

Preservation is Revolutionary

ANNUAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS

June 11, 2026 | 521 Overlook at Fenway Park



2026 People's Preservation Choice Award Nominee

Sturbridge Senior Center

Ignite Community Fabric Through Living Preservation

The Sturbridge Senior Center is more than a beautifully restored historic building — it is a living example of what happens when a community chooses to invest in its past to support its future.

At its heart is the 1874 Snellville District #2 Schoolhouse, a beloved Italianate brick landmark that has stood for generations as a place of learning and civic life. Rather than losing this important piece of Sturbridge's history, the Town reimagined it — carefully restoring the original building and pairing it with a thoughtfully designed addition to create a vibrant, modern Senior Center. Today, the building once again welcomes people through its doors — not as a relic of the past, but as an active and essential part of daily community life.

This project is a powerful reminder that preservation is not just about saving structures — it is about sustaining the places that bring people together. The Senior Center now serves as a hub for connection, offering programs, support services, and opportunities for engagement that help residents age in place with dignity and purpose. It continues the legacy of the schoolhouse as a place of learning and gathering, adapted for today and ready for tomorrow.

Elevate Appreciation by Demonstrating Preservation in Action

What makes this project truly special is its balance. The historic building has been preserved with care and respect, while the new addition provides the accessibility, comfort, and flexibility needed for modern use. The result is seamless — old and new working together to create a place that feels both familiar and welcoming. It is a space where history is not only visible, but experienced.

Inspire Broader Stewardship Across the Commonwealth

The project also reflects a broader commitment to sustainability and stewardship. By reusing the existing building, the Town conserved resources and reduced environmental impact — proving that preservation is one of the most responsible ways to build for the future. Every decision reflects a belief that what we already have is worth investing in.

Most importantly, the Sturbridge Senior Center belongs to its community. It was shaped by local voices, shared priorities, and a collective vision for what this place could become. That spirit is evident in how the building is used every day — filled with activity, conversation, and connection.

This is what preservation at its best looks like: not just honoring history, but putting it to work. The Sturbridge Senior Center stands as a testament to the idea that the buildings we save can continue to serve, inspire, and bring people together.

It is not only a success story for Sturbridge — it is a model for communities everywhere. And it is a project worthy of recognition as the People's Preservation Choice