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## MUSEUM ANNOUNCES PRESERVATION HEROES

*2020 Charlotte Preservation Awards recognize people and projects that save Queen City history*

**CHARLOTTE, N.C., August 20, 2020** – The Charlotte Museum of History announced winners of the 2020 Charlotte Preservation Awards tonight during a live-streamed ceremony celebrating preservation in and around the Queen City.

“We were proud to keep the Charlotte Preservation Awards alive this year, despite these unprecedented times, and we are so pleased that the Charlotte community joined us online to support historic preservation,” said Adria Focht, president & CEO of The Charlotte Museum of History. “Our region continues to grow exponentially, and we must shine a light on our unique historic buildings and neighborhoods now so that we can preserve these places for the future.”

### **2020 Charlotte Preservation Award Winners**

An independent panel of local architects and preservation enthusiasts selected eight award-winning historic preservation projects from among the nominees. This year the museum added a new award category for preservation projects outside of Mecklenburg County in the neighboring counties of Cabarrus, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln and Union.

#### **1. Award with Distinction – Residential Preservation**

*Award created by this year’s judges to recognize a residential preservation project that went above and beyond, surpassing all others in scope and scale.*

**Sloan-Porter House.** Built around 1790, The Sloan-Porter House is a local landmark and one of the last remaining historic residences in the vicinity of Steele Creek Presbyterian Church, which was founded in 1760 as the second of the "seven sisters" churches in the area. The house is one of only two original houses in the Dixie and Berryhill communities, and it is likely the only one that will retain its historic rural setting, a feat made possible because it is surrounded on three sides by the Berryhill Nature Preserve. When Brian Clarke purchased the house in 2015, it was abandoned. The house lacked running water, had no functional bathroom or kitchen and suffered from severe rot and insect

damage. Over the next five years, he and his wife, Sarah Hammett Clarke, restored the neglected farmhouse into a beautiful, functional home, doing much of the work themselves. This labor of love showcases many of the home's original features, including woodwork and windows dating back to an 1890s expansion to the home and even earlier.

## **2. Award with Distinction – Commercial Preservation**

*Award created by this year's judges to recognize a commercial preservation project that went above and beyond, surpassing all others in scope and scale.*

**Sodoma Law: 217 North Graham Street.** The Graham is located on the Cotton Mill block in historic Fourth Ward. Built in 1913, the prominent brick structure was first home to the Western Newspaper Union. It survived at least two fires, one when an airplane crashed into it in the 1940s. It has housed many tenants during its 100-plus-year history, including a rubber company when Ford Motor's plant was in Charlotte, a candy factory, a ballroom and a five-and-dime store. When Doma Vida Inc. purchased the building in 2018, it was empty and dilapidated. After an extensive renovation, it now houses Sodoma Law's headquarters. Ratzlaff Construction, with the help of C Design and SGA | NarmourWright Design, managed this adaptive reuse project, bringing the three-story 18,270-square-foot shell back to life. The team salvaged windows and skylights to use as tables and repurposed an old newspaper printing spindle from the building as a light fixture. The original hardwood floors, brickwork, ceilings and steel beams tell stories of the building's past.

## **3. Preservation in a Small or Medium-Sized Community**

*This category – new for 2020 – recognizes restoration of a historic structure in a community with a population of less than 100,000 that is located in Cabarrus, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln or Union county.*

**Mooresville Historic Wall Sign Restoration Project.** Mooresville's historic downtown embodies the railroad-era architecture that typified small and mid-size communities of the 19th and early 20th centuries. During that time, wall signs became a popular advertising tool, and the first Coca-Cola sign appeared on a brick façade in downtown Mooresville in 1894. A number of buildings in the old business district featured painted wall signs advertising local goods and services, but over the years, the signs faded and many became barely legible. The Town of Mooresville hired

Brushcan Custom Murals in 2019 to revive these historic icons. The team from Brushcan spent 155 hours over 17 days restoring the signs using a painstaking process that preserved the historic designs while capturing the faded character created by the natural weathering process.

