



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION TO THE ANN ARBOR CITY COUNCIL FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2011

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.

Annual Retreat

A Historic District Commissioner retreat was held February 12, 2011. The retreat agenda included review and discussion of:

- ❑ The restoration of a Greek Revival cottage on Pontiac Trail;
- ❑ New HDC guidelines designed to assist applicants and the public;
- ❑ Signage policies;
- ❑ The HDC bylaws.

Statistics

In 2011, action was taken on a total of 179 applications by the Commission or staff (on the Commission's behalf). This is up 12% from the 160 applications that were acted upon in 2010.

The Historic District Commission has delegated a number of minor activities to staff to approve on their behalf. 144 of the 179 applications submitted for staff approval received staff Certificates of Appropriateness (or 76% of all applications). 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 32 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 added one new item to the staff approvals list:

- ❑ Installation of venting for mechanical equipment (usually high-efficiency furnaces)

The Commission held hearings on the other 35 applications during their regular monthly meetings. Of those applications, 29 (or 83%) received Certificates of Appropriateness and six applications (or 17%) were denied. Two applications (5%) were partially denied, with some portion of the application not being approved while other aspects of the application received Certificates of Appropriateness. All of the sites were visited prior to their hearing by the HDC Review Committee, which is made up of two Commissioners and staff.

The denied work items included:

- ❑ a request to construct a second floor addition that was determined to be incompatible in design; the request was later resubmitted with modifications and was approved;
- ❑ a request to install a vinyl fabric blade sign, which was determined to be out of proportion and incompatible with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*;
- ❑ a request to construct a new basement egress window, because of the proposed location and multiple basement egress windows already in existence;
- ❑ a request to install a second driveway and curb cut on a residential lot;
- ❑ the construction of a wood split-rail fence that was an inappropriate design;
- ❑ a request for the demolition of a single-car garage and construction of a new two-car garage; the request was later resubmitted with modifications and was approved.

In 2011, a total of 103 building permits were issued for properties within Ann Arbor's historic districts. This represented an investment of \$1,834,836. Of the 1,997 permits issued for all properties in Ann Arbor in 2011, properties within historic districts accounted for 5.2% of the permits. 4.5% of parcels in Ann Arbor are in a local historic district.

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 2011 awards were presented by Mayor John Hieftje during the June 6, 2011 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: Edward Shaffran/Shaffran Equities
For: 306 South Main Street, Pratt Block

Over fifteen years ago Shaffran began the process of removing the false front on the former Kline's Department Store. This year he finished by restoring the elaborate cornice using the Detroit Cornice and Slate Company, who had built the original over 100 years ago. Constructed for a corset factory in 1896, it has seen many uses over the years but was Kline's for almost 70 of them. This rehabilitation

sparked the renovation of other buildings in the 300 block of S. Main which resulted in the removal of all the false fronts that had been added in the 1950s. Today this is the liveliest block in downtown Ann Arbor. It is in the Main Street Historic District.



Awarded to: Inter Cooperative Council (ICC)
For: 711 Catherine Street

The ICC at UM is one of the biggest holders of historic homes in downtown neighborhoods and last year focused on the complete renovation of the Linder Co-op. With the approval of the HDC, they replaced the windows with more energy efficient ones, removed asphalt siding, replaced the clapboard with Hardie plank and restored the late 19th century porch. Built in 1894 in the Second

Empire style (note the Mansard roof) with elaborate turned porch posts and cutouts, this house was originally a boarding house but quickly became the Phi Chi fraternity. This medical fraternity was prominently featured in the 1896 Ann Arbor Headlight magazine. It became Linder Co-Op in 1989. We applaud the ICC's commitment to the rehabilitation of its 19 homes in the downtown. This building is in the Old Fourth Ward Historic District.



Awarded to: Jean & Randolph Perry
For: 1701 Hill Street

Jean and Randolph love to restore old houses and this one was sorely in need of their care and skills. It was built originally for J. Playfair McMurrich, a Professor of Anatomy and is believed to have been designed by Irving Pond, of the Chicago architecture firm Pond and Pond, in 1894. Pond and Pond are best known as the architects for the Michigan Union and Michigan League. It was built by contractor John Copeland who bragged about it in one local publication. The house is built in a Colonial Revival style with elements of Craftsman in its massing and details.

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: Helen Pappas
For: 809 East Kingsley Street

This wonderful orange brick Art Deco apartment building, constructed in 1929, has been owned by the Pappas family since 1992. With its Moorish overtones in the pointed arched doorway, this building represents the epitome of Art Deco design and resembles many buildings in Detroit. It was designed by local architect R.S. Gerganoff, who built many buildings in Ypsilanti and also designed the Washtenaw County Courthouse on Main St. Ms. Pappas has done a fine job of maintaining the historic character of this building overlooking the Huron River. It is in the Old Fourth Ward Historic District.



Awarded to: Jeff & Marcia DeBoer
For: 1515 Cambridge Road

This house was built in 1927 and has been owned by the DeBoers since 1997. An article in the *Ann Arbor News* in 2003 pictured Jeff demonstrating the painting techniques he used to maintain the interior of this fine foursquare stucco home. He has also meticulously restored all the windows of the home.



