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Historic panel honors Freehold homeowners

BY CLARE MARIE CELANO Staff Writer

The borough of Freehold is known for its character, its small-town ambiance and its historic homes.



The Freehold Borough Historic Advisory Commission recently honored two homeowners for their efforts to maintain, restore and beautify their homes. Top photo shows a home on South Street, which received the Restoration Award. Bottom photo shows a home on Brinckerhoff Avenue, which received the Preservation Award.

the years." The structure must have always maintained a high level of historical accuracy and integrity.

"This award reflects the structure's continuum over time, through successive occupants and the changes and alterations that have been made," Loring explained.

Schure, 78, said he and Baker were honored and happy to receive the award. Schure said he has lived in the house for 32 years.

The Freehold Borough Historic Advisory Commission annually honors families that have gone above and beyond the norm in the care and maintenance of their older homes. The commission presents a Restoration Award and a Preservation Award to deserving homeowners

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The awards carry the name of the borough's late historian, Ira Tilton.

The winners of the awards for 2007, Conrad Schure and Sharon Baker, 21 Brinckerhoff Ave., and Tom and Patt Gaetano, 120 South St., were presented with a plaque from the commission during a recent meeting of the Borough Council.

According to commission Chairman Dave Loring, the Preservation Award was presented to Schure and Baker, who live in a green and red colonial that has graced tree-lined Brinckerhoff Avenue for more than 100 years.

This award is presented to a house or structure that has been "consistently and accurately historically preserved through



PHOTOS BY ERIC SUCAR staff

"I fell in love with it the first time I saw it," Schure said. "I never looked at another home. This was it."

Over the years the Schure family has made repairs and improvements to the home, including redoing the attic, which is now a library. Schure added an extension to create a larger kitchen, breakfast room and powder room. New landscaping surrounds the home, and there are new windows, storms and screens, all in keeping with the original structure.

"People who like these houses like the windows that go with them, even though they are quite hard to keep clean," he said

Schure's home is the perfect showcase for his large collection of antique devices such as old slide rules, adding machines, scientific and survey instruments. He crafts and displays hand-made lamps.

The home, which includes French doors leading to a large outdoor side porch, is a source of contentment for Schure.

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"I suppose I should be thinking about downsizing," he said, "but I don't want to. The house is comfortable for us and I'm not giving it up."

The Gaetano family, which received the commission's Restoration Award, moved into their circa 1890 home in 1987. According to Tom Gaetano, the home was bought with the express purpose of restoring it.

restore??

The couple said they were happy and honored to receive the award from the commission.

Patti Gaetano, who was raised in Woodbridge, said that when the couple found Freehold Borough they knew this would be their new hometown.

Tom, who works as an architect for Renaissance Properties in Old Bridge, said his dream had always been to renovate and restore an older home. The home at 120 South Street gave him that opportunity.

Initial improvements included an addition to enlarge the kitchen and add a breakfast room. More recent additions, in 2007, included expanding the living room and adding a bedroom suite, bathroom and enclosed/porch sunroom onto the home.

Patti's mom, Edith Kardos, now lives with the family.

All of the improvements and alterations were designed to retain the character of the home.

"My plan was always to make the changes appear as if they had been a part of the original concept of the house," Tom explained.

Calling the work "a labor of love," the Gaetanos said they are happy with the results of all the hard work and are glad they decided to make the borough their hometown.

Councilman Marc Le Vine said when an older home or building passes from one owner to another, more than just a deed is transferred.

"Along with the purchase," Le Vine said, "comes a greater responsibility to maintain the history and character of those beloved properties, which affectionately bare the name of the original owner."

if he only knew what he was talking about

Le Vine said, "The winners of this year's awards should be congratulated for choosing the borough and its historic properties to live in, preserve and/or restore. The attention to detail and maintenance efforts show great respect for the memories of those who built them, lived in them and gave them their rich historical and aesthetic character."

"By keeping these properties structurally sound and true to their original architectural design, they are helping to ensure that future generations will be able to enjoy living in them and passersby will continue to reflect on their history," the councilman said.

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