

STAFF REPORT

DATE: April 10, 2026
TO: Joliet Historic Preservation Commission
FROM: Jayne M. Bernhard, Secretary to the Joliet Historic Preservation Commission
SUBJECT: Annual Historic Preservation Award Program

BACKGROUND

Since 2008, the Joliet Historic Preservation Commission annually sponsors the Joliet Historic Preservation Award. The City of Joliet annually bestows these awards, which recognizes properties that have undergone recent preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation as well as people or organizations who exhibit dedication to the field of historic preservation. Last year the City recognized the Patrick Haley Mansion and the homeowners of 900 N. Raynor for their historic preservation efforts.

The Historic Preservation Commission issued a call for nominations in March 2026. Nominations were due Friday April 10, 2026.

DISCUSSION

Three nominations for completed projects were submitted for consideration for the 2026 Annual Historic Preservation Awards Program:

- 408 Whitney Avenue – for the restoration and repair of the exterior and interior after major fire damage, which was authorized by the homeowner.
- 226 E. Clinton Street – for the for the repair and preservation of the decorative brick details at the former Joliet Jewish Federation temple, which has been home to the Werden Buck Boys & Girls Club for the past several decades. This work was authorized by the Boys & Girls Club.
- 416 N. Chicago Street – for the installation of specialty lighting that highlights the distinct architectural features of historic St. Joseph Church, which was authorized by the St. Joseph Parish Council and financially supported by donations.

Nominations as well as supporting information and photos are attached. Winners will likely be recognized at the May 19th 2026 City Council meeting with a proclamation.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends all three nominations for awards this year. The property owners authorized work to preserve the historic architectural features of these structures when they could have chosen not to. Joliet's architecture reflects the city's rich heritage and contributes

significantly to its character and identity. Preserving this architecture enhances Joliet's authenticity, sense of place and overall quality of life.

ATTACHMENTS

- Nominations
- Supporting information and photos

Annual Joliet Historic Preservation Award

A recognition of properties that have undergone recent exterior and/or interior preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, adaptive use, or sympathetic additions as well as for people who exhibit dedication to the field of historic preservation.

MAIL NOMINATION FORM TO:

Joliet Historic Preservation Commission
150 W. Jefferson Street
Joliet, IL 60432

EMAIL NOMINATION FORM TO:

HistoricPreservation@joliet.gov

DEADLINE: Friday, April 10, 2026

Property Address: 408 Whitney Avenue ZIP Code 60435

Current Property Owner (if known): Rey and Maria Hernandez

Historic Name and/or Original Owner (if known): Aaron E. Vance, 1891

Current Use: Single family home, Bands on the Porch

Historic Use: Residence of Aaron E. Vance, owner of the first furniture store in Joliet (1891)

Year Built (if known): 1891

Year Rehabilitated, Renovated, Restored (if known): 2016, 2025

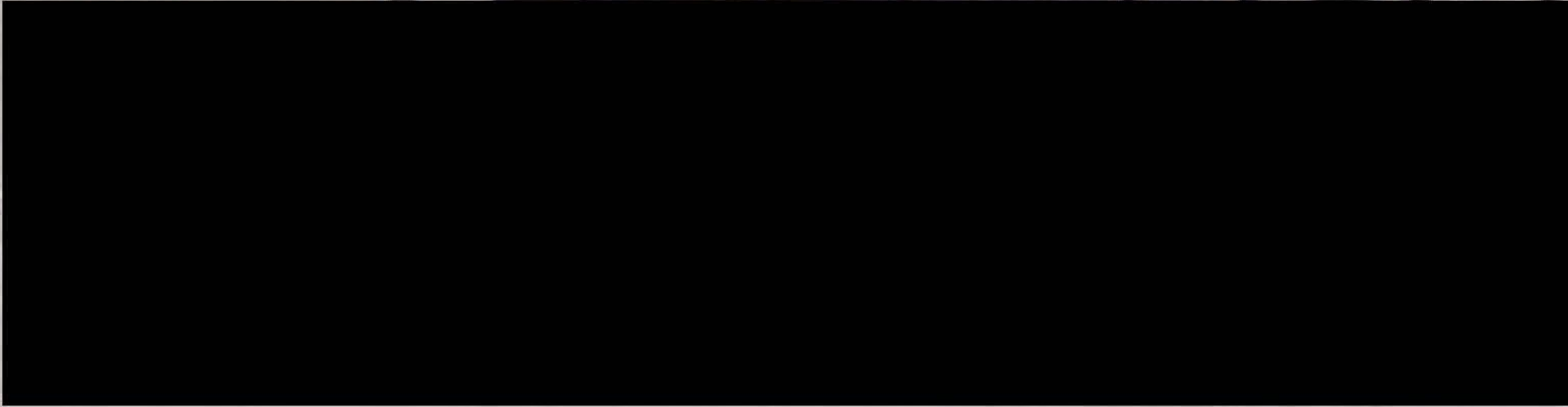
Architectural Style/Form (if known): Queen anne victorian

