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FALL 2015, VOL. 40, NO. 3, FREE

Architectural Surveys Discovering Hidden Gems in the Deering and Willard neighborhoods



PHOTO: HEATH PALEY

The Dunn Memorial Church, later called Central Square Baptist Church and known today as Deering Center Community Church, is one of several important religious and educational buildings along Stevens Avenue in Portland. It was designed in 1906-07 by Victor Hodgins of Bangor.

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S THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE SERVED on the boards of small nonprofits know well, being a trustee can often become more like being a volunteer staff member. Landmarks is no different and we have been enormously lucky to have people involved who have a true passion for this mission who can help develop programs and future plans.

The past 18 months has been a celebratory time for Landmarks as we looked back on where we came from and at the same time were crafting a new direction for the coming years. Several recent observations meant that what began as a "simple" tweaking of our last strategic plan became a more comprehensive effort to imagine our future.

First, and most noticeable, the pace of development in Portland has heated up, a major change from just a few years ago. New construction is evident throughout the Portland peninsula, such as along Congress Street and Forest Avenue, and in East Bayside. Surrounding communities are seeing a variety of rehabilitation and new construction projects. Closer to home, the removal of the Spring Street median and expansion of the esplanade on the south side is bringing an opportunity to enhance the public realm adjacent to Landmarks offices.

Greater Portland is changing rapidly and is attracting people from a wide demographic spectrum; from young people who can take advantage of technology to live and work wherever they choose; to retirees seeking a smaller scale urban setting; all the way to recent immigrants seeing a better life for their families.

At the Observatory, we see that our historic seaport has been discovered by people from all over the world who are coming to visit. Places in Europe, Asia including China, India and Japan, South America, and Africa, and of course North America, are all called out on the map of the world at the tower. We are in dynamic times!

Given this rapid pace of change, Landmarks will be focusing on advocacy and education, reaching out to new audiences, and committing additional resources and energy to our core mission, vision and beliefs. I'd like to take this opportunity to share them with you.



HILARY BASSETT
Executive Director

MISSION

Greater Portland Landmarks mission is to preserve and revitalize Greater Portland's remarkable legacy of historic buildings, neighborhoods, landscapes and parks.

VISION

Greater Portland residents and visitors will appreciate, protect and support the historic fabric and architecture of the community, thus enriching our lives and those of generations to come.

BELIEFS

- The maintenance and enhancement of our historic buildings, neighborhoods, landscapes and parks support sustainability, spur economic development and help to make Greater Portland one of the most vital communities in America.
- The design, quality and condition of the built environment affect our sense of well-being, evoke the power of the past and embody our aspirations for the future.
- Historic structures can and should be adapted to fit modern uses while maintaining their integrity and character.
- Education is essential to carry forward the stories and achievements of the past and to rally the public to preserve and revitalize Greater Portland's legacy for the future.

PRESERVATION UPDATES

Amanda Larson joins Landmarks staff



Amanda Larson has joined Landmarks staff as Director of Development. She is a native of greater Philadelphia, and has raised funds for organizations such as the Philadelphia Orchestra, Peter Nero and the Philly Pops, the General Theological Seminary, and Washington National Cathedral. In addition to her work here, Amanda is also active on the South Portland Arts and Preservation

Committee. "I am delighted to be working with Landmarks," she said. "It is a joy to be able to use my development experience to help preserve the historic, visual character of greater Portland, my adopted home."

Spring Street transformation begins

Construction began in August to reconfigure and repave Spring Street. The Jersey barrier has been removed, and esplanades have been extended at several locations, including a 16 foot wide area adjacent to Landmarks Safford



House headquarters. Landmarks was active in developing the concept plans guiding the work, which is the first phase of a larger effort to undo Urban Renewal, reclaim land for development, and provide bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly amenities.

Jane Moody was a Preservation Visionary

Jane Moody passed away in April. Her leadership in the early years of the organization, as project director for the Portland book, the first social and architectural history of the city, and more recently in providing guidance, mentoring, and seasoned perspectives on a variety of programs and public issues was transformative for Landmarks. "Jane was an outstanding leader and visionary for Landmarks and the preservation movement in Portland," said Hilary Bassett, Executive Director.



