FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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2025-2026 Historic Preservation Awards

Historic Kansas City Releases List of Historic Preservation Award-Winners at its Annual Program

Historic Kansas City has announced the recipients of its 2025–2026 Preservation Awards, presented Thursday, November 12, at the National WWI Museum and Memorial. More than 220 attendees gathered for the organization's largest annual event and highest turnout to date, recognizing outstanding achievements in historic rehabilitation, restoration, adaptive reuse, compatible new design, neighborhood reinvestment, public education, and scholarship across the Kansas City region.

The ceremony took place exactly 100 years and a day after the 1926 dedication of the Liberty Memorial. Guests enjoyed special after-hours access to Memory Hall and the Museum's centennial exhibition,*Story of the Museum and Memorial*, before gathering for a reception and awards presentation. Representatives of 20 award-winning projects and initiatives joined Historic KC members, preservation enthusiasts, architects, developers, contractors, craftspeople, and community leaders for the celebration.

"These awards recognize the owners, architects, contractors, craftspeople, public agencies, advocates and volunteers who have carried preservation projects through to completion," said Bryan Painter, president of Historic Kansas City. "Their work demonstrates the range of ways historic places can continue serving our community." "This year's recipients include major building rehabilitations, careful restoration work, affordable housing, new construction in historic settings, public interpretation and new forms of preservation education," said Ethan Starr, Executive Director of Historic Kansas City. "We congratulate every recipient and the project teams whose work made these achievements possible."

Award presentations were conducted with the help of Kyle Talbot of The KC Scene. Dr. Matthew Naylor, President and CEO of the National WWI Museum and Memorial, provided remarks following HKC President Bryan Painter. The event welcomed 220 guests to the WWI Museum, with award-winning teams joined by Historic KC members. Reception attendees enjoyed fresh coconuts served by The Honest Coconut, a new business housed in an award-winning rehabilitation project on Troost Avenue, and had the opportunity to meet contributors to *Forest Hill Calvary Cemetery: Lessons for Living*, this year’s recipient of the George Ehrlich Award for outstanding scholarship.

Awards were presented at three levels, Excellence, Honor, and Merit, across the principal categories. Recipients were selected through a months-long, intensive review process involving a committee of former Historic Kansas City presidents.

The complete list of 2025–2026 Preservation Award recipients, including project descriptions and participating teams, follows.

About Historic Kansas City

Founded in 1974, Historic Kansas City is a nonprofit organization dedicated to historic preservation advocacy and education. For more than fifty years, Historic KC has served as the leading voice for preservation, working to protect, promote, and preserve the region’s historic buildings, neighborhoods, and landscapes. Through advocacy, public policy, education, and outreach, Historic KC brings people and organizations together to influence the future of Kansas City’s built heritage.

Trailblazers Award

This award recognizes outstanding achievement in preservation by a group, business, municipality, neighborhood or organization.

Excellence | National WWI Museum & Memorial

2 Memorial Dr, Kansas City, Missouri

Kansas Citians dedicated the Liberty Memorial site in 1921 and opened the completed memorial in 1926. Following deterioration and closure in 1994, a public-private campaign funded restoration and construction of a new museum beneath the historic landscape. Since reopening in 2006, the institution has continued major preservation work on the tower, limestone, Flame of Inspiration, galleries and building systems while interpreting the full range of perspectives that shaped the site's transformation.

Recipient: National WWI Museum & Memorial, represented by Dr. Matthew Naylor and the many professionals and firms that have worked on the site over several decades.

Honor | Jackson County Historical Society

1859 Jail and Marshal's Home Museum and Howard Schoolhouse; 217 N. Main Street, Independence, Missouri

The Jackson County Historical Society raised and directed more than $385,000 for work at two historic properties. At the 1859 Jail and Marshal's Home, repairs stabilized a sinking corner and addressed foundations, floors, plaster, masonry, windows, doors and drainage. The Society then lifted the approximately 10,000-pound Howard Schoolhouse by crane so its failed foundation could be replaced before volunteers and contractors repaired the building for renewed school visits.

Project team: Jackson County Historical Society; Pishny Restoration Services; Springer Building Company.

Best Adaptive Re-Use

Awarded to a creative and appropriate reuse of a historic structure whose current use differs from its historic use.

