2022 Preservation Awards – Providence Preservation Society

Providence Athenaeum Art Room
251 Benefit Street, College Hill
*Interior Restoration Award*

During the Providence Athenaeum’s extended closure in the first year of the pandemic, board member Tripp Evans recognized the opportunity to restore the library’s Art Room, located within the 1836 building designed by prominent architect William Strickland. Created in 1896 to highlight the institution’s art collection, the Art Room has been a well-loved haven but recently showed signs of hard use, deferred maintenance, and unsympathetic alterations. A top-to-bottom traditional restoration of the room and its furnishings brought the physical space and collections back to their original glory. The jury commends the Athenaeum for taking advantage of unexpected time for a project and for approaching the restoration with sensitivity and creativity.

Lang/Morra Storefront
38 Willow Street, Armory
*Neighborhood Charm Award*

Using historical documentation and physical evidence, architect Monika Kraemer worked with clients Kari Lang and John Morra to recreate a commercial space within a residential neighborhood. The restored Willow Street Variety shop is attached to 36-38 Willow Street, a common end-gable, double-height-bay house (c. 1890). Particular attention was paid to high-quality material choices of the street-level structure, and a roof deck was added but set back to avoid distraction. The “store” is now used as a garage, work room, and family gathering space (in good weather), maintaining the easily lost charm of the Armory district’s early mixed-use legacy.

Brown University’s Sharpe House
79-81 Brown Street, College Hill
*Preservation through Relocation Award*

The Sharpe House relocation and renovation project is not a common preservation story but offers a creative approach to the conservation of a historic home. Through relocation and reconnection to its long-separated neighbor from Angell Street, the Peter Green House (formerly Lippitt-Guild House, 1868), the Sharpe double-house (1873) by noted Providence architect Alpheus Morse has renewed purpose. KITE Architects were engaged by Brown University to lead the work, including an addition to address accessibility, circulation, and code issues while creating new internal and external spaces. The result of this project is a memorable experience for students and faculty of the history department.
Crossroads Family Housing
14 Properties in West End, Smith Hill, and Silver Lake
Community Housing Preservation Award

This ambitious project involved the phased interior and exterior renovation of 14 structures to provide housing for 30 low-income families who have experienced homelessness in the West End, Smith Hill and Silver Lake. The renovated buildings represent a mix of designated historic and simply older housing stock emblematic of traditional neighborhood multi-family housing. The work dramatically improved safety and durability of housing for a vulnerable population. This collaboration between Crossroads Family Housing and KITE Architects included the preservation of key houses and neighborhood fabric, and architectural improvements, through materials, energy efficiency measures, and accessibility.

New Townhouses
112 Hudson Street and 99 Messer Street, Armory
Sensitive Residential Infill Award

Two long-vacant parcels at the corner of Hudson and Messer Streets have received sensitive residential infill in the form of two sets of townhouses. Each new construction cluster was designed to be sympathetic to the scale and design of the adjacent eclectic 19th century dwellings. Located in the local historic district, the result of this project was improved through the design review process—notably the elevated entrance height rather than at-grade constructions. The outcome at this corner maintains the rhythm of the streets and context of the neighborhood.

The Beatrice
90 Westminster Street, Downtown
Adaptive Reuse Award

Inspired by the owner’s mother, The Beatrice hotel anchors the redevelopment and restoration of the historic National Exchange Bank Building (1888, by prominent local firm Stone, Carpenter & Willson) in downtown Providence’s Financial District. Paolino Properties and ZDS Architecture & Interiors teamed up to create a flow between the historic bank building, with restaurant on the ground floor, and the northeastern atrium connector of 50 Kennedy Plaza (formerly Fleet Center, 1983-85). The jury noted the visual improvement of this atrium space, that now serves as the hotel reception area, and its street elevations on Westminster and Kennedy Plaza.
Old State House  
150 Benefit Street, College Hill  
Conservation Award

Home to the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, the Old State House has undergone a meticulous exterior restoration employing high-quality materials and procedures. The team, including the State of Rhode Island, project architect Haynes/de Boer Associates, and general contractor Martone, Inc., faithfully restored several exterior materials and design elements of the 1762 Georgian-style civic building. A signature feature of the property, the bell tower, was made functional again with the replication of a new bell wheel out of oak, and the bell was heard for the first time in years at the ribbon cutting. The success of this project elevates the State Historic Preservation Office as an exemplar of materials conservation and preservation in Rhode Island.

Downcity Phase II  
Trayne Building, 270 Westminster Street, Downtown  
Wit Building, 276 Westminster Street, Downtown  
Lapham Building, 290 Westminster Street, Downtown  
Commercial Rehabilitation Award

The latest undertaking by Cornish Associates is a complete rehabilitation of three commercial structures and reactivation of a central block of Westminster Street downtown. The project was broken into two pieces: combining the Lapham (1904) and Wit (c. 1930) Buildings and erecting an addition to the Trayne Building (1893-94). The formerly largely vacant and underutilized Lapham-Wit Buildings have been fitted with modern offices, retail space, and apartments, and the front façade and second-floor window of the Wit Building were rebuilt following research by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission. The late 19th century Trayne Building was carefully restored and expanded, with a compatible but clearly differentiated addition abutting Grant’s Block park. The success of this project continues Cornish Associate’s commitment to mixed-use development that contributes to a vibrant downtown.

Rise ‘N Shine  
97 Holden Street, Smith Hill  
Neighborhood Gem Award

The latest adaptation of the Second Empire-style Christopher G. Dodge Carriage House is a bustling coffee shop that is helping to revitalize this pocket of Smith Hill. The carriage house, built c. 1858 to serve the house at 11 West Park Street, is located in a charming, largely 19th-century residential neighborhood. Since the days of horses and carriages, the building has been used as shops and workshops with dwellings above. In addition to the exterior
renovation work, Neal Kaplan of neal estate LLC and a longtime resident of Smith Hill, opened Rise 'N Shine Coffee Bar to serve as a new community hub and celebration of this little gem.

Providence Public Library Empire Street Renovation
150 Empire Street, Downtown
Community Design Award

Providence Public Library (PPL) has long been a fixture of the community, providing access to a wide range of services and programs. After a century of use, the physical structure was struggling to keep pace with the library’s aspirations for 21st century programming. Following a successful renovation in 2012 of the original 1900 Stone, Carpenter & Willson building fronting Washington Street, PPL recently embarked on the largest-ever public library renovation in Rhode Island history on the 1953 Moderne addition fronting Empire Street. The jury commended the thoughtfulness that went into the exterior and interior design to better serve library patrons in a more attractive space, an accomplishment achieved through collaboration with designLAB architects.

Southside Community Land Trust
404 Broad Street, Upper South Providence
Mission-Driven Preservation Award

The Southside Community Land Trust has opened its new, state-of-the-art headquarters in South Providence in a space that exemplifies mission-drive historic preservation. The building long served the transportation needs of South Providence, from original livery use to automobile storage and many subsequent uses. This collaboration between Southside Community Land Trust and Union Studio reimagines this rare 19th-century building in Trinity Square. Today, the original Trinity Square Stable (c. 1868) is a hub of farm-to-market activity, including space for education, programming, processing, kitchen, office, and retail accommodations for three Black-owned businesses.