

Bill had many hats and wore them all – warm tan knit, wide brimmed and tennis, to name a few – while he walked the streets of town. In the four decades I knew Bill and Carol, I don't think I ever saw Bill drive. While walking, he absorbed the streetscapes, the high-style buildings, the civic structures, the proud worker's cottages and the rows of commodious tenements (or three-deckers if seen from their back yards), all in street patterns set centuries ago.

Observing red bricks and clapboards over-clad with perma-stone, vinyl or aluminum, which didn't matter to him, Bill saw Charlestown with x-ray vision and knew what was authentic and what lay underneath and might be workable or replaceable and still please the buildings' owners.

Over these years, Bill's walking, looking and architectural training enabled his understanding of this community's dense and varied character. This translated into his own private practice (my rear el benefited from Bill's redesign) and his role as neighborhood advocate in every circumstance possible.

You are reading about his big projects: City Square, the Zakim Bridge and Main Street housing. Little-known is his cheerleading for the tiny, single-family frame dwellings that have housed Charlestown families since the mid-1800's during the town's heyday and development along new streets laid out on pasture land.

Carol introduced me to Bill when she was involved in seventeenth-century burying ground research, especially the Phipps Street Burying Ground. Then as a beau and later as a husband, Bill and Carol were a team of friendly, knowledgeable, can-do Charlestown residents. CPS house tours, City Old House Fairs, BRA squabbles: Bill and Carol lent their talents and voices to make Charlestown better for the coming centuries.

Thank you, Bill and Carol.

Judith McDonough is a Charlestown resident and former executive director of the Boston Landmarks Commission and the Massachusetts Historical Commission.