



GREATER PORTLAND LANDMARKS



Mid-century Architecture Comes of Age: Heritage for a 40 foot Lot

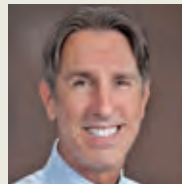
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PHOTO : HEATH PALEY



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HOUSE GALA

Friday, June 9

Celebrate Mid Century
design at a fabulous
1961 home

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Landmarks gets a new look

OVER THE PAST YEAR Landmarks has been taking a new approach to communicating with our supporters.

You are looking at the new magazine format for our newsletter – a major change from the newsprint tabloid we used for over 25 years. Graphic designer John O’Brien has created a new template, palette of colors and typestyles.

To be as current as we can, we have expanded our online presence. Twice per month our e-newsletter provides the latest information on programs and advocacy. Timely reminders and preservation alerts keep you up to date on events and advocacy priorities.

Our annual Preservation Directory also has a new look in print and online. The new digital version is not only indexed by specialty, but the text is also searchable by keyword. Just type in the keyword, search, and voila! you will find the tradespeople who provide that product or service. You’ll find it on our website: www.portlandlandmarks.org

Another new feature on our website is our blog. Recent posts highlight historic schools, area landmarks, Places in Peril and



HILARY BASSETT
Executive Director

local preservationists. For example, in April, we interviewed Library Director Kevin Davis about the South Portland Public Library, designed in the mid-century modern style by John Leasure and opened in 1966.

We are also reaching out to longstanding friends and new constituents through FaceBook and Instagram. These quick and responsive channels, allow us to share the stories behind the people and their preservation projects, including current and historic images, with a broad pool of constituents.

Sharing the discoveries from our recent architectural surveys through public programs, on-line resources, and print materials is an important priority for Landmarks. The enthusiastic public response to date demonstrates that people are hungry to learn the fascinating stories about the places where they live, work, and visit.

Preservation is about building community and we are enjoying these new initiatives, whether in print, online, or in person, to reach out to and engage a wide audience.

ABOUT THIS ISSUE:

Mid-century modern architecture is “hot” all over the country as the styles and furnishings of the 1950s and 1960s are popular again, hence our lead story in this issue. We hope that you’ll join Landmarks supporters on June 9th for our 2017 Mid-Mod House Gala: Be There or Be Square at a classic 1961 house in Portland. Look for additional social media posts and future programs featuring mid-century modern architecture. ■



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PRESERVATION UPDATES



Adaptive reuse of the former Baxter Library (1888) as headquarters for the Via Agency was made possible with federal historic tax credits.

Federal Historic Tax Credit Under Threat

For more than three decades, the federal Historic Tax Credit (HTC) has successfully implemented a national policy of preserving our historic resources. It is the most significant investment the federal government makes toward the preservation of our historic buildings. Despite a proven track record of stimulating economic growth and preserving our architectural heritage, the historic tax credit faces an uncertain future. As pressure builds to reform the nation's tax code, several influential tax reform proposals recommend a repeal of this essential credit. In Maine more than 72 historic buildings have been rehabilitated using HTC investment generating \$77 million in taxes and \$283 million in business and household income. Sen. Collins supports the redevelopment of Maine's historic resources and is a sponsor of a bill to enhance the HTC program. We thank Sen. Collins for her leadership in introducing the Historic Tax Credit Improvement Act (HR.1158/S.425) and we are urging the rest of Maine's congressional delegation to support the bill as it moves through the legislative process.

Places in Peril Become Preservation Success Stories



Copper cornices have been restored as part of the comprehensive rehabilitation of the former Grand Trunk office, also a federal tax credit project.

Grand Trunk Office, 1 India Street, Portland (listed 2012)

Gorham Savings Bank is completing its new Portland headquarters in the former Grand Trunk Offices at 1 India Street. Built in 1903, it is the only surviving building from the extensive Grand Trunk Railroad complex in Portland. The Grand Trunk (and later Canadian National) was an important source of Portland's prosperity between the 1850s and 1960s, serving as Canada's main shipping route in winter between Montreal and the ice-free port of Portland. The Bank has completely rehabilitated the building, including restoring the masonry and copper trim details, in a comprehensive rehabilitation project that benefits

from historic tax credits. A series of video posts on FaceBook has documented the preservation process.

