

Blackbird Inn – Mills Act – Written Statement

Blackbird Inn
1755 First Street
Built 1915

The original home at 1755 First Street was built in 1915. It was American Craftsman style (AKA "California bungalow") and replaced a farmhouse which had been built sometime before 1891. That was torn down to create the new, larger residence with a prominent front porch.

During the 1970s, the home, like many homes Downtown, was converted to office use. In 2000, it was purchased by Scott Warren to be extensively restored, expanded, and converted into a Bed & Breakfast. At the time, the building was being used as the office of Malloy Insurance. Scott actually moved into the building with his dogs during construction to make sure the construction site was protected. At the time, the area was much more dangerous and at night, Scott saw candles in the windows of the then derelict Noyes Mansion across the street where squatters were sleeping.

Additional square footage was added to the south side of the building to make it usable as an 8-room bed & breakfast. Each of the rooms had to be given a private bathroom. Even the basement was expanded to provide enough space for laundry and kitchen.

The Blackbird Inn opened in the summer of 2001, although Warren spent years finishing architectural details of the Craftsman-style building. This was the second project in Napa for Warren. He previously remodeled and expanded another craftsman style house at 1795 3rd Street. As is the practice in the Craftsman movement, as much as possible, parts of the building are handmade by an artisan or craftsman. Scott drew inspiration from the Greene & Greene architectural firm who famously designed many significant Arts & Crafts homes in California.

Finch Guest House
Formerly 952 Jefferson Street

In 2015, Scott Warren and Bart Jones purchased the 1890 Eastlake Victorian Queen Anne cottage located along the southern property line of the Blackbird Inn. The original house had also been converted into office use in the 1960s-70s. At the time of the August 2014 earthquake, it was being used by Mais Oui day spa. The exterior trim was so deteriorated that some pieces simply came off in your hand with little effort. The building interior had to be completely remodeled reusing old materials wherever possible. Former attic space was converted into Room 12, a king suite which occupies the entire second floor. Three more rooms were created on the main floor, bringing the total number of guest rooms in the two buildings to 12.

As with the Blackbird Inn, Warren was the primary carpenter and craftsman for Finch Guest House. This time, he worked with woodwork from the 1890s. The front, west-facing facade of this building, still retains most of its original Queen Anne details. Warren

restored the original features by hand and hewed replicas for the lost or deteriorated pieces. The new north side entrance was built to align with the parking lot/primary entrance to Blackbird Inn. The new entrance and modifications to the other sides of the building followed the Secretary of Interior guidelines. Although it blends perfectly with the style of the building, the details are unique and do not duplicate the original historic details of the original west facade.

Due to the expansion of Jefferson Street in 1966, both the Blackbird Inn and Finch Guest House buildings lost strips of their yards which became the easternmost lane of Jefferson Street. This is why the main chimney of Blackbird Inn is right against the sidewalk. At the time that the Finch GH was converted to office use, the City required that the original driveway off of Jefferson Street be removed for traffic safety. The only access by car was from College Street and cars had to park at the back of the building in a parking lot shared with two other houses converted to office buildings. For this reason, and to make it easier for guests to walk between the two buildings, the new entrance was added on the north side.

The interior was in poor condition, particularly the kitchen. In the 2014 Napa earthquake, brick from the oven chimney inside the interior wall, exploded through the wall. The main building also suffered significant damage in the earthquake. The main chimney on Jefferson Street fell away from the building and completely collapsed into a pile of bricks that covered the sidewalk and the easternmost lane of Jefferson Street for days. The second chimney broke off and landed on the roof, but did not crash through it. Three upper story balconies were damaged.

