AARCH

Adirondack Architectural Heritage

23rd Annual

Preservation Awards

An event to recognize exemplary historic preservation work throughout the Adirondack region

VALCOUR BREWING COMPANY, PLATTSBURGH

2018
AARCH
PRESERVATION
AWARDS

FRIDAY,
NOVEMBER 2,
2018

The AARCH awards program recognizes exemplary historic preservation work throughout the Adirondack region each year. We honor examples of sensitive restoration, rehabilitation, adaptive reuse, and long-term stewardship by a wide range of individuals and organizations.

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AARCH

Preserving the Architecture and Communities of the Adirondacks through Education, Action, and Advocacy

Hotel Saranac

Owner: Roedel Companies
Village of Saranac Lake, Town of Harrietstown, Franklin County

Hotel Saranac images courtesy of Hotel Saranac

Since its construction in 1927, the Hotel Saranac has been a distinctive part of Saranac Lake's streetscape. As a result of Saranac Lake's booming cure industry brought on by the success of Dr. E. L. Trudeau's Adirondack Sanitarium (later the Trudeau Sanitarium), the village hosted thousands of patients and their families who came to the area seeking a cure for tuberculosis. Rising to a height of six stories, Hotel Saranac's rectangular block massing and masonry façade stood out amongst Saranac Lake's typical wood-framed hotels and guest-houses. In fact, its construction was rather atypical for hotels in the Adirondack region.

Hotel Saranac was conceived and designed by the notable Saranac Lake architectural firm of William H. Scopes and Maurice M. Feustmann and constructed by Saranac Lake builders Branch & Callanan. It opened in 1927 as a modern, fire-proof hotel with one hundred rooms, built to be a "true city hotel," one that rivaled accommodations in large metropolitan cities. Impressive modern amenities such as private baths for each guestroom was especially rare considering the comparative remoteness of Saranac Lake.

The interior decoration of Hotel Saranac made the modern hotel even more grand. Inspired by the famous Davanzati Palace in Florence, Italy, public spaces such as ballrooms, dining areas, and a grand lobby were all adorned with high quality materials: marble staircases, ornamental wrought iron railings, marble floors, large fireplaces, decorative plaster, ornately painted wood beams, and paneled wood walls and ceilings.

Over decades of changing ownership, the condition of Hotel Saranac had changed and deteriorated: new partitions had been installed; the arcade at the base of the building was closed off from public use, the storefronts sat empty, and new and insensitive interior finishes were installed. Despite these conditions, the potential of Hotel Saranac was evident to the Roedel Companies, a development corporation based in New Hampshire, which purchased the property in 2013.

Roedel Companies enlisted the help of Albany-based preservation consultant Kimberly Konrad Alvarez of Landmark Consulting to develop a plan for the building that would meet the needs of a modern luxury hotel while preserving and highlighting the unique architectural details that make the building special. Roedel Companies and their contracting company, ROK Builders, focused their work on restoring the storefront facades, the original arcade, and the building's exterior, as well as rehabilitating the lobby and dining room. Because Hotel Saranac is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the project used state and federal investment tax credit programs to help fund the project cost.

It took four years of painstaking work to restore this architectural gem down to the smallest detail. Since its grand reopening in 2018, Hotel Saranac has rightfully received national attention for its truly stunning transformation.

Moss Ledge

Owners: Mike & Wendy Lincoln
Upper Saranac Lake, Town of Harrietstown, Franklin County

Moss Ledge was built in 1898 for Isabel A. Ballantine, an heiress to the fortune of the Patterson & Ballantine Brewing Company in New Jersey. She commissioned William L. Coulter, an architect seeking a cure for his tuberculosis in Saranac Lake, to design her camp on the shores of Upper Saranac Lake. Coulter would go on to design numerous great camps and buildings around the region, but Moss Ledge is distinctive for being among his first commissions. Ballantine hosted many famous visitors at Moss Ledge, including Teddy Roosevelt.

This grand, sprawling complex consists of three buildings connected by covered walkways, on a cliff overlooking Upper Saranac Lake. Coulter's distinctive design characteristics are evident throughout the property, such as the log screen at the second floor of the main building and the incorporation of connecting covered walkways. Moss Ledge was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986 as part of a thematic "Great Camps of the Adirondacks" nomination.

