



**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE  
ANN ARBOR  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
TO THE ANN ARBOR CITY COUNCIL  
FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2012**

In accordance with the bylaws of the Ann Arbor Historic District Commission, an annual report is to be prepared by staff, approved by the Commission, and presented to City Council each year outlining the activities of the Historic District Commission for the previous year.

## **Annual Retreat**

A Historic District Commissioner retreat was held March 17, 2012. The retreat agenda included review and discussion of:

- Training with Kristine Kidorf, Kidorf Preservation Consulting.
- Review of last year's projects.
- The HDC bylaws.

## **Statistics**

A total of 231 applications were received by the Commission in 2012. This is up 29% from the 179 applications received in 2011.

The Historic District Commission has delegated a number of minor activities to staff to approve on their behalf, and 173 of the 231 (or 75%) of the applications submitted received staff Certificates of Appropriateness. Generally speaking, these are routine work activities that do not affect historic materials on a structure, like replacing a non-historic roof with the same. Other examples of some of the thirty-six kinds of work that may be approved by staff, if the work is appropriate, include:

- Replacement of non-original windows, doors, or garage doors
- Installation of external lighting on signs
- Reconstruction of existing porches
- New or replacement fences
- Replacement of walkways
- Installation of skylights on non-character defining roofs

The Commission held hearings on the other 58 applications during their regular monthly meetings. Of those applications, 56 (or 97%) received Certificates of Appropriateness and one application was denied. The denial was for a request to replace wood windows with vinyl. That property owner later received a Certificate of Appropriateness for wood replacement windows. The one remaining application was partially approved and partially denied. Commission applications often have multiple work items, and occasionally one or more of the items are denied and the rest are approved. The partial denial was for banner signs to be mounted on a downtown building. Other work proposed on the building was approved. The applicant later received a Certificate of Appropriateness for a different style of signs.

All of the sites were visited prior to their hearing by the HDC Review Committee, which is made up of two Commissioners and staff.

## Historic Preservation Awards

Each year, the Historic District Commission presents Historic Preservation Awards to property owners who have shown dedication to preservation by rehabilitating or maintaining their historic property. The Ann Arbor Historic District Commission's 2012 awards were presented by Mayor John Hieftje during the June 4, 2012 City Council meeting. A reception for award recipients was held at the Judge Robert S. Wilson House following the ceremony at City Hall.

### *Rehabilitation Awards*

Rehabilitation Awards recognize substantial work which returns a property to a state of utility through repair or alteration in accordance with good preservation practice as established by the US Department of the Interior. The work facilitates contemporary needs but respects the features of the property which are significant to its historic and architectural values.



**Awarded to: Clifford Williams**  
**For: 1407 Broadway Street**

Clifford Williams purchased the Erastus LeSure (LeSeur) House, built in 1848, and renovated it in 2011. This Greek Revival side gable house has a pair of frieze windows on the front but Italianate features in the long first floor windows and the doorway with double arched windows. Mr. Williams has taken a very dilapidated house and made it into a wonderful addition to the Broadway Historic District by adding a new roof and painting the clapboards as well as other interior improvements.



**Awarded to: Martin Soave**  
**For: 508 Fourth Street**

This tiny house was rescued from twelve years of abandonment by Martin Soave and featured on the Old West Side Homes Tour in 2011. This house was built in 1924 for Ernest Scheeburger, a letter carrier with the post office who later became the Postmaster of Ann Arbor. Many people remember this as the home of Eugene Horning, a baker at Quality Bakery, and his wife who died in 1997. A characteristic feature of this

Arts and Crafts style house is the wide porch across the front. Mr. Soave had to deal with raccoons that lived in a back closet and a collapsing porch but he was up to the challenge. Mr. Soave's tenaciousness is evident and this makes one less eyesore in the Old West Side Historic District.



**Awarded to: The University of Michigan, School of Music,  
Dean Kendall  
For: Burton Tower**

The University of Michigan continues to rehabilitate its monuments on central campus including one of its most photographed landmarks, the Burton Tower. The renovation of Burton Tower coincides with the celebration of its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, having been built in 1935-36 and designed by Albert Kahn as a memorial to deceased UM President Marion LeRoy Burton. The tower contains the world's fourth heaviest carillon, donated by Charles A. Baird, who also commissioned the Milles Sculpture and fountain on the Ingalls Mall in front of the Tower. The Burton Tower is part of the University of Michigan Central Campus Historic District listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



**Awarded to: Swati Dutta  
For: 519 Third Street**

Owner Swati Dutta removed wide aluminum siding and restored the original clapboard. She also replaced iron hand rails with wood ones and repaired the cement block foundation. A one-story rear addition was removed for a two-story addition, where Ms. Dutta reused as much of the original building and finish materials as possible. The home was built in 1911 for Roy Standbridge, a piano seller at Ann Arbor Organ Company. Ms. Dutta has contributed much to her Old West Side Historic District neighborhood with this pleasant rehabilitation.