Due to the parking lot, very little open land existed on the Finch parcel. Unneeded asphalt was removed to open it up as much as possible. Warren designed and cultivated a year-round ornamental garden, utilizing every square foot of available land. He surrounded it with a white picket fence as was common in the Victorian Era. He also designed and built a Victorian inspired carriage house that incorporates a gazebo as a welcoming outdoor dining space for Blackbird Inn guests. Landscape lighting was added on both parcels and lighting from inside Finch is now visible (since it is now a B&B, the buildings are no longer dark at night like the other office buildings). This has improved the appearance and the security of guests and pedestrians. These elements greatly improved the streetscape on the west side of Jefferson Street in the entire stretch between 1st and 2nd Streets. The Finch Guest House was completed and ready for business at the very end of 2019.

Although over 15 years had passed between the restoration and remodeling of the two buildings, in addition to Warren, three other longtime Napa residents significantly contributed to both buildings:

Clifford Simpkins a long time Napa architect, acted as architect for the conversion of the main building in 2000-2001. As he had retired by 2015, Simpkins provided the basic floor plan to convert of Finch into four additional suites for the Inn. A master at adapting existing buildings to new use, he hand sketched the floor plan on a piece of vellum before the building sale was even negotiated.

Ken Boyd, a local Napa artisan, created stained glass windows and partitions throughout both buildings. His stained glass work is prominently displayed in all entrances of both buildings, the exterior of Finch Guest House Room 10 (facing Jefferson Street), and

upstairs on the north side of the main building. Inside, his work is featured on the interior of the Living Room/Dining Room of the main building. He created some of the pendant lights and a piece for the front sign of Blackbird Inn. Ken's stained glass pieces are on the doors to every single guestroom in the main building.

The late Mark Connor, did concrete and foundation work for hundreds of Napa homes over decades. He participated in the restoration work of many of Napa's historical buildings. Connor did the concrete and foundation work for both buildings.

There are many unique features in both buildings. The foundation of the main building is faced with local river rock, to tie it into the surrounding natural environment. The two posts at the new Finch GH entrance were made from recycled posts of the redwood fence that originally separated the two buildings. The picket fencing in front of Finch GH has a unique bird design (due to the names Blackbird and Finch) which is echoed in the trim in the new entrance to Finch.

In 2001, Napa County Landmarks selected the Blackbird Inn as an Award of Merit recipient for historic preservation. The main building was featured in Napa County Landmark's Holiday Candlelight Tour in 2001 and 2012. In 2023, both buildings were in the tour (we even made the cover of the brochure).

The Blackbird Inn is located at the intersection of 1st and Jefferson Streets. The area has been proposed for decades to become a "First & Jefferson Historic District". The direction of First Street was reversed between 29 Freeway and Jefferson Street, and cars often are stopped at the traffic light. First & Jefferson has become a very prominent intersection that marks the beginning of Downtown coming from the freeway. Given that the intersection has historic buildings in good states of repair and restoration on all four corners, it benefits Napa to ensure that the Blackbird Inn and Finch Guest House, and the surrounding grounds, be well maintained.

The cost for maintenance, in particular the painting of Finch Guest House is very expensive. Due to modern paint formulations, the paint does not hold up for very long. This is particularly true of the west facing facades of both buildings. The historic facade of Finch Guest House gets blasted by sun and wind and needs to be frequently touched up. The maintenance schedule is such that we are basically painting or refinishing something on the exterior every year. My Rehabilitation/Restoration Plan includes the approximate schedule and costs for repainting. This isn't an exact schedule since the need to repaint varies depending on weather, the direction that the walls face, and amount of exposure.

