



M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Terry Martino

FROM: Brian Grisi

DATE: April 30, 2013

SUBJECT: Report on the "Excellence in Design Competition"
and the awards for the winning designs

The Adirondack Park Local Government Day Conference Committee announced the winners of the first-ever Adirondack Park "Excellence in Design Competition." The competition was designed to showcase examples of buildings in the Adirondack Park that enhance the sustainability and livability of communities and contribute to distinctive, attractive neighborhoods with a strong sense of place. The contest received twenty-one entries from fifteen communities in the Park.

Awards were presented in three categories: Public and Semi-Public Buildings; New Residential and Commercial Buildings completed within the last 10 years; and Historic Buildings, older than 50 years, renovated (in whole or in part) within the last 15 years. Staff from the NYS Department of State, Division of Local Government Services, judged submissions and helped award certificates to the sponsors of the winning entries. The award ceremony was held at the annual Adirondack Park Local Government Day Conference on April 25th, in Lake Placid. Over 325 local officials and interested parties from 55 towns and villages in the Park and from 50 other regional organizations attended the conference.

In the category of Public and Semi-Public Buildings, there was a tie for First Place between the Bio Building at The Wild Center/Natural History Museum of the Adirondacks in Tupper Lake, and the Town of Essex Wastewater Treatment Plant in Essex. The first runner-up was the Hutt House in Blue Mountain Lake. The award certificates for the buildings noted these distinctive features:

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The Bio Building at the Wild Center is designed so elegantly it not only fits the landscape but seems to grow out of it. The materials and methods of construction look to be of model quality, and the function of the building and institution—to educate residents of and visitors to the Adirondacks—is far-reaching and noble.

The Town of Essex Wastewater Treatment Plant is innovative in its design both aesthetically and technologically: the structures resemble vernacular farm buildings, and solar energy and the latest technology in wastewater treatment are utilized. The project has widespread value to the community, performing the important function of treating wastewater and protecting the water quality of Lake Champlain.

The Hutt House in Blue Mountain Lake provides form and function in a true Adirondack style. The breezy and open, rustic design of this facility helps preserve the aesthetic qualities of the lakeshore.

In the category of New Residential and Commercial Buildings, First Place was award to the Adirondack Health Medical Office Building in Tupper Lake. The first runner-up was the Ausable Valley Habitat for Humanity Home in Westport. The award certificates for the buildings noted these distinctive features:

The AMC Health Medical Office Building embodies the goals of smart growth in its village location and enhancement of an urban-style streetscape. This it does with an innovative design that draws upon --and is respectful of-- familiar Adirondack architecture.

The Ausable Valley Habitat for Humanity Home, built by the organization and their community volunteers, showcases what can be accomplished with community spirit, a minimum budget and modern design and materials. The construction effort was volunteer-friendly, and the result is an energy-efficient, low-maintenance residence.

In the category of Renovated Historic Buildings, First Place was award to the Brighton Town Hall Restoration in Paul Smiths. There was a tie for the first runner-up with the Paul Smith's Electric Light and Power and Railroad Company Building in Village of Saranac Lake, and the Champlain Valley Senior Community in Willsboro. The award certificates for the buildings noted these distinctive features:

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The Brighton Town Hall Restoration disproves that notion that new buildings are needed to accommodate contemporary tasks. It is a model both in the continued use of a historic building for its original purpose and in its restoration, which celebrates every aspect of the heritage of the building --from its period lighting to its beaded board ceiling and birch floors. Adding to the accomplishment is the incorporation of current building standards such as ADA compliance and greater energy efficiency.

Paul Smith's Electric Light and Power and Railroad Company Building is a reuse of this important building, returning it to the tradition of its function as a place of important technology of the day. Incorporating geothermal heating into a project that meets federal standards for historic rehabilitation is exciting in itself. The project also, by creating modern office space for cutting-edge biotechnological firms, brings good jobs and associated economic development to the village, making it a model example of smart growth on several levels.

Champlain Valley Senior Community is a thoughtful rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of an important anchor to the hamlet of Willsboro, serving the critical function of keeping seniors who need assistance in the community. The historic function of the building is celebrated through retention of much of its character in large hallways and murals. Such rehabilitation of an existing building in a hamlet location is a fine example of smart growth.

The Adirondack Park Local Government Day Conference Committee thanks all the people who submitted entries to the competition and for making this a great event.

BFG:lhb

cc: James Connolly
Robyn Burgess