Properties such as Moss Ledge are challenging to maintain and the camp was in need of extensive repairs and conservation work, including the restoration of its extensive porches, by the time Mike and Wendy Lincoln became interested in purchasing the property. Despite the significant work ahead, they fell in love with the complex and recognized the inherent beauty of the camp and the potential to rehabilitate it. When the Lincolns learned that another potential buyer planned to raze all of the buildings, they personally wrote to the owners and promised to completely restore the buildings to their original glory. Their pledge to be caring stewards resonated with the owners and the Lincolns purchased the property in January 2016.

Recognizing the dire state of the buildings, the Lincolns immediately set to work to stabilize the structures. The log screen was structurally unsound and the porches were not safe for walking. Additionally, a covered walkway was destroyed when a tree fell on it, demolishing the roof and the walkway underneath. John Hamilton of Adirondack Classic Designs developed a five-year restoration plan beginning with structural reinforcement throughout.

Each building was jacked up and received new footers for stabilization, with new steel beams installed for additional reinforcement. The log screen and log work throughout the porches were redone. New porch floors were installed and the covered walkway was rebuilt.

New electrical and plumbing building systems were installed throughout. Interior finishes were conserved. In fact, very little changes were made to the interior, aside from cleaning, sanding, and re-staining.

With their vision for Moss Ledge, the Lincolns have transformed this property and have given it new life.

The Hedges

The Hedges images courtesy of Nancie Battaglia

Pat Benton
Hamlet of Blue Mountain Lake,
Town of Indian Lake, Hamilton County

Rip and Pat Benton purchased The Hedges, located on the shores of Blue Mountain Lake, in 2000. At the time of their purchase, this historic resort had only been owned by three families previously.

Long before it became The Hedges, this property was built for Colonel Hiram Duryea, who had purchased 266 acres of land on the south shore of Blue Mountain Lake. He manipulated the landscape by building a point that extended out into the water, thereby creating more shoreline to build his complex. Duryea built several buildings on the property, including a Main Lodge, the Stone Lodge, a caretaker's house, a gazebo, and several outbuildings and recreational courts. Duryea died in 1914 and some years later Robert J. Collins, a caretaker at Camp Sagamore, purchased the property at a public auction.

While completing his tenure at Camp Sagamore, Collins leased his property to a local resident who operated the complex as a small hotel, known as "The Hedges," starting in 1921. After Collins assumed full management, the name stuck, and Collins and his wife built several additional buildings to support their business, namely the Dining Room and several lakeside cottages. They also modernized the resort by introducing plumbing and electricity to the buildings.

After purchasing The Hedges, the Bentons spent eighteen years restoring and rehabilitating the property, down to every single building and detail. Much of the work was guided by architect Carl Stearns of the Syracuse architectural firm of Crawford & Stearns, and included structural stabilization and significant interior and exterior preservation work throughout the property. Pat also had the property listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2009.

In 2017, Pat decided to retire from managing and owning The Hedges. Recognizing the importance and value of the property, she carried out a careful search for a new owner who would continue to preserve and care for The Hedges as she had. Finally, she found the solution in a group of individuals who had long visited The Hedges, who knew and loved the property, and desired to see it survive for future generations. These individuals formed an LLC to assume ownership and, we hope, will care for the property as lovingly as Pat.

7 Gables Antiques

Owner: Audrey Miller
Hamlet of Onchiota, Town of Franklin, Franklin County

This little antiques shop was originally built in 1927 as the Tomey General Store and Gasoline Station. Constructed by Hayden Tomey at a time when gas stations were meant to be picturesque, the building was designed to resemble an English cottage.

Audrey Miller purchased this storybook-like building in 2003 to house her antiques shop, 7 Gables Antiques. To find antiques shops housed within historic buildings was once prevalent in the Adirondacks, but now, this is exceedingly rare.

The building sat empty since the 1980s and had fallen into disrepair. Audrey set to work and installed a new roof, a new electrical system, and completed necessary interior and exterior repairs. About eight years ago, the building was damaged as a result of a vehicular accident. Luckily, the building was stable, and necessary repairs, such as a new garage door, new ceilings, and other associated work, rendered the building usable once more. Thanks to Audrey's good stewardship, this building remains remarkably well-preserved and has extra value as a rare building type.

Tapawingo

Owner: Margo Fish
Town of North Elba
Essex County

Image courtesy of Nancie Battaglia

Margo Fish and her husband Mac purchased their property on Lake Placid, which they named "Tapawingo," in 1957. The name is from the Mohawk for "House of Joy." At the time, there was one small cabin on the premises. Since then, Tapawingo has grown into a bohemian haven consisting of 14 one– and two–room buildings connected by pathways and stairs that wind between buildings, leading from the deep woods to the shores of the lake.