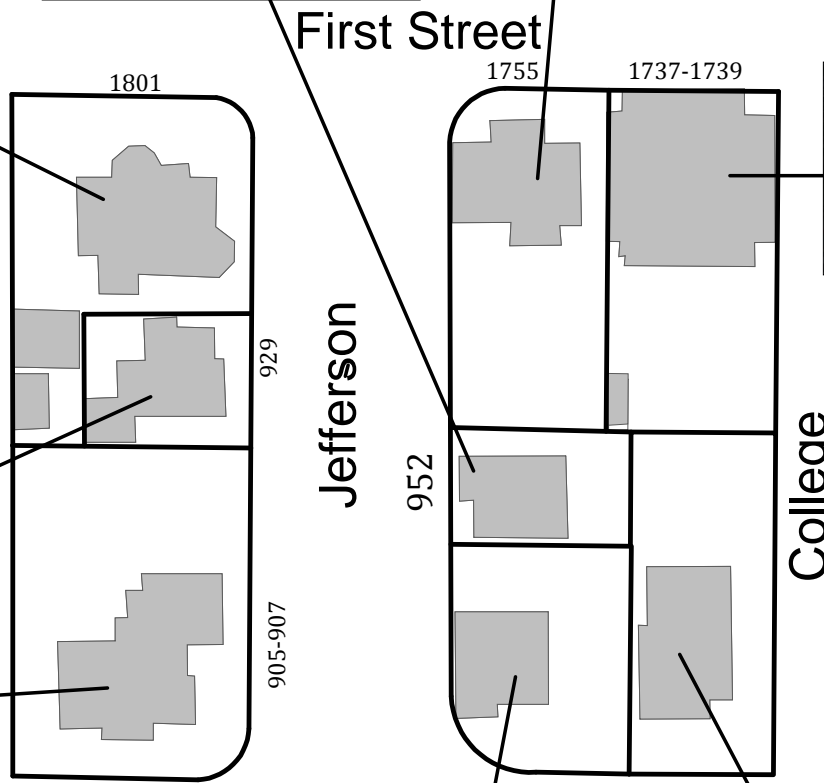

Bart Jones

8-30-24


Scott Warren

8-30-24

SUBJECT
PROPERTY



Vicinity Map



KATCHER HOUSE / BLACKBIRD INN

1755 First Street

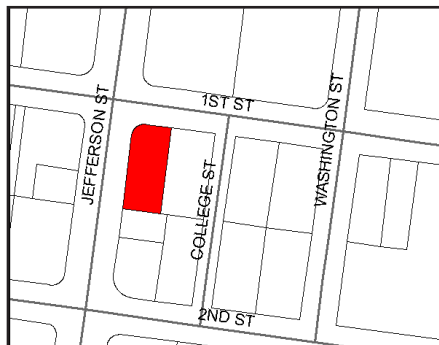


Gable roof supported by knee braces with prominent brick chimney

Multi-light wood frame windows

Front porch with battered columns and river stone base

Maintain front setback



APN	003193007000
YEAR BUILT	1915
ARCHITECT	Unknown
STYLE	Craftsman
USE	Residential / Commercial Conversion (Bed-and-Breakfast)
CHRSC	3S, 5S3
NOTES	Located within potential First & Jefferson Streets Historic District

Retain

- Restored appearance
- Two-story massing
- Craftsman style details
 - Exposed rafter tails
 - Simple front porch supported by battered columns on river stone bases
 - Wood shingle cladding
 - Multi-light windows
 - Partially glazed entry door
 - Side gable roof supported by brackets
 - Exterior end, brick chimneys which feature decorative brick detailing

Consider

- Simpler window awnings (e.g. single dark color; supported by brackets)
- Retaining existing type and placement of commercial signage

Avoid

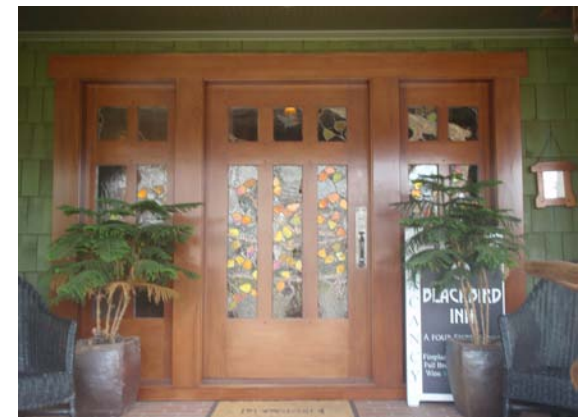
- Addition of architectural details that create a false sense of historical development
- Conversion of landscape into surface parking or other commercial use
- Additions that overpower the building

