

# Ypsilanti Historic District Commission 2014 Annual Report

## Membership

Anne Stevenson, Chair  
Hank Prebys, Vice-Chair  
Ronald Rupert  
Michael Condon  
Alex Pettit  
Jennifer Henriksen (Last day May 27, 2014)  
Erika Lindsay (Confirmed October 21, 2014)  
Jane Schmiedeke

## Commission and Staff

Throughout 2014, the Historic District Commission (HDC) continued meeting on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers.

The HDC was staffed by interns Cynthia Kochanek and Abigail Jaske. In the HDC Assistant role, they worked 15-20 hours per week performing various administrative tasks to enable the Commission to fulfill its responsibilities under the historic district ordinance. Staff responsibilities included reviewing Historic District Work Permit Applications prior to meetings; corresponding with applicants; preparing meeting agendas, Commission packets, and minutes; property monitoring; and preparing reports as needed.

The Commission continued to provide prompt review of applications. The current application procedure begins with the filing of a Historic District Work Permit Application by noon on the Wednesday before the HDC meeting. The applications are then collected from the Building Department and reviewed by staff for completeness. Incomplete applications are addressed through written or phone correspondence to the applicant, requesting that additional information be provided prior to the meeting. Properties under consideration are photographed by staff for reference and included with all completed applications into assembled meeting packets. Packets are then posted on the City of Ypsilanti's website and emailed to the Commission by the Friday before each meeting.

The HDC Assistant attends each Commission meeting. After the meeting, the HDC Assistant writes all decision letters and a draft of the official minutes. The draft is then forwarded to the HDC Chair for review. The turnaround time for this process, from application submittal to mailing of decision letters, generally takes about ten days;

however, the approvals are provided to the building department the next day so as to expedite the work getting done.

Potential applicants are encouraged to bring projects to the Commission as study items before formal submission of a Work Permit Application. This allows the Commission to provide feedback to property owners at a conceptual stage, clarifying expectations and allowing for a more predictable final review.

<b>Statistics and Trends</b>
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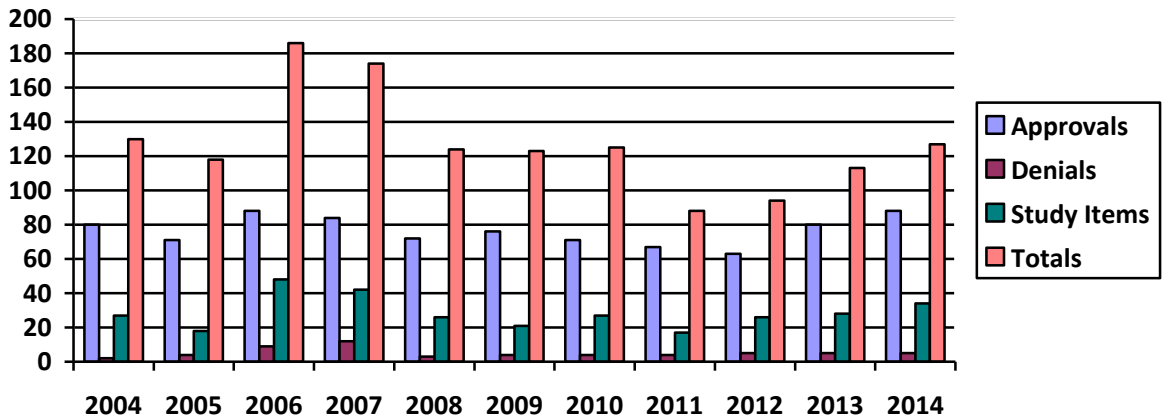
The number of applications received this year was the highest number received since the year 2007. The lower amounts of applications in recent years reflect the impact of economic issues. The ambitious scope of many of the approved projects reflects the commitment of residents and businesses to the improvement of the local community. The number of applications and actions taken is shown in the table below.

