



# ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION TO THE ANN ARBOR CITY COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR 2007

## Introduction

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.

## Statistics



*An application to demolish this Old West Side building was denied. New owners were given a Certificate of Appropriateness to rehabilitate the house (see below).*

A total of 182 applications were received by the Commission in 2007. The Historic District Commission has delegated a number of minor activities to staff to approve on their behalf, and 127 of those applications received Certificates of Appropriateness from staff. Examples of some of the thirty kinds of work that may be approved by staff, if the work is appropriate, include:

- Replacement of non-original windows or doors
- Replacement of existing awnings and signage in the same size, dimension, and location
- Reconstruction of existing porches
- New or replacement fences
- Replacement of roofs and concrete basement walls



The Commission held hearings on the other 55 applications during their regular monthly meetings. Of those applications, 46 received Certificates of Appropriateness, one received a Notice to Proceed (when work may proceed without a Certificate of Appropriateness under certain narrow conditions), and eight applications were denied. All of the sites were visited prior to their hearing by the HDC Review Committee, which is made up of two Commissioners and staff.

Examples of applications receiving Certificates of Appropriateness included:

- Five signs, awnings, and canopies
- Two residential decks
- Eight residential and one non-residential additions
- Four new buildings (two garages, one house, and one office)
- Two demolitions



The Glazier Building at 100 South Main had its historic cornice restored in 2007, with stunning results.



The denied applications included:

- ❑ Two additions, one of which reapplied with a corrected application and was issued a Certificate of Appropriateness
- ❑ An exterior stair, which reapplied with a corrected application and was issued a Certificate of Appropriateness
- ❑ Three applications to remove original windows which were determined to be repairable
- ❑ One egress window which was installed without prior HDC review or building permits
- ❑ Additional parking spaces in a residential rear yard

### Awards

Each year during May (National Preservation Month), 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 2007 awards were presented by Mayor John Hieftje during the May 7, 2007 City Council meeting. A reception for award recipients followed in the Kempf House.

#### *Rehabilitation Awards*

Rehabilitation Awards recognize substantial work which returns a property to a state of utility through repair or alteration. The work facilitates contemporary needs but respects the features of the property which are significant to its historic and architectural values.



**Award to: 211 N. Fourth LLC**  
**For: Kayser Block, 209-211 North Fourth Avenue**

Built in 1899, this property had a strong connection with African-Americans and the Colored Welfare League in Ann Arbor. It was the former home of an adult bookstore and now houses a shoe store and a mattress store. It has been rehabilitated with a new storefront and two apartments in the upper floors. The rehabilitation is respectful of the original building and joins its neighbors in maintaining the ambience in the Fourth/Ann Historic District.



**Award to: Lana Hawkins**  
**For: Ulrich Phillips House, 1910 Hill Street (1940 Cambridge)**

In 1914 this house was designed by Emil Lorch, dean of the UM Architecture School, for History Professor Ulrich B. Phillips, who was widely known for his study of slavery in the United States. It had a Cambridge Street address until 1940 when Engineering Professor G.G.

Brown (known as Gas Brown) enclosed the open porch with casement windows and reoriented the house to Hill Street, which prompted the address change. Later a fraternity and the Corntree Co-op, it fell into disrepair over the years. New owner Lana Hawkins has restored it as a single-family house, removed a deteriorated 1970s solar collector, put on a new roof, and engaged paint expert Rob Schweitzer for advice on period paint colors. Using Lorch's original designs at the Bentley Library, she redesigned the lean-to porch facing Cambridge. Now a former neighborhood eyesore has once again become an asset to the Oxbridge neighborhood.

**Award to: Thomas and Kelly Fitzsimmons**  
**For: David Malloy House, 608 North Main Street**



This house, built by David Malloy (who owned a harness shop on East Ann Street) in 1898, was Ozone House for runaway teens from 1977 to 2001. When the current owners purchased it in 2001, they removed the asbestos-shingle siding, added an addition in the rear, and returned it to single-family use. They also built a matching garage and restored the front and side porches.

**Award to: Elizabeth Lindsley and John Ballard**  
**For: 731 South Seventh Street**



This 1885 house, a typical German worker's home of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was on the Old West Side Homes Tour in 2006 to showcase the careful remodeling job done by the current owners over the past 10 years. Within the original footprint, almost everything on the interior was upgraded, while on the exterior the clapboard siding was restored and the original porch was added back using historic photos.