Additions & Adjacent New Construction

- Opportunities for new construction may exist on the surface parking lot located south of the subject building and the non-historic building (6Z status code) to the east.
- Additions should not interfere with roofline. Rear one-story additions are recommended although a one-story addition to the east of the building is possible so long as it is set back from the primary façade of the building on First Street.
- Maintain the existing open space between the subject building and Jefferson Street to the west.
- Adjacent development to the east should be two or fewer stories; the height should not exceed that of the subject building.
- Due to its location within the potential First & Jefferson Streets National Register Historic District, alterations and additions to the Katcher House should be treated carefully.



Historic fabric on Jefferson Street facade should be retained.



Detail of original art glass door.



Napa County Landmarks

32ND
ANNUAL
HOLIDAY CANDLELIGHT TOUR

December 9th, 2023



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ATTACHMENT 2

WELCOME TO NAPA COUNTY LANDMARKS ANNUAL HOLIDAY CANDLELIGHT TOUR

Welcome to an engaging exploration of our community's rich history. Each step is illuminated by the warm, inviting glow of candlelight, revealing the unique stories and heritage that shape our shared identity. This event celebrates the ongoing commitment to preserving Napa's invaluable historic residences. We express our sincere gratitude to all the homeowners for their generous spirit in opening their homes for the community's enjoyment and to our enthusiastic volunteers that make this event possible. Your commitment inspires us all.

With heartfelt gratitude, I extend a special thank you to our devoted board members. Your unwavering dedication and expertise profoundly enrich our mission. To Bill Tuikka (Vice President), John Sensenbaugh (Secretary), Kara Brunzell, Jonathan Franz, Shari Kamimori, Vince Traverso, Karen Wesson, and Rebecca Yerger: your contributions are the pillars that uphold our shared vision.

Wishing you a joyful holiday season filled with warmth, light, and cherished memories. Happy Holidays and a Prosperous New Year!

—Terry Wunderlich
Board President

RECEPTION SITE

*St. Mary's Episcopal Church—
Reverend Robin Denney
Rector
Sharon Arnold
Parish Administrator
Marie Paz B. Maurer
Invite, Welcome, Connect Ministry*

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Napa Design Partners
Terry Wunderlich &
Christopher Wunderlich
—Corcoran Icon Properties
Small World Restaurant
Jay Jacobson, Architect

MUSICIANS

*Performing in the church
Ingrid Foster,
Alchemy Crystal Singing Bowls
Michael Pratt, Guitar
Rylan Nikolai Bates, Piano*

EVENT ORGANIZATION

*Rebecca Yerger, Event Chair
Christine Madrid French,
NCL Executive Director
Annie Schaefer, NCL Staff*

*Linda Corwin,
Program Layout*

*Barry Schwartz
Photography*

VINTAGE CARS & OWNERS

*Cindy and Rod Dahlgren
1953 Cadillac 4 Door Sedan*

*Jeanne and Keith Feigal
1952 Nash Statesman Sedan*

*Sharon and Al Lawson
1939 Ford Coupe*

*Carol and Dave Rasmussen
1937 Tudor Sedan*

*Roxy Chiurco
1928 Model T 2 Door*

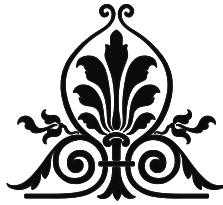
*Dennis and Susan Penborn
1941 Ford Pickup*

