

## 2003/2004 Historic Preservation Awards

### *Centennial Awards: 2004*

**Awarded to: Tim & Michele Shannon**  
**For: Wilkinson Luggage - 1904**

Frank W. Wilkinson established Wilkinson's Luggage at 325 S. Main Street in 1904. The city directory listed the business as offering "new and second-hand stoves and furniture." A decade later, the 1914 city directory listed the business as a furniture store that "buys second-hand." Frank Wilkinson often sold furniture to students and buy it back at the year's end.

By 1924, Wilkinson sold primarily trunks, also a student need. From there it was a natural evolution into luggage because the trunk makers were also manufacturing luggage and leather goods by the twenties.

In 1938, the address on the building was renumbered to 327, the same address it carries today. Frank Wilkinson owned the business until about 1951, when Herbert Wodke purchased it from him. The current owners, Tim and Michele Shannon, believe this to be about the time the business became formally known as Wilkinson's Luggage Shop, Inc., instead of just F. W. Wilkinson.

Harlow Olson purchased the business from Wodke in 1963. Mr. Olson owned the business until 1994, when he retired and sold the store to his manager of 17 years, Tim Shannon. Mr. Shannon is only the fourth proprietor in the 100-year history of Wilkinson Luggage.

**Awarded to: The University of Michigan**  
**For: Michigan Union - 1904**

The Michigan Union formed in 1904, an all-inclusive organization meant for men. The first meeting of the union was held in Waterman Gymnasium and was attended by over 1100 male students. In search of a "home" for their organization, the young men purchased the Judge Thomas M. Cooley home on South State Street in 1907; this building soon proved inadequate for their needs. In 1910, union members sought to construct a more suitable building.

Brothers and university alumni, Irving and Allen Pond, were hired to design the new union building. In 1916, the Cooley house was demolished, and work for the new union building began. Funds for the building's interior were collected in the form of pledges, but America's entry into WWI halted the progress. For a time, the unfinished Union served as barracks and a mess hall by the Student Army Training Corps. After the war ended, the Union's interior was completed, and the Michigan Union building opened in 1919.

The original Union contained a basement bowling alley, and a main-floor barbershop and eatery. In addition, the Union housed lounges, reading rooms, committee rooms, dining rooms, billiard and games rooms, an assembly room, and accommodations for returning alumni. A swimming pool, included in the Pond brothers' original design but unfinished as of the 1919 opening, was completed in 1925. Initially operated as a club, the Union ran on membership dues, with members paying \$2.50 per year. By 1918, fees had increased to \$5.00 per year and were collected from all students; each male student on campus automatically became a member. The Union operated through a Board of Directors composed of students, faculty and alumni.

Women were initially only allowed to enter the Union through the north doors, and then only when accompanied by a male escort. The founders believed the women already had a social center in the Barbour Gymnasium parlors. Campus women raised money for their own facility. The Michigan League was also designed by the Pond brothers and opened on North University Avenue in 1929. It was dedicated to women's social, cultural and recreational activities. In 1956, women were allowed to enter the Union unescorted, even through the front door. It was not until 1968, however, that women were allowed access to the entire building, such as the billiards room.

The swimming pool eventually closed, more vendor space and student offices were created, and the International Student Center was added. The fourth floor, originally consisting of hotel rooms for alumni, became student offices in 1972, and those were renovated in 1994. The Michigan Union today hosts a wide array of services, programs and facilities serving students, other University members and community members.

**Awarded To: Arnet's, Becker, Burrell  
For: Arnet's Inc. - 1904**

The first monument completed by the Arnet family in the United States was in 1888. Prior to 1904, Arnet's was in partnership with Zachmann, located at 105-07 E. Ann Street. At some point, there was an agreement to dissolve the partnership, and Joseph Arnet bought Zachmann's share in 1904 by cashing in an insurance policy and with financial support from the Masons. Joseph built the business into quite a success. His work can still be appreciated in the local cemeteries, including in mausoleums and significant monuments. From 1917-1935, Arnet's was located at 208 W. Huron Street.

In 1935, Joseph's son, Frederick Arnet, took over the company, and moved it to 924-36 N. Main Street, where it remained until 1963. Fred was a graduate architect of the University of Michigan and his works excelled in the local area. Some of his work can still be seen in Ann Arbor, such as in the granite at the courthouse and the granite at the Ann Arbor News building, both on Huron Street.

