

Preservation Awards help keep Chatham, Chatham

AT THE ATWOOD

By Tim Weller

It's never too late to try and preserve Chatham's unique character.

What do we mean? Consider TripAdvisor's description: "This pleasant, walkable town at the elbow of Cape Cod is a classic New England vacation spot."

Or this from Chatham's own Chamber of Commerce: "Chatham has a special blend of the past and present with quaint streets lined with historic sea captains' homes..."

But look around.

That Chatham is disappearing. Rapidly.

Cape Cod Chronicle columnist John Whelan wrote in 2017 that "Chatham has definitely suffered losses in the number of its beautiful and historic homes..." He predicted that by 2028 the "quaint Chatham" many residents and visitors cherish might be gone.

Chatham's Preservation Awards program slows down that process. This program, first created in 2004, recognizes the efforts of local property owners to preserve and maintain historic buildings.

Representatives from the Chatham Historical Society and two town boards, The Chatham Historical Commission and the Historic Business District Commission, oversee the awards.

Award-winning projects could include private residences, commercial properties, publicly owned buildings, not-for-profit institutions and historic landscapes. Properties must be at least 75 years old, and judges focus on exterior preservation, rehabilitation or restoration.

Nominations will be judged on the following:

- The historical and architectural significance of the property.
- Sensitivity to the historic integrity of the building and its site, including streetscapes.
- Preservation or replication of historic materials and quality of project craftsmanship.
- The impact of the project on the preservation of the town's historic fabric, neighborhoods and resources.

Nominations for 2019 include projects completed between Jan. 1, 2008 and Dec. 31, 2018. A property owner, or another individual or group – such as a neighborhood association, building contractor, architect or other town body – may make a nomination. Judges also encourage nominations from the general public.

The deadline for applications is Jan. 30, 2019. You can pick up an application at the Chatham Historical Commission, Town Hall Annex, 261 George Ryder Road. You may also

download applications from the town's website at www.chatham-ma.gov. and e-mail your package to mclarke@chatham-ma.gov.

An awards ceremony recognizing the winners will be held next May at the Wayside Inn in Chatham.

So, get to work on those applications, and good luck!

Tim Weller is a member of the Chatham Historical Society/Atwood House Board of Trustees.