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ARCHITECTURAL SURVEYS and their role in smart development

The last couple of decades have seen a significant pivot from the suburbanization of America back to an increase in urbanism — and Maine has been no different.

MAINE'S CITIES, MOST NOTABLY Portland and surrounding towns, are experiencing more and faster growth than other areas of the state. Its demographics include more younger people. Job growth is stronger and the unemployment rate is a percentage point lower.

This makes Portland a magnet of sorts, which calls up all sorts of public policy questions. Development of the city is a key one. More housing is needed, companies are now and will increasingly be clamoring for office space, and we've already seen a plethora of new hotels. The Portland Company is slated for development that could involve the razing of several significant industrial buildings.

Such development must be smart. That is, planners have to grapple with how to accommodate new traffic loads without endangering pedestrians and cyclists, how to ensure that housing accommodates a range of incomes, and how to preserve green space. And planners must employ historic preservation to ensure that the city's streetscape—an important draw for residents, businesses, and tourists, and therefore a catalyst for the city's growth—retains its essential character.

One of the most important tools for city planners and preservationists is the architectural survey—the only way to get an accurate picture of the significant physical elements in a place.

Taking inventory: Portland & South Portland

Taking inventory of the visible elements of the built environment establishes not just what buildings, bridges, parks, wharves, cemeteries, etc. there are, but also lays the groundwork for considering their potential for renovation and reuse, and for furthering the larger goals of a city and its population.

Greater Portland Landmarks has long advocated for and assisted in completing a variety of architectural surveys. Last year, in cooperation with the South Portland Historical Society, Landmarks received grant support for a pilot architectural survey in that city's Willard neighborhood. The undertaking in some ways is especially important for South Portland, which is also growing quickly but unlike Portland has no formal historic preservation protections.

Thanks to an \$8,000 grant from the Horizon Foundation, 17 volunteers participated in training, field surveys, and photography for three months, and four were trained in the use of CARMA (Cultural & Architectural Resource Management Archive) data entry by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission. As a result, 336 residential, commercial, and institutional building in the Willard neighborhood between SMCC, Preble and Deake Streets, and the water were recorded

18 Willard Street
The craftsman style cottage (right) at 18 Willard Street built in 1937 looks much the same as in this historic photo from the South Portland Historical Society.



429 Preble Street
The forms of transportation have evolved at the commercial building, built about 1890, which still stands at 429 Preble Street in South Portland.

and photographed, many of them with key architectural importance to the fabric and history of the area.

The work can inform the city in zoning and planning decisions and could help property owners and developers gain tax credits, insurance benefits, and other support when they undertake preservation efforts for historically significant buildings.

And in Portland this summer, our interns, Liz Vazquez and Hannah Allen, completed fieldwork on 157 properties and prepared 15 more in-depth studies of selected historic buildings along portions of the Forest and Stevens

Avenue transportation corridors, a thriving area of the city that includes educational and commercial buildings as well as Evergreen Cemetery and Baxter Woods, that could be ideal for preservation efforts and protections. (For more on Liz and Hannah, see Who We Are, p. 6).

The process: Research & Field Work

An architectural survey usually involves field work, walking the neighborhoods of the area being surveyed, which requires legwork, time, and knowledge of what

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DISCOVERIES IN DEERING

While many people are familiar with the landmarks of downtown Portland, major buildings along the Stevens and Forest Avenue transportation corridors are lesser known. Here are a few highlights from Landmarks' recent survey of the area – one that is being rediscovered for new development.



Odd Fellows Block

Built in 1897, the Odd Fellows Block at 643-651 Forest Avenue was designed by well-known Portland architects Francis H. Fassett and his son Edward F. Fassett. The elder Fassett's use of Victorian High Gothic, Queen Anne, and Italianate styles in several buildings here have greatly shaped Portland's streetscape. This Italianate-style building at Woodfords Corner was designed for the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, a fraternal and charitable organization with roots in 18th Century England.