*Freeland and Sabrina Tanner
1931 Chevy Coupe*

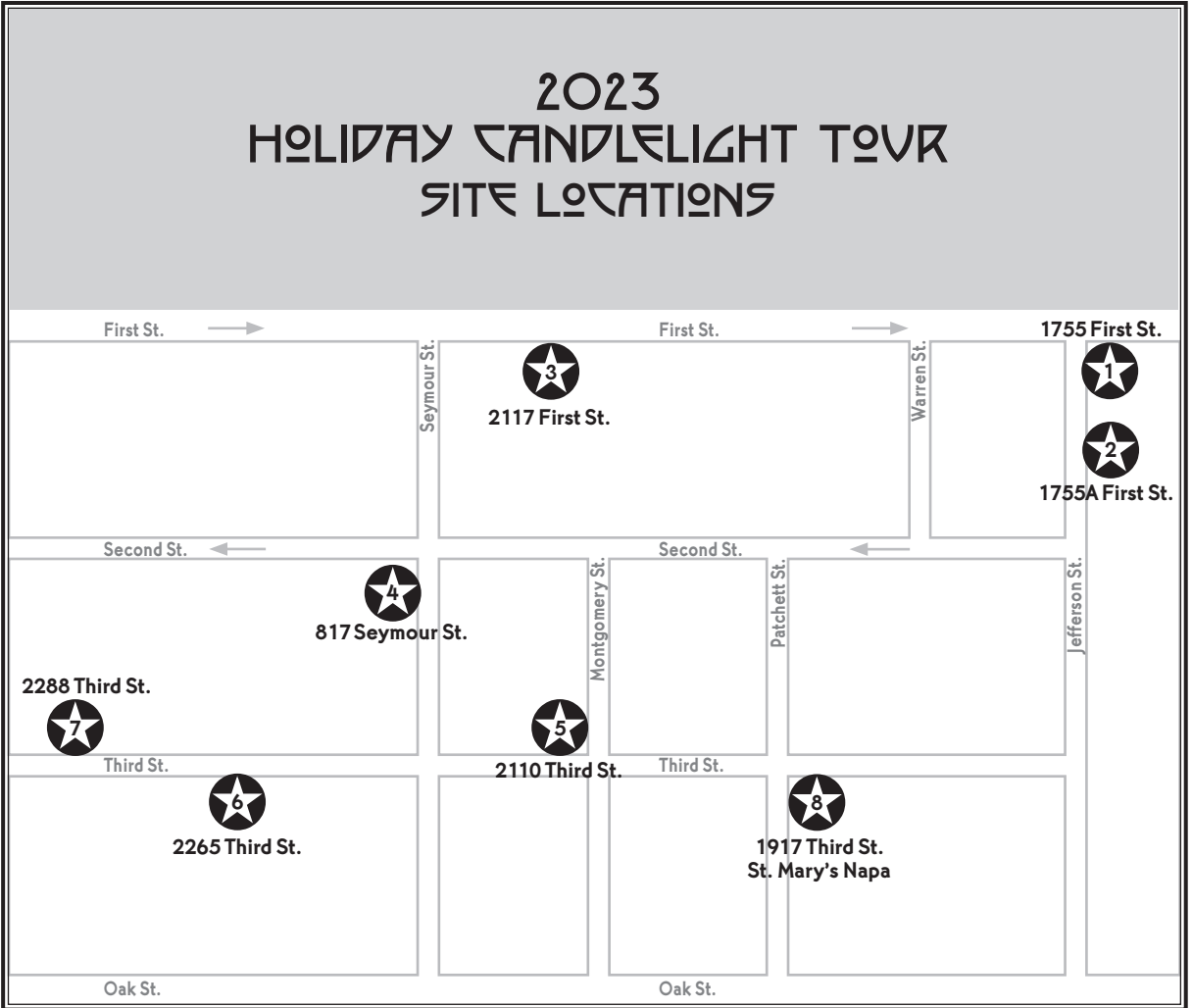
*Reggie and Miriam Duke
1930 Ford Model A*

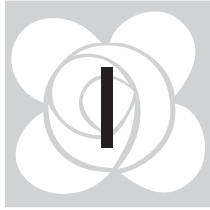


NAPA COUNTY
LANDMARKS



2023 HOLIDAY CANDLELIGHT TOUR SITE LOCATIONS





1755 FIRST STREET

Blackbird Inn

Built: 1902

Owners: Scott Warren & Bart Jones

This home was first owned by the Norton family, who oversaw its construction and completion in 1902. The Nortons held a prominent and influential position within the local community. Annah Norton was a devout member of St. Mary's Episcopal Church and widely known for her charitable activities.

