

News Release



Embargoed until October 15, 2009

Contact : Media Relations, 202-588-6141, pr@nthp.org

The National Trust for Historic Preservation Presents its National Trust/Housing and Urban Development Secretary's Award for Excellence in Historic Preservation to the Fairbanks Flats Rowhomes in Beloit, Wisc.

Restored Historic African-American Housing Complex Spurs Community

Nashville, Tenn. (October 15, 2009)—Today, the **National Trust for Historic Preservation** presented its **National Trust/Housing and Urban Development Secretary's Award for Excellence in Historic Preservation** to **Gorman & Company, Inc.** for the renovation and redevelopment of the **Fairbanks Flats Rowhomes in Beloit, Wisc.** The project was honored by the National Trust during its **2009 National Preservation Conference** in Nashville, Tenn. The joint award with HUD recognizes exemplary preservation achievement in the areas of affordable housing and neighborhood development.

Nestled in a quiet residential neighborhood on the shores of the Rock River in Beloit, Wisc., Fairbanks Flats was constructed in 1917 as company housing for African-American machinists, the only known example of segregated housing of its kind in the state. The complex's four identical buildings were designed to accommodate the growing ranks of workers migrating from the South to work at Fairbanks Morse Engine, Beloit's largest employer at the time. For decades, the housing complex was a community anchor, sheltering generations of residents and eventually forming the nucleus of a thriving African American community.

Through the years, changes in ownership and poor maintenance slowly led to the deterioration of the buildings. By 1999, the property stood vacant, and many believed that demolition was the best option. In 2006, however, Gorman & Company, Inc., a Wisconsin developer, launched an ambitious bid to renovate the buildings and provide quality, affordable townhouses for low- and moderate-income families and people with disabilities.

Throughout construction, Gorman & Company paid careful attention to the historic elements of the buildings. From the unique porch awnings to the colors of the facades, each design element was replicated to mirror the historic housing available to workers nearly a century ago. Interiors gleam with new finishes and mechanical systems, while exteriors look as they did when the buildings were new, more than 90 years ago.

“The restoration of Fairbanks Flats Rowhomes is an example of how preservation can restore vitality, hope and pride to a community,” says Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. “The sensitive renovation of the Rowhomes has brought new life to the historic complex and the community, and returned Fairbanks Flats to its historic role as high-quality affordable housing.”

Along with Gorman & Company, Inc., co-recipients honored today for the restoration of the Fairbanks Flats Rowhomes are: Fairbanks Flats Revitalization Committee; the City of Beloit; and the Wisconsin Housing & Economic Development Authority.

The National Preservation Awards are bestowed on distinguished individuals, nonprofit organizations, public agencies and corporations whose skill and determination have given new meaning to their communities through preservation of our architectural and cultural heritage. These efforts include citizen attempts to save and maintain important landmarks; companies and craftsmen whose work restores the richness of the past; the vision of public officials who support preservation projects and legislation in their communities; and educators and journalists who help Americans understand the value of preservation. The winners of the National Preservation Awards will appear in the November/December issue of *Preservation Magazine* and online at www.PreservationNation.org/awards.

To download high resolution images of this year's National Preservation Award winners, visit www.PreservationNation.org/press

THE 2009 NATIONAL PRESERVATION AWARD WINNERS:

THE 2009 NATIONAL PRESERVATION HONOR AWARD WINNERS:

The National Trust for Historic Preservation (www.PreservationNation.org) is a non-profit membership organization bringing people together to protect, enhance and enjoy the places that matter to them. By saving the places where great moments from history – and the important moments of everyday life – took place, the National Trust for Historic Preservation helps revitalize neighborhoods and communities, spark economic development and promote environmental sustainability. With headquarters in Washington, DC, 9 regional and field offices, 29 historic sites, and partner organizations in all 50 states, the National Trust for Historic Preservation provides leadership, education, advocacy and resources to a national network of people, organizations and local communities committed to saving places, connecting us to our history and collectively shaping the future of America's stories.

###