Merit | Holtman Building

708 E. 18th Street, Kansas City, Missouri

Constructed in 1918 for the Holtman Heating Company, this brick-and-timber building was rehabilitated in roughly ten months. The project retained its original footprint, structure and brick while creating eight loft apartments, local businesses, offices, a private club and a rooftop bar. Exposed brick, timber and original structural elements remain central to the interior.

Project team: Molzer Development; Pluribus Architectural Collaborative; GPS-KC; STAND Structural Engineering; Lankford | Fendler + Associates Consulting Engineers; GKW Restoration.

Merit | Aiden by Best Western Kansas City Downtown (Historic Mutual Building, Kessler Building)

405 E. 13th Street, Kansas City, Missouri

Completed in 1919 for the Merry Optical Company, the Mutual Building was later known as the Kessler Building and has ties to the early careers of Walt Disney and Ub Iwerks. After years of vacancy, the building became an 84-room boutique hotel through a $23.7 million rehabilitation that replaced building systems, repaired the attached garage and retained features including the former Mutual Bank vault.

Project team: Oak KC LLC and the Meiners family; Exact Architects; Level Builders; Country Club Bank, now FNBO; KCATA.

Honor | Sky on Main (Formerly Ten Main Center)

920 Main Street, Kansas City, Missouri

Completed in 1968 as the Traders National Bank and Financial Center, this modernist office tower has been converted to residential use in phases. Price Brothers Development completed the conversion of the remaining office floors while existing residents and commercial tenants remained in place. The more than $90 million project now contains 281 apartments and 20,000 square feet of retail space while retaining its distinctive precast-concrete exterior.

Project team: PB Development and Price Brothers Management; NSPJ Architects; Bob D. Campbell & Company; Latimer Sommers & Associates; Davis and Davis; Historic, LLC / AHR, LLC.

Honor | The Dial Apartments (Former AT&T Office Building)

500 E. 8th Street, Kansas City, Missouri

Designed by Kivett and Myers as Southwestern Bell's headquarters in 1973, this thirteen-story Brutalist landmark has been converted into 263 apartments. The project retained its concrete exterior, vertical window patterns, terrazzo, woodwork and penthouse while introducing residential units and common spaces. Extensive structural repairs were also completed in the six-level parking garage.

Project team: The Bernstein Companies; Clockwork; PARIC Corporation; Heritage Consulting Group.

Excellence | Sentinel Lofts (Sentinel Federal Savings Bank)

1003 Walnut Street, Kansas City, Missouri

Built in 1914 and designed by Frederick Gunn, the former Sentinel Federal Savings Bank was converted into seventeen apartments. The rehabilitation retained features from the building's original construction and later alterations, including terra cotta, granite, storefronts, terrazzo, woodwork, upper-floor windows and the former bank vault. Rather than reconstructing an undocumented original cornice, the team repaired the later brick cornice and parapet with National Park Service approval.

Project team: KCLoftCentral / Sentinel Lofts LLC; SWD Architects; Rau Construction; Heritage Consulting Group; Higgins Design.

Excellence | DRAW Architecture Studio

1400 W 13th St., Kansas City, Missouri

The approximately 130-year-old Henney Buggy Building now houses DRAW's offices and a group of tenants within its historic brick walls and heavy-timber frame. Weathered timber, sun-faded brick and imperfections in the original floors were retained, while removed joists were repurposed as stair treads and shelving. New clerestories, interior storm windows and specialized mechanical systems support the project's energy and Net Zero goals.

Project team: DRAW Architecture + Urban Design; Cardinal Crest Commercial; Apex Engineers; FSC, Inc.; Waters Edge.

Best Preservation Practices

This award recognizes outstanding work in the rehabilitation, restoration or reconstruction of a historic structure.

Excellence | Sondern-Adler House

3600 Belleview Avenue, Kansas City, Missouri

Frank Lloyd Wright designed the original Sondern House in 1939 and a substantial addition completed in 1949. The recent restoration conserved the home's blonde variegated brick, wood paneling, ceilings, interior finishes, exterior woodwork and copper detailing while removing later changes that detracted from the design. Landscape work reestablished the sloping terrain, reduced paved surfaces and restored the historic wrought-iron gate.