Maine State Armory, South Portland (listed 2012)

A new gas station, market, and martial arts center are open in the rehabilitated South Portland Armory. The developers, Priority Real Estate Group of Topsham, Maine, restored the head house and repaired its marvelous cast concrete details. The City of South Portland retains a preservation easement on the façade of the 1941 building, which features details in the Art Deco style, including glass block windows, sculptured eagles, and carved keystones with images of tanks, grenades, and bullets. Finding new uses for vacant large-scale buildings is a challenge. Although the drill hall could not be saved, Landmarks worked with city leaders and the developer to ensure that the portion of the armory to remain was preserved in a manner consistent with national preservation standards.



Work has begun to rehabilitate Portland's oldest park.

Lincoln Park, Portland (listed 2013)

Sharon and Frank Reilly, leaders of the Friends of Lincoln Park, joined with city officials and local supporters on April 13 to break ground for the first of two major projects. Built immediately after the Great Fire of 1866, Lincoln Park is Portland's oldest public park. This summer, the City will replace the pathways and repair the foundation of the central fountain, which conservator Jonathan Taggart is restoring to its original appearance. In 2018, the City will refurbish the fence, pillars, and posts that surround the Park. The iron fencing was forged by the Portland Company in 1866. Landmarks Director of Advocacy Julie Larry says, "We strongly support the Friends and their initiatives to revitalize the park. These projects demonstrate the power of public and private partnerships to promote preservation."

Nominations Open for 2017 Places in Peril

Landmarks is seeking nominations for the 2017 Places in Peril. The program draws attention to places that are in danger of extreme deterioration or loss because of limited public awareness of how important they are to our history, lack of maintenance, and the absence of preservation protections. "Our goal is to broaden awareness of these vulnerable places and to advocate for their preservation, protection and adaptive reuse. We look forward to serving as a catalyst for preservation so that these at-risk places can be saved," said Hilary Bassett, Executive Director of Landmarks. Please send nominations through our website www.portlandlandmarks.org by June 23, 2017.



Acclaimed architect Marcel Breuer's design for the Arnold and Selma Potter House (1949) on Stonybrook Lane in Cape Elizabeth reaches up from its fieldstone foundations and extends out over the landscape, its geometric forms and reflective glass playing beautifully with the form and color of the trees and stone.

HERITAGE for a 40 Foot Lot

TEXT BY CHARLES HARTFELDER

PHOTOS BY HEATH PALEY

As the architecture of the modernist movement has come of age, its historical significance is now eligible to receive all the benefits of historic designation. Its unique situation at the crux of modern homebuilding innovation in the 20th century will be remembered as the forbearer of the open-plan ideal of the 21st.

IN THE YEARS FOLLOWING THE Second World War, Southern Maine was not immune to the most rapid expansion of housing this country has seen owing to easily affordable mortgages for returning servicemen and servicewomen. For most, this meant carving out a slice of Maine's cultural character at a time when national and civic pride reached its zenith. For a modest price and a drive to celebrate the past, the post war family of four could own a

small piece of New England's architectural legacy: heritage for a forty foot lot.

At the same time, the growing neighborhoods of Portland's suburbs saw the introduction of a new approach to modern homebuilding. Here emerged a dichotomy in architectural responses to the expanding needs of the family. Take Michael Barton, a construction manager with a deep connection to the urban landscape of Portland, who describes the home where his cousins grew up on Maple Street. A classic cape with four simple



The house at 11 Pillsbury in Scarborough, like many homes of this era, suggests a deep appreciation for the landscape, seen in their strategic placements of glass used to welcome the outside in and an embrace of functionality in interior circulation.



Mid-century architecture took many forms, such as this raised ranch on Reef Road. For more information about mid-century architecture in Maine, see the report *Post World War II Architecture in Maine: A Guide for Surveyors*, 2009, available on the Maine Historic Preservation Commission website.

rooms and an attic above, built for \$3,100 on a 5,000 square foot lot. As the family grew and more space was needed, wall heights were raised to the second floor to create more bedrooms, and a single-car garage converted to even more living space. By the 1980s, what began as a modest kit home could hold upwards of thirty friends and family for Thanksgiving Day. In contrast, Barton's childhood home around the corner on Ludlow stands as one of the best examples of the ranch style in Portland, built by his grandfather with the intention to add more space as the family grew. "In this house, efficiency was key, where long, open spaces allowed the family to move freely and adapt to whatever the occasion called for."

