

Symbols of Unity, Expressions of Faith

STORIES FROM THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS OF ROXBURY'S ST. JAMES AFRICAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

by Lance Kasparian

The coordinated ensemble of stained glass windows at the former St. James African Orthodox Church in Roxbury creates a sunny

cloistered atmosphere in the second floor preaching auditorium, shedding light not only on the two immigrant communities who made this building

their home, but also on the spirit of American Progressivism and Christian Unity which flourished in early 20th century Boston.

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Comfort Kitchen closer to opening at the Upham's Corner Comfort Station p3



Fowler Clark Epstein Farm Wins Richard H. Driehaus National Preservation Award p11



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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

In a year that has changed us all, Historic Boston Inc. (HBI) continued its important preservation mission in Boston while also rising to meet the challenges of Covid-19 and our city's demands for racial equity.

This is also HBI's 60th anniversary year. The lessons we've learned over six decades of restoring endangered historic buildings for new uses are helping us to press ahead with our portfolio of projects in Boston neighborhoods where they are most needed, but with new sensitivity to design, uses and execution that address matters of public health and inclusion and equity. Even while we worked remotely and navigated the pandemic's uncertainties, 2020 has been a year of achievement:

- The restored **Fowler Clark Epstein Farm** won the prestigious **Richard Driehaus Foundation Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation** and the **Urban Farming Institute** completed its third harvest there.
- HBI advanced a plan for new affordable housing units at the **historic St. James African Orthodox Church (1910)** that responds to the community's hopes for home ownership opportunities accessible to neighborhood residents.
- Restoration of the **Upham's Corner Comfort Station** is nearly complete and the building is being made ready for **Comfort Kitchen**, activating the Arts and Crafts style building for the first time in 43 years.
- HBI's proposal for a health and wellness center at the **Owen Nawn Factory** for **The Wellness Collaborative**, a non-profit team of three African-American medical professionals, advances new approaches to fighting healthcare disparities in communities of color.
- Improvements began at the **Ralph Adams Cram – design St. Luke's Chapel** in Roxbury in partnership with the **Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts** and **St. John St. James Church**, following plans to re-activate the tiny chapel for community uses.

These projects – and their benefits to our city – cannot happen without the steady support of you -- our friends, partners, and donors – who bring us ideas and insights that make good projects that much more meaningful.

We are grateful for your support.

Sincerely,

Kathy Kottaridis
Executive Director

Comfort Kitchen inches closer to opening at the Upham's Corner Comfort Station

The onset of Covid-19 last spring halted construction at the Upham's Corner Comfort Station for Comfort Kitchen, a 30-seat global comfort food cafe and community space. The \$1.4 million restoration and rehabilitation of the 1912 Upham's Corner Comfort Station, is now expected to resume in December and be completed in the Summer of 2021.

Led by food entrepreneurs Biplaw Rai, Nyacko Perry, and Kwasi Kwaa, Comfort Kitchen will be a daytime café and pop-up dinner experience. The partners have generated new interior restaurant designs with architect SuperNormal. In response to the pandemic, Comfort Kitchen's kitchen and restaurant spaces will now be equipped with a take out window, and new social distancing designs and protocols.

Why wait?

If you'd like a preview of Comfort Kitchen's flavors, follow their social media or visit HBI's website for the latest in a series of Comfort Kitchen takeout pop-ups at area restaurants. Each is a fundraiser to support local non-profit organizations, and features takeout menus of the staff's favorite comfort foods made with local ingredients and the spices of the diaspora. Comfort Kitchen plans more fundraiser pop-ups in Dorchester and Jamaica Plain through the winter.

 @Comfort Kitchen Boston

 @ComfortKitchenBos

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Comfort Kitchen Staff

Left to right: Ola Awogboro, Kwasi Kwaa, Rita Ferrera, Biplaw Rai, Nyacko Pearl Perry, Brooke Kebede



Symbols of Unity, Expressions of Faith

STORIES FROM THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS OF ROXBURY'S ST. JAMES AFRICAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

from page 1

Although the designer and artisans remain undocumented, it's known that these windows were installed by late 1911 or 1912. Consisting of leaded, semi-opaque, opalescent sheet glass with tonal plating, jewel accents and vitreous painting, the focal point of this ensemble is the large pictorial window in the north wall overlooking Cedar Street. Modeled after the popular illustration, *The Friend of Children* (1885) by German artist Heinrich Hofmann, this window was given to the Norwegian Evangelical Free Church by the Osgood family, who were longstanding members of Roxbury's Dudley Street Baptist Church and also affiliated with the so-called Unity Movement. Annah Faxon Osgood (1835-1911) was founder of the Ladies Unity Club of Roxbury and a supporter of numerous local civic and charitable projects. Among these was the Ladies Unity Club Home for Aged Women, which she established in 1902 at Roxbury's Spooner-Lambert House (c. 1780, and a former HBI project).