Larry Arnet, Frederick's son, took over the business in 1953. During Larry's tenure, the business was located at 218 Chapin Street from 1963-1970. In 1970, Larry moved the business to its present location at 4495 Jackson Road. Larry was very creative at marketing, and he added other lines of business, including two crematories and a sign department. In 1981, Larry purchased A. J. Burrell and Sons, located on Michigan Avenue in Ypsilanti. He then purchased

Becker Memorials, located in Ann Arbor, in 1986. Larry retired in 1997 and this brought his daughters, Caryl Arnet to the company as president, and Martha Arnet Moomey as vice president. Their accomplishments thus far include the installation and running of a pet crematory as of April 2002.

## *Preservation Awards*

**Awarded To: Village Cooperative Homes Management Office**  
**For: Pittsfield Village – 1940-44**

The Village Cooperative Homes is a unique community in Ann Arbor. It consists of 422 units, spread over 64 acres, and it remains the city's second-largest housing community. It is easily recognized by its rows of quaint, uniform buildings and extensive landscaping.

Pittsfield Village, as it was formerly known, began construction in 1940 and was completed by May 1944. The units were designed by Charles Noble and intended to serve as rental spaces for those serving in the war effort at the Willow Run Bomber Plant in Ypsilanti. The village converted to a market-rate cooperative in 1988 and began selling affordable units shortly thereafter. The first unit was sold on July 1, 1989 and the last sale of the conversion took place in January 1995.

The Board of Directors of the Village Cooperative Homes contracted Reserve Advisors in 1999 to conduct a study to begin a preventative maintenance schedule and to allow ample funding in the Board's reserve accounts. This report is closely adhered to in order to retain the upkeep of the buildings. This allows for adequate funding for roofing, exterior painting, chimney repairs, concrete replacement, deck maintenance, and tree replacement.

The landscape committee began rejuvenating the landscape in early 2002. The goals of this project are twofold: to work to preserve existing plantings by properly trimming, pruning, and clearing space for healthy growth, and to plant new, more appropriate native plantings in place of those that are removed.

The Village has recently hired a color consultant to analyze the exterior paint colors and come up with a palette of 8 body and 12 trim colors that can be used interchangeably. They are making every attempt to keep the "vintage" look alive throughout the Village with the landscaping and new paint colors.

**Awarded To: TCF Bank**  
**For: 411 E. Washington, Albert & Leah Polhemus House - 1848**

This well-built Greek Revival house has a characteristic classic entry with sidelights. The elegantly restrained porches add grace to the otherwise boxy structure. The house was built for

Albert Polhemus and their family of six, who had come to Ann Arbor from New York State. The Rev. Maltby Gelston, Jr., family moved into the house in 1861. Rev. Gelston and his brother, Mills, were “supply” ministers for Michigan. Maltby’s son, Joseph Mills Gelston, was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor from 1888 to 1909. After Maltby’s death in 1893, his daughter Sarah converted the house into apartments, which at the time were reserved for single or widowed ladies.

Great Lakes Bancorp has owned the building since before 1980, and they lease the space to two businesses, Rosebud Solutions, a healthcare software firm, and Briton Information Systems, custom software developers.

TCF Bank began the recent exterior paint job and restoration in the summer of 2003. Along with painting, TCF replaced the gutters and fascia board, and reinstalled a replicated front entry. New lap siding was also installed on the front porch and enclosed back porch, along with a new porch deck for the rear deck.

### *Rehabilitation Awards*

**Awarded To: Robert & Nancy Harrington**

**For: 1324 Pontiac St., Jonathan Lund House - 1847**

Ten years after Jonathan Lund and his wife arrived in Ann Arbor, they built this large and gracious house with sweeping views of the Huron River valley. A matter of interest at the time and to historians since is the fact that the stucco for the exterior of the house was mixed with barrels of skim milk to add a particularly adhesive quality. The builders, Robert and John Davidson, finished it in time for the Lunds to move in and celebrate Thanksgiving 1847 in their new home.

In 1908, young Fremond Ward came to Ann Arbor to supervise the construction of the U.S. Post Office on Main Street. He and his wife, Flora, spied the house on an evening’s walk, admired it, bought it, and settled in Ann Arbor, remaining in the house for nearly half a century. Early in the 1930s they divided the home into apartments without affecting the exterior appearance. In 1936, in one of the apartments, university student Arthur Miller regaled an election night faculty party with humorous readings from his recent “finger exercises.”

The Harringtons purchased the house in November 1981 and immediately leased it to graduate students and young professionals. In 1997, they decided to renovate the first floor for their own residence and were able to celebrate their first Thanksgiving in the house exactly 150 years after the Lunds did.