#### *Preservation Awards*

Preservation awards are given to owners who have maintained 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.

**Award to: Anthony Ramirez and Mary Ivers**  
**For: Keating House, 920 East Ann Street**



This 1866 upright and wing in the Old Fourth Ward Historic District still has its original clapboard siding and 19<sup>th</sup> century windows. It has been preserved and maintained for over 10 years by owners Tony Ramirez and Mary Ivers, who recently added a standing seam metal roof in keeping with the historic character of the property. The Keating family, who built the house, published the 1872 Ann Arbor City Directory and also a well know professional medical journal, the *Physician and Surgeon*. The last

surviving Keating descendant lived in the house until 1971, after which it became a rental property. It is once again owner-occupied, which is unusual in this predominantly student-rental neighborhood.

**Award to: University Reformed Church**  
**For: Edna Allen House, 928 East Ann Street**



Originally the Edna Allen residence, this house in the Old Fourth Ward Historic District was constructed in 1908. From 1920-1961 it was the home of Mrs. Marie Balsler, widow of Charles, and her children. It has been owned by the church since 1967 and used for a variety of their outreach projects. In the 1980s, the church wanted to add vinyl siding and instead was aided by the HDC in finding a proper paint and paint system, which has held up for twenty years.

**Award to: Stephen and Ellen Ramsburgh**  
**For: Daniel Zimmerman House, 1503 Cambridge Road**



This Georgian style home, built in 1902, has been lovingly preserved and maintained by the current owners for over 10 years. Note the symmetrical Georgian plan of red brick with traditional white trim and green shutters. The entry is a simple Colonial Revival with square porch supports, all of which are original. The house was constructed for Daniel F. Zimmerman, a partner in Zimmerman and McOmber, loan agents. The builder was Eugene Hall, who lived nearby at 1430 Cambridge.

**Award to: Susan K. Agar Trust**  
**For: Groh House, 525 Cherry Street**



This small vernacular Queen Anne house is an excellent example of preservation. The original windows and clapboard siding have been retained and maintained. The Agar Trust, which has owned it since 1995, also owns the house to the west at 529 Cherry Street. This house can be traced back as far as 1892 when it was occupied by George Groh, a railroad car inspector for the Michigan Central Railroad. The Groh family continued to live here until World War I.

**Award to: Barbara Levin Bergman**  
**For: Wells Bennett House, 2045 Geddes Avenue**



This home was built in 1953 and designed by Wells Bennett, then dean of the UM School of Architecture. It is in the International Style and has been well maintained by current owner Barbara Bergman who purchased the property with her late husband, Reuben, in 1980. A 1980s kitchen addition blends seamlessly with the original. A renewed appreciation of

“mid-century modern” buildings is now a major trend all over the United States. We are fortunate to have such a wonderful example of this style.

**Award to: Maureen J. Barrett**  
**For: Emma Lowrey House, 848 East University Avenue**



This is a wonderful example of an Arts and Crafts house and has been kept in meticulous condition by its current owner. It was built in 1912 for Mrs. Emma Lowrey, a widow. In the 1960s it was the home of beloved English Professor Austin Warren and his wife, Antonia. Mrs. Barrett purchased it in 1991 and has maintained its historical qualities, including its unusual roof materials, detailing, and stone work, in pristine condition.

*Adaptive Reuse Awards*

Adaptive reuse awards recognize those resources that have been successfully reused in another manner than their original purpose.

**Award to: Morningside Ann Arbor LLC**  
**For: King-Seeley Factory, 315 Second Street [formerly 315 S. First]**



This former factory, built in 1928 and 1939 in the Old West Side Historic District, has been converted into condominiums and has given new residential life to a former industrial space. A new addition, approved by the HDC, replaced the oldest building on the site (a former tannery dating to the 1860s), which was judged unsalvageable. The new addition harmonizes nicely with the old, and this project, known as Liberty Lofts, has greatly added to housing density downtown.

*Special Merit Awards*

Special Merit awards are given to unusual or specific historic preservation activities that are neither rehabilitation, adaptive reuse, nor preservation maintenance.