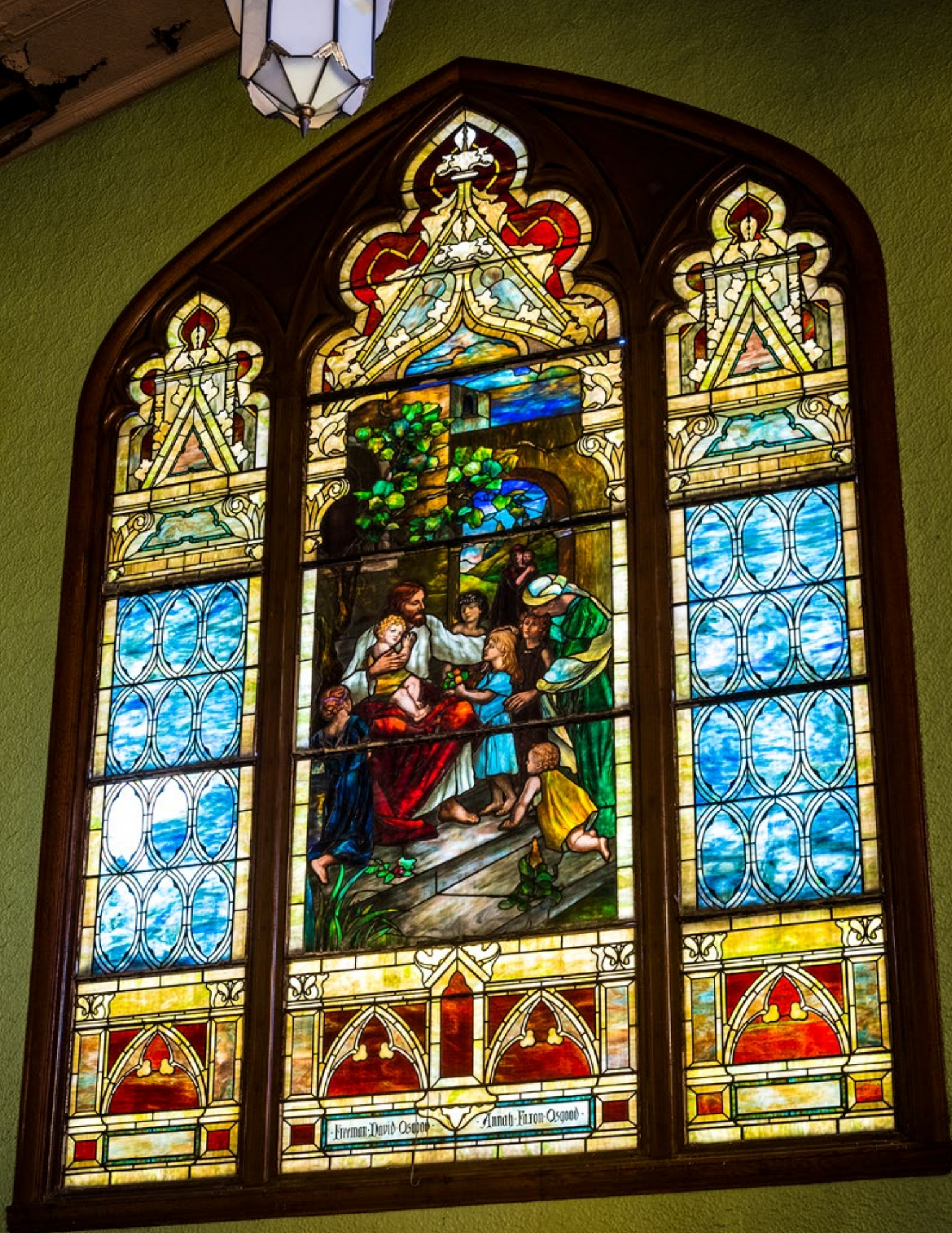
In 1909 as a gesture of religious fellowship, Mrs. Osgood financed the Norwegian Evangelical Free Church's purchase of her family's Cedar Street estate, and after her death, the pictorial window was given to the church by her children



in memory of Mrs. Osgood and her husband. At the center of this window the pictorial panel depicts a gathering of nurturing figures around a child who offers a bouquet of flowers to Jesus. Representing an allegory of personal courage, faith and humility - perhaps as public virtues - this suggests the spirit of early 20th century American Progressivism and the Unity Movement, as well as the personal character of Annah Faxon Osgood.