Project team: Tom and Amy Axtell; Dirk Shaffer and Jim Huckleberry; Lisa Schmitz Interior Design; STRATA Architecture + Preservation; Young + Dring; Mid-Continental Restoration; MTS Contracting; RetroChem; BruceBuilt; John Jackson of Integrity Stone.

Merit | Thomas Hart Benton Home and Studio State Historic Site

3616 Belleview Avenue, Kansas City, Missouri

Missouri State Parks completed more than $600,000 in preservation work at the nationally significant home and studio. Repairs addressed cedar shingles, soffits, trim, windows, historic paint colors, garden steps and deterioration caused by a concealed original gutter. Two round second-floor windows were recreated, and Benton's large studio window was repaired and reglazed with matching antique hammered glass.

Project team: Missouri State Parks; Brown & Root Industrial Services; SES Construction; Big Spring Millwork, Inc.; 5M Restoration, LLC.

Best Contribution to Affordable Housing Through Preservation

This category recognizes rehabilitation projects that preserve historic buildings while creating or maintaining affordable housing.

Honor | reStart Family Lodge (Historic Southland Hotel)

3517 Main Street, Kansas City, Missouri

The 1910 Southland Hotel, associated with pioneering hotel operator Ella Graves, has been adapted as reStart Family Lodge. The building now contains forty-five private family suites with bathrooms, kitchenettes, living areas and bedrooms, as well as space for case management, education, children's programs and community use. The lodge is expected to serve approximately 175 families each year.

Project team: reStart Inc.; Nash Restoration; Trakas & Trakas; Summit Alliance.

Excellence | Ellison Apartments

300 W. Armour Boulevard, Kansas City, Missouri

Designed by Nelle Peters and completed in 1927, the two-tower Ellison Apartment Hotel reopened in November 2025 after an extensive rehabilitation. The project renovated all 68 apartments, restored common spaces and completed substantial exterior work. All 68 apartments are now income-restricted, compared with 51 affordable and 17 market-rate units before rehabilitation.

Project team: Eagle Point Development; Stark Wilson Duncan Architects Inc.; Rau Construction Company; Hoss & Brown Engineers, Inc.; Heritage Consulting Inc.

Excellence | Jazz Hill Apartments

900–1300 blocks of The Paseo, Kansas City, Missouri

Jazz Hill encompasses ten early twentieth-century apartment buildings along The Paseo, nine of which are fully completed. Constructed between 1901 and 1913, the buildings retain the brick, stone, porches, cornices and classical columns associated with Kansas City's colonnaded apartment tradition. The project has created or preserved 181 affordable apartments restricted to households earning no more than 60 percent of area median income.

Project team: Flaherty & Collins Properties; Twelfth Street Heritage Development Corporation; Merchants Capital; Rouse Frets White Goss Gentile Rhodes, P.C.; Heritage Consulting Group; Centric; HIVE Design Collaborative; Kaw Valley Engineering.

Contemporary Design in Historic Context

Awarded to projects that demonstrate appropriate and innovative contemporary design within a historic context.

Excellence | KCMO City Hall South Plaza, Garage and Entrance

414 E. 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri

Kansas City's 1937 Art Deco City Hall stands above a plaza and underground garage that had become unsafe after failed waterproofing caused extensive corrosion. The project replaced the plaza deck, repaired concrete, installed waterproofing and snowmelt systems, restored all eight fountains and created an accessible entrance. A new security vestibule uses limestone, travertine, terrazzo and custom metalwork related to the original building while remaining visually and structurally distinct.

Project team: City of Kansas City, Missouri; Kansas City General Services Department; Piper-Wind Architects; McCownGordon Construction; Walter P Moore; FSC, Inc.; Taliaferro & Browne.

Excellence | Bishop Hogan Center and Father Donnelly Hall

416 W. 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri

Completed in 2024 beside the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, the 18,900-square-foot building provides a 300-seat gathering space, offices, meeting rooms and facilities for Morning Glory Ministries. Its low horizontal form reestablishes the Broadway street edge without competing with the cathedral. Natural limestone relates to the cathedral's foundation and trim, while a glazed connection preserves views and distinguishes the new work from the historic building.