PHOTO: TODD CAVERLY



PHOTO: TODD CAVERLY

Hinds Building

Noted Portland architects John Calvin Stevens and his son John Howard Stevens in 1920 designed the A. S. Hinds Laboratory Building at 331-337 Forest Avenue for Aurelius Stone Hinds. Hinds worked for the apothecary of H. H. Hay & Company in downtown Portland until 1864 and was a drugstore purveyor himself by 1875. He perfected a formula for honey and almond skin cream, which became famous and needed an advertising team to promote it worldwide. His company in 1907 was acquired by Lehn & Fink of New York, the company which brought Lysol from Germany to the American market in 1890. The building now houses 70 residential apartments and Back Bay Cycle.

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Studebaker Building & John S. Goff Chevrolet

The Studebaker Automobile Dealership at what is now 533 Forest Avenue was built in 1928 for the Hennings Motor Co. and was later used by other auto dealerships when Forest hosted much auto-related commerce. The Studebaker logo remains at the apex of the parapet gable, though the two story brick building's three main bays and two large street-level windows is now occupied by outdoor furniture retailer Skillful Home Recreation. The Goff building next door was also part of "Automobile Row."



PHOTO: HEATH PALEY

Linnell Hall with reflection of Alexander Hall

In their architectural survey of the Stevens Avenue area this summer, interns Liz Vazquez and Hannah Allen came upon Linnell and Alexander Halls, intriguing examples of mid-20th century architecture on the University of New England's Portland campus. That era is often overlooked in Portland, and Landmarks is working to find more information about these buildings and their architect.



PHOTO: TODD CAVERLY

Lincoln Middle School

Lincoln Middle School is the oldest of the three Portland public school buildings on Stevens Avenue, designed by prominent local architect Frederick A. Tompson in 1897. The building was intended to be Deering's high school and faced opposition, but within a year Portland annexed the town and needed and wanted it. The building suffered a deadly fire in 1921 and was rebuilt with a flat roof. It became the city's first middle school when the larger Deering High School was built down the street in 1924. In 1981, nearly 100 years after its construction, Portland residents successfully rallied against efforts to tear down the school.



PHOTO: BILL HALL

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Architectural Surveys

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to look for. Each property is examined for its basic characteristics, such as roof form, patterns of windows, number of stories, and materials, as well as its architectural style. Surveys also gather information on the historic owners of the property, the architect (if known), and any major changes, remodeling, or additions. Every building, including outbuildings such as garages, is photographed.

The first level of survey is known as “reconnaissance level,” and is based on a look at existing structures. An intensive level survey and research digs deeper into individual sites for a better understanding of its history, characteristics and evolution. Liz and Hannah conducted more detailed research on certain buildings like the Deering Community Church, the City’s schools along Stevens Avenue, the former Fire Station, Odd Fellows Hall, the Chapman Block at Woodford’s Corner, and the former Hinds Laboratory and several automobile dealerships along Forest Avenue. They noticed that University of New England’s Alexander Hall and a matching building are examples of modernist architecture from about 1960, and Landmarks is now researching them to unearth more information.

A survey also involves an overall study of the general history and context of the area. This “context statement” describes the historical and cultural context related to the area— its transportation routes, immigration patterns, any commercial or industrial activity there, or changes in activity, as when a neighborhood changes from residential to commercial or from large estates to more suburbanized housing patterns. Historic photographs, a discussion of



6 Willard Street
A former hotel at 6 Willard Street built about 1890 in South Portland retains its form and the former snack bar outbuilding, now boarded up, survives.

HISTORIC PHOTOS COURTESY OF SOUTH PORTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY



selected buildings and landscapes, and area maps round out the information in the context statement. Scott Hanson of Sutherland Consulting prepared the context statement for the Forest and Stevens survey, which Landmarks will make available to the City of Portland planning department. The new survey information will be added to the statewide CARMA database.