A similar idealism resonates in the cycle of painted medallions which line the east and west walls of the auditorium. Each medallion in the east (Hawthorne Street) aisle depicts a symbol of faith or sacrifice, while each medallion in the opposite (west) window depicts a corresponding symbol of reward or salvation. Of note is the universal appeal of the floral symbols at the center of the east and west aisles. Recalling the child's bouquet in the Osgood memorial window, these flowers mediate between the divergent symbolism of the flanking windows. On one side, the wheat sheaf and grapes are emblems of the Eucharist or orthodox ritualistic traditions. On the other side, the Bible and Alpha-Omega monogram represent the word of God or alternate evangelical preaching traditions. Altogether, this cycle of symbols captures the traditions of the Norwegian Free Church and the ecumenical spirit of the Unity Movement, while also inviting the engagement of St. James African Orthodox Church, as the successors who sustained this landmark into the 21st century.

Lance Kasparian is an architect and stained glass historian. His full report is posted on HBI's website, historicboston.org. Special thanks to Thomas Cairns MD, Archivist of the Evangelical Free Church of America in Minneapolis.



HBI Unveils Workforce Housing Plan at St. James African Orthodox Church Site



View of St. James African Orthodox Church and proposed housing development from intersection of Cedar Street and Hawthorne Street

HISTORIC BOSTON, INC. (HBI) INTRODUCED THE FIRST PHASE OF ITS PLAN FOR THE FORMER ST. JAMES AFRICAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

in Roxbury to the Highland Park neighborhood in September. The proposal outlines the construction of 14 new units of home-ownership units, 100% of which will be available to people making 80 – 100% of Area Median Income.

Although new construction is a rare undertaking for HBI, these units, which will be placed on the former church's parking lot, will help to offset costs associated with the acquisition and historic rehabilitation of the church, planned as a second phase of the project. HBI conceives of the church's re-use for non-profit or commercial space.

HBI purchased the historic church in 2018 from developer City Realty, which planned to tear it down for housing construction. After protest from neighborhood leaders, a petition was accepted for its designation as a Boston Landmark and after

an injunction, filed by Mayor Martin Walsh, City Realty agreed to sell the church to Historic Boston.

The historic church was built in 1910 for the Norwegian Evangelical Congregational Church and was home to that congregation's worship and social services until 1955. At that time, St. James African Orthodox Church, a congregation formed in Lower Roxbury in the 1920s, purchased the structure. African Orthodoxy, a national Christian denomination, was founded by Boston-trained doctor George McGuire and built on the ideas of Marcus Garvey, founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). St. James' congregation sold the church for \$1 million to City Realty in 2015.

Working with the architectural firm of Hacin + Associates, HBI is moving forward with permitting review of the new construction and the historic building's rehabilitation through the Boston Planning and Development Agency.

Designing 50 Cedar:

An interview with Architects
David Hacin and Scott Thomson

Hacin + Associates was chosen by HBI as architect for the two component parts of the project at 50 Cedar Street in Roxbury. HBI's Office Manager Gabrielle Chapman recently spoke with David Hacin and Scott Thompson to talk about the challenges and opportunities in designing quality affordable housing and repositioning the historic St. James African Orthodox Church.

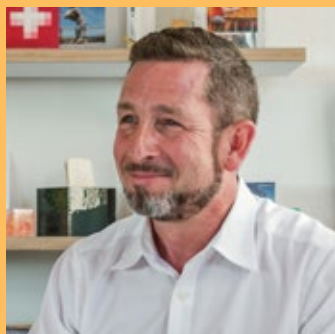
HBI: What attracted you to the 50 Cedar Street project?

S: For me, it was the involvement of HBI, since I know your work and what you can do to transform historic resources. The chance to work on the church itself is part of the whole ethos of working with at-risk historic structures, which harkens back to the early work of H+A.

D: There was something really appealing about tackling the complex site to complete the vision the neighborhood had for the church. We had seen how the neighborhood was facing the loss of the church, and we were excited to help imagine a better future and highlight the value of the church.



