

HISTORY MUSEUM ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF 2024 CHARLOTTE GEM PRESERVATION AWARDS

Awards recognize projects that preserve and protect Charlotte's architectural heritage

*Museum to honor Mecklenburg County Manager Dena R. Diorio with Charlotte Gem Award and
Catawba Nation's Cultural Center with Excellence in Preservation Award*

CHARLOTTE, N.C., April 10, 2024 – The Charlotte Museum of History will honor winners of the annual Charlotte Gem Preservation Awards at the museum's premier fundraising event on Thursday, May 9, at The Revelry in historic Camp North End.

The Charlotte Gem Preservation Awards recognize outstanding contributions to historic preservation in the Charlotte region, encouraging preservation of the area's historic buildings and streetscapes. Major supporting sponsors this year include Wells Fargo, Rodgers Builders and Stewart and Anna McQueen.

Mecklenburg County Manager Dena R. Diorio is the featured speaker, and the museum's board of trustees will award her with the Charlotte Gem Award for her service to the Charlotte region.

In addition, an independent panel of local architects and preservation enthusiasts selected six projects to receive Charlotte Gem Preservation Awards, along with two honorable mentions.

"Historic preservation is about more than conserving buildings. It helps to preserve the soul of our communities, enriching lives, inspiring future generations and making Charlotte a more attractive place to live," said Terri L. White, president and CEO of the Charlotte Museum of History.

Before the awards ceremony, guests at Charlotte Gem will enjoy a cocktail hour and a silent auction with the opportunity to bid on experiences and objects representing the Charlotte region's rich culture.

All proceeds from the event support the mission of the Charlotte Museum of History to save and share Charlotte's history. That mission includes the preservation of Charlotte's oldest home, the 1774 Alexander Rock House, and its historic Revolutionary-era homesite, as well as the preservation of the historic Siloam School, which opens to the public this summer after an eight-year restoration effort.

2024 Charlotte Gem Preservation Award Winners

Charlotte Gem Award – Dena R. Diorio, County Manager, Mecklenburg County

A person who actively works to make the Charlotte region a better place through advocacy, volunteerism and support for our community.

The Charlotte Museum of History's board of trustees selected County Manager Dena Diorio to receive the 2024 Charlotte Gem Award for her 17 years of outstanding service to Mecklenburg County. Diorio became the first woman to serve as Mecklenburg County Manager in 2013, a role in which she leads all county departments and agencies, drafts the county's annual budget and carries out the county's priorities and initiatives. Diorio serves on various boards in the region, and numerous organizations have recognized her impact as a leader, including the National Association of Women Business Owners, Queens University and the Urban League of Central Carolinas, among many others.

Excellence in Preservation Award – Catawba Cultural Center, Rock Hill, 1536 Tom Steven Road

A person, group, or project that preserves the cultural or built heritage of a neighborhood or community.

Judges recognized the Catawba Cultural Center with an Excellence in Preservation award for the center's exemplary efforts in preserving and promoting the cultural and material heritage of the Catawba people, who are indigenous to the Piedmont region of the Carolinas. Mecklenburg County is part of the Catawba's historic homelands and remains a part of the modern Catawba Nation's federally recognized service area, making Catawba Nation history a fundamental part of Mecklenburg County history.

The building that houses the cultural center began its life as a two-room Catawba school in 1948, when the local Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints constructed it to provide an education to Catawba children on the reservation during segregation. Starting in 2020, the Catawba Nation undertook a major interior modernization and renovation of the building so that it could continue serving the Catawba community into the 21st century. Today, three generations of Catawba have passed through the center's doors, where they have learned to dance, to weave, to make pottery and to carry on traditions that have endured for over 6,000 years.

Preservation (Commercial) – Waxhaw Livery Stable, Downtown Waxhaw, 121 South Broome St.*Restoration of a historic commercial structure*

Owner Mark Hernig dedicated six years to restoring and repurposing the Waxhaw Livery Stable, which was built in 1932. The building was boarded up, close to demolition, when Hernig purchased it in 2015. His project turned the building into a vibrant commercial space that now houses the Mule Barn Mercantile, a shop featuring locally made food, art and antiques. The restored stable tells the story of Waxhaw's rural and equestrian history and supports the historic downtown's economic revitalization.