Awarded to: Walter Spiller
For: 548 South Fifth Avenue

Walter Spiller purchased this property in 1977 and has preserved it and four other properties nearby on Madison as well. The house is a vernacular workman's house, probably dating to 1883 when the Kern family is first listed as living here. It has the distinctive round window in the attic, 2 over 2 windows and a heavy eave overhang from the roof. Kern family members lived here from then until circa 1940. This street was occupied entirely by Germans, including Stierle, Haller, and Mann, Stampfler, Gauss, Fiegel, Kern and Seeger families and forms the heart of the Germantown neighborhood.



Awarded to: George & Danielle Kuper
For: 431 Highland Road

This is one of the many homes in this neighborhood designed by Wells Bennett, a former Dean of the UM School of Architecture. It was built in 1927 for A.F. Shull, Associate Professor of Zoology at UM and purchased by the current owners in 1989. The owners have done a wonderful job of maintaining the exterior of this Tudor style home as it was designed by Bennett. It still manifests the pointed Gothic arch doorway, the half timbering and the steep roof pitch typical of this style.



Awarded to: Bethlehem United Church of Christ
For: 423 South Fourth Avenue

The Bethlehem Congregation is one of a handful of downtown churches that has remained on its original site while most of its members have moved away from what had once been an almost exclusively German neighborhood. The church was built in 1895 and designed by Detroit architect Richard Rasemann under the pastorship of Rev. John Neuman. It is built of fieldstone in the Richardsonian Romanesque style. An addition in the style of the original was constructed in 1935. We applaud the stewardship of this magnificent church with its beautiful stained glass windows, old organ and wonderful interior. The State of Michigan marker on the front lawn reminds us that they are the oldest German church in Michigan.



Awarded to: Firestone/Bridgestone Tire Company
For: 402 East Huron Street

This auto repair and tire store is still in its original 1930 configuration and still has many of its original windows. It is another example of a business that is still serving customers downtown and adds to the pleasure of living in

this neighborhood. The friendly onsite manager is proud of his building and it is maintained in excellent repair despite the fact their parent company is in Tennessee. We applaud the continued use of a building designed for this purpose and its continued service to downtown.



Awarded to: Tom & Linda O'Brien
For: 808 Lawrence Street

Members of the O'Brien family have lived on this site since the 1920s, shortly after it was built in 1917. The current owners have continued the tradition and raised their children here. We applaud their maintenance of owner occupancy in what is primarily a student neighborhood. The O'Briens have maintained this lovely Craftsman house with its details of overhanging eaves, stone foundation porch, and different materials for the first and second floors—all features of the style. We applaud them for living downtown and maintaining their property as well as others nearby. The house is located in the Old Fourth Ward Historic District



Awarded to: Alison Marsh
For: 513 Second Street

This is one of the first buildings constructed in this neighborhood when it was platted as William S. Maynard's Second Addition in 1846 and may date to circa 1850. We find David Rupp, a cabinet maker, living on the east side of West Second in 1868 and living at #17 in 1872. It was later renumbered to #37 and is associated with the Gakle family in the 1890s, an early pioneer family. The house exhibits the features of the domestic Greek Revival, with the long portion of the house facing the street and tiny eyebrow windows in the upper storey. We applaud the Marsh family for restoring this house. It is in the Old West Side Historic District

Special Merit Awards

These are awarded to projects that focus on an unusual aspect of a historic property.



Awarded to: Scott Kunst & Jane Rayburn, Old House Gardens

For: 536 Third Street

We applaud the adaptive reuse of the former barn-like garage in the rear of their home for the operation of their internationally famous antique bulb business. They gave up looking for a historic farm and decided to stay in town and create new green office and shipping space and expand their network of urban micro-farms. This business is in the Old

West Side Historic District.



Awarded to: Jeff Hauptman & Oxford Companies, 312 S. State LLC

For: 300 South State Street

The mural of famous authors and film makers, which has graced this corner for almost 25 years, was restored by the original artist. The mural depicts Frank Kafka, Anais Nin, Thomas Mann, Woody Allen and Edgar Allen Poe. It remains a landmark for a college town and is in the State Street Historic District.

Project of the Year



Awarded to: Matt & Kelly Grocoff

For: 217 South Seventh Street

This “net zero” house shows how preservation and sustainability can work in concert to be good both for the environment and the community. The home was built in 1902-03 and the first occupant was George Ristine. The Gauss family lived here from 1920 to 1940. The Grocoffs purchased their home in 2006 and immediately started restoring it. To save energy, they started small, just changing to more energy efficient light bulbs. By the end, they had placed solar panels on the roof, restored every window, insulated their home, installed a geothermal heating and cooling system, and more. These efforts reduced their energy bills to nothing, and in fact, the power company pays them for the excess energy they produce. Their accomplishments have garnered national attention and articles have appeared in the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s magazine *Preservation* and in *Detroit Hour* magazine. In the process, Kelly and Matt became advocates not only for sustainability but for historic preservation as well. This house is in the Old West Side Historic District.

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.