Project team: Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception / Diocese of Kansas City–St. Joseph; SFS Architecture; JE Dunn Construction; SK Design Group; Walter P Moore; Smith & Boucher; Confluence.

Innovation in Preservation

This award recognizes projects and public-education efforts that use new approaches to advance preservation.

Merit | Rock Island Bridge

1799 American Royal Dr, Kansas City, Missouri

The 1905 Rock Island Bridge has been adapted into a pedestrian crossing, trailhead and gathering place over the Kansas River. Its Pennsylvania trusses, riveted steelwork, river foundations and historic lifting machinery remain central to the design, while new walkways, railings, hospitality spaces and an upper

event level support public use. The bridge was strengthened without new river foundations and raised approximately four feet using its historic screw-lift machinery.

Project team: Flying Truss, LLC; Michael and Liz Zeller; Michael and Holli Laddin; John and Katie McGurk; Multistudio; Thornton Tomasetti; TranSystems; L.G. Barcus & Sons; Centric Construction; Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas.

Honor | Innovative Influencers

Kansas City metropolitan area

Zach Molzer and Kyle Talbot have used social media to place preservation before audiences numbering in the hundreds of thousands. Molzer Development has documented work on the Aladdin Hotel and Holtman Building while explaining masonry, windows, historic designation, Historic Tax Credits, financing and construction. Through KC Scene, Talbot has reported on demolition by neglect, dangerous-building policy, neighborhood losses and rehabilitation projects while collaborating with Historic Kansas City on public-education posts.

Recipients: Zach Molzer and the Molzer Development team, including Anna McQueeny; Kyle Talbot and the KC Scene / Moving to KC team, including Noel Muse.

Neighborhood Stabilization

Awarded to projects that return long-vacant or threatened properties to use and contribute directly to their surrounding neighborhood or commercial district.

Honor | Former Safeway No. 357

3740 Troost Avenue, Kansas City, Missouri

Built around 1940, this 6,000-square-foot building is believed to be among Kansas City's earliest stores constructed specifically for Safeway. The rehabilitation addressed roof failure, fire damage and decades of neglect while retaining streamlined masonry, cast-stone details, the original storefront configuration and porcelain reflector lights. The former grocery store now houses The Hair KCMO Aesthetics Collective, The Honest Coconut and other small businesses.

Project team: Screenland Real Estate Services; Butch Rigby and Byron Pendleton; Keith Mueller; Landmark National Bank; The Hair KCMO Aesthetics Collective; The Honest Coconut; Brandt Glass; Gieske Custom Metal Fabricators; Simmons Electric; MJ Construction; NPM Plumbing.

Excellence | Boone Theater

1701 E. 18th Street, Kansas City, Missouri

Built in 1924 as the Rialto Theater and renamed in 1930 for ragtime pianist Blind Boone, the theater closed in 1971 after several later uses. An $8.7 million rehabilitation restored its Spanish Colonial Revival exterior and historic auditorium while adapting the building for screenings, performances, community events, digital media and commercial uses. Its reopening returns a long-vacant landmark to active use in the 18th and Vine Historic District.

Project team: Vine Street Collaborative LLC; Heritage Consulting Group; Black Movie Hall of Fame; Parson + Associates; Benton, Lloyd & Chung, LLP; AEL Management.

George Ehrlich Award

Awarded for an outstanding publication concerning preservation, history, urban design or a related subject.

Forest Hill Calvary Cemetery: Lessons for Living

Produced in support of the Forest Hill Calvary Cemetery History Society, this richly illustrated volume documents the cemetery's designed landscape and generations of Kansas City civic, business, cultural and neighborhood history. Bruce Mathews, Jamie Oberfoell and Tina Lasater-Sladek served as principal authors and editors, with contributions from sixty-seven authors. Proceeds beyond printing costs will support restoration of the cemetery's historic mausoleum.

Publication team: Bruce Mathews, Jamie Oberfoell and Tina Lasater-Sladek; foreword by Roland Sabates; book design by Sara Meiers of Moshie Creations; editor Lynn Mackle; Walsworth.

For more information about the event itself, refer to the following HKC Gazette article:

https://substack.com/home/post/p-224827347

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