Prior to moving into the house, the Harringtons reconstructed the garage, side porch and main entry stairs; repaired the main wrap-around porch, including structural members, floor, columns, and balustrade; and repaired all of the large double-hung windows. After moving in, the

Harringtons reconstructed the brick chimneys and exterior basement entrance; reroofed the north wing, and removed multiple layers of shingles on the main house and reroofed it; repaired exterior brick walls and the cupola, including the wave design, and installed new gutters and applied paint to the entire exterior.

**Awarded To: Nancy Hunt**

**For: 543 Detroit Street, The Thorpe-Frank House – 1850s**

The Greek Revival house at 543 Detroit Street is one of Ann Arbor's earliest. Research on the property reveals the lot was part of John Allen's and Elisha Rumsey's original plat of Ann Arbor in 1824. The 1853 plat map for the city shows the house on this lot, so research supports the house was there that early, though the exact date of construction is unknown.

The upright-and-wing style of Greek Revival, evident in this house, was a popular building type in Ann Arbor during the 1840s through the '60s. The one-and-a-half-story main block has an entry that faces the driveway has eyebrow windows on the second floor and a steep, enclosed central staircase. It is possible this portion was built as early as the 1830s. The wing, the portion of the house that faces Detroit Street, was not added until sometime between 1870 and 1888, as indicated by research with Sanborn fire insurance maps.

Several remodelings have occurred at the house over time, the most recent being executed in 2003. Ms. Hunt had extensive work done at her home, including replacement windows, a new roof, new furnace and air conditioning, removal of aluminum siding, repair and painting of the clapboard, new window punctures looking over the rear yard, a large deck to the rear, and renovation of the porch skirting. Ms. Hunt also had extensive landscaping done in the rear yard at an earlier date and is looking forward to working on her front and side yard in the near future.

## *Special Merit Awards*

**Awarded To: Douglas Trubey & Michael Milliken**

**For: 626 W. Liberty Street**

When 626 W. Liberty Street was purchased in 1986, it was from an owner who had tried to demolish the house. In the first years of ownership, the Mr. Trubey and Mr. Milliken restored the home – this included replacing rotted clapboard and trim, restoring the 9/6 muntin window pattern in the front parlor, and period windows were installed at every window. The chimney was rebuilt, reusing the brick, which was cleaned and stripped of white paint. Finally, a picket fence was installed to complete the look of the small 1840s Greek Revival house, as evidenced in a historic photograph.

The front section of the house consists of a main living area and a loft space. It is made by hand-hewn post-and-beam construction and has hand-split lath under the plaster. The one-story rear section was most likely added in the 1850s. It is of frame construction on a minimal foundation and was poorly built, resulting in tilting and sagging floors and crooked walls.

When the owners wanted to enlarge the rear portion for more living space, the condition of the rear section presented challenges to rehabilitation and/or adding on. Their main concern was maintaining the integrity of the building and its architectural character. The eventual solution was to remove the rear section, reusing the windows and other historical details, and rebuild it following the character of the original front section. After the rear section was rebuilt, Mr. Trubey and Mr. Millken built a two-story addition, designed to resemble an attached barn. The ground floor was lowered three feet below grade to reduce the overall height of the addition. By employing barn-like architectural details for the addition, the owners hoped to retain the scale of the original house as a separate and identifiable entity. The owners say there is still much to be done, such as replacing a temporary steel door with an appropriate wood door, painting, and working on trim details and shutters. They are anxious to get back to work as the weather improves.

**Awarded To: Doolin Properties**

**For: 1335 Traver St., Sumner Hicks House - 1846**

This 1-1/2-story Greek Revival home was built in 1846 for Sumner Hicks. The plan is an upright and wing with a full-façade front porch and cornice returns and trim of the period. One of the last remaining houses on the south side of Wall Street until it was moved in the summer of 2002, it was indicative of those houses that lined the street in the 1830s and '40s.

Moved in July 2002, the home now sits on a new foundation at 1335 Traver. Some clapboard was replaced with new cedar boards, new windows were installed throughout, and the porch was reinstalled after the move. A new paint job completes the look. The house now sits in a neighborhood like it was once part of on Wall Street.

## *Adaptive Reuse Award*

**Awarded To: Michael Bielby & Lisa Profera**

**For: 632 N. Fourth Avenue, Bethel AME Church – 1891-96**

Before the Civil War, African-Americans in Ann Arbor worshipped in a small Greek Revival church which still stands today at 504 High Street. Then it was simply known as the “Union” church or the “Colored” church.

