

Welcome to our 2024 Historic Preservation Awards. I am Lyn Romine and serve as chairman for the City's Historic Preservation Commission, along with Board members, Mr. Will Deller, Mrs. Diane Folk, Mrs. Carol Haley and Mrs. Nancy Marshall.

For those of you who may not know, the city ordinance created The HPC as an architectural review board for residents within the city's local **Plaza District**. When residents are planning to make material changes to their historic homes within the district, they submit those plans through a COA. Our job is to help owners preserve the historic elements of their home by following design guidelines created by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of historic properties, and so doing, help preserve our city's cultural heritage.



May is National Historic Preservation Month:

Across the country during this month many events are planned in cities and national parks to promote historic places for the purpose of **instilling national and community pride, promoting heritage tourism, and showing the social and economic benefits of historic preservation.**

For Eatonton, it is a time to pause and appreciate what has been preserved which we do each year by honoring preservation projects; but it is also a time to take a serious look at those buildings and sites in our midst that might still be threatened and lost without taking action. It is a time to educate our citizens to respect our architectural heritage, as it provides important roots that trace our past and gives our community its distinct characteristics.

(At this time, I want to thank Eatonton Mainstreet and the Chamber of Commerce for their excellent project for Preservation Month. They reproduced and enlarged 8 of the historic Sanborn Insurance maps and installed them on the windows of downtown buildings to share the history of our downtown growth from 1890- 1921.) They are certainly worth a walk around downtown.

To this point, as chairman of Eatonton's Historic Preservation Commission, it is again our honor to share with City Council projects not only from our local Plaza Historic District but also some outstanding projects from the business district and the community at large. These are **the people** in our community who are saving places.

Our Categories tonight are:

- **Excellence in Rehabilitation**- which recognizes those who have preserved significant features of a property that convey its historic value through repair, alteration, or additions.
- **Excellence in Stewardship**- which recognizes those who ensure the preservation of historic properties through long-term care and maintenance, stabilization, protection, or continuous ownership.

Our first award goes to **The Eatonton First Methodist Church for Excellence in Stewardship for the Thomas- Nisbet- Taliaferro House at 302 N. Madison Ave.**

This historic home was built by Lewis P. Harwell we feel around 1836, judging by its wide floor boards and high ceiling.

It was standing there when the First Methodist Church was built next door in 1857 and has been there to celebrate each of the church's birthdays over the past 167 years.

Dr. Reuban Nisbet and his heirs owned the home for about 60 years, and was responsible for the remodeling done around 1914 that added the columns and grand portico.

Dr. and Mrs. Taliaferro bought the house in the early 1930's and later Mrs. Taliaferro sold it to the Methodist Church in 1952. Since that time, this beautiful home has been used by the church members for classrooms, for meetings, as the bridal room, a reception room, and a prayer room.

For 72 years, the church and its members have lovingly cared for this building, having just recently finished an extensive restoration of its exterior. Thank you, Rev. Wofford, your Trustees, and congregation for the stewardship you have shown to this historic home.



Our next category is for **Excellence in Rehabilitation with Additions** for the Shields-Leverette- Blackwell House at 201 N. Madison Ave.

If this address sounds familiar it is because this is the second preservation award garnered by this home. Last year we honored the owners who saved the house from demolition due to neglect.

This year we honor the couple who have made it their home, **Michael and Amanda Cabe**. This project involved adding new additions to an historic property, which can be damaging to a property site, if not done right.

However, Michael and Amanda worked diligently to research and build the additions in a way that honored the materials and architecture of the original house. Working in the rear of their large property to keep the historic façade of the house intact, they enlarged the back deck, built a covered parking area, installed a side paved driveway, fencing, and extensive landscaping.

Their beautiful additions have enhanced the property while echoing the design of the original building. This house is now truly a home (for cars, dogs and people) Thank you Michael and Amanda Cabe for putting down roots on N. Madison Ave.



Our next award is for **Excellence in Rehabilitation for The Langston House** at 401 N. Jefferson Avenue.

