



CITY OF

# Ypsilanti

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## Historic District

### HDC Fact Sheet

This Fact Sheet is not a substitute for the ordinance, but addresses common questions about City ordinances. For further information, please contact the Historic District Assistant.

All permit applications are available from the Building Department and at [cityofypsilanti.com/permits](http://cityofypsilanti.com/permits).

Completed applications may be dropped off at the Building Department.

### City Hall

One South Huron  
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

#### Building

3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, City Hall  
Phone: (734) 482-1025  
[cityofypsilanti.com/building](http://cityofypsilanti.com/building)

#### Planning

4<sup>th</sup> Floor, City Hall  
Phone: (734) 483-9646  
[cityofypsilanti.com/planning](http://cityofypsilanti.com/planning)

#### Historic District

4<sup>th</sup> Floor, City Hall  
Phone: (734) 483-9646  
[cityofypsilanti.com/hdc](http://cityofypsilanti.com/hdc)

All permits, fees, and factsheets can be found at [cityofypsilanti.com/permits](http://cityofypsilanti.com/permits).

### What is a Historic District?

A historic district is an area of a community with a high concentration of historically and architecturally significant structures worthy of preservation. Historic districts are created based on the age of properties, integrity of the structures, and their significance to history and the community.

### What is the Historic District Commission?

The Historic District Commission (HDC) consists of seven citizens appointed by the Mayor with the concurrence of City Council. It is responsible for guiding development and construction within the Historic District so that it can continue to be an asset of Ypsilanti. The Commission works to preserve and enhance historic features by reviewing and acting upon all applications for building permits in the HDC. This includes, but is not limited to, *alteration, addition, repair, demolition, and moving, as well as fences, signs, or painting.*

The historic district ordinance and the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation guide all Commission decisions. Copies of the ordinance and the Secretary's Standards are available at City Hall or online at [www.cityofypsilanti.com/hdc](http://www.cityofypsilanti.com/hdc).

### How do I get approval?

1. Fill out an HDC Work Permit application, available on the City website or from the Building Department at City Hall. An application can be an Action Item or a Study Item. The Commission can only make a decision on an Action Item, for which there is an application fee. The Study Item option is useful as you plan your project, as it can give you a sense of what's considered appropriate for your property. It doesn't commit you to a course of action, nor the HDC to an approval or denial, and it's free. This helps projects go more smoothly, and often can help you save valuable time and money.
2. Submit the application and required materials to the Building Department (3<sup>rd</sup> floor of City Hall) by the deadline, 4pm on the first and third Tuesday of the month; meetings are held every second and fourth Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm in City Hall unless stated otherwise by the Commission.
3. HDC will review the application at a public meeting and approve, deny, or table it. To speed up the process and avoid being tabled, the applicant or someone familiar with the project, such as the contractor, should be at the meeting to answer any questions.
4. The applicant will be mailed the Commission's decision with a description of the work to be done and the basis for their decision, drawn from the Secretary for the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Structures.
5. The Building Department is generally notified of the meeting results by noon the next day, so that applicants can pick up permits that may have been waiting for HDC approval before being issued. However, HDC approval does not guarantee other approvals.

**Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the  
Rehabilitation of Historic Structures**

**U.S. Department of the Interior,  
National Park Service**

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1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archaeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

**City of Ypsilanti Code, Chapter 54,  
Historic Preservation (excerpt)**

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1. The proposed height should be within ten percent of the average height of existing adjacent historic resources.
2. The proposed setback should not be more than five percent in front of or behind the existing setback of adjacent historic resources.
3. The relationship of the height to the width of the front facade should be consistent with the pattern established by existing adjacent historic resources.
4. The relationship of the height to the width of windows, doors and other openings should be consistent with the pattern established by existing adjacent historic resources.
5. The rhythm of structural mass to voids (openings) across the front facade should be consistent with the pattern established by existing adjacent historic resources.
6. The rhythm of structural mass to open space between structures should be consistent with the pattern established by existing adjacent historic resources.
7. The rhythm created by the placement of sidewalks, entrances, steps, porches and canopies should be consistent with the pattern established by existing adjacent historic resources.
8. The proposed construction materials should be the same type as those that have already been heavily used in existing adjacent historic resources.
9. The proposed textures of the building materials should relate to and complement the predominant textures of the materials used in existing adjacent historic resources.
10. The proposed colors, whether of natural materials, such as brick and stone; or applied colors, such as paint and pre-colored siding, should relate to and complement the colors used on existing adjacent historic resources.
11. No specific architectural style shall be required for the construction of a new building, addition or other structure. The proposed architectural details should be appropriate for the style of the structure on which they are to be used and compatible with other structures in the historic district and particularly to historic resources and sites to which they may be visually related.
12. The proposed roof shape and profile should relate to the predominant styles of existing adjacent historic resources.
13. The proposed landscape designs and choices of plant material should be appropriate to the character of the historic district and that of the involved historic resource.
14. The proposed paving (i.e., brick, block, concrete, slate) should be of the same types as those already heavily used around existing adjacent historic resources.