“We chose the Forest Avenue/Stevens Avenue transp-

ortation corridor as a project area at the encouragement of several city councilors and community leaders,” said Landmarks executive director Hilary Bassett. “Forest Avenue has just undergone a master planning process, transportation improvements are planned for Woodford’s Corner, and a heated real estate market on the Portland peninsula is pushing developers to look at other neighborhoods. So the timing was right for this survey.” ■

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WHO We Are



Summer Interns: Hannah Allen & Liz Vazquez

This summer Greater Portland Landmarks is hosting, and greatly benefitting from, two interns with diverse backgrounds in preservation. Liz Vazquez, an Andover, Mass. native, recently earned a Master of Arts degree in cultural heritage studies from University College London's Institute of Archaeology. Hannah Allen, originally from Lexington, KY and now a dedicated Chicagoan, is in the midst of a beginning her final year in a two-year Master's of Science program in historic preservation at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

These two are admitted preservation "nerds," coming from different perspectives, and have different tasks at Landmarks. Hannah is working on projects related to endangered properties and the Places in Peril initiative, and Liz has been assigned an architectural survey in Portland's Deering neighborhood. But the two have discovered that their backgrounds, interests, and approaches actually complement each other very well, and they're collaborating on those assignments more than anyone anticipated. We caught up with them one day when they were in the office on High Street.

It's nice to see young people so keen on historic preservation issues. What got you interested?

Liz Vazquez: I studied art history, art and architecture as an undergrad. I really liked it and came to that the same way I came to cultural heritage — I sat in on a class, Italian Renaissance painting, and I thought, "You can study this?!"

In pursuing post-graduate work, I considered interior design, historic preservation ... it seemed like programs here are narrowly focused and I wanted to do more with international heritage. Then my mom found this program in London, and it was the same thing — "You can get a degree in this?!"

In that program, all the elements that make these pieces and buildings and sites important included the cultural heritage focus and to me was a little more holistic. We talked about things like language preservation dance and food in addition to archeology.

Hannah Allen: I had majors in Public Policy and Urban Geography and a minor in Architectural History as an undergrad at DePaul University. I found architectural history before I found historic preservation, when I fell in love with a building in Chicago when I was 15 and actually I haven't stopped researching it since.

I've realized that architecture and urban planning are not just about the structures. I've gained a better appreciation for Chicago as I've realized how things are built.

But, all my friends are urban geographers too. We're very lucky to be able to discuss preservation issues with each other. I was at dinner with a friend recently and there we were, in public, discussing "authenticity." I don't think that preservation is exclusively for older people.

LV: The key is to keep it relevant, keep it alive, keep it contributing. There's a lot of appreciation right now for things that are hand-made, hand-crafted. That these are skills and techniques that can be learned from the past.

What do you wish people understood more about historic preservation?

HA: I think we need to show that it's not always as easy as "we have to save this", you have to have a plan in place as to how a building will be saved, how it will be used in the future. It's also about community. People aren't always very aware of what's at stake, about what they could lose. We as preservationists understand what a historic resource does to strengthen a community.

LV: And you get involved at different levels. I feel like this is an important time —

HA: — with mid-century buildings becoming significant.

What brings you to Portland?

LV: I wanted a chance to apply what I learned in London, now that I'm back in the States. In my program, the focus was different, the approach from start to finish integrated a wide range of activities including archaeology, managing sites, and communicating the significance of whatever site you're working on to the public.

I'm interested in learning more about the site interpretation opportunities here. Taking what you know as a professional and sharing that with the general public.

HA: I've already interned in Chicago, but here there is a good opportunity to get out of my bubble. Here it's a different scale and Liz and I have different backgrounds, her studies were more geared towards site management and interpretation while my current area of focus is on construction technology.

LV: Yes, in fact, we started out having separate positions but it turns out it works better to collaborate. We both understand that it can't just be about the buildings, that we have to put it in context, but we come at that from different directions.

HA: The Deering survey will be an inventory of all the buildings along Stevens Avenue between Brighton and Morrill's Corner, and from Woodfords down Forest to 295. Within that, we're looking to identify properties that might be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, even the possibility of finding a historic district.

LV: Right now there are only two historic districts off the peninsula besides the two on islands.

HA: So we'll see what we can do. Portland is a great place to be working with historic buildings.

LV: We do keep finding things that are fun and exciting about Portland and its history

HA: And the common "building nerd" aspect between us is very fun! ■

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- Spring Point Ledge Light Trust South Portland, ME
- Stone*Henge Restorations South Portland, ME
- Thor Construction Harpswell, ME
- Triangle Lodge Portland, ME
- ttl-architects llc Portland, ME
- United Insurance Portland, ME
- Upright Frameworks Portland, ME
- Yarmouth Historical Society Yarmouth, ME

Please join other businesses in advancing historic preservation by becoming a Landmarks Business Partner today. You will be recognized for your community support with a listing in every issue of the quarterly *Landmarks Observer* and receive discounts on advertising and many other great benefits. Please call 774-5561 for more information.