Like much of New England, the post-war housing boom in Portland coincided with a revolution in interior planning, informed largely by the powerhouse of European architectural thought at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. While new principles of functionalism in design often stood in opposition to

more classical approaches, particularly in academic architecture and planning, the writings of Harvard's Walter Gropius and Eleanor Raymond of the Cambridge School of Architecture, a close affiliate of Harvard, show a deep reverence for the seemingly "pure" nature of early New England housing. Modernist design responses in New England celebrated the value of traditionalism while allowing new materials, new methods, and most importantly new arrangements to define their aesthetic.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the Potter House on Stonybrook Lane, Cape Elizabeth, whose design encapsulates the application of functionalism within the New England landscape. Seemingly reaching up from its more 'ancient' fieldstone foundations and out towards the street, the home extends out over the landscape supported by a series of light columns, an outstretched arm of umbered, vertical siding and reflective glass playing beautifully with the form and color of the trees and stone. Designed by acclaimed architect Marcel Breuer, a graduate of the Bauhaus



Located on a beautiful coastal site in Falmouth Foreside, the Michael Payson House (1952) was designed by Serge Chermayeff, a German immigrant to the United States, who along with other immigrant architects like Walter Gropius, Marcel Breuer, and Erich Mendelsohn brought European modernist ideas about design and interior planning to the United States.



At the Whited residence (1964) in Portland, the use of traditional materials and forms for the exterior meets an interior configuration based wholly on a midcentury ideal of maximum adaptability, interaction, and fluidity for the homeowner.

and affiliate of the Harvard School, the Potter House is itself a conversation with New England’s architectural past, particularly in the use of the stone wall which provides a delicate continuity with local tradition.

The Potter House’s innovative yet historically reverent approach to homebuilding is reflected in the design of homes throughout greater Portland that include devices to invite the natural landscape of Maine into the home. Readers may be familiar with such iconic examples as the Isaacson House in Lewiston (1960), the Robert Armitage House in Cape Elizabeth, the home at 11 Pillsbury Drive in Scarborough, and the Michael Payson House in Falmouth Foreside (1952), the latter of which is associated with Gropius through its architect, Serge Chermayeff. Each of these homes suggest a deep appreciation for the landscape, seen in their strategic placements of glass used to welcome the outside in, and an embrace of functionality in interior circulation. Says architect Carol Wilson, these

were houses designed around “patterns for living,” inviting and connecting with the outdoors and making use of finely-tuned solutions and natural materials to “suggest the elegance and quiet of the surrounding landscape.”

Perhaps the best local example of these concepts converging in a single design is the Whited Residence at 45 Heather Road in Portland. Here the use of traditional materials and forms for the exterior meets an interior configuration based wholly on a midcentury ideal of maximum adaptability, interaction, and fluidity for the homeowner. Beneath the traditional gables of the home, a seemingly rambling configuration of spaces follows a highly-engineered, orchestrated path of movement for the modern working family. Similar configurations may be found at 32 and 33 Pilot Point Road in Cape Elizabeth (and further along at 4 Surfside Avenue), 167 and 177 Caleb Street in Portland where integration with natural and designed landscapes is visibly potent, and at 480 Capisic Street in Nasons Corner which sits



Robert Armitage designed his own house on Reef Road in Cape Elizabeth in 1964. Its innovative yet historically reverent approach to homebuilding is reflected in the design of homes throughout the area that include devices to invite the natural landscape of Maine into the home.

beautifully nestled above the Fore River just west of Capisic Pond. There, traditionally-informed post and beam construction allows for the liberal reconfiguration of the home and individualism on the part of the homeowner. Leaving no space unused or unaccounted for, and at each angle welcoming the outside landscape into the home, the Whited residence and others like it embody this turning point in American architecture which prioritized satisfying the evolving needs of the nuclear family and celebrating the landscape of Maine.