#### **4. Preservation Residential**

*Restoration of a historic residential structure.*

**429 West Park Ave.** Built in 1931, this home is located in Charlotte's Wilmore Historic District. Before Sarah and Alex Wheat purchased the property in 2018, it was in such disrepair that many would have considered it a tear down. The Wheats chose to restore the approximately 2,000-square-foot bungalow, keeping the footprint virtually the same and reconfiguring the interior to create an open floor plan. The project restored the original charm and character of the house, keeping as many of the original details as possible, including the windows, pine floors, exterior siding and wraparound front porch. The house was given a fresh coat of white paint to stay true to its original color.

#### **5. Preservation Commercial**

*Restoration of a historic commercial structure.*

**2322 Dunavant Street.** South End is known for its historic mill buildings and warehouses, but a significant number of industrial buildings were built there after WWII, including 2322 Dunavant. Built in 1961, the building represents midcentury modern style, an uncommon design approach in southern commercial real estate at the time. The building stood out from others around it with its monolithic breeze-block facade. Argos Real Estate Advisors began renovations to this former industrial space in late 2016. They incorporated the building's signature façade into a series of "floating" panels that separate the public sidewalk from the exterior private courtyard. Other building materials were repurposed as well, including roll-up warehouse doors that were converted into entrances for The Dunavant restaurant and the office lobby entrance.

## 6. Historic Neighborhood Infill – Residential

*New residential building that integrates sensitively with its historic environment.*

**208 Grandin Road.** The historic Wesley Heights neighborhood was developed primarily in the 1920s and retains an amazing degree of its original character, thanks in large part to Wesley Height’s residents, whose efforts led to the area’s listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 1994. Mindful of the historic nature of the neighborhood and its original bungalow and craftsman-style homes, Realtor Charlie Miller and Williams Farrow Builders designed an exterior for 208 Grandin that closely matches its historic counterparts. Charlotte’s Historic District Commission approved the project, and construction began in 2019. The exterior of 208 Grandin Road was inspired by a Standard Homes catalogue plan from 1923. While it easily could be mistaken for a 100-year-old home from the outside, the interior combines timeless elements with modern design.

## 7. Excellence in Preservation – Advocacy & Education

*This award recognizes a person or group that has made a significant impact on historic preservation in the Charlotte region.*

**NC Modernist.** NCModernist is a digital archive that documents and promotes North Carolina modernist residential design. The nonprofit’s mission is to seek out every modernist house in North Carolina, determine the architect and house history and make that information available for free to the public on its website, [ncmodernist.org](http://ncmodernist.org). So far, the largely volunteer group has documented over 2,400 houses statewide, about 400 in the Charlotte area alone. Modernism is a rich part of Charlotte’s built history, yet midcentury modern houses are often endangered, either by demolition or unfortunate renovations. The best time to start saving modernist houses is when they go vacant, and you can only anticipate that by knowing where these houses are, who designed them and why they are important.

## **8. Excellence in Preservation – Community History**

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

**Huntersville Town Jail.** Built circa 1935, the Huntersville Town Jail is near the town’s historic center. As the oldest surviving municipal building in Huntersville, the jail reflects the town’s municipal development. It is also a well-preserved example of the unprecedented public works projects constructed during the Great Depression in Mecklenburg County. Lastly, the jail is a valuable historic artifact at a state and national level, as it helps to demonstrate jail design and development, especially in small towns and rural areas. The building ceased to function as a jail by 1963, and by the early 2000s, the building had fallen into disrepair and was rapidly deteriorating. Today, thanks to the work of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, the Town of Huntersville and the Olde Huntersville Historical Society the building is a local historic landmark, and has been completely restored to a state that clearly demonstrates the property’s historic character. The Olde Huntersville Historical Society is continuing to develop programs for the property and is working towards a plan for adaptive reuse of the grounds as a pocket park.

### **About the Historic Preservation Awards**

The Charlotte Preservation Awards recognize outstanding historic preservation projects in the Charlotte region that help preserve the area’s architectural heritage and protect its unique sense of place. An independent panel of judges selects award-winning residential and commercial projects from among the nominees.

### **About The Charlotte Museum of History**

The Charlotte Museum of History engages a broad audience in the history of the Charlotte region through the stories of its people, places and events to promote dialogue and historical perspective. The museum is the steward of the Hezekiah Alexander House (ca. 1774) and home site, a site listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the oldest home in Mecklenburg County. To learn more, visit [charlottemuseum.org](http://charlottemuseum.org) and follow the museum on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

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