These buildings were built based upon the needs, desires, and imaginations of Margo, Mac, and their four children over several years and include sleeping and guest quarters, a dedicated dining space, and a charming private nondenominational chapel. Each building was designed and constructed by Margo and Mac utilizing readily-available materials. They are ornamented with Margo's art and family artifacts from their fascinating lives: cement stepping stones decorated with broken glass, antique furniture, and objects from all over the world.

These buildings are each individual free-standing structures and all completely unique. The result is an organic, free-form complex that is truly unlike any other place in the region.

Ticonderoga High School Auditorium

Owner: Ticonderoga Central School District, Town of Ticonderoga, Essex County

Ticonderoga High School is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This architecturally distinctive building is a Neoclassical Revival school constructed in 1929, and largely rebuilt in 1933 following a devastating fire. The school was designed by New York City architectural firm Tooker & Marsh. The centerpiece of this school building is its public space: the auditorium, a gathering place for students, teachers, and the community.

After years of use and little maintenance or updating, this large auditorium was deteriorated and dark and no longer fit the needs of the school it served. Concern grew over what do to with the outdated space and how to intervene in a way that was cost effective, feasible, and successful. In 2014, teacher Janet A. C. Mallon led the effort to fund a feasibility study to assess the condition of the auditorium and its proposed restoration. She successfully collected donations to cover the cost of the $10,400 survey, which was conducted by the firm of John G. Waite Associates.

The conditions assessment showed that a restoration of the auditorium was feasible but cost prohibitive to complete all at once. As such, the plan was to fund separate phases of the project through grants. The Ticonderoga School Board of Education, however, devised a creative plan wherein the residents of Ticonderoga could vote to pass a school bond for the entire project. The plan worked and the town voted to approve full funding of the Ticonderoga High School auditorium project.

The restoration and rehabilitation was led by architectural firms John G. Waite Associates and CS Arch with the goal to retain as much original historic fabric as possible. Work included cleaning and preserving the original linoleum flooring, selecting a paint color scheme that was in keeping with the original color scheme, which included that of the flooring. The original wood and cast iron seats were retained, and the "THS" initials for Ticonderoga High School, cast into the cast iron seat stations, were highlighted in gold paint to match the historic finish. Historically inappropriate vinyl windows were removed and new windows were installed that maintained the style of the original historic windows.

Many other upgrades were required to update the auditorium to the contemporary needs of an active school district, including updating mechanical systems, lighting, and ventilation systems (while taking care to use the original air vents) and removing asbestos from the acoustic plaster ceiling while restoring its original details. This sensitive restoration honors the original design while modernizing the space for contemporary use.

Westport Town Hall

Owner: Town of Westport
Town of Westport
Essex County

The Westport Town Hall was originally built in 1927 as a Grange Hall. The Town of Westport offices moved into the building in 1971. Town administrative needs outgrew the building, and several years ago, the town commissioned a new building to house the highway department, fire department, and town offices. Westport voters ultimately rejected the plan.

The town then appointed a Town Hall Rehabilitation Committee to investigate options to renovate and rehabilitate the building to determine if and how it might be improved and adapted to meet the current needs of town administration. The committee was able to secure enough funding to hire the Middlebury, Vermont firm Vermont Integrated Architecture (VIA) to survey the building and conduct a feasibility study to determine if rehabilitating the existing town hall may be a viable option. The resulting study concluded that the building was basically sound but in need of structural reinforcement and many building upgrades. Additional work was required for the building's interior in order to comply with the current needs of the town administration. Initial cost estimates put the proposed project at over $1 million.

The Town Hall Rehabilitation Committee applied for funding from the New York State Historic Preservation Fund. Committee members Bill Johnston and Nancy Page wrote the application with help from Andrea Murray from VIA. To be eligible for funding, the building needed to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The town received help from Bill Krattinger of OPRHP, who wrote the nomination. Forces on the local, regional, and state level came together to great success: the Westport Town Hall project was successfully funded with a $500,000 grant. Its award was especially significant as it was the only historic preservation project in the North Country funded during that particular round.

After several rounds of unsuccessfully receiving affordable bids for the proposed work, the town found the right firm for the job in local contractor Schell McKinley, who understood the importance of saving the original Town Hall building and had the knowledge and skills required to keep additional costs to a minimum. McKinley coordinated a team of workers that included sub-contractors, employees from the Westport Department of Public Works, crews from the Moriah Shock Incarceration Correctional Facility, and community volunteers to restore the exterior, update building systems, and rearrange the interior walls and partitions to accommodate contemporary needs. The project was successful and a true community effort.