



Rockingham Old House restoration awards

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – The Rockingham Historic Preservation Commission will open nominations for its 2018 Old House awards at a reception Friday, April 27, to honor the 2017 winners.

The awards are designed to celebrate property owners in town who are maintaining and restoring their historic homes and commercial buildings.

The gathering will be held from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Windham Antique Center, 5 Square, Bellows Falls, and is open to the public. The reception will recognize 2017 winners as well as provide an opportunity for potential 2018 nominees to learn



more about the contest criteria and what this past year's winners did to earn their brass plaques.

There will be awards in multiple categories in 2018, with multiple winners. Awards for 2017 went to a variety of buildings, including residential, commercial, mixed use, and industrial properties.

Eligible properties are older homes and businesses that have been renovated, painted, or otherwise enhanced on the exterior in the past five years. Properties must be located within the town of Rockingham, including the incorporated villages of Bellows Falls and Saxtons River as well as the hamlets of Bartonsville, Cambridgeport, and Rockingham Village, and the town's rural areas. To qualify, properties must be at least 50 years old and can be residential, commercial, or industrial in use.

Residents may enter their own properties or nominate someone else who has recently improved the appearance of a historic house or building in their neighborhood or the town.

To nominate a property for the 2018 Old House Awards, please email clg@rockbf.org, or write to Rockingham Historic Preservation Coordinator, P.O. Box 370, Bellows Falls, VT 05101. All nominations should include the property's address and the owner's name. Photographs will be greatly appreciated.

The deadline for nominations is Friday, June 22. The Rockingham Historic Preservation Commission will select 2018 winners at its meeting in August. There will be a reception in the fall to celebrate the winning property owners and to distribute the Old House Awards plaques. This program is supported by a grant from the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation.

For more information about the Old House Awards, contact Susan Reing, town historic preservation coordinator, at clg@rockbf.org.

Three major home renovations that are worth the effort

StatePoint - Building a new home? Overhauling an existing one? Here are three renovation ideas that will add beauty and value.

Expand your living space

Don't let that basement sit unfinished and unused. Substantially expand your home's livable areas by turning your attention to the bottom floor. Finishing a basement is an involved project, potentially requiring electrical and plumbing work, insulation, drywall and more - but the end result is worth the effort and expense. What's more, some of the less technical aspects of this renovation could even be DIY-ed.

Before getting started, consider what type of space would most benefit your household long-term. You may even be able to recoup some cost of the investment. For example, turning your basement into an at-home fitness center means ditching the costly gym membership. Want to reduce time and money on your commute? Your basement may just make an ideal home office.

Add a focal point

Is your interior design in need of a little something? The right eye-



Add a focal point to your living space to make it a cozy gathering place with a purpose.

PHOTO BY JIM KRUGER AND STEVE HERDER

catching elements can make a room pop while adding vitality to your living spaces. A fireplace, for example, adds ambiance and comfort while also creating a natural gathering space.

What's more, new models pair the charm of a traditional open-front fireplace with the design flexibility of gas models. The Phoenix TrueView from Heat & Glo offers the convenience

also how to make this space usable for a larger portion of the year, such as adding a fire pit or an enclosed, heated patio. Lastly, consider aesthetics. A bit of landscaping can make your backyard as visually appealing as your home's interiors.

This season, consider the renovations that will go furthest to boost your home's livability, beauty, and value.

Four rules for a more organized home



Use spring cleaning time to get organized.

PHOTO PROVIDED

StatePoint - There are plenty of reasons why people obsess over organization and resolve to master it at home. Household items become easier to find. Rooms all of a sudden

seem bigger and more welcoming. Each walk past a tidy linen closet - where there was once an avalanche waiting to spill forward - comes with a small sense of accomplishment.

Whether you're after smarter storage or looking to cut clutter, success begins with a thoughtful approach.

Think small

While it's fun to dream about a large-scale routine reset, smaller sustainable actions are key to lasting change. Take it one room or even one drawer at a time to keep momentum positive and to avoid feeling overwhelmed. Doing so also allows you to focus, leading to more creative solutions for taking advantage of under-utilized areas. For example, you may find using over the door organizers to be a great way to free up space in home offices and craft rooms.

Say "no" to clutter

Everyone has items they keep around for no real reason that aren't particularly meaningful and don't serve a purpose. Being able to objectively identify these items makes everything easier.

See **FOUR RULES** on Page 3B

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Spring Home Improvement

Curb appeal transformations from last year

Submissions for this year's challenge are due by Aug. 30.



PHOTOS PROVIDED

FOUR RULES FOR A MORE ORGANIZED HOME

From Page 2B

Paring down possessions doesn't have to be painful. That cardinal shaped cookie jar that you've always been on the fence about? It would make an incredibly thoughtful "just because" gift for an ornithology-obsessed aunt. Often, less can literally be more. Consignment shops and eBay make it easy to turn four or five pieces of furniture you "kind of like" into one piece you absolutely love.

Keep a place for everything
Nobody likes wasting time gathering or searching. Make storage more convenient and efficient by streamlining. Items frequently used together should be kept together, from coffee supplies to vehicle maintenance tools.

Make a plan
Create a schedule so nothing project is next gives you time to prepare and purchase any storage items you might need. When scheduling, designate specific rooms and spaces for certain seasons. For example, the first warm days of spring are made for cleaning out the shed or garage.

More organizational inspiration can be found by visiting www.improvementcatalog.com.

Successful new habits can become part of your lifestyle. Deliberately choosing to incorporate small acts of organization on a daily basis will pay off tremendously over time.



Organization is key to every room in the house.

STOCK PHOTO

Five ways to create ambiance at home

StatePoint - If your home interiors lack charm, don't worry. These five simple additions and updates can add ambiance and character to your home.

- 1. Use bold colors.**
Colors have the power to create specific moods. To ensure a welcoming atmosphere, make sure you select shades wisely. The science behind color psychology can help you choose paint, upholstery, and more. Warm colors like red, orange, and yellow make people feel more cozy and intimate. Cooler colors like grey and green are better for invoking calm, and are used to make a room feel more spacious.



Choose bold colors to set the mood and tone of your rooms.
PHOTO BY BUKHTA79. STOCK.ADOBE

- 2. Add a touch of softness.**
Use plush, cozy materials, such as decorative pillows and throws to create inviting places to sit. Soften hard surfaces like wooden or tile floors with area rugs. Add some warmth to hallways and narrow foyers with runners.
- 3. Breathe new life into spaces.**
Indoor plants can give life to an otherwise stagnant living area. For those not blessed with a green thumb, consider artificial plants. High-quality options can

look very realistic and will save you time on care and maintenance. Or, for variety, add a simple vase to the kitchen table and brighten up the room with a new bouquet of fresh cut flowers each week.

- 4. Make music.**
A piano brings a level of elegance to any room, but you don't have to overspend to get a beautiful sound or visual. New digital pianos reproduce the subtle nuances of the world's finest grand pianos at vari-

ous price points. For example, the Celviano Grand Hybrid Piano from Casio has the technology to produce an authentic grand piano experience, but doesn't take up as much space or cost as much. Plus, since it's digital, you won't have to worry about maintenance and tuning.

- 5. Mood lighting.**
From candles to unique fixtures to bright open windows, the type of lighting used to illuminate a room sets its tone. Choose curtains and candles for cozy, romantic nights. Draw them open in the day for bright, sun-lit spaces. Install interesting fixtures as a focal point in empty hallways and in living spaces.

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