Landmarks Calendar

Greater Portland Landmarks engages in advocacy and education to preserve the extraordinary historic buildings, neighborhoods, and landscapes that make greater Portland and increasingly popular place to live, work and visit. We invite you to join us!

PROGRAMS & EVENTS

The Preservation of Portland Since 1961

Fridays, 10:30 am – 1:30 pm.

Landmarks will be open to view our new large scale murals depicting the evolution of Preservation in Portland in images and text in the Gregory W. Boulos Gallery of Architecture and Design at Landmarks' Safford House headquarters, 93 High Street, Portland

Portland Observatory Museum

Through October 12, 10 am – 5 pm daily, last tour at 4:30 pm

Guided tours of the last remaining historic maritime signal tower in the country. Amazing views and fascinating history appeals to visitors of all ages. Landmarks members receive free admission. 138 Congress Street, Portland

Tours of the US Custom House, Portland

Sept. 23, Oct. 7 and Oct. 21, Wednesdays, 10:30 am and 11:30 am

Join us for a guided tour of the interior of the Custom House of 1867-72, designed by Alfred B. Mullett with a grand scale and beautiful marble, decorative plaster and gold leaf. 312 Fore Street, Portland. Advance registration required: www.portlandlandmarks.org

Homes of Portland's Golden Age

July 31 – October 9, Fridays, 11 am – 12:30 pm

This tour features the neighborhood surrounding two great streets, State and High Streets, that were noted in the 19th century for magnificent residences and houses of worship. Tour begins at Greater Portland Landmarks, 93 High Street.

2015-16 LANDMARKS LECTURES

CELEBRATING PORTLAND: OUR STORY THROUGH ARCHITECTURE

Portland Public Library, Rines Auditorium, 6-7 pm

October 20: The Birth of the City

Speaker: Jack Bauman

Portland traces its origins to the Englishman George Cleeve's fur-trading settlement planted in 1632. This presentation will focus on the city's rich history, physical appearance, architecture, and infrastructure.

November 17: Ship Builders and Merchants

Speaker: Herb Adams

For 300 years Portland has been the shipbuilding, sailing and fishing center of Casco Bay. The story of the Port of Portland is one of merchants and mariners, shipbuilders and sailors, visionaries and villains.

February 16: The Entrepreneurs

Speaker: Lincoln Paine

The architecture of Portland's nineteenth-century residential, commercial, and political buildings reflects their entrepreneurial builders' personal aspirations and civic commitment.

March 15: The City Beautiful

Speaker: Elizabeth Bischof

Inspired by the City Beautiful movement, Portland mayor James Phinney Baxter initiated the urban reform and beautification project that gave the city the Back Cove, Deering Oaks, Eastern and Western Promenades, and more.

April 19: The Women who Saved Portland's Architectural Heritage

Speaker: Kathleen Sutherland

Women such as Margaret Jane Mussey Sweat who founded the Portland Society of Art in 1882; Clara Holmes, who with her brother, saved Victoria Mansion, and Edith Sills who in 1960 founded Greater Portland Landmarks are a few of the women who worked to preserve the city's architectural heritage.

For more information, and to register
for events and programs:
www.portlandlandmarks.org or call 774-5561

Tate House Museum celebrates The Coast of Maine Past, Present, and Future with award winning journalist Colin Woodard



Currently the State and National Affairs writer for the *Portland Press Herald*, Colin Woodard also writes for *Washington Monthly*, *Political Magazine*, and reviews books for the *Washington Post*. A Maine native, he was recently named one of the "Best State Capital Reporters in America" by the *Washington Post* and Journalist of the Year by the Maine Press Association. Colin has reported from over 50 foreign countries.

Gala Fundraising Reception and Lecture
Saturday, November 7, 2015
6-9 pm ■ \$75.00 per person

For more information and reservations, call Tate House Museum
(207) 774-6177 ■ info@tatehouse.org ■ www.tatehouse.org

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