Scott Thomson



David Hacin

HBI: What is the most exciting part of envisioning design when historic buildings are involved in a project?

S: What makes [historic] projects interesting is that they're not a blank slate. When you have an important civic center like the church, it becomes an exciting challenge to design interventions for new uses. Our research discovered so much about the church's and the neighborhood's social history; we want to preserve that through continuity of design for the new pieces. This includes figuring out how to adapt to a new function, since the historic building can't continue to stand in the state that it was in 2018.

HBI: How do you see architectural design responding to affordability for the housing portion of 50 Cedar?

S: I remember reading a book when I first started at H+A that said there is no such thing as affordable housing. To cross the finish line of affordability, then, requires us to be efficient in building, and construction. With a one-off type of project, where we have a tight budget, the challenge is to utilize every aspect of the project most efficiently and effectively.

D: [The City's] DND wants good design in subsidized housing and has put that down in writing. A lot of that regulation has to do with the size of units. We see it as a challenge to be efficient with the size but not make units feel tight when you are living in them. DND's guidelines are trying to achieve these things on many levels and that is a noble goal.

HBI: What is your studio's approach to affordability for housing?

S: At H+A, we design housing for everyone. We believe the housing you design should be at the highest level at every income. There are lessons we learn moving between income restricted housing and market rate units that applies to both.

D: In a project like this, you have to make every detail count. Good housing meets certain standards no matter your end goal. Focusing on getting the basics right — good, efficient use of space, rooms that make sense, good light, and access. In other words, a lot of the expensive finishes are just extra, but they should always rest on a strong foundation. If the underlying structure is not handled well, you're just gilding the lily.

HBI: How will the existing character of the neighborhood influence your design?

S: Hawthorne Street has many different styles of housing. There are a few layers — 20th century apartments and historic houses dating back to the 1870s. Even within that group, the styles are very different and each helps tell the stories of various populations who have lived there. This gives us flexibility to be more creative in our inspiration for design.

D: It's important to be respectful of the church without overpowering it with scale or design. We are looking to use materials that reference the church but, in the end, the church is the main event.

S: We want the new housing to be a sympathetic background to the church and to the neighborhood. Through the affordability goals of HBI, we're hoping the new housing units can be bought by people from the neighborhood.

HBI: What are the biggest challenges in the project?

S: We are working hard to find the sweet spot of housing and parking to make it all work together and respect the historic church and the street. We're working the numbers and rolling up our sleeves to achieve maximum efficiency to ensure that as much value goes into the units as possible.

D: The project size is also unique for economies of scale. We constantly evaluate opportunities to shift costs between both sites to make sure the affordable housing can help the church's preservation be more feasible. We want to make sure we get it all right.

Thank you!

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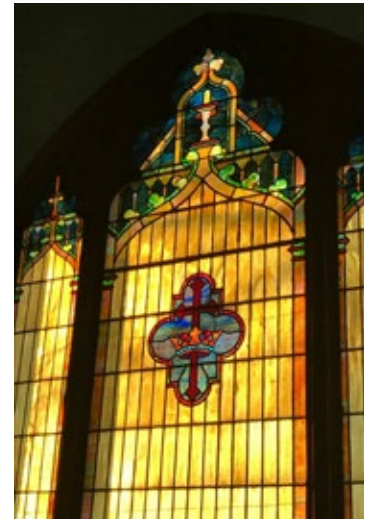
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Structural Investments Begin at St. Luke's Chapel

Structural stabilization measures and envelope repairs have begun at the 1901 St. Luke's Chapel through a cooperative effort with the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts and the Roxbury parish of St. John St. James.



St. Luke's Chapel (1901) on the corner of Roxbury St. and Malcolm X Blvd.

The work, overseen by the architectural firm of Spencer Sullivan & Vogt, involves re-building a portion of the chapel's unstable north-facing wall, protection of historic stained glass windows, removal of furniture, sill repairs, a new roof, and repairs to parapets.

Built in 1901 for residents of St. Luke's Convalescents Home, which once occupied the next door Ionic Hall, the small 1000-square foot chapel was designed by the well-known ecclesiastical architect Ralph Adams Cram. Cram's signature gothic revival design elements appear throughout this tiny building, from the pointed-arch windows, to hand wrought door hardware and interior wood paneling and reredos by frequent collaborator, Johannes Kirchmayer.