Eventually two denominations developed: the African Methodist Episcopal (AME), organized in 1855, and the Second Baptist. The date of the first AME church building is unclear. All sources agree, however, that the present church building was begun in 1891 after the older structure was moved to the rear of the property. Bishop Henry McNeal Turner, an important figure in the AME church who had served President Lincoln as the first black chaplain in the United States Army, laid the cornerstone. Due to financial problems, however, the building was not dedicated until 1896.

During the depression of the 1890s a trustee mortgaged his own home so the church would be saved. In the ensuing decades Ann Arbor’s African-American population grew and so did this congregation. Racial discrimination was endemic, neighborhoods were segregated, and low-paying jobs were the norm. But the church was a refuge in these hard times. As one member recalled: “—Our lives revolved around the church. We socialized there, did our homework there. If you were passing by and saw the light on you went in to see what was going on.”

The congregation eventually prospered and built a new church on Plum Street, selling the old one to the New Grace Apostolic congregation in 1971. New Grace Apostolic belongs to the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World of Apostolic Faith, an interracial group of fundamentalists.

Owners Michael Bielby and Lisa Profera bought the property in 1998 and began work in 1999. They kept all stained glass windows and divided the interior into four luxury apartments, essentially building a new building within the shell of the church. When the building was designated as an IHP, they received approval to place four gabled dormers on either side of the roof ridge. These dormers allow more space in the upper level and also the introduction of more natural light. Mr. Bielby & Ms. Profera are awarded this adaptive reuse award for maintaining the integrity of a former neighborhood church and positively adapting the space into a suitable use for the community.

**Awarded To: Carl Rinne & Tamara Real**

**For: 411 Fountain Street, Church on Fountain Street - 1907**

In 1907, the First Baptist Church built this chapel on Miller Avenue, adjacent to the old Mack School. The chapel was located at the front of the lot and was used for meetings of the Young Peoples’ Society, Sunday school, and presentations of “instructive and pleasing moving

pictures,” among other things. By 1924, the church decided to halt services in the chapel and sold the property. In 1926, Jay Morningstar, a Pilgrim Holiness minister, acquired the property with the proviso that he move it to a different location. After moving the church to Fountain Street, Jay Morningstar and his family took up residence in the basement.

In 1962, the Church of God in Christ, led by Elder Booker T. Rimson, purchased the property for his congregation. By 1998, the same congregation, led by Elder Samuel Peppers, moved to larger quarters on Stadium Boulevard. After the congregation departed the church on Fountain Street, the building was put on the market.

Owners Carl Rinne & Tamara Real bought the church building in 2000 and started the conversion of the structure into their home. They consulted with a local historian and found older photographs of the building with the hopes of returning the exterior to some semblance of its historical appearance. The owners began the conversion by tackling the basement; it had suffered water penetration over the years. The basement had to be rebuilt and since the location of the church on the lot crowded their neighbor to the south, so Carl and Tamara decided to move the church over on the same lot. They moved the structure forty feet to the north, intact, to a new basement on their double lot. The new basement is constructed of concrete-filled Styrofoam that is strong and weather tight.

After the move, Carl and Tamara began gutting the interior of the church. A false ceiling (circa 1964) was removed from the 1,500-square-foot sanctuary space, revealing the original dark-stained oak ceiling. Carl and Tamara uncovered and reconditioned the original gothic window facing Fountain Street. They stripped 90 years’ worth of glued linoleum, carpeting, and paint off the floor, then sanded and finished it in its natural yellow pine state. They saved all wainscoting and relocated the original preacher’s platform in the sanctuary space.

After restoring portions of the church, the new construction began. A new dining room was added to the rear of the property, and a second-floor balcony and living quarters were added above the sanctuary space. The new main floor interior arrangement includes a living room beneath the balcony. New insulation and plasterboard were added throughout the building, and new dark-stained trim was added in the Arts and Crafts style. A new staircase was also built.

With all of the work the owners have done to adapt this building into their private residence, they also worked to leave some bits of the past intact within the structure. The preacher’s platform is a stage for entertainment; the old sill plate is exposed in the stairwell; some of the old wainscot can be seen in the vestibule and inglenook; the original gothic window is fully visible again. Ten steps once again lead up to the front entrance, the original window dimensions along the side elevations have been retained, and the original front stoop roof still protects the double entry door with its hand-crafted window crosses.

