

Historic District Commission 2003 Annual Report

Membership

Jane Schmiedeke, Chair
Hank Prebys, Vice-Chair
Betty Miller (January to August) -- resigned
Christian Overland
Brenda Rigdon, Architect
Ronald Rupert
Robert Taylor (February to December) – resigned

Commission and Staff

The Historic District Commission continued to meet on the first and third Tuesdays of each month, which met the requirements of the Historic District Ordinance. The meetings were held at 7:00 p.m. in the City Hall meeting room.

In 2003, the Commission was staffed by Associate City Planner Jimar Wilson. Staff responsibilities included: reviewing applications for historic district work permits, corresponding with applicants, preparing meeting agendas, Commissioner Packets and minutes, property monitoring and preparing reports as needed. Due to budget constraints, the EMU Graduate Student Assistantship was eliminated as of December 31, 2002. As a result, the HDC was understaffed for the majority of 2003. Temporary staff support was provided from September through December by Vanessa Haight, a graduate student in the Master of Urban Planning Program at the University of Michigan. The HDC Assistant served approximately 5 hours per week, performing various administrative duties which enabled the Commission to fulfill the requirements of the ordinance.

The Building Official, Charles Boulard, attended several meetings throughout the calendar year, providing valuable communication between the HDC and the Building Department, as well as assistance in ensuring compliance with the Historic District Ordinance.

The Commission continued to function in a manner that provides prompt review of applications. To summarize the current procedure, once an application is filed by the deadline (Wednesday prior to HDC meeting), staff assembles the applications from the Building Department and reviews the applications for completeness. Any incomplete applications are addressed through written or phone correspondence to the applicant, requesting additional information. Staff assembles completed applications into meeting packets and delivers them to Commissioners on Friday before the meeting. Staff also takes photographs of every project being considered. The Associate City Planner and HDC Assistant, when present, attend each Commission meeting. After the meeting, the HDC Assistant writes all decision letters and the official minutes from the meeting. This general process or turnaround time from application submittal to mailing of decision letters takes approximately 10 days.