Not regularly used by the parish of St. John St. James, St. Luke's has been empty for more than 30 years. The current stabilization work benefits from \$100,000 from the City of Boston's CPA program and a significant contribution from the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts.

Historic Boston has been assisting the Diocese and the parish with planning for preservation and re-activation of both St. Luke's and Ionic Hall, an unusual example of Federal period architecture in Roxbury. When two Roxbury parishes united in 1968, they purchased this site from the convalescent home and a modern addition was constructed at the rear of Ionic Hall for their new church sanctuary.



For more information, visit www.historicboston.org

FOWLER CLARK EPSTEIN FARM WINS PRESTIGIOUS RICHARD H. DRIEHAUS NATIONAL PRESERVATION AWARD

Historic Boston is honored to receive one of three 2020 Richard H. Driehaus Foundation National Preservation Awards for the revitalization of the Fowler Clark Epstein Farm in Mattapan.

Awarded to preservation projects that demonstrate excellence in practice and partnerships, as well as a transformative impact on the vitality of their communities, this year's Driehaus Award recipients were honored at the virtual ceremony, hosted by television host and preservationist Bob Vila, on October 29, 2020 as part of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's annual conference.

According to the National Trust and the Driehaus Foundation's external jury, the Fowler Clark Epstein Farm '...is a creative urban farming solution that proves the preservation field's value to important community initiatives, such as reducing unemployment, increasing food access, and building new green space.'

This year's other winners were the Universal Life Insurance Building in Memphis, Tennessee, converted to a center for entrepreneurship and design, and the historic Chelsea District Health

Center in New York City, restored as the Leona Baumgartner District Health Center.

According to Paul Edmondson, president and CEO of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, "This year's recipients vividly demonstrate that activating historic places through partnerships and creativity supports the health and vitality of individuals and their communities across the country."



For more information, visit tinyurl.com/driehausaward

HBI Awaits Nawn Factory Decision



Early in 2020, HBI responded to the PLAN: Nubian Square Request for Proposals for the historic Owen Nawn Factory with a fresh vision for the historic building as home to **The Wellness Collaborative** and a **Roxbury History and Orientation Center**.



The proposed \$8.26 million project restores the Nawn Factory to its 1880s appearance, and re-creates the portion of the building that was lost to fire more than 20 years ago.

“HBI’s proposal reactivates the long empty historic building,” said Shaurya Batra, HBI’s Director of Real Estate Development. “In doing so, the Nawn Factory becomes a place of innovation in community health and wellness through professionally delivered, culturally relevant programs and services.”

HBI’s proposal features a partnership with The Wellness Collaborative (TWC), an organization founded by three black medical professionals – an internist, a pediatrician and psychologist – and a social enterprise that aims to eliminate health care disparities in African American communities experiencing disproportionate impact.

The project also devotes nearly 2400 sq. ft of mixed-use space for the Roxbury History and Orientation Center in the form of a “History Café,” a café-retail-

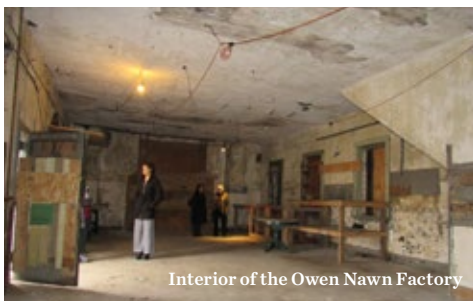
Rendering of proposed cafe and history interpretive center



interpretation space, with plans for static and digital exhibits, geo-coded walking tours, and immersive augmented and virtual reality content.

TWC provides health education for the community, employers, as well as training for health care service organizations. Their headquarters at the Nawn Factory will host educational forums and provide space to an interdisciplinary network of small businesses in the health care and wellness-related fields.

The City of Boston and the Roxbury Strategic Plan Oversight Committee continue to deliberate on two proposals submitted for the Nawn Factory.



Interior of the Owen Nawn Factory

Wellness and Technology at the Eustis Street Fire House

The Wellness Collaborative, a new non-profit organization devoted to eliminating health care disparities in Boston's African American communities, and the **Timothy Smith Network**, a foundation that provides technology resources to children and families throughout Roxbury, are now headquartered at the Eustis Street Fire House at 20 Eustis Street.

"We are so pleased that this historic building --once vacant and deteriorated-- now serves two locally-based organizations and contributes to the vibrancy of the neighborhood," said HBI Executive Director Kathy Kottaridis. Dating to 1859, the Eustis Street Fire House is Boston's oldest remaining fire house structure. HBI completed its rehabilitation in 2011.

