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*Preserving America's Heritage*

## **Manhattan Project Site Honored with Chairman's Award**

Washington, D.C.—A collaborative effort to save a historic site integral to the secret project to build the atomic bomb in World War II has received the Chairman's Award for Achievement in Historic Preservation from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP).

The project brought together the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and preservationists and developers in eastern Tennessee to rehabilitate the Alexander Inn, a National Register of Historic Places site that fell into disrepair in the 1990s. During the war, the inn, originally known as the Guest House, accommodated visiting dignitaries to the Manhattan Project site in Oak Ridge, Tenn., such as General Leslie Groves, Secretary of War Henry Stimson, and physicists J. Robert Oppenheimer and Enrico Fermi.

In the late 1980s, DOE shut down uranium enrichment operations at Oak Ridge's "K-25" site – later to become the East Tennessee Technology Park – and began a long-term project of cleanup and demolition of facilities in the contaminated site.

In 1991, the inn was added to the National Register. But despite this honor, the condition of the site became destabilized over the following years. With the roof leaking and water accumulating in the basement, the structure began falling apart. As a result, the East Tennessee Preservation Alliance (ETPA) named the inn to its "East Tennessee Endangered Heritage" list in 2010.

In November 2011, DOE convened stakeholders to discuss the demolition of K-25, a National Register-eligible site. To mitigate for the destruction of K-25, DOE signed a Memorandum of Agreement in August 2012 that included a provision allocating a \$500,000 grant to ETPA for purchase and partial stabilization of the inn.

After ETPA took ownership of the property, it designed a rehabilitation plan that called for converting the site into the Alexander Guest House assisted living center. The preservation group then sold the facility to Knoxville-based Dover Development Corporation, which carried out the conversion plan over the next two years.

The impact of the assisted living center to the local economy was substantial. Before opening in November 2015, 60 percent of the units had been reserved, and the property tax value of the center rose from \$400,000 to \$9 million.

The legacy of the atomic program is also honored in the main lobby of the assisted living center, which houses a museum curated by the Oak Ridge Heritage and Preservation Association. The museum is in turn included in heritage tourism tours sponsored by the newly designated Manhattan Project National Historical Park.

"The Alexander Inn project fulfills a number of the objectives we honor through the Chairman's Award, including significant contributions to economic development and heritage tourism, and rehabilitation of historic resources," said ACHP Chairman Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA.

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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The award ceremony took place at a reception at the National Building Museum as part of the ACHP's summer business meeting in Washington, D.C. Accepting on behalf of East Tennessee Preservation Alliance was Kim Trent, Executive Director. Accepting on behalf of DOE was Sue Cange, Manager, Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management.

For more information please visit:

<http://energy.gov/management/office-management/operational-management/history/manhattan-project/manhattan-project-0>

<https://www.nps.gov/mapr/index.htm>

<http://www.ssmgrp.com/communities/tennessee/alexander-guest-house/>

*About the ACHP:* An independent federal agency, the ACHP promotes the economic, educational, environmental, sustainability, and cultural values of historic preservation and advises the President and Congress on national historic preservation policy. It also influences federal activities, programs, and policies that affect historic and cultural properties. See [www.achp.gov](http://www.achp.gov) for more information.