**Awarded to: Eileen Bristol  
For: 300 West Huron Street – The Relax  
Station**

Eileen Bristol is given this award for her sensitive adaptive reuse of this former gas station which was formerly protected as an Individual Historic Property. It was built as Hunter Bros. White Star Gas Station in 1927. Ms. Bristol has remodeled the building and site for her massage business while maintaining the original Spanish Revival structure and details intact, including the stepped Spanish-style arches over the entry and the stucco.

### **Preservation Awards**

Preservation awards are given to owners who have undertaken superior maintenance and repair of a significant property to preserve its essential historical, cultural or architectural value for a period of 10 years or more.



**Awarded to: Holde and Robert Borcherts  
For: 1555 Washtenaw Avenue**

Holde and Robert Borcherts have owned the historic Edward DeMille Campbell House, also known as the Campbell-Hayes House, built in 1899 and designed by Albert Kahn since 1979. Campbell was a UM Professor of Chemistry and Director of the Chemical Laboratories. The home is red brick with white trim in the Georgian Revival style characterized by strict symmetry, a central entry, end chimneys, and dormers. Inside there is fine woodwork, wide stairways and a paneled study. Nearly all the

original details both exterior and interior have been preserved by the Borcherts who continually maintain the home in pristine condition. This house is one of the five properties which in 1979 formed the original Washtenaw-Hill Historic District.



**Awarded to: Kathy Clark and Mike Anglin  
For: 549 South First Street**

Kathy Clark and Mike Anglin have kept their simple Colonial Revival home in tip top condition and are being recognized for their continued preservation of the house built by Henry Koch in 1897. Koch was a local contractor and lived here until 1910. When the couple purchased this house in 1993, the house was very deteriorated and Ms. Clark and Mr. Anglin have nicely restored the property and have preserved its charm ever since as its occupants and the operators of a bed and breakfast inn. Ms. Clark and Mr. Anglin have won awards in the past for their wonderful gardens which delight neighbors and passers-by alike. It is in the Old West Side Historic District.



**Awarded to: Kenneth and Elizabeth Baird  
For: 1223 Pontiac Trail**

Kenneth and Elizabeth Baird, owners since 1990, are presented with a preservation award for their maintenance and preservation of the Jean Paul Slusser House, designed by George Brigham in 1939. The property originally contained the Robert Frost Ann Arbor House which was moved and is now located at the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village. It is considered one of the first "modern" houses in Ann Arbor and has large board horizontal redwood siding, a flat roof with deep overhanging eaves, 'beams' that

fan out under the eaves at the corners, and a single vertical window on the entry side for both floors. It is an anachronism in this otherwise traditional neighborhood but its shrub and tree-filled landscape allow it to harmoniously blend with surrounding properties.



**Awarded to: Kenneth and Elizabeth Nesbit  
For: 1334 Arlington Boulevard**

Ken and Betsy have owned this property since 1983 and have taken great pains to preserve its Art Deco/Art Moderne character with its emphasis on the horizontal rather than vertical. The home features glass block and rounded corners and has an asymmetrical façade. It was built in 1938 for UM Professor Carl Rufus and his wife. The “Moon Gate” on the front lawn reflects Professor Rufus’ travels to Korea for his work in astronomy and is a landmark on

the street. The home was featured in an October 22, 1938 *Ann Arbor News* article where they called out the wide windows among its features. Rufus and his wife, an amateur pilot and author of a book called the “Flying Grandma”, lived here until the mid 1940’s, when they both died. The property is included in the recently formed Mid-Century Modern group in the Ann Arbor Hills neighborhood.



**Awarded to: James and Jane Kister  
For: 2250 Belmont Road**

Jane and James Kister have owned what is known as the Eberbach House since 1994. The house was designed by UM Professor of Architecture and Dean of the Architecture School Walter Sanders in 1950. Sanders was lured from his practice in New York in 1949 to UM and only designed three houses here. The house has the characteristic boxy form of the Mid-Century Modern look and unusual vertical paneling projecting from its façade. It is

featured in the A2Modern booklet, published in 2012.



**Awarded to: Peter Hinman  
For: 1075 Chestnut Road –**

Peter Hinman and his late wife Elizabeth Young purchased this Robert Meltcalf-designed home in 1988. Internationally known, UM Professor of Architecture and local architect Metcalf designed this fine example of mid-century modern home in 1961 for physician Lyle D. Elliott. First with his wife, Professor Emeritus Hinman now maintains this classically modern home in pristine condition in between being an active grandfather.



**Awarded to: Glenn Watkins  
For: 1336 Glendaloch Drive**

Glenn Watkins has owned this house, designed by UM Professor of Architecture Herbert Johe for Mr. and Mrs. Walter Holcombe in 1959, since 1987. Johe designed nine houses in Ann Arbor and the Holcombe Residence was his favorite because he was given full reign for design. A Scandinavian influence is noticeable which was the result of a trip Johe took there in 1956. Simple lines, boxy shapes, a flat roof, and the use of wood siding characterize this lovely example of Mid-Century

Modern and is featured a booklet published by A2Modern this year.