## *Preservation Project of the Year*

**Awarded To: The Ashley Group, LLC**

**For: 213-215 S. Ashley Street, Schwaben Halle - 1914**

Schwaben Halle, a four-story commercial building located at 213-15 S. Ashley Street, was designed by George Scott. Mr. Scott moved to Ann Arbor from Ontario in 1880. Scott is also credited with the design of numerous buildings in Ann Arbor, including St. Andrew's Episcopal Church parsonage and the School of Music at the University of Michigan.

Schwaben Halle's founding organization and building are socially significant to the Ann Arbor area. South central Michigan was largely settled by farmers from southern Germany in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, and the Schwabischer Unterstutungs Verein was organized by 11 men in 1888 as a burial society for men of Swabian descent – hailing from the Swabian region of Bavaria. This group first met in rooms above the Washington Street business of one of its founders, Mr. Gottlieb Wild. Before long, the verein wanted to increase its membership and broaden its purpose. The men began to look for the right opportunity to build a larger home for their organization. South Ashley was lined with German-owned livery stables and blacksmith shops in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; the group bought Henry Otto's blacksmith shop in 1894 and held their meetings there for 20 years. In 1914, the shop was demolished and the verein commissioned Schwaben Halle to be built. By 1922, the verein's membership had expanded to 230, and its role in the Ann Arbor community expanded, as Schwaben Halle became a social center. A December 1922 *News* article describes the organization thus: "The society (the Verein) helped in every deserving war charity brought to its notice. It gave the hall free of charge to churches and deserving institutions . . . The hall is greatly used for social gatherings and dances . . ." The organization occupied the second floor of the building, which was characterized by a large social room. They remained there for the next 86 years.

By 2000, the verein's membership had dwindled and the building had become difficult to maintain. The building was sold to the Ashley Group in 2001, which became only the second owner of this Ann Arbor "institution." The owners made a number of improvements to rehabilitate the building. New windows were installed on every elevation, matching the style and openings of the original, and brickwork was assessed and cared for appropriately. Perhaps the most noticeable change was the rehabilitation of the storefront space. The building had seen at least five times in the past decades, most of those changes not having been sensitive to the building. The Ashley Group completely rehabilitated the storefronts to appear more like a true 20<sup>th</sup>-century commercial building, with recessed entries, large clear glass display windows, and multilight transoms. Materials used for rehabilitating the storefronts were also appropriate, from the bulkheads below the display windows to the transom glass itself.

Not only has The Ashley Group's rehabilitation improved the look of the storefronts, the change has fostered positive growth for the streetscape. Three Chairs, a furniture company, now occupies the ground floor space, and draws many window shoppers and purchasers into the building. The change has positively impacted the South Ashley streetscape and The Ashley Group is presented with the 2003 Preservation Project of the Year award.

## *Preservationist of the Year: 2003*

### **Louisa Pieper**

Long involved in community enhancement efforts, Louisa Pieper's passion for interpreting and preserving our city's past did not end with her retirement as the city's Historic Preservation Coordinator in 1999. She immediately began docenting at the Detroit Observatory, and giving the tours her all, even auditing a class in astronomy so she could better understand and explain the workings of the historical artifacts found inside.

Through her involvement with the Michigan Historic Preservation Network, Louisa helped craft the language for what became Public Act 169, Michigan's Local Historic Districts Act and continues to be a board member for the organization, each year putting many hours of effort into gathering books for their annual conference sale and silent auction.

Louisa is the current president of the Kempf House Center for Local History, and is a board member of the Ann Arbor Historical Foundation. She is always eager and available to provide school groups and other groups walking tours of historic buildings or neighborhoods. Louisa continues to serve on historic district study committees for the city and the county, researching properties and neighborhoods for possible historic district status. She is the current chair of Ann Arbor's Individual Historic Properties Historic District Study Committee.

Perhaps Louisa's most famed involvement has been to work on the Downtown Historic Street Exhibit Program. Years of research and work have culminated in the tangible result of sharing our history with passersby on almost every downtown street throughout Ann Arbor. Though not working alone, Louisa has been a major contributor to the program, writing text, selecting photos, fund raising, and promoting the program to donors. She has also worked to integrate the program into the social studies curriculum in the Ann Arbor Public Schools. Her participation in this program has led to the DDA, the City of Ann Arbor, and the program itself receiving three major awards: the International Downtown Association award; the Michigan Historic Preservation Network Government/Institution award; and an award from the Historical Society of Michigan.

Most recently, Louisa was a finalist for the 2003 Citizen of the Year, and the Historic District Commission is honored to name Louisa Pieper the 2004 Preservationist of the Year.