



SPRINGFIELD PRESERVATION TRUST, INC

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www.springfieldpreservationtrust.org

Dedicated to Preserving Springfield's Architectural History

April 2008

Annual Meeting

The Springfield Preservation Trust held its annual meeting at the historic Hotel Kimball in downtown Springfield on Sunday afternoon, March 2. Elected as officers were Michael Marcinkewich, president; Linda Langevin, first vice president; William Devlin, vice president for advocacy; Joanne Cardell, secretary; Robert McCarroll, education; and Benjamin Murphy, treasurer.

Board Members include Fran Gallagher, Jim Llewellyn, Robert Holbrook, Jeanne LaLancette, Patricia Staples, and Michael Noonan, M.D. Outgoing board member and past president, James Boone, was recognized for more than 30 years of service on the board and given the title of President Emeritus.

The Donald E. Campion Award for Outstanding Achievement in Historic Preservation was given to Gary Lewis of Springfield. Mr. Lewis was recognized for restoring numerous homes in the city, primarily in the McKnight Historic District, and for being a tireless booster of Springfield's architectural heritage.

Donald Campion was an early Board Member, served as past president of the Springfield Preservation Trust, and was one of the original restorers of homes on Mattoon Street, Elliot Street and Maple Street. He set the standard and led the way for the preservation movement in Springfield. Donald, as Clerk of the Works for the Springfield Preservation Trust in the early 1980's, restored 5 houses in the McKnight neighborhood. This drew attention to McKnight and helped stimulate the neighborhood's resurgence.

It is only natural that Gary Lewis should be awarded this highest honor for Preservation and Restoration as so much of his work has also been in the McKnight neighborhood. Gary had a very special love for McKnight where he lived for more than 20 years.

Gary was one of those people who did things because they were the right things to do. He tackled the problem of urban blight by restoring houses all over the City and providing decent housing for people.

Gary restored houses on Yale, Harvard, Thompson, Westminster, and Florida Streets, St. James Avenue, Ingersoll Grove, Dartmouth Terrace, apartments on Worthington Street and Bowdoin Street, as well as his own house on Ingersoll Grove. He will also receive an additional award in May for his most recent restoration of 111 Ingersoll Grove.

Gary has also rehabilitated homes in many other parts of the city including Worcester Street, Dorne Street, Carew, Aster, and Newman Streets, as well as apartment blocks on Avon Place and Belmont Avenue. Gary did not restore the easy ones, only the ones that desperately needed that special touch and extra love and attention that saved them from further decay or the wrecker.

The Springfield Preservation Trust recognizes and thanks Gary for his dedication to Springfield and for his many efforts to preserve our wonderful built environment.

Gary Lewis

It is with great sadness that the Trust learned of Gary Lewis's passing the day after he was honored with the Trust's highest award.

Gary had been ill for a while and his close friend Jim Locke accepted the award on his behalf. Jim reported that he was able to read the tribute to Gary and that Gary was very pleased and honored by the award. Per Gary's request, the Campion award was prominently displayed at his wake and Bob McCarroll read the tribute at his funeral.

Gary repeatedly received awards from the Trust for his individual restorations. The City of Springfield and the Preservation Trust will miss Gary and we thank him for all of his goodness and generosity.

Forest Park Heights House Tour

The SPT Board is hard at work putting together a Forest Park Heights House Tour for May 18 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The tour will open six homes south of Sumner Avenue, developed by the Forest Park Heights Company and headed by Lewis Newman. Colonial Revival and Shingle style homes predominate in this area. Forest Park Heights is the largest and most elegant late nineteenth/early twentieth century neighborhood in Western Massachusetts. Residential development was spurred in the 1890s with expansion of the electrified trolley system and creation of Forest Park. The following 30 years saw construction of the 600 houses now protected as a local historic district.

Tickets will be available in early May at Flowers, Flowers at Sumner Avenue and White Street and at The Flowers Box near the corner of Carew and Armory Streets. They will also be available on the day of the tour at a yet to be determined location. Check the Trust voice mail at 747-0656 for the specific location. Trust members receive a discount. Tickets may be purchased online at www.springfieldpreservationtrust.org.

25-27 Elliot Street at risk

This brick double house with slate mansard roof, yellow sandstone trim, front bay windows and side porches, was severely damaged by fire in early January.

Elliot Street had been opened in the 1850s, but most of the development took place after the Civil War. 25-27 Elliot Street was built in 1872 by local mason and builder, Benjamin Farrar. Mr. Farrar also built 94-98 Elliot Street as well as 5-11, 41-47, and 50-52 Mattoon Street. Charles Blackstone, a Main Street, hardware merchant, was the first owner of 25 Elliot Street. Peter Bailey, a treasurer at Hampden Savings Bank, occupied 27 Elliot Street. The current owner is requesting permission from the Springfield Historical Commission to demolish the property.

SPT Committees

The Springfield Preservation Trust is in the process of creating a committee structure to assist the organization so that it may function more efficiently and effectively. The Board of Directors is asking you, the members, for help by utilizing your professional talents and experience. We are looking for members to volunteer a little time each month who have backgrounds in Marketing/Public Relations, Fundraising/Development, Program Planning, and Database Administration.

Your time will make a difference in the capacity of the Trust to advocate for the historic structures of Springfield and educate residents of the significance of our unique built environment. Please contact Ben Murphy at bmurphy@springfieldpreservationtrust.org if you would like to volunteer some time for SPT.

SPT Website

Over the last few months the SPT website has gone through some big changes with the addition of much more content and added resources. We encourage you to visit www.springfieldpreservationtrust.org and look through all the different pages. Upcoming events will be listed on the homepage with links to more detailed information on the events page or the house tour page. Read past newsletters online or print the convenient PDF version. On the resources page can be found our Contractors List with contact information for many different types of contractors. And coming soon to the resource page will be information about the new resource library.

You will be able to search for SPT books online and see what is available in the library. Another new and exciting feature is our online sale pages. SPT now sells tickets and can receive memberships by credit card online through a secure online sales page. Next time there is an event or you want to renew your membership, consider doing it through the website.

The website now offers a way to communicate with the Trust through email. Our email address, info@springfieldpreservationtrust.org, is posted on the website.

Contractor List

The very popular Contractor Recommendation List is in need of updating. If you have recently used a contractor that you were pleased with, let us know so we can add them to the list. If you need a contractor, let us know and we can share the list or you can look it up on the trust website at www.springfieldpreservationtrust.org

Send contractors name, trade specialty, address, telephone number, and email to Jim Boone, 97 Florida Street, Springfield 01109, or send an email to Jim at jimboone@hotmail.com.

Monthly Meetings

Monthly meetings of the Springfield Preservation Trust are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m., at the Mason Wright Retirement Center, 74 Walnut Street. All Trust members are welcome.

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