**Award to: First Martin Corporation**  
**For: Staebler and Son Coal and Coke Company Trestle, 201 Depot Street**



First Martin Corporation has preserved the remains of Staebler and Son Coal and Coke Company’s railroad trestle siding. Michael Staebler began his coal business in 1885 at his Germania Hotel (now the Earle Restaurant) on the corner of Washington and Ashley. By 1908 he had a yard on Depot Street next to the railroad. When First Martin constructed its new building at this site, it not only preserved the historic trestle, but also found a 1950s Detroit and Mackinac coal car from Durand, Mich., to sit on top of the tracks.

**Award to: McKinley Associates Inc.**  
**For: Albert Polhemus House, 1528 Pontiac Trail (formerly at 411 East Washington Street)**



This award is to McKinley Associates for moving the historic 1848 Albert Polhemus House to 1528 Pontiac Trail in late 2006. The house moving was a well-attended community event and sparked a great outpouring of interest. This building had been protected as an Individual Historic Property, but lost that protection in 2001. McKinley set an excellent example in its determination to save the house by moving it from downtown to an appropriate older residential neighborhood.

*Centennial Awards*

Centennial Awards are given to businesses and organizations which have been in Ann Arbor for at least 100 years.

**Award to: Mark Hodesh and Margaret Parker**  
**For: Hertler Brothers (Downtown Home and Garden), 210 S. Ashley**



Brothers Gottlob, George and Herman Hertler purchased George Mann's horse barn (built in 1899) and organized their business as Hertler Brothers in 1906. In the late 1970s, they sold the business to Mark Hodesh who adapted it into a popular downtown destination. It remained as Hertler's until the 1990s, when Hodesh and his artist wife, Margaret Parker, returned from Maine to run the business. They had to relinquish the Hertler's name to the previous tenant, but they were able to rebuild the business and make it even more popular. Hodesh notes in his newsletter: "We work hard, [and] draw strength from our tradition of knowledgeable full-service staff and useful, durable products. For us, it's always been about the "old way", and that mantra has helped us adapt to the times without losing our soul."

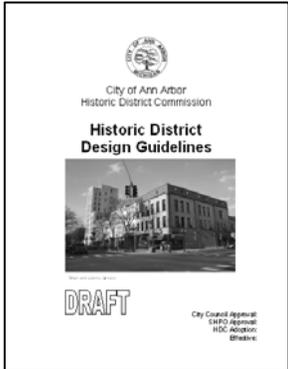
**Award to: University of Michigan**  
**For: The Nichols Arboretum and Matthaei Botanical Gardens**



In February 2007, the centennial of the "Arb", a 123-acre park, was celebrated and an exhibit was mounted in the Reader Center. It began in 1907 when Walter and Esther Nichols donated a large tract of rolling farmland to the University. This was supplemented by land donated by Botany Professor George P. Burns, Ann Arbor city parkland, and land donated to the city by Alex Dow of Detroit Edison. This exhibit featured both the history of the "Arb" and of Matthaei Botanical Gardens, which was also established in 1907.

## Additional Activities

A Historic District Commissioner retreat was held in April. The retreat agenda included advanced training on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, guidance on parliamentary procedure from parliamentarian Pat Austin, and detailed review of the draft Historic District Design Guidelines.



In March, City Council adopted the revised Chapters 8 and 103, updating the Historic Preservation Ordinance. Public workshops, meetings, and hearings were held prior to the ordinance changes. The revisions bring all of the City's thirteen historic districts under the same standard of review and the ordinance into compliance with current state law.

Draft design guidelines for all historic districts were approved by City Council in June. These guidelines assist in the interpretation of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, which are the basis for decision making in the historic districts. The guidelines are expected to be finalized and adopted in 2008.

## Areas Under Study



*Built by Samuel House in 1862, this house at 1660 Broadway is within the proposed Broadway Historic District*

In March, Council appointed members to the Broadway Historic District Study Committee. The committee met throughout 2007. After reviewing the history and resources of the district and holding two public meetings, the committee is recommending that two historic districts be created. The proposed Broadway Historic District is comprised of the residential area on Broadway, Cedar Bend, Jones, Traver, and Moore. The proposed 1001-1013 Broadway Historic District contains the oldest extant commercial building in Ann Arbor. These recommendations will be formally delivered to Council when the draft ordinance language is complete.

## 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) 994-2797 or email [jasthacher@a2gov.org](mailto:jasthacher@a2gov.org).