

Ann Arbor Historic District Commission 1999 Awards

Centennial Award

Michigan Municipal League

1899

Created by elected municipal leaders in 1899 as a collective voice to promote local government issues and cooperation, the league had no permanent home or staff until 1916 when it established a cooperative arrangement with the University of Michigan. In 1935, the league purchased the historic Goodrich House on the southeast corner of State and Washington Streets, becoming one of the first such organizations to own its own headquarters. There they remained until 1971 when they built their present home on Green Road.

Preservation Award

839 W Huron, Herman Miller House

1901

To: Patricia E Thompson

Main Street druggist Herman Miller built this handsome Colonial Revival house on the site of an older family home. Pat Thompson moved in during 1982 and purchased the house three years later. Her exquisite landscaping and high standards of maintenance have made this property a joy for passersby ever since.

119 W Liberty, Walker Brothers Building

1886

To: Ann Arbor Art Center

Built as a carriage factory and show room for Christian Walker and his brother, this large, handsome Italianate Commercial block became Henne and Stanger Furniture by 1894. Much later it was used as Sears Roebuck and Company's catalogue store. With the arrival of Briarwood Mall, Sears moved out of downtown and the City purchased the property in the mid-1970s planning to demolish it for more parking. Strong public support for preservation, however, resulted in historic district designation and the purchase by the Ann Arbor Art Association. Since then, both the building and the organization have thrived and become one of the major attractions of a vibrant downtown.

523 W Liberty, George Visel House
To: Hugh McPherson

1899

A true Old West Side success story, this house on its prominent corner had long been converted to a duplex when two young couples restored it in the mid 1980s when it appeared on one of the neighborhood's annual fall homes tours. The present owners have converted it back to single family status and continued to maintain the exterior as a true asset to the district.

606 & 608 Packard, Binder/Eggleston Houses
To: GWI Co-Partnership

1916

Built in 1916 to replace an older home on the property, these two stucco and shingle houses were rental properties from the beginning. As is typical of this student rental neighborhood, the properties were badly run down by the time the present owners purchased them in 1989. As a realty firm, they have made the properties a real show place, surrounding them with attractive landscaping and an iron fence, removing unsightly fire escapes, and bringing out their modest but attractive charm. They now set the highest standard for all landlords.

611 Stratford, Fielding & Eunice Yost House
To: James Miner, MD

1930

Tucked away on a hill on a dead end street, this is one of the loveliest homes in town. Beautifully detailed in the Georgian Colonial style for legendary U-M football coach Fielding Yost, the present owners have continued to care for the home since 1975.

536 Third, Louis & Lydia Betz House
To: Scott G Kunst

1889

Built in 1889, this classic Old West Side home features Queen Anne form and fancy detailing combined with one of the neighborhoods well loved early 20th century stone porches. The present owner runs his extremely popular antique bulb business out of the house and is known far and wide for his Old House Garden expertise.

Rehabilitation Award

223 E Ann, Ann Arbor Armory

1911

To: Edward Shaffran

A source of increasing concert in recent years as it sat empty and deteriorating, Ann Arbor's 1911 Armory has finally found a new use as ultra modern, comfortable downtown living spaces. With new windows, a fully restored exterior, the original interiors have been adapted into attractive multi-story apartments, bringing more residents to our even more exciting downtown neighborhood.

544 S First, Christian & Sarah Koch House

1894

To: Anne C Chamberlain

This modest Queen Anne house, built for one of the large clan of Koch Brothers Construction firm and his family, had long been converted to a duplex. The side porch woodwork was replaced by the ever-popular wrought iron posts and railings. Resident owner, Anne Chamberlain just knew that was not right, so when repair time came around she chose to restore the porch to match the remaining original front one. She even managed to withstand the wiles of vinyl replacement window salesmen and retain the original wood sash. She is a true inspiration to all homeowners in the historic district.

1022 S Forest, Conrad & Katherine Georg, Jr. House

1917

To: Duane E Black

Built as a family home for physician, surgeon and "demonstrator of surgery" at the U-M, for Conrad Georg Jr. and his wife Katherine, this large stucco building soon housed multiple tenants, first as Spaulding House in the early 1902s and then as a fraternity followed by a sorority. By the 1950s it was converted to apartments. Award-winning landlord, Duane Black, has lovingly refurbished it inside and out including replacing the original windows in the central bay.

621 Second, Julius & Irene Weinberg House

1929 (moved)

To: Brenda Bentley & Lahki Goenka

As the proud owners of one of the Old West Side's showiest Queen Anne houses, the Bentley-Goenkas had to be creative in solving their front entry dilemma. They chose to move the original

front door forward from the back of the wrap around front porch and create a new, window-walled vestibule, improving the function of the house without altering its historic character.

323 S Seventh, Julius Neinz House

1849

To: Spencer & Jen Cooreman

Not content with removing the inappropriate asbestos shingles and repainting the original siding of this modest house, young landlords and eager renovators, Spencer and Jen Cooreman went on to rebuild the non-original wrap around front porch using replicas of unusual turned posts from a house on North Main.

524 Third, Charles & Wilhelmina Miller House

1870

To: Thomas & K Fitzsimmons

Builder/developer Tom Fitzsimmons removed inappropriate siding from this interesting house to discover a wildly exuberant Queen Anne gable on top of an 1870s Greek Revival. The whole, now painted in appropriate colors, is finished off with a 20th century stone-faced concrete block front porch making this house a true reflection of the neighborhood's architectural history.

Special Merit Award

213 W Liberty, Schlenker Hardware Building Façade

1906

To: Janet Muhleman, Liberty Land LLC

Though the late Marty Schlenker was extremely pleased with the years of no maintenance needed for the porcelain enamel front he installed on his father's 1906 brick hardware store, the time had definitely come for a change. The new owners have carried out an extremely careful and handsome restoration of the façade, which once again enhances this block of West Liberty.

321 S Main, Marchese Brothers Building Canopy

1925

To: James & John Curtis

Discovering to their dismay that the original copper canopy on the Marchese Brothers Building was about to collapse, Jim & John Curtis elected to replace it with a brand new replica which not only provides welcome shelter from the weather but even more welcome pleasure for the eye.

Year Award

1308 E Ann, Detroit Observatory

1854

To: Lee Bollinger, President, University of Michigan

As the oldest academic building at the University of Michigan, the 1854 Detroit Observatory is one of its brightest jewels. Years of concern over the challenging future of this small but fascinating National Register building have now culminated in not only an outstanding, meticulously correct restoration but funding for a curator position as well to insure the building will be more than just a lovely icon.