



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

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**SECRETARY GALVIN TO PRESENT 2012 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD TO
BEAUPORT, SLEEPER-MCCANN HOUSE, GLOUCESTER**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin, Chairman of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, announces the selection of Beauport, Sleeper McCann House in Gloucester, to receive a 2012 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 thorough, uniquely challenging restoration of Beauport, Sleeper-McCann House will help to preserve this remarkable architectural, design, and decorative arts resource for generations to come.”

Beauport is a dramatic two-story building overlooking Gloucester Harbor. Henry Davis Sleeper, one of America’s first professional interior designers, began construction of the house in 1907 as a summer retreat, expanding it throughout his life. Designated a National Historic Landmark in 2003, Beauport is also notable for housing an important early collection of American antiques and for its influence on museum interpretation of American decorative arts. Since 1942, Beauport has been owned by Historic New England and open to the public. The house has its own unique aesthetic, borrowing from various architectural styles, but it has the greatest affinity with the Shingle Style. The building has 6 large brick chimneys, 10 skylights, and 106 window openings with 249 sash and nearly 4,000 panes. The interior is a labyrinth of over 50 rooms housing nearly 5,500 objects. Today, the house and its rooms remain virtually as Sleeper left them. Beauport, well-maintained over its 100-year life, nevertheless suffered from a number of moisture-related problems due to the harsh coastal climate and to its architectural maze of intersecting planes and forms. The roof that had been installed in 1985 was beginning to leak, and the chimneys also showed evidence of leaks. Many window components were defective, and an improperly flashed exterior element installed in 1913—a brick veneer over stucco walls—was allowing water penetration, resulting in potential structural issues from deteriorated sills and framing. In order to stop the damage and protect the interior, Historic New England developed a comprehensive, three-year restoration plan with various sources of funding, including a Save America’s Treasures grant, a Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund grant, and Community Preservation Act funds. All efforts were made to retain historic fabric and, where repair or replacement was necessary, to match materials in-kind. The complex project included restoration and repair of windows and sash, restoration of all chimneys, full replacement of cedar roof shingles and copper flashing, historic paint analysis, and repair of the damage resulting from the improperly installed brick veneer. The project culminated in a two-phase restoration of the landscape, which included a new sloping entrance path to make the grounds more accessible.

This is the 34th 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 30, 2012, at the Massachusetts Archives Building at 220 Morrissey Blvd., Dorchester. The Beauport, Sleeper-McCann House restoration project is one of 12 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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