The Wellness Collaborative is also HBI's partner on a proposal for redevelopment of the 1880's Owen Nawn Factory in Nubian Square. TWC's new operations at the Eustis Street Fire House will help the



Karilyn Crockett, Ph.D



Jeanette Callahan, MD



Robin Read, MD

new organization incubate its business plan and operations in order to be prepared to scale up to the full occupancy of the Nawn Factory building, should HBI be designated.

For more information, visit thewellnesscollaborative.org and tsn.org



Timothy Smith Network staff

HBI NEWS AND NOTES

NEW HBI BOARD MEMBER

Historic Boston Inc. is excited to announce that **Sammy Nabulsi**, a Roxbury resident and Associate at Rose Law Partners, was elected to the HBI Board of Directors in July 2020.



Sammy Nabulsi

Sammy joined Rose Law Partners' practice in land use law in 2018. He was previously Assistant Corporation Counsel for the City of Boston, where he represented the city in environmental, land-use and zoning, historic preservation, and municipal taxation litigation.

HBI MOVE TO OCB

HBI returned to the Old Corner Bookstore in downtown Boston in August after nine years in Roxbury's Nubian Square. The move makes way for two Roxbury non-profits at the Eustis Street Fire House. HBI will also assume management of the 1718 bookstore building.

HBI was formed in 1960 to purchase and restore the Old Corner Bookstore, then threatened by demolition. That effort inspired six decades of preservation projects throughout Boston. "We're glad to be back where it all began," said HBI President Kathy MacNeil. "The Old Corner Bookstore exemplifies HBI's mission of rehabilitating historic buildings for new uses."

HBI at 60

Revisit some of HBI's favorite projects and more at historicboston.org/celebrating-sixty-years



DISTINCTIONS FOR HBI PROJECTS

The Roslindale Substation, whose 2018 renewal was a partnership of **Peregrine Group LLC, Roslindale Village Main**



Roslindale Substation (1911) photo by Elisif Brandon

Street and Historic Boston, received the Boston Preservation Alliance's **2020 Preservation Achievement Award**, and this year's **Thomas M. Menino Award** from **Preservation Massachusetts**.

The **National Park Service** notified HBI in July that the **Fowler Clark Epstein Farm** has been listed individually on the **National Register of Historic Places**. Already designated a Boston Landmark in 2005, the historic farmstead was acquired by HBI in 2015 and underwent a \$3.8 million rehabilitation utilizing State and Federal Historic Tax Credits in 2018.

REMEMBERING RICH BEAL

HBI board member **Richard P. Beal** passed away unexpectedly on September 21st. He served on HBI's Council of Advisors in 2014 and joined the Board of Directors in 2015. Rich was an enthusiastic supporter of HBI's mission, and brought his interest in historic preservation and skills in real estate to our projects.

We will miss him, and send condolences to his family and associates at A.W. Perry, where he was President.



HBI Proposes Housing for Historic Dudley Mansion



Archbishop John J. Williams, purchased the Dudley House for the Catholic Church in 1896.

HISTORIC BOSTON submitted a proposal in February to the Commonwealth's Division of Capital Asset Management to rehabilitate the historic Dudley House at 167 Centre Street near Jackson Square in Roxbury for seven home ownership units.



David Dudley (1787) and Hannah Davis Dudley (1792)
Photos from Harvard Art Museums

Built in 1825 for Hannah and David Dudley, the house was part of a sprawling estate built along the Stony Brook until railroad and industrial uses changed the physical and social make-up of the neighborhood. The house was purchased by the Catholic Archdiocese in 1896 as a parsonage for the newly built Church of All Saints, a parish that was formed to serve the new concentration of German immigrants who lived and worked in the industries along Stonybrook. The church was demolished as part of the clearance for the I-695 highway in the early 1970s, and the parsonage reverted to State control. In the 1990s and 2000s, the building was used as First Inc./First Askia Academy, a residential program that provided substance abuse treatment services.

Owned by the Trustees of Roxbury Community College, the building is significantly distressed from years of vacancy, break-ins and water infiltration. Historic Boston proposes to return the house to its early 19th century appearance with restoration of the house's character-defining features while creating new, code compliant residential units with modern amenities.

Sketch of All Saints Church
from *The Pilot* newspaper



The Dudley House, built circa 1825



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