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Secretary of the Commonwealth

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**SECRETARY GALVIN PRESENTS 2017 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD  
TO THE HOWARD & ONOTA 74 BUILDINGS IN PITTSFIELD**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William F. Galvin, Chairman of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, announces the selection of the Howard and Onota 74 Buildings, Pittsfield to receive a 2017 Massachusetts Historical Commission Historic Preservation Award.

“The Massachusetts Historical Commission is proud to recognize the extraordinary accomplishments of this year’s awardees,” said Secretary Galvin. “The projects the Commission is recognizing this year are particularly diverse and represent the many creative ways that significant historic resources are being preserved across the Commonwealth. The successful rehabilitation of the Howard and Onota buildings stands as an important accomplishment for downtown Pittsfield.”

The Howard and Onota buildings are two early 20th-century commercial buildings located in the heart of downtown Pittsfield. The Howard Building was designed by local architect Joseph McArthur Vance in the Classical Revival style. It sits on a prominent corner lot on First Street and occupies the full width of a block. The three-story red-brick building, erected in 1916, features a parapet wall and flat roof. It was originally built for the Frank Howard, Inc., hardware store; the company occupied the entire first floor, with rental offices on the second floor and inventory storage on the third.

The Howard Company became a staple of the community, serving the surrounding Berkshire County farms and gentlemen’s estates between 1893 and 1960, as the area transitioned from agricultural uses to suburban neighborhoods. After the closure of the hardware store in 1960, the building changed hands several times before being purchased by the Allegrone

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Companies in 2011.

Located two blocks west of the Howard, the Onota Building sits at the corner of North and School streets. The Renaissance Revival-style commercial building was designed by Walter & Weeks Architects of Cleveland, Ohio, and built in 1927. The L-shaped building is clad in red brick with limestone trim and has a parapet wall.

The Onota Building is one of the most prominent buildings in the downtown district and at six stories in height, it is the tallest building on North Street, Pittsfield's main commercial thoroughfare. It was originally intended to be mixed-use, with retail, office, and residential space, but the office and residential uses did not come into fruition. By 1930, the primary tenant was the Holden & Stone department store. After the store's closure in 1969, the space was divided into two stores and the upper floors served as office space. Since then the building has been occupied by short-term tenants; more recently, it has been underutilized, with only partial occupancy.

Under the ownership of the Allegrone Companies, LLC, both the Howard and Onota buildings recently underwent rehabilitation into mixed commercial/residential space. In both buildings, the first floors remained commercial and the upper floors became residential. The Howard Building was transformed into 10,000 square feet of retail and 14 apartment units, while the Onota Building now includes 8,000 square feet of retail and 25 apartment units.

Both buildings retained significant surviving original interior decorative features, including historic hallway configurations and woodwork, which were retained in the adaptive reuse projects. On the exterior, both buildings had modern windows and storm window combinations, which were replaced with more historically appropriate sash and glazing. The buildings also underwent masonry repairs, repointing, and cleaning, as well as storefront repairs and reconfiguration to more historically appropriate designs.

With the downtown area leading the way for revitalization in Pittsfield, the Howard and Onota buildings are expected to serve as a catalyst for a continued surge in economic development. The successful use of both state and federal historic tax credits demonstrates the feasibility of projects of this size and scope in downtown Pittsfield and the role that historic preservation can play in the city's ongoing economic growth.

This is the 39th year of MHC's Preservation Awards program. Projects are considered annually for awards in the categories of Rehabilitation and Restoration, Adaptive Reuse, Education and Outreach, Archaeology, Stewardship, and Landscape Preservation. Individuals are considered in the categories of Individual Lifetime Achievement and Local Preservationist.

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Secretary Galvin serves as the chair of the 17-member Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Secretary Galvin will present the awards at an afternoon ceremony on November 2, 2017, at the Massachusetts Archives Building at 220 Morrissey Blvd., Dorchester. The Howard the Onota 74 Buildings in Pittsfield is one of 11 projects to be honored.

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