**Historic District Commission Actions, 2004-2014**

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Applications approved as submitted	80	71	88	84	72	76	71	51	44	62	54
Applications approved with modifications	20	22	10	8	2	3	7	15	10	6	25
Administrative approvals			24	19	11	12	13	11	9	10	9
Applications denied due to lack of information	2	4	6	3	1	3	2	1	2	0	0
Applications denied due to inappropriateness	0	0	3	9	2	1	2	3	3	5	5
Applications pending at end of year	1	3	2	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Study Items	27	18	48	42	26	21	27	17	26	28	34
Amendments to previous approvals			5	7	9	6	2	5	2	2	3
<b>Total Applications</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>130</b>

To illustrate the number of projects within the Historic District this year as compared to the past ten years, the chart below depicts HDC Work Permit application activity from 2004 through 2014.

### Historic District Work Permit Application Data, 2004-2014



Source: Planning & Development Department Records

### Historic District Fact Sheets

In 2014, revisions continued on the HDC fact sheets. A review of the all fact sheets will be conducted throughout the coming year. The alternative energy, fences, and windows fact sheets were revised for current standards. The porch fact sheet revision was started in November 2014 and will be finalized in the first few months of 2015. The sample applications were edited on the HDC website to bring them up to current standards.

### Demolitions

No demolitions were approved in 2014.

### Appeals

317 S. Huron – An appeal based on the Historic District Commission’s decision to deny the installation of vinyl windows that were installed at the back of the structure in 2006 was dropped. The Commission denied the application on January 28, 2014 since vinyl and vinyl-clad windows were not permissible within the historic district. The owner appealed the decision to the Michigan SHPO and a hearing was scheduled for May 20, 2014 however the owner was willing to settle the issue before the hearing date.

## Significant Projects

The Historic District continued to benefit from investment over the past year. Some of the significant projects are summarized here:

- Riverside Park- The installation of a kiosk for the Heritage River Water Trail was approved.
- Thompson Block- The HDC approved a rehabilitation project for the Thompson Block. This included painting, window installation, parking lot installation, store fronts, lighting, and an addition for stairs and elevator, as well as rooftop decks.
- Starkweather House- A letter was sent by the HDC commission to the insurance company regarding the need to protect the existing zinc roof.
- 230 W. Michigan Ave.- Restoration project of façade to match more appropriately with other surrounding storefronts. The HDC approved the removal of shake shingles, glass block and green paneling above the storefront. Windows were duplicated from neighboring storefront.
- 314 E. Cross- HDC approved project to repair porch while preserving original details on the left side. New posts were also installed, but replicated to match the old ones which were chamfered. Furthermore, roof replacement was approved to match the existing and preserve architectural elements.
- 304 E. Forest- Repairs of the siding and painting were approved by the HDC. Landscaping was redone to remove dirt ramp.
- 206 Oak St.- HDC approved a solar panel installation on the garage and back porch area of the home. This project is an example of how solar panels are being utilized in the historic district while preserving the historic integrity of buildings.

## Educational Workshops

The HDC planned three educational workshops for the spring and early summer 2014. The workshop schedule was as follows:

- *Weatherization of the Historic House* on April 22, 2014
- *Alternative Energy for the Historic House* on May 31, 2014
- *Historic Window Repair* on June 24, 2014

The first two workshops were well attended. The *Historic Window Repair* workshop was cancelled due to a presenter's last minute conflict and was unable to be re-scheduled for a later date. Due to the success of previous workshops, a series of similar educational workshops may be planned for 2015.

## Evaluation and Training

CLG Evaluation- 2012 saw an evaluation conducted of the Ypsilanti Historic District Commission. Created by MSHDA for the purpose of analyzing how historic district commissions in certified local governments operate, the evaluation was filled out and submitted to the state. Results of the evaluation are still forthcoming.

## Conclusion

Although of varied scope and scale, the projects completed throughout 2014 are excellent examples of the continued preservation efforts of property owners within the Ypsilanti Historic District. Commendation by the City is due to these owners for their substantial contribution to the community as they continue to support the efforts of the HDC to beautify the district and preserve the heritage of Ypsilanti's built environment.

This report respectfully submitted to the Ypsilanti City Council by the Historic District Commission.

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Anne Stevenson, Chair  
Historic District Commission

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Date

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Abigail Jaske, HDC Assistant  
Planning and Development Department

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Date