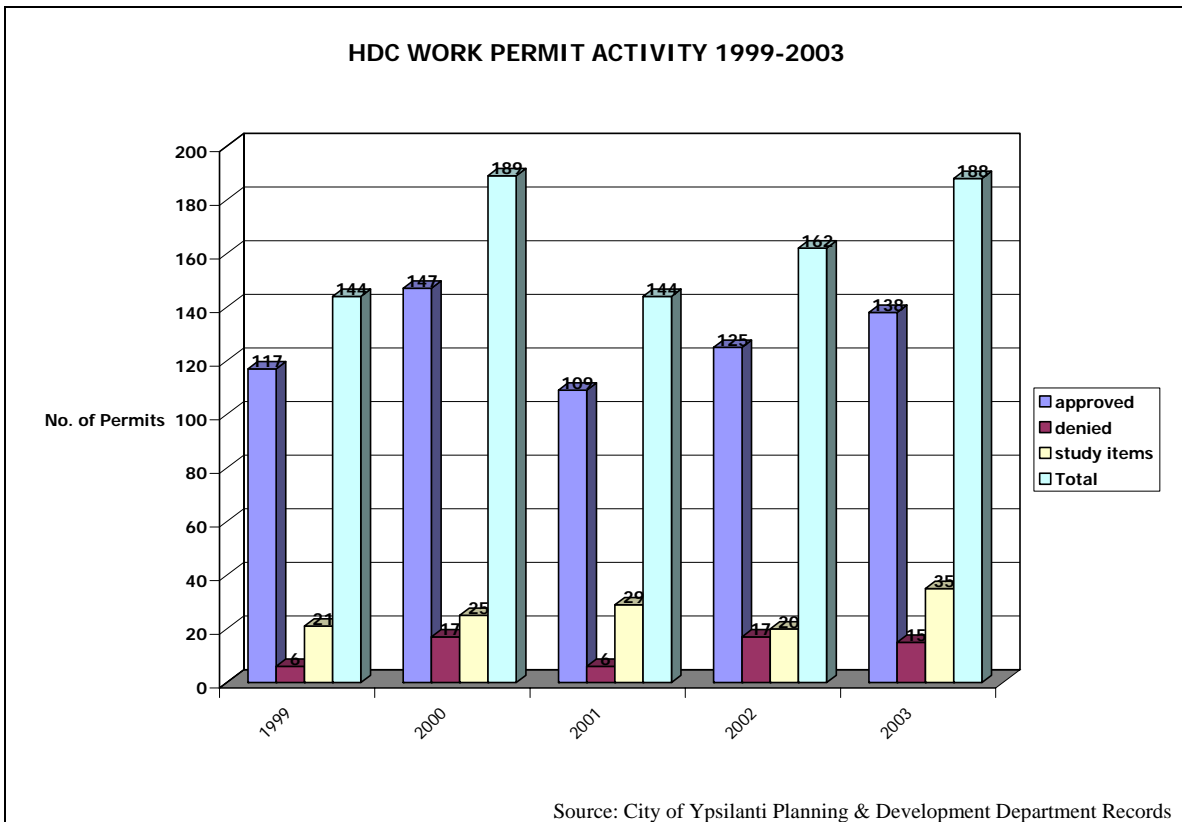
Statistics and Trends

For the past few years, residents of the historic district have been investing in their homes and businesses at increasing rates. Compared to last year's total discussion number of 168, the number of discussions in 2003 has increased by 12.5%. The total number of discussions since 2001 has increased by nearly 30%. The following table breaks down the number of discussions by HDC action:

	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
Applications approved as submitted	95	87	77
Applications approved with modifications	14	38	61
Applications denied due to lack of information	4	6	3
Applications denied due to inappropriate materials	2	11	12
Applications pending at end of year	4	6	1
Study items	29	20	35
Total Discussions	148	168	189

Source: City of Ypsilanti Planning & Development Department Records

To further illustrate activity in the historic district, the chart below shows HDC Work Permit activity from 1999 through 2003.



Completed Projects

In 2003, the Historic District Commission and staff completed the following specific projects:

- New Fact Sheets written and existing Fact Sheets revised as necessary. These HD Fact Sheets serve as guides to property owners who wish to perform some of the more common types of redevelopment and restoration projects.
- Staff, with the assistance of the HDC Chair, facilitated a workshop hosted by the Downtown Ypsilanti District Library for property owners on acquiring Historic Preservation Tax Credits.

Ongoing Projects

The following projects commenced in 2003, and should be completed and/or implemented in 2004:

- New property monitoring procedures, emphasizing stronger communication between HDC, Building and P & D Departments.
- Ordinance amendments.
- Updating/providing more information on the Web Site.

Demolitions

Approved

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| • 2-4 Water Street | Principal Structures |
| • 2 E Michigan | Principal Structure |
| • 6-8 E Michigan | Principal Structures |
| • 10 E Michigan | Principal Structure |
| • 14 E Michigan | Principal Structure |
| • 20 E Michigan | Principle Structure |
| • 34-38 E Michigan | Principal Structure |
| • 40 E Michigan | Principal Structure |
| • 102-116 E Michigan | Principal Structure |

Not approved

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| • 314 E Forest | Garage (demolished without a permit) |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|

Appeals

- 111 N Adams—Request to demolish the garage was denied by HDC. The State Historic Review Board has tabled the hearing until March 21, 2004, pending further communication between the City and the owner.
- 314 E Forest—the owner appealed his citation (misdemeanor) given by the City for demolition of a resource without a permit. His appeal to the district court was denied.
- 601 N River—Kenneth Posner, counsel for Wallside Windows, appealed the citation (misdemeanor) given by the City for installing inappropriate windows (full vinyl) without permit. The district court recommended both parties reach a mutual agreement out of court. An agreement was reached, but Wallside has yet to follow through on their commitment.

Significant Projects

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

- West Michigan Avenue Loft Apartments: 200-208 W Michigan. The buildings are planned to have 20 loft apartments on the upper floors and retail on the first floor.
- Water Street Project: Buildings in the Water Street Project area will be demolished and the new properties will contribute to a major improvement program that will substantially benefit the community.
- 400 N. River: The Thompson Building is in the hands of a receiver charged with restoring the building.
- 52 E Cross: Extensive façade renovations are near completion.
- 32 E Cross (Quiznos Sub): New submarine sandwich franchise in Depot Town. Opening in February 2004.
- 8-14 S Huron: Extensive renovations completed for entire exterior of this prominent downtown building.
- 305 Maple St.: New additions to second floor and rear (kitchen) completed.
- 306 S Huron: Significant restoration to home in the historic south side: new fencing, storm windows, porch decking/railings, and new exterior paint job.
- 217 W Michigan: Extensive storefront and other exterior renovations.
- 211 Arcade: New four-unit apartment building being built per HD standards. Near completion.
- Ypsilanti Public Library: Large-scale building renovation project completed.

Conclusion

The above projects are all excellent examples of restoration and reflect Ypsilanti's sense of pride and commitment to historic preservation. Commendation by the City is due to these owners for

their substantial contribution to the community as they help support our efforts to beautify the district and preserve our historic heritage.

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

Jane Schmiedeke, Chair
Historic District Commission

Date

Jimar Wilson, Planner
Planning and Development Department

Date