Reason for nomination: Please provide a short description, between 50 and 500 words, explaining the project or person being nominated. The statement should clearly identify the purpose and scope of work, unusual challenges or innovative approaches, sensitive treatment of historic fabric, long-term impact and any other information that supports the nomination as being exceptional. Attach an additional page if needed.

408 Whitney's current owner's intention when purchasing the home is to restore it to its original state. Although 408 Whitney has almost been demolished twice over its years due to the poor state and negligence, including being a multi-family house for many years, Rey has worked hard to find the history of the Aaron E. Vance house and make the Queen anne victorian house shine like it did in 1891. After a fire in April 2023, the house, while almost fully restored, is still undergoing renovations.

Images: Please provide a minimum of five photographs or quality digital photographs in .jpg format on a CD ROM, flash drive, or by email highlighting the project. Before and after pictures are encouraged.

Submitted By: Rey Hernandez

Phone: 

Email: 

Home Address: 408 Whitney Ave City Joliet State IL ZIP 60435

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Property Address: 408 Whitney Avenue, Joliet

ZIP Code: 60435

Current Property Owner (if known): Rey & Maria Hernandez

Historic Name and/or Original Owner (if known): Aaron E. Vance, 1891

Year Built (if known): 1891

Year Rehabilitated, Renovated, Restored (if known): 2016 & 2025

Architectural Style/Form (if known): Queen Anne

ADDENDUM:

Staff spoke with the property and obtained the following additional information related to the nomination of their home for this award:

The owners communicated that after the April 2023 fire, they took their time restoring the fire damage. They interviewed several contractors who proposed work that would not have retained the architectural details of the house. The homeowners felt it was important to retain the cedar shakes and wood siding. In the end, they were able to find a contractor who would retain the home's architectural features and historic integrity with special orders for the cedar shakes and siding. For this reason, they did not move back into the home until the fall of 2025!

The owners also communicated that the front steps were in complete disrepair at the time of their purchase in 2016 (pictures attached). They took time to find wrought iron rails that matched other homes in the area. In the future, they would love to rebuild the front steps as it was originally constructed; however, modern building code will require a handrail and guardrails (handrail with balusters) above 30" in height off the ground.

Before



Before



After



In-progress

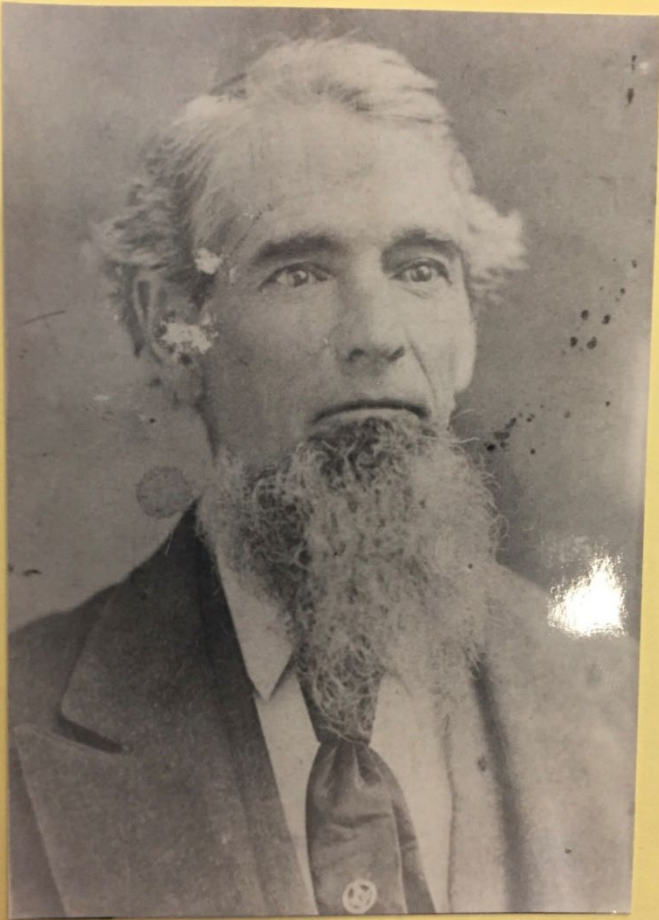


Fire



After - Now





Aaron Vance
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EMAIL NOMINATION FORM TO:
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Property Address: 226 E. Clinton St **ZIP Code:** 60432