Aside from the unabashed traditionalism that defines the neighborhoods of South Portland, Back Cove, and many others, any baby boomer will tell you there was more to their childhood cape or gambrel than met the outward eye. Within these seemingly time-honored structures there lay a calculated set of

architectural responses to the call for openness and adaptability, what Gropius called the “flexibility for continuous growth and change.” The intents behind these two seemingly opposing architectures converge in their modifiability and their rich connection to the neighborhoods in which they were built, despite the clearly divergent approaches to their design and adornment. Here were buildings constructed to create a sense of small-town community while sharing in the resources of a larger city, on one side presenting a new traditionalism, and on the other, inviting the traditional landscape in. ■

Charles Hartfelder recently completed his PhD in Architectural History and Archaeology at the University of Durham in the United Kingdom.

Who We Are



Ed Gardner

Ed Gardner is the First Vice President of the Board of Greater Portland Landmarks, with a tremendous knowledge of the real estate industry and enthusiasm for Portland. He joined the Board in 2013. We met with him at 511 Congress Street, home of his real estate office and his newest venture of renovating an important 20th century building.

How did you get started in real estate?

I grew up in a Sabattus, Maine farmhouse, an old Stage Coach stop from 1791, which my parents spent years renovating. Remembering uncovering treasures of the past from that property, I had an interest learning more about the “old.”

Upon leaving high school at 17, I needed to create a sustainable job for myself. I started to invest in real estate and also to learn how to create equity. I bought two fixer-upper adjacent multi-family properties in Lewiston, a total of 12 units. A developer needed these buildings out of his portfolio and I only had to pay closing costs to obtain them. I refinanced my car to pay the \$500 in closing costs. I collected rent for the buildings and did odd jobs on the side to pay for the renovations. I have continued to invest, renovate, and resell – over 50 buildings to date. I became a REALTOR in 1999 and helped start Ocean Gate Realty in 2004.

How did you get to Portland?

I kept a 27’ sailboat docked at Dimillo’s and spent weekends on it. One beautiful night, in 1994, I looked back at the city and thought, “Portland is where I want to call home.” So I sold my Lewiston properties and a home in the West End and bought the Portland Stage building. That purchase was my introduction to the Portland arts community.

The Portland Stage building was a historic Odd Fellows Hall blended with a modern theater. These historic buildings give back to the community in so many ways. The Portland Stage connections were great. I was introduced to many great Portland personalities. There then came the time when the Stage Company wanted to become owners of the building. I sold them the building and then

bought the former Shaarey Tphiloh Synagogue on Newbury Street.

What is it like being an owner of properties in historic districts?

The Old Port tells a powerful story. I think historic districts are vehicles to keep historic areas intact and to continue to tell the story to generations to come. Historic Districts educate homeowners as to the most thoughtful ways of renovating and restoring their buildings, so they can continue to be pieces of our history.

I have to admit that when I was new to renovating and didn’t have much money, I questioned the importance of restoring rather than renovating. But now as a real estate agent, I see the outcome of good work and the true benefit of what conscientious rehabilitation and restoration have done for the City.

What are buyers looking for?

All buyers want to be able to walk to the amenities of Portland’s peninsula. But most come for the treasured character of older homes or wanting the experience that a historic district can give: that sense of place that you can’t find in newer buildings or subdivisions.

The geography of Portland’s peninsula creates its own large neighborhood and with that, nationally, people are gravitating to city centers. It’s a perfect storm for big growth for our wonderful city. Portland is a destination for all people: families, working people, retirees, and everyone in between.

Why did you join Landmarks?

When I bought the synagogue on Newbury Street, it had received an award from Landmarks. I noted how much help the prior owner got from Landmarks in properly restoring it. I was also working

with several buyers in historic districts and knew that Landmarks can be a great resource for information for new homeowners and knew I wanted to be part of it, somehow. One of my colleagues, the late Nan Sawyer, was on the Landmarks board and asked me to sponsor an event. I did and had a great time! My partner Steve suggested that I follow up with Landmarks and become involved.

How do you see Portland evolving?

I have had the experience as a commercial pilot to travel all over the country. Portland, Maine is known as a special place with great people, and is noticed throughout the country. People want to be part of it. It’s been said over and over that Portland will be the San Francisco of the northeast because of its geography, diversity, and the overall look and feel of the city, including its authentic historic properties.


How do you see Landmarks evolving?

People are more mindful of preservation because we can reflect back on our building stock, to tell a story. Young people are appreciating this more and more. Landmarks will be the vehicle to educate the new stock of Portlanders about the importance of these buildings to keep telling our story.

What does preservation mean to Portland today?