This Queen Ann Victorian Cottage was built around 1896 by Dr. Benjamin Hunt on land that was part of Panola Hall Estate. Dr. Hunt had originally promised to donate the land to the Episcopal Church, if they could build the church by 1895, When the church failed to raise the funds, he built this home for Mrs. Langston on that lot. (The church did finally raise the funds to build **All Angels Episcopal** just two houses down from this home in 1899)

It has belonged to several owners through the years. During World War II when there was a housing shortage, owners Clyde and Irma Dunn Carpenter divided the home into two apartments, which changed the floorplan and flow of the original home.

Recently, the home was purchased by realtor, Heidi King who planned to rehabilitate the property for future sale. Sometimes during rehabs, well-meaning investors just want to take an old house and make all things “new again”, but in the process they lose much of its historic character. This is where we want to thank Heidi, she has carefully kept the Victorian details to the exterior of the house, repairing the porch, protecting old windows and doors which are key elements.....while making her modern updates to the interior of the house, and restoring the floor plan to its original single-family design.

The results are a beautiful new addition to the growing number of restored historic homes on Jefferson Avenue that welcome visitors to Eatonton. Thank you, Heidi, for being a realtor with the heart of a preservationist. Hope you take on some new projects! (by the way..... heard it sold !)



Now, we will move to our commercial properties in our business district,

First, we would first like to recognize Myrna Taylor of Taylor Flowers and Gifts for Excellence in Rehabilitation of the building she and her husband Karl bought at 124 W. Marion Street.

You may remember, we recognized Karl last year for his project on N. Jefferson Ave. This couple has truly invested in our downtown community in a most positive way!

At the turn of the century, the 124 W. Marion building was a grocery store (2nd from left) . Through the years it's storefront was modernized and most recently it was the home of the Briar Patch Office Supply. As it changed hands, the interior walls had been sheet rocked, it was subdivided into smaller rooms, and the ceiling was lowered

Myrna, an extraordinary flower designer and event planner from Miami, had a vision for the building that included bringing back the large windows, exposing the beautiful brick walls, raising the ceiling, and creating a front sales and display area, with the rear of the building for her workshop.

Myrna's building has become a beauty spot on this west end of Marion Street. She has opened her doors for receptions and community events, and she herself is eager to get involved and create a new energy in downtown Eatonton. Thank you Myrna, for your magic!



Our final Historic Preservation Award tonight goes to **Mr. Mark Smith & Smith Communications, Inc.** for **Excellence in Stewardship** of the 1908 Prudden Building, at 100 N. Jefferson Ave.

Take a good look at The Prudden Building. It is unique for its architectural design. It was built in the modern Sullivanesque Style made popular by architect Luis Sullivan, who was known at the turn of the century for his commercial buildings and was a mentor to Frank Lloyd Wright.

Sullivan was a "intricate weaving of liner and geometric form" and guided by the adage that "form follows function". Sullivan felt that the purpose of a building should be the starting point for its design. It was quite a modern building for the turn of the century Eatonton, where it served as a bank until 1939.

The Prudden building was built back in 1908 by local businessmen, Dr. Benjamin Hunt and Mr. E.B. Ezell, to house the new **Middle Georgia Bank** which they were starting. Since Dr. Hunt was married to Louise Prudden, it was named for her father, Mr. Sidney Clark Prudden, who had served as the postmaster for Eatonton from 1850 until 1900.

There have been many businesses in this centrally located building since then. The basement once served as a popular shoe repair shop during the 1950's and Mark, at one time your upstairs office housed the town's telephone switchboard and a very alert operator, Mrs. Knight, who could survey the comings and goings from your window and give her callers first hand information about who was out and about.

Today it is still the building everyone sees when entering or exiting town from east, west, north or south. The rehabilitation that was undertaken in 2004 was extensive, and it honored the building's original design. (Thank you for not painting that brick, Mark)

Even details like the signage chosen for the building shows the attention given to this historic rehabilitation project.

When Mark made the decision to move the town's newspaper, *The Eatonton Messenger* to this building in early 2004, his effort not only preserved a landmark structure, it brought a major business, Smith Communication, Inc. to our downtown. Mark has always championed Eatonton through his leadership and actions, and was an early supporter of historic preservation.

Thank you Mark for your continued Stewardship of the Prudden Building over the last 20 years, and hopefully others will follow your lead.



On behalf of the Eatonton Historic Preservation Commission, we want to again thank all of you for being Eatonton's "People Who are Saving Places".



— 2024 —

PEOPLE SAVING PLACES

PRESERVATION MONTH