In the 1970s, the building was turned into office space for an insurance firm. In 2000, it was purchased by Scott Warren, a former real estate developer from Mill Valley, who moved into the building with his dogs. The Blackbird Inn opened in the summer of 2001, but suffered from a fire shortly thereafter. Warren spent years transforming the Craftsman-style building, guided by his knowledge and love of the style. Every part of the building is handmade by an artist or a craftsman, inspired by the Greene & Greene architectural firm who famously designed many significant Arts & Crafts homes in California. Each of the eight rooms has a private bath and many have fireplaces and private patios.

One of the talented artists who contributed to the character of the building was local artisan Ken Boyd, who created stained glass



windows and partitions throughout the building. He added a personal touch by incorporating the names of Scott's dogs into the glass work at the entry.

The foundation of the building is faced with local river rock, to blend into the surrounding environment. Another unique feature of the Blackbird Inn is the two sconces flanking the fireplace. While visiting his mother in the Chicago area, Scott toured a Frank Lloyd Wright residence and collected some fallen leaves from the local ginkgo trees. Those leaves are now permanently preserved, pressed into the sconces' lamp shades.

In 2001, Napa County Landmarks selected the Blackbird Inn as an Award of Merit recipient for historic preservation.



2

1755A FIRST STREET

Finch Guest House

Built: 1890

Owners: Scott Warren & Bart Jones

In 2018, Scott Warren and Bart Jones purchased the 1890 Eastlake Victorian Queen Anne cottage located along the southern property line of the Blackbird Inn. As with the Inn, Warren was the Finch Guest House craftsman.

The front, west-facing, facade of this building still retains most of its original Queen Anne details. Warren restored the original features by hand and hewed replicas for the lost or deteriorated elements. Of this work, Jones said, “It was amazing to watch. He (Warren) used these little tools to hand carve the replacement decorative pieces.”

The exterior replicas include the new north-facing, or main, entrance into the guest house. Warren meticulously hand-crafted these details to compliment the original Queen Anne design elements. The interior was in poor condition, particularly the kitchen. Jones said, “The (2014 Napa) earthquake caused the brick inside the wall to explode through the wall.” The cottage also sustained other earthquake damage. The project converted the cottage interior into four guest rooms. Warren incorporated a more masculine look rather than a traditional Victorian



aesthetic. The result is an understated elegance.

However, a bit of whimsy can be found within the custom art glass window. Mixed in amongst the finches is a diminutive U.S.S. Enterprise spaceship of the television series “Star Trek the Next Generation.” When asked, Jones admitted they were “Trekkies,” or fans of the television and film series.

To complete the look of a classic Queen Anne home, Warren designed and cultivated a year-round ornamental garden surrounded by a white picket fence. He also designed and built a Victorian inspired carriage house that incorporates a gazebo as a welcoming outdoor space for their guests. The Queen Anne residence turned guest house was completed and ready for business in early 2020.



2117 FIRST STREET

Built: 1893

Owners: David & Susan LePage

John Edward O'Neill was 25 years old with a secure position as a teller at the Bank of Napa when he purchased a lot in April of 1893. It didn't take long before construction was underway in June on this Queen Anne cottage. John was motivated to build and furnish "one of the neatest and most tastily arranged cottages in this city" for his new bride. On September 14th John married 19-year-old Harriett Nielsen. They spent their honeymoon in Santa Cruz and then returned to take up residence in the newly completed cottage.

