

## Hyde Park's Vertullo Building Sold to Local Business Owner

When Historic Boston purchased the Vertullo Building in 2010, it hoped to show historic preservation's value to small businesses and neighborhood economic development. The restored Vertullo Building has come full circle. In November, HBI sold the rehabilitated building to Nikia Londy and her husband Baron Langston, proprietors of Intriguing Hair, one of the small businesses in the Vertullo Building.

Built in 1868 -- the same year the Town of Hyde Park was incorporated -- the historic structure on

Fairmount Avenue exemplifies the Second Empire style of design popular at that time, and has five small business spaces and four apartments. Owned for most of the 20th century by the Vertullo family, HBI purchased it from Carmela Vertullo Pearce, who lived in the building until 2019.

"We love this building and have wanted to purchase it for a long time," said Londy. "It's important to our business, but it will also be an important investment property for our family."



New owners of Vertullo Building, Nikia Londy and Baron Langston

Photo by Jean Hangarter



The Comfort Kitchen team, Nyacko Pearl Perry, Kwasi Kwaa, and Biplaw Rai, in the Comfort Station

## Beyond Covid: Construction Resumes for Comfort Kitchen in Upham's Corner

Delayed by the pandemic, HBI resumed construction at Dorchester's Upham's Corner Comfort Station for Comfort Kitchen, the restaurant and café that will open in in early 2022. The Comfort Kitchen team of Nyacko Pearl Perry, Biplaw Rai, and Kwasi Kwaa, are molding the space to fit their vision of a community space that celebrates global comfort food.

HBI completed the building's rehabilitation in 2019. Built as restrooms for the MBTA's Streetcar system in 1912, it was vacant and in a deteriorated state for more than 40 years. Architect for the building's restoration was Utile, interior fit-out architect is Supernormal, and all construction is by M.J. Mawn Construction.

"The pandemic has made the outdoor patio spaces more important to the café and restaurant," said Nathan Fash of Supernormal. "Those spaces are now designed to host events and showcase the cultural roots of the team. They're like an open door to the community."

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## New Collaboration Works to Preserve East Boston's Donald McKay House

Historic Boston is working with the East Boston Museum and the East Boston Community Development Corporation on preservation plans for the 1844 Donald McKay House, a Boston Landmark in Eagle Hill.

The 6000 square foot house was built for Donald McKay, East Boston's legendary ship builder, of vessels renowned for their speed. McKay lived in his Greek Revival period house from 1844 until 1869. Much of the first floor's interior is authentic to the 19th century, and while the exterior of the house has been altered, it retains much of its original character.

Owned by the Vertuccio family for the last 80 years, the house also tells the story of the waves of immigration that have passed through East Boston through to today's fast-growing Central and South American communities. McKay, also an immigrant, was born and brought up in Nova Scotia.

A redevelopment feasibility study, to be completed in 2022, will help determine the building's restoration needs and how it can be configured to support the museum's mission.



East Boston's Donald McKay house today

# Back at the Old Corner Bookstore, HBI Looks at the Building's Future

HBI moved back to the Old Corner Bookstore in 2021 after 10 years at Roxbury's Nubian Square. The 1859 Eustis Street Fire House, which HBI rehabilitated in 2011, is now home to two Roxbury non-profit organizations, the Timothy Smith Network and The Wellness Collaborative.

HBI has also taken on management of the 1718 Old Corner Bookstore, upgrading systems and common areas over the last year to help with energy savings and preservation. Office and retail tenants are back in operation after lengthy closures due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The Old Corner Bookstore's success is tied directly to HBI's ability to serve a citywide preservation mission," said Michael Durand, Historic Boston's President. "We're committed to making sure it performs well as an asset and that it presents the best of historic preservation."

Next up, HBI has commissioned Gale Associates to evaluate the building's envelop for improvement to roofs, windows, and drainage. A task force of HBI's



Board of Directors is evaluating options for a new program of restoration and interpretation that would also allow for better accessibility throughout the historic building.



Michael Durand

## Michael Durand Elected New HBI President

At its annual meeting in April, HBI's Board of Directors elected Michael Durand the organization's fifth president. Durand embarks on a three-year term, replacing Kathleen MacNeil.

Durand is principal at Back Bay Development and has worked throughout Boston's neighborhoods on historic preservation projects and new development. He has served on Historic Boston's board of directors since 2016.



Kathleen MacNeil

## MacNeil Joins HBI Council of Advisors

After ten years on HBI's Board of Directors, six as President, Kathleen MacNeil stepped down from HBI's Board in March. She becomes the newest member of HBI's Council of Advisors, a group of 26 individuals who help to advance HBI's interests through advice, technical support and contributions. MacNeil joins Brian Swett in co-chairing the Council of Advisors.



Sammy Nabulsi



James Labeck



Derek Lumpkins



Julie Paul Brown

## New Board Members and Officers

HBI's Board of Directors elected three new members this year, and voted new officers to the positions of Clerk and Treasurer. The Board's Executive Committee also expanded with two new members.

Sammy Nabulsi of Roxbury is partner at the Rose Law Firm and practices land-use law. Dakota Jones of Roslindale is director of operations at In Order Business Development Solutions, and David Black of Roxbury is formerly transportation planner at VHB.

Nabulsi is HBI's new Treasurer, and James Labeck was elected Clerk. Board members Derek Lumpkins and Julie Paul Brown joined HBI's Executive Committee as at-large members.

# PROJECT UPDATES

## ST. LUKE'S CHAPEL, ROXBURY (1901)

With funds from Boston's Community Preservation Act, the Episcopal Diocese of Boston and the Henderson Foundation, tiny St. Luke's Chapel, designed by Ralph Adams Cram, is on its way to a complete restoration for use as performance and meeting space.

## ST. JAMES AFRICAN ORTHODOX CHURCH, ROXBURY (1910)

HBI continues to advance plans for the historic church's restoration along with new housing in the Highland Park neighborhood.



New HBI Board members David Black and Dakota Jones visit with Patricia Spence at the Fowler Clark Epstein Farm

## FOWLER CLARK EPSTEIN FARM (1786)

The Urban Farming Institute of Boston had its fourth abundant growing season at the historic Fowler Clark Epstein Farm, supplying area restaurants, and selling directly to the public through its weekly Friday farm stand.

Visit [urbanfarminginstitute.org](http://urbanfarminginstitute.org) for more.

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