



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

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**SECRETARY GALVIN TO PRESENT 2011 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD TO
RUSSELL BOX FACTORY / ATLAS LOFTS, CHELSEA**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin, Chairman of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, announces the selection of the Russell Box Factory in Chelsea to receive a 2011 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 rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the Russell Box Factory has created new residential units and will help further preservation of Chelsea’s many historic resources.”

Originally built for the Russell Box Company, which set up operations on this site in 1903, this two-building mill complex replaced the company’s first plant, which was lost in Chelsea’s Great Fire of 1908. The earlier of the two extant buildings, built in 1911, is a three-story, brown-brick structure designed by F. T. Eskrigge. The second building, designed as a storehouse by Fred S. Hinds, was erected in 1914 and is architecturally similar to the factory building. The complex was last used by the mattress company Spring Air, which recently moved to a more modern facility elsewhere in Chelsea, leaving these buildings vacant. The Russell Box buildings have found new life as Atlas Lofts, developed by Mitchell Properties as a 53-unit rental complex with both market-rate and affordable lofts. Prior to this adaptive reuse project, all of the buildings’ windows were either badly damaged, or removed and boarded up. Mitchell Properties worked with a consultant to design new, historically accurate windows for both buildings. The brick exteriors were washed and restored. On the interior, the project conserved two original staircases, and large, steel fire doors and original signs were refurbished and reused. Much of the interior woodwork was also preserved, including large support posts, as well as the wide-plank wood floors, which are visible as ceilings. The buildings now stand as reminders of the neighborhood’s industrial past, while providing modern housing for downtown Chelsea.

This is the 33rd 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. Secretary Galvin serves as the chair of the 17-member Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Secretary Galvin will present the awards at an afternoon ceremony on May 25, 2011, at the Massachusetts Archives Building at 220 Morrissey Blvd., Dorchester. The Russell Box Factory restoration project is one of 9 projects, individuals, and organizations to be honored.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission is the office of the State Historic Preservation Officer and the State Archaeologist. It was established in 1963 to identify, evaluate, and protect important historical

and archaeological assets of the Commonwealth. Visit our website to learn more about the Commission's programs (www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc).

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