What attracted the current owners, the LePage family, to this home was how it was still in nearly original condition. When you arrive at this cottage, you'll see why it was described in 1893 with such praise for its design. The front steps of this Queen Anne cottage lead to a handsome circular porch with distinctive oval brackets. There is a hipped roof with a gothic gable above the bay window. Upon entering the open parlor and dining room, note the Bradbury & Bradbury Victorian-style wallpaper. Notice the golden tones in the paper and how they catch the light. The redwood woodwork throughout the home has been painstakingly restored to its



original condition. The dark amber relief tiles and brass surround on the walnut coal burning fireplace in the dining room evoke the many cozy family dinners enjoyed here.

There are two bedrooms which are adjoined by a passageway that originally held a marble washstand but is now a complete bathroom. (Homes of this period most often had an outhouse in the backyard). An additional bedroom and bath have been added to complete the home. The kitchen was recently remodeled, keeping a vintage feel which includes a prized antique O'Keeffe & Merritt range.

Enjoy the collection of vintage Christmas decorations throughout as you tour this lovely cherished Victorian home.

Harry Price, owner of the Hatt Market and Napa River Inn, located in the historic 1884 Napa Mill, was named Preservationist of the Year by Napa County Landmarks. LINDSAY MILLER/REGISTER

Barns and B&Bs

Napa County Landmarks announces 2001 awards

By **SUSAN POWERS KENNELLY**
Special to the Register

Fire engines, schools, barns, and bed and breakfast inns share something in common in the Napa Valley. As do century-old and brand-new buildings. All have been recognized for a significant contribution to preservation by Napa County Landmarks in its 27th annual Awards of Merit, announced last week.

Landmarks, the county-wide nonprofit preservation organization, distributed the awards in ceremonies held Oct. 14 at the historic Atkinson House on the grounds of St. Supery Winery in Rutherford.

The full list of awards and commendations includes three lodging establishments, three commercial sites, a restaurant, an auditorium, an author, a city, a school district, a barn and a fire engine. Two individuals were also cited for their contributions to the work of historic preservation in Napa County.

Topping the list of awards as Preservationist of the Year, Landmark's highest honor, is Harry Price, owner and developer of the Napa River Inn and Hatt Market, located in the historic 1884 Napa Mill.

According to Cindy Heitzman, Landmarks president, "Mr. Price is honored for his example and leadership" in the decade-long effort to restore a significant building from the Napa River's 19th century heyday to modern use as an entertainment complex with public accessibility in Napa's new river front development.

The Napa River Inn /Hatt Market also received an Award of Merit for the maintenance of its architectural and historic integrity.

Two other lodging establishments were also recognized with awards: the 1801 Inn and the Blackbird Inn, situated across from one another at the intersection of First and Jefferson streets.


Former owners Chris and Linda Craiker spent six years restoring their Queen Anne home and carriage house to become a Victorian landmark, the 1801 Inn. Blackbird Inn owner Scott Warren, with architect Cliff Simpkins, turned an old residence into a show-place of Arts and Crafts style architecture, upgrading the home's interior to meet modern guest standards.

Landmarks Awards 2001


Preservationist of the Year:
Harry Price

Volunteer of the Year:
Nancy Brennan

Awards of Merit:
Hatt Building, Napa
Blackbird Inn, Napa
1801 Inn, Napa,
First Napa Federal Credit Union
Kayser-Williams Building, Napa
Pritchard Building, St. Helena
Miramonte Restaurant, St. Helena
St. Helena School District,
Elementary School theater
Author Linn Webber



Above, a former residence transformed into the new Blackbird Inn on First Street in Napa, won accolades from Landmarks.



Right, the 1801 Inn at First and Jefferson streets in Napa, was also chosen for an award of merit.

See LANDMARKS Page 2D