Without preservation we wouldn’t have the Portland we have today. Without preservation we would be missing out on half the story. Look at other cities – New York, DC, Philadelphia – we like to visit them, we go to learn about them. Typically the older embellishments attract people. Portland is peppered with all kinds of historic elements. And Landmarks is in the middle of it all. ■

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Left to Right: Mike Boyson, Mike Melo, Rick Rosu-Myles, Lauren Stone, Andy Thomas and Jennifer Beecher

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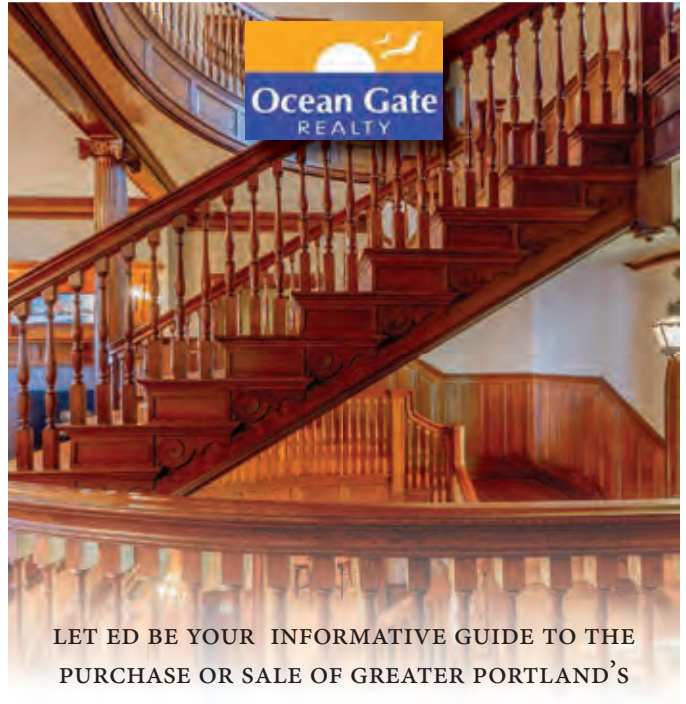
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LANDMARKS CALENDAR

The Preservation of Portland Since 1961

Every Friday, May 26 – September 29, 10:30 am – 1:30 pm.

View large scale murals depicting Portland's Preservation Movement.
93 High Street, Portland

Observatory opens for the Season

Saturday, May 27 – Monday, October 9

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

Tours the last remaining historic maritime signal tower in the country.
Landmarks members receive free admission.
138 Congress Street, Portland

House Gala: Mid Mod: Be There or Be Square

Friday, June 9, 6:30 – 10 pm, Baxter Boulevard, Portland

Celebrate the Mid-Century Modern era of architecture and culture at a 1961 Portland home, featuring period music and dancing, cocktails and hors d'oeuvres. Guests are welcome (and encouraged!) to dress the part. Tickets: \$100 per person, www.portlandlandmarks.org

Flag Day, Portland Observatory Museum

Wednesday, June 14, 10 am – 7 pm

Enjoy a free day of family-friendly activities at the Observatory.
138 Congress Street, Portland

Tours of the US Custom House, Portland

Wednesdays, June 28 – October 25, 10 am and 11:30 am

Meet at 312 Fore Street, Portland. Advance registration required.
Tickets: \$10. www.portlandlandmarks.org

Sunset Tours at the Portland Observatory Museum

Thursdays, July 6 – August 31, 5 – 8 pm

Experience Casco Bay as the sun goes down. Landmarks members receive free admission. 138 Congress Street, Portland

Homes of Portland's Golden Age

Tuesdays and Fridays, July 18 – October 6, 10 am

Stroll along Portland's State and High Streets with their magnificent 19th century residences and houses of worship. Tickets: \$10.
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FLAG DAY



Portland Observatory Museum

138 Congress Street, Portland

Wednesday, June 14, 2017

10 am – 7 pm **FREE Admission**

Flag-raising at 10 am

Sea songs with
David Peloquin from 1- 6 pm

Tours of Eastern Cemetery
and Munjoy Hill

Special visit by Captain
and Mrs. Lemuel Moody

www.portlandlandmarks.org

Greater Portland Landmarks

Mid Mod: Be There or Be

Join us for a journey to 1961 at
this Mid-Century Modern House Gala

Friday, June 9, 2017

For tickets: www.portlandlandmarks.org

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