

Historic District Commission 2012 Annual Report

Membership

Jane Schmiedeke, Chair
Hank Prebys, Vice-Chair
Ronald Rupert
Michael Condon
Alex Pettit
Jennifer Henriksen
Anne Stevenson

Commission and Staff

Throughout 2012, 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 Connie Locker and Adam Cripps. As HDC Assistant, he 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 on 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.

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.

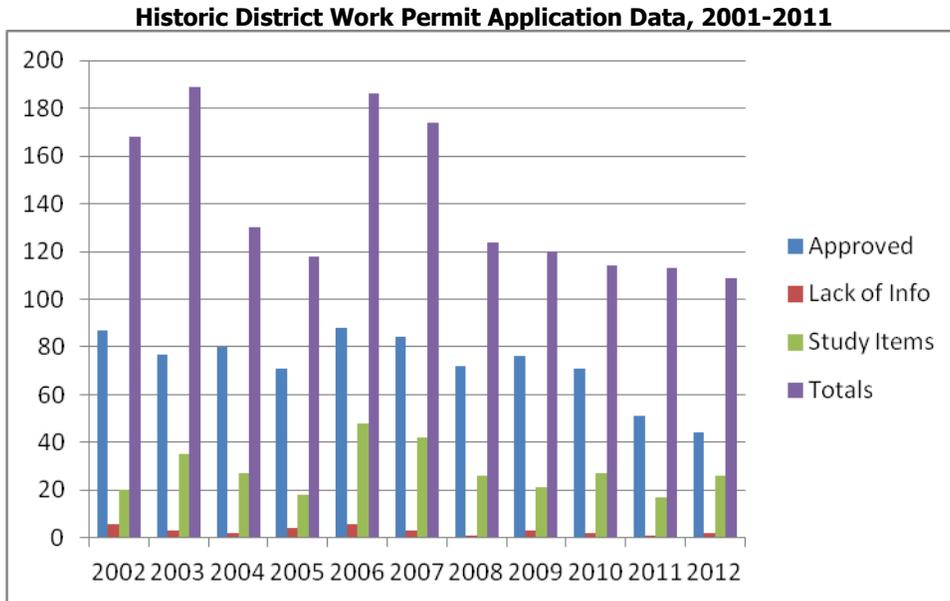
Statistics and Trends

Although the number of applications received this year was significantly lower than in recent years due to 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, 2009-2012

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Applications approved as submitted	75	81	95	87	77	80	71	88	84	72	76	71	51	44
Applications approved with modifications	42	66	14	38	61	20	22	10	8	2	3	7	15	10
Administrative approvals		1						24	19	11	12	13	11	9
Applications denied due to lack of information	5	7	4	6	3	2	4	6	3	1	3	2	1	2
Applications denied due to inappropriateness	1	10	2	11	12	0	0	3	9	2	1	2	3	3
Applications pending at end of year	3	3	4	6	1	1	3	2	2	1	1	1	0	0
Study Items	21	25	29	20	35	27	18	48	42	26	21	27	17	26
Amendments to previous approvals								5	7	9	6	2	5	2
Total Applications	148	193	148	168	189	130	118	186	174	124	123	125	103	96

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 2002 through 2012.



Historic District Fact Sheets

In 2012, revisions began on the fencing fact sheet but were not approved before the end of the year. A review of the remaining fact sheets will be conducted throughout the coming year. Production of house style fact sheets will also begin in 2013.

Demolitions

No demolitions were approved in 2012.

Appeals

No appeals were requested in 2012.

Significant Projects

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

- 720 Norris – Application was made for the installation of solar panels on Corner Brewery. The application was approved on the condition that they be lowered in order to maintain the roofline and façade of the building. Installation of these panels supports the initiative of the brewery to become more eco-friendly.

- 100 W. Michigan- Work was approved for the Dalat restaurant to include the addition of six windows on the south elevation of the building and two others on the east elevation. An additional two windows on the east elevation were eliminated. This approval allowed the owners to establish residential space that could be rented.
- 203 S. Huron- Construction has begun on the Gilbert Residence's planned addition for the care of Alzheimer's and dementia patients which was approved in March of 2011. This work consists of an addition using brick with plank siding near the roofline, composite shingles, and clad windows to match the existing building.
- 209 Washtenaw- Replacement of yellowed and cracked Plexiglas window coverings was conducted at the Methodist Church at 209 Washtenaw. The Plexiglas was replaced with regular glass panes that were at least ¼" thick. In addition to replacing window coverings, the stained glass windows were treated with a material to strengthen and repair the existing lead comes.
- 201-203 W. Michigan- Application was received for repainting the upper two stories, window sashes, and arch elements of The Tap Room. An alternative palette than that proposed in the application was recommended.
- 39 E. Cross- Approval was given to Aubree's Pizza for lettering reconstructed on the east elevation of the structure. This "Lunch Buffet" advertisement was present in historic photographs of the building and was barely visible to the naked eye.
- Freight house – Under new management the Friends of the Freight house are working to open a small café in the former office of the building. Improvements continue to be made in the interior of the building in preparation for commuter rail service in the near future.
- Starkweather – During 2012, work has continued on Starkweather consisting of the removal of the cement porches on the south and east elevations. In addition preparations have begun for restoring the wood porch and pillars on the south elevation. Plans for 2013 include completion of the south porch and removal of the west elevation cement porch in order to replicate a wooden porch present in a photograph from 1911.

Educational Workshops

The HDC continued hosting educational workshops on topics of interest to residents of the district. Two sessions were planned consisting of:

- Repairing Historic Windows
- Weatherization Made Simple

Unfortunately, a medical emergency forced the cancellation of the weatherization workshop. It is currently being rescheduled for 2013.

Due to the success of these workshops, a series of similar presentations by preservation professionals from the Michigan Historic Preservation Network, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, private firms, and the State Historic Preservation Office has been planned for 2013.

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.

Commission Retreat- In July, the commission conducted training at Spark East. John Barr, the city attorney, discussed ethics with the commission while Ted Ligibel presented on the role of historic districts in the community. A review of current fact sheets was also conducted and discussion held as to how to update and make them more accessible to the general public.

Conclusion

Although of varied scope and scale, the projects completed throughout 2012 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.

Jane Schmiedeke, Chair
Historic District Commission

Date

Adam Cripps, HDC Assistant
Planning and Development Department

Date