Current Property Owner (if known): George Werden Buck Boys & Girls Club of Joliet

Historic Name and/or Original Owner (if known): The Joliet Jewish Federation

Current Use: Boys and Girls Club/Recreational Center

Historic Use: Religious

Year Built (if known): 1928; c. 1969 (Natatorium Addition)

Year Rehabilitated, Renovated, Restored (if known): 2025-2026

Architectural Style/Form (if known): Byzantine Revival

Reason for nomination: *Please provide a short description, between 50 and 500 words, explaining the project or person being nominated. The statement should clearly identify the purpose and scope of work, unusual challenges or innovative approaches, sensitive treatment of historic fabric, long-term impact and any other information that supports the nomination as being exceptional. Attach an additional page if needed.*

The George Werden Buck Boys & Girls Club of Joliet realized a need for extensive tuckpointing on the upper portion of the North elevation during 2025. They began the work of removing and reassembling the exterior bricks in the fall of that year. While doing so they managed to recreate the original decorative brick patterns throughout in order to maintain original architectural details. The tuckpointing work was completed by P&J Masonry Restoration Professionals.

Images: *Please provide a minimum of five photographs or quality digital photographs in .jpg format on a CD ROM, flash drive, or by email highlighting the project. Before and after pictures are encouraged.*

ATTACHED

Submitted By: _Candace Johnson & Sara Stovall, Commissioners, Historic Preservation Commission

Phone: [REDACTED] **Email:** [REDACTED]

Home Address: [REDACTED] **City:** Joliet **State:** IL **ZIP:** 60435

April 2026



April 2025



Annual Joliet Historic Preservation Award

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DEADLINE: Friday, April 10, 2026

MAIL NOMINATION FORM TO:
Joliet Historic Preservation Commission
150 W. Jefferson Street
Joliet, IL 60432

EMAIL NOMINATION FORM TO:
HistoricPreservation@joliet.gov

Property Address: 416 North Chicago Street **ZIP Code :** 60432

Current Property Owner (if known): St. Joseph Church (Diocese of Joliet)

Historic Name and/or Original Owner (if known): St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church (Slovenian)

Current Use: Roman Catholic Church / active Worship and Faith Community

Historic Use: Roman Catholic Church / active Worship and Faith Community

Year Built (if known): 1904-1905

Year Rehabilitated, Renovated, Restored (if known): 2026

Architectural Style/Form (if known): Romanesque Revival

Reason for nomination: *Please provide a short description, between 50 and 500 words, explaining the project or person being nominated. The statement should clearly identify the purpose and scope of work, unusual challenges or innovative approaches, sensitive treatment of historic fabric, long-term impact and any other information that supports the nomination as being exceptional. Attach an additional page if needed.*

St. Joseph Catholic Church at 416 North Chicago Street is being nominated for a 2026 Joliet Historic Preservation Award for the exterior lighting that was recently installed. This was a \$100,000 project. This lighting enhances the architectural features of the church; in particular, the limestone façade and the dual towers at the front of the building. In addition, the lighting certainly highlights the building in the evening and at night, commanding a very noticeable presence in Downtown Joliet.

Over the past years, the St. Joseph Congregation has been diligent in maintaining the historical integrity of this building and preserving and maintaining the work of architect William J. Brinkmann. In addition to the physical tasks related to the church building, the parishioners of the church support an active and vibrant faith community which contributes to the cultural fabric of the City of Joliet.

Images: *Please provide a minimum of five photographs or quality digital photographs in .jpg format on a CD ROM, flash drive, or by email highlighting the project. Before and after pictures are encouraged.*

Submitted By: _ Sharon Merwin, Joliet Historic Preservation Commissioner

Phone: [REDACTED] **Email:** [REDACTED]

Home Address: [REDACTED] **City:** Joliet **State:** IL **ZIP:** 60435



