

# Historic District Commission 2010 Annual Report

## Membership

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

## Commission and Staff

Throughout 2010, 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. In October, Anne Stevenson, a graduate student in the historic preservation program at Eastern Michigan University (EMU) and the most recent HDC Assistant, was appointed Commissioner.

From January to September, the HDC was staffed by intern Anne Stevenson. As HDC Assistant, she worked 15-20 hours per week performing various administrative tasks to enable the Commission to fulfill its responsibilities under the ordinance. When she was appointed Commissioner in October, her position was filled by EMU undergraduate Jessica Brigle, who retained the internship through December. EMU historic preservation graduate student Connie Locker was hired at the end of the year as the HDC Assistant for 2011.

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. Additionally, staff administratively approved routine roof work under conditions that the Commission has defined.

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 both completeness and zoning compliance. 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. Staff assembles completed applications into meeting packets and delivers them to Commissioners on the Friday before the 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.

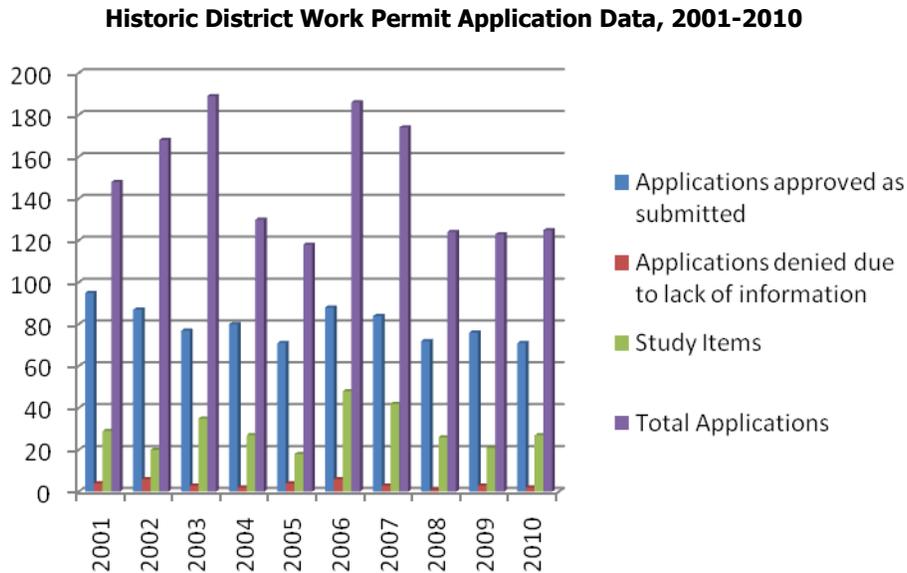
## Statistics and Trends

Although economic problems have impacted the community as a whole, this year's statistics reveal that both residents and businesses are continuing to invest in properties in the Ypsilanti Historic District. The volume of applications received remained in the same range as the previous two years, indicating a stable interest in building improvement projects within the District. The number of applications and actions taken is shown in the table below.

**Historic District Commission Actions, 2007-2010**

	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Applications approved as submitted	84	72	76	71
Applications approved with modifications	8	2	3	7
Administrative approvals	19	11	12	13
Applications denied due to lack of information	3	1	3	2
Applications denied due to inappropriateness	9	2	1	2
Applications pending at end of year	2	1	1	1
Study Items	42	26	21	27
Amendments to previous approvals	7	9	6	2
<b>Total Applications</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>125</b>

To illustrate the number of projects within the Historic District this year as compared to previous years, the chart below depicts HDC Work Permit application activity from 2001 through 2010.



Source: Planning & Development Department Records

## Historic District Fact Sheets

In 2010, the Historic District Commission created a Satellite Dish Fact Sheet.

## Demolitions

105 W. Cross – The Commission found the demolition of the structure to be in the best interest of the community.

32-34, 36-38, and 40 E. Michigan Ave – The Commission found the buildings had no historical or architectural significance and would be a deterrent to the Water Street improvement project. Demolition was therefore approved.

420 N. Hamilton – The garage on the property was found to be unsafe by the Commission. Demolition of the structure was approved.

## Appeals

119 N. Huron – A railing on the building was installed without the submission of a work permit application to the HDC. Upon request of the HDC, an application was filed for the completed work. The Commission found the railing to be inappropriate for the structure and denied the application. The property owners have since filed an appeal and a hearing date of March 3, 2011 has been set.

## Significant Projects

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

- 120/122 W. Michigan – The metal façade of the structure was removed and the store front was bumped out.
- 108 W. Michigan – The back wall of the building was completely reconstructed with existing and reclaimed brick. The wall was replaced due to bowing.
- Freighthouse – Work completed with approval of the State Historic Preservation Office included:
  - Excess soil from under the floor and from beneath the north deck removed
  - Foundation for the walls brought up to code
  - Electrical upgrades made
  - Steel beams inserted as structural reinforcement to load-bearing walls
  - Roof rafters replaced, roof insulated, and standing seam metal roof installed
  - West deck constructed
  - Brick cleaned; mortar re-pointed
  - Staircase and an ADA ramp constructed

Various instances of demolition took place in order to install the necessary foundation and beams.

- Starkweather – Work continues at 1266 Huron. Additions constructed during the 1950s have been removed to recreate the 1850 footprint of the structure. The north side of the building has been resided and painted. The east entrance door has been removed and the original window installed in its place. Terms of the modified agreement between the City and the property owner are being reevaluated and a resolution is expected in early 2011.

## **Educational Workshops**

This year, the HDC began hosting educational workshops on topics of interest to residents of the district. Three sessions were held ("Introduction to Historic Preservation," "Historic Window Repair," and "Tax Credits") and residents were able to confer with professional presenters from the Michigan Historic Preservation Network, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the State Historic Preservation Office.

Due to the success of these workshops, a series of similar presentations for 2011 has been planned.

## **Conclusion**

Although of varied scope and scale, the projects completed throughout 2010 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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Jane Schmiedeke, Chair  
Historic District Commission

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Date

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Connie Locker, HDC Assistant  
Planning and Development Department

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Date