EXCELLENCE IN PRESERVATION AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Hunterfly Road houses of Weeksville, Brooklyn to be honored

ALBANY, 8/13/2014 – The Preservation League of New York State has selected the restoration of the Hunterfly Road Houses on Bergen Street, Brooklyn, to receive its prestigious Excellence in Preservation Award. This statewide awards program recognizes individuals and organizations for demonstrating an outstanding commitment to the preservation of New York State’s irreplaceable architectural heritage.

“This project is a celebration of both African-American heritage and Brooklyn’s vernacular architecture,” said Jay DiLorenzo, President of the Preservation League. “It took a sensitive approach to historic preservation in light of the changes required for public access, provided the opportunity to interpret the buildings and landscape in an exciting and informative context, and has bolstered pride in the local community.”

Contributing to the success of the project were the efforts of the New York City Department of Design & Construction; City of New York Department of Cultural Affairs; and Wank Adams Slavin Associates.

The Hunterfly Road Houses are the only surviving remnants of Weeksville, a free African-American community in Brooklyn. The buildings restorations represent several periods from the 1860s to 1930, and are being interpreted as African-American house museums. Constructed shortly after the Civil War, the group of four wood-frame houses (one of which is a reconstruction) is located in the Crown Heights neighborhood.

“Three of the houses face mid-block, and show the location of a no-longer extant native-American path, subsequently a Dutch route known as Hunterfly Road,” said Pamela Jerome of (more)
Wank Adams Slavin Associates LLP (WASA), who prepared the project’s master plan. “The siting, massing and materials of these buildings are rare examples of their type and age in New York City, as most such structures have been demolished in New York’s never-ending redevelopment of itself.”

According to Pamela Green, Executive Director of the Weeksville Heritage Center, “The restoration of the Hunterfly Road Houses was envisioned for years by the Society for the Preservation of Weeksville and Bedford Stuyvesant History. We are so pleased that the Preservation League’s award will further promote this rediscovered remnant of a once-thriving community of free blacks.”

The award will be presented at the Preservation League’s Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony in New York City at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 18th at The Princeton Club of New York, 15 West 43rd Street.

Other award winning projects include: Harmony Mills, Cohoes, Albany County; the Reverend J. Edward Nash House, Buffalo, Erie County; 256-262 State Street, Carthage, Jefferson County; Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn, Kings County; Historic Front Street, New York, New York County; 90 West Street, New York, New York County; and the MTA-Metro North Railroad Station Restoration, Yonkers, Westchester County. The Greene County Industrial Development Agency will be honored for organizational excellence, and Henry McCartney, former Executive Director of the Landmark Society of Western New York, of Rochester, Monroe County will be honored for individual excellence.

“Excellence in Preservation Awards are our principal means of honoring the preservation community and educating the public about the important contribution that historic preservation projects make to our quality of life throughout New York State,” said DiLorenzo. “Each year, we are impressed by the number and variety of laudable projects, and this year was no exception. We are delighted to give the restoration of the Hunterfly Road Houses of Weeksville the statewide recognition it deserves.”

The Preservation League Statewide Awards Program is funded by a generous grant from the Arthur F. and Alice E. Adams Foundation of Miami, Florida.

By leading a statewide preservation movement, sharing information and expertise and raising a unified voice, the Preservation League of New York State promotes historic preservation as a tool to revitalize our neighborhoods and communities, honor our heritage and enrich our lives.

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