in recent years had fallen into disrepair. During Prohibition it was shut down and was used as a warehouse for bales of cotton and wool. Haffenreffer stored its beer there; later it was used as a moving and storage facility.

tive preservation efforts at the James Blake House, the oldest house in Boston. Built circa 1648, it is an example of West England construction. Scheduled for demolition to make way for construction of city greenhouses along Massachusetts Avenue, the house was moved in the late 1890s by the society to its present location on Columbia Road at a cost of \$295.

Rather than try to rehabilitate the

house to its original appearance, the society decided to bring it back to the way it looked when it was moved and renovated to reflect an Arts and Crafts style.

Kelly said that the society's approach was thoughtful. It "highlights an important moment in the history of the preservation movement."

The Boston Medical Center will receive an achievement award too.

The two remaining Boston City Hospital buildings, the BCD and the FGH buildings, also designed by Gridley J.F. Bryant, were completely rebuilt, preserving the three-and-a-half-story brick Mansard facades and creating two mezzanine levels of workspace in the interiors.

"This project is proof ... that hospitals can maintain their historic

buildings and provide the highest quality of facilities for their employees and patients," she said.

The eighth award will recognize new construction in context with the built environment. The four-story Cathedral High School gymnasium on Washington Street in the South End "broke the mold of the typical gymnasium," said Kelly. It features a building of brick, metal and glass, designed by CBT Architects. It stands in the shadow of the Cathedral of the Holy Cross, which was built in 1875.

The Barnes School, East Boston's first high school, was built in 1898. No longer needed, the building was closed 20 years ago. CWC Builders redeveloped the property for the East Boston Development Corporation, and today it serves as affordable housing for the elderly.

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