Preservation (Commercial) – Dowd House, Camp Greene, 2216 Monument St.*Restoration of a historic commercial structure*

James C. Dowd built this farmhouse on 248 acres in southwest Charlotte in 1879. During WWI, it became the headquarters of the U.S. Army's Camp Greene. It also is an example of Southern Victorian architecture, a style prominent in the late 1800s of which there are few remaining examples in the region today. Mecklenburg County purchased the property in 1985 to preserve it, but years of standing vacant took a toll on the structure. In 2018, the county invited developers to submit proposals to acquire and preserve the property. Rob Pressley of MECA Commercial Real Estate and his wife, Kathy, acquired the property and completely restored the house, expanding it for office use. After more than two years of painstaking renovations, the Dowd House is now home to MECA Commercial Real Estate.

Preservation (Commercial) – Historic Dallas Jail, Dallas, N.C., 108 East Trade St.*Restoration of a historic commercial structure*

Built as the Gaston County Jail in 1848 and now a designated historic landmark, the Historic Dallas Jail is a tangible representation of early American incarceration practices and judicial systems. Its Greek Revival design also makes it a unique existing example of architecture popular at the time. A years-long restoration effort led by the Properts family adapted the building into an event venue, positively impacting the local economy and attracting visitors. The Properts' innovative approach to documenting the restoration process amassed 45,000 followers on TikTok, providing a window into the complexities

of historic preservation projects and fostering a renewed sense of pride and unity as the community works to revitalize its historic town square.

Preservation Award (Residential) - Bungalow Unboxed, Dilworth Historic District, 624 East Kingston Ave.

Restoration of a historic residential structure

Located in Charlotte's first streetcar suburb, this sensitive rehabilitation of a 1931 Craftsman-style bungalow exemplifies how a historic structure can be adapted to contemporary living while respecting the historic fabric of its surroundings. Previous owners modified the building to become a triplex complete with numerous "boxes" on all sides of the building. The team from Studio H and Concept Building & Restoration removed these additions to return the bungalow to a more historically informed presentation that was sensitive to the surrounding neighborhood.

Neighborhood Infill (Residential) - Mini Me, Dilworth Historic District, 906 Magnolia Ave.

New residential building that integrates sensitively with its historic environment

Hopedale Builders' innovative approach to creating an accessory dwelling unit for a 1925 bungalow reflected the homeowners' commitment to historical appropriateness and neighborhood compatibility while creating a comfortable accessory dwelling unit for use as a teen hangout, home office or guest house. The new space matches the historic home's architecture and integrates into the existing landscape, helping preserve the neighborhood's identity.

Honorable Mention - Preservation (Commercial) – Petit Phillipe, Montford Park, 4001 Park Road

Restoration of a historic commercial structure

Petit Phillipe owners Mark Meissner and Casey Hickey converted this 4,500-square-foot dry cleaners in Montford Park, originally built in 1962, into a jewel box of a space for their upscale wine shop. By preserving the building's midcentury modern exterior and site, the restored space integrates authentically with neighbors that include the Park Road Shopping Center and The Kimberlee apartments, well-known midcentury modern landmarks in the Montford Park neighborhood.

Honorable Mention - Preservation Award (Residential)**Dilworth Bungalow, Dilworth Historic District, 2221 Ledgewood Lane***Restoration of a historic residential structure*

Located in Dilworth, the renovation of this 1920s-era bungalow maintained the essential design elements of the Craftsman Style, while enhancing the home's functionality for its current owners. The project tackled numerous challenges including an irregularly shaped lot and a maxed-out setback allotment. Despite the need to go up instead of out, the home maintained the sense of façade and blends seamlessly with the surrounding homes.

How to Go

The Charlotte Gem Preservation Awards are Thursday, May 9, at 6 p.m. at The Revelry in historic Camp North End. Cocktail attire. Tickets start at \$175 for members and are available at charlottemuseum.org/events. Limited sponsorship opportunities are still available.

About the Venue

The Museum chose The Revelry as the site of this year's awards to highlight the role of adaptive reuse in our community. The Revelry is part of the larger Camp North End complex, a sprawling entertainment venue that was originally the site of the Ford Motor Company and later a Quartermaster Depot for the Army during WWII before Eckerd Pharmaceuticals purchased it in 1967. In 2016, ATCO properties purchased the property and began an extensive renovation and restoration process. The Revelry exemplifies how historic buildings can breathe new life into their communities.

The Charlotte Museum of History exists to save and share the Charlotte region's history, helping create a better understanding of the past and inspiring dialogue about the future. The museum is the steward of the [1774 Hezekiah Alexander Rock House and homesite](#), which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is the oldest home in Mecklenburg County. The museum also is home to the [historic Siloam School, which will open to the public as a historic site in summer 2024, after an eight-year fundraising and restoration effort](#). Visit charlottemuseum.org and follow the museum on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#). The museum is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

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