**Awarded to: Myron and Barbara Levine  
For: 356 Hilldale Drive –**

Myron and Barbara Levine are the original owners of this house, built in 1962 and designed by local architect Donald Van Curler. It is another excellent example of mid-century modern design on the north side of the city. Like many others, it has a boxy shape, a carport in front with a flat roof, complimenting the flat roof of the house, and a good deal of vertical wood siding with white contrasts. The Levines are recognized for superb preservation of their architect-designed residence.



**Awarded to: Carol Amster  
For: 2601 Heather Way**

Carol Amster and her late husband Herbert owned this house since 1978. Designed by UM Professors of Architecture Ed Olencki and Jo Albano for UM Professor Leonard Eaton in 1962, it is yet another example of mid-century modern style in the Ann Arbor Hills neighborhood, also featured in the booklet published this year by A2Modern on the topic. Olencki studied with Mies van der Rohe in Chicago and the

arrangement of this house in boxes shows that influence expressed in brick. Albano also trained in Chicago and both were hired at the UM School of Architecture in the late 1940's. Carol continues the Amsters well-known work in the community as philanthropists and the preservation of this home is another gift to Ann Arbor.



**Awarded to: Herb David  
For: 302 East Liberty Street**

Small business owner Herb David moved his guitar studio here in 1983 and has maintained and advocated for his 1907 Dutch Colonial Revival building, as well as this block of East Liberty Street which constitutes the East Liberty Street Historic District. Mr. David has tirelessly worked to keep this block intact despite many external pressures from development. This home was built by Joe Parker famous for his saloon “Joe’s” which was made famous in an early University of Michigan song.

***Lifetime Achievement Award***

**Rosemarion Blake** has worked to promote local history by serving on the City of Ann Arbor Historic District Commission, the Washtenaw County Historical Society, the Ann Arbor Historical Foundation, the Kempft House Board, the Cobblestone Farm Association, and many historic study committees including one which resulted in the publication of Historic Buildings, Ann Arbor. Rosemarion grew up in Ann Arbor and married Richard Blake in 1949. She is an active member of her church, Bethel AME, and funded research of its history. Her interest in preservation is heartfelt and, as she says, “once something is gone, it cannot be replaced and is lost to us forever.”

***Special Merit Awards***



**Awarded to: Nancy Deromedi and Tracy Aris  
For: A2Modern Group and Website**

Special Merit Awards are presented to **Nancy Deromedi** and **Tracy Aris** for the establishment of the A2Modern group and website. They have conducted field trips to Alden Dow’s Home and Studio in Midland, Michigan and locally to Robert C. Metcalf’s mid-century home. They have worked tirelessly developing a map and brochure that provides biographies of a selection of architects working in the modern style in the Ann Arbor Hills neighborhood which as a large concentration of mid-century works.

A2Modern has benefited greatly from partnerships in the community, namely Robert C. Metcalf, Taubman College of Architecture, Bentley Historical Library, EMU’s Historic Preservation Program, Washtenaw County Economic Development, Surovell and Reihart Realtors and the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office.

### **Centennial Awards**



**Awarded to: University of Michigan Rackham Graduate School, Dean Janet A. Weiss  
For: 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

Since conferring its first doctoral degree in 1876, the University of Michigan has advanced graduate education to meet society's needs. In 1912, a separate school of graduate studies was established with the ultimate goal of preparing students for careers in academia. Today UM is one of the largest producers of Ph.Ds. in the country. In 1935 donor Mary Rackham worked with President Alexander Ruthven to endow the Graduate School to support graduation education at Michigan. The result was the beautiful Rackham Building, arguably one of the finest on campus, designed by Smith Hinchman and Grylls of Detroit.

Rackham has 7,000 students enrolled in 108 doctoral programs, 83 master's programs and 33 certificate programs. It is overseen by a Dean and many Associate and Assistant Deans. There is also a Board of Governors which was created as a contingency of the bequest. Today, the Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies is a community of scholars, researchers and students in 191 programs at the UM. More than 85,000 Rackham Alumni are out in the world, making it a better place to live.



**Awarded to: Monarch Jim Richardson  
For: 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Zal Gaz Grotto Club**

The Zal Gaz Grotto No. 34 is one of but a few surviving members of the once numerous Masonic organizations in Ann Arbor, and is believed to be the only surviving property-owning Masonic affiliation in the city. They celebrated a century of service in 2011. They were part of a group of "grottoes" serving as Freemason social clubs. Zal Gaz is a made up name which is supposed to sound Persian. It is both a social club and a club which raises money for cerebral palsy and dental care for

children with special needs. Grottos of North America were founded by Leroy Fairchild in 1889 with other Masons from the Hamilton Lodge in New York. In that year they organized the "Mystic Order of the Veiled Prophets" which were commonly known as Grottoes emphasizing fun and the brighter side of life.

Many prominent businessmen were and are members. They were housed in many places downtown until they received a plot of land on West Stadium Boulevard from Gottlob and Caroline Schumacher. These Masons built their clubhouse at this location in 1959 which still stands today. The Grotto is also a host for local jazz groups and other performances.

### **For More Information**

If you would like more information about the Historic District Commission or its activities, please contact Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator, at (734) 794-6265 x42608 or email [jthacher@a2gov.org](mailto:jthacher@a2gov.org).