

# Historic District Commission 2004 Annual Report

## Membership

Jane Schmiedeke, Chair  
Hank Prebys, Vice-Chair  
Joseph Schultz  
Edward Penet  
Christian Overland  
Brenda Rigdon, Architect  
Ronald Rupert

## 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 2004, the Commission was staffed by City Planner I Jimar Wilson from January through April, and City Planner I Karen Wieber from April through December. 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. Staff support was provided from the end of February through December by Suzanne McCoy, a student in the Urban Planning Program at Eastern Michigan University. The HDC Assistant served approximately 10 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 both completeness and zoning compliance. 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 City Planner I 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.

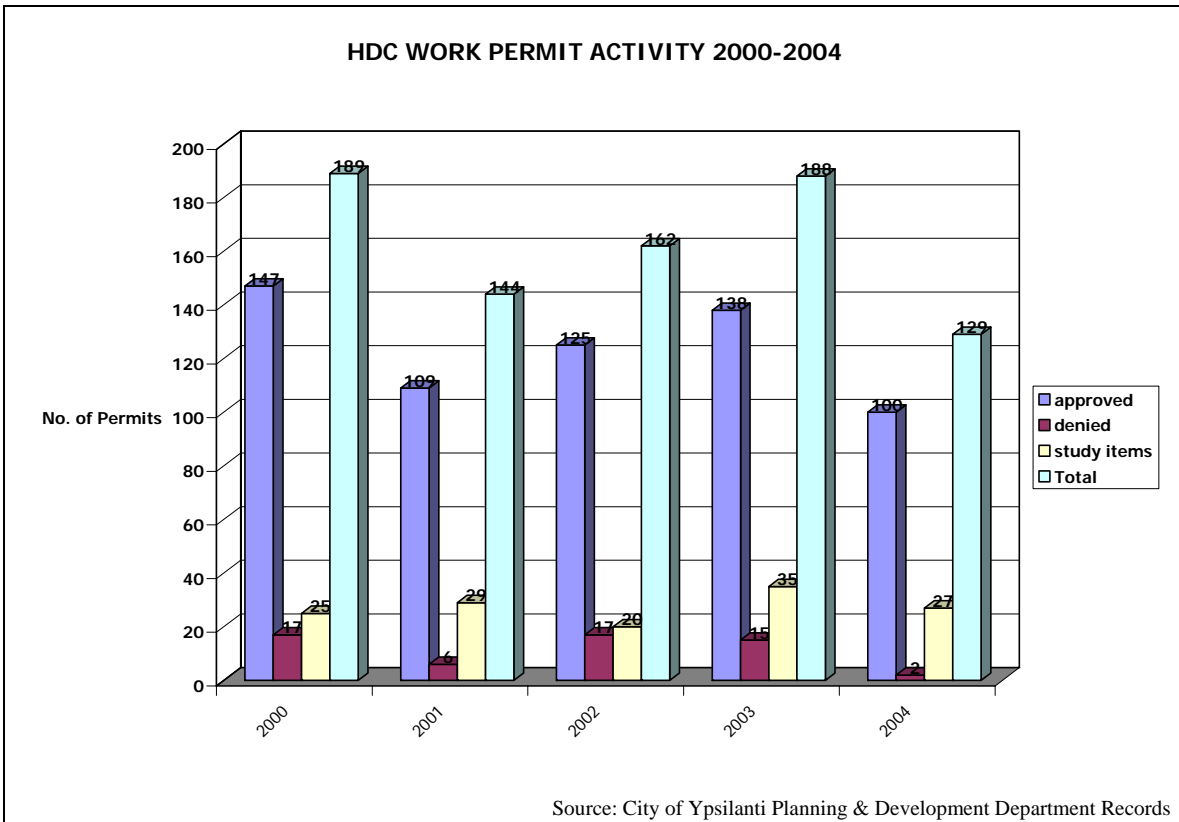
## Statistics and Trends

Applications for work in the Historic District decreased from year 2003 to year 2004, possibly due to the downturn in the economy. However, despite the decrease, many property owners continued to invest in the district, as is evidenced by the table below:

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>
Applications approved as submitted	87	77	80
Applications approved with modifications	38	61	20
Applications denied due to lack of information	6	3	2
Applications denied due to inappropriate materials	11	12	0
Applications pending at end of year	6	1	1
Study items	20	35	27
<b>Total Discussions</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>130</b>

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 2000 through 2004.



## Completed Projects

In 2004, the Historic District Commission and staff completed the following specific projects:

- New Fact Sheets written and existing Fact Sheets revised as necessary, including a procedures guide for demolition and moving of structures in the district. Most of these Fact Sheets serve as guides to property owners who wish to perform some of the more common types of redevelopment and restoration projects.

## Ongoing Projects

The following projects commenced in 2004, and should be completed and/or implemented in 2005:

- Historic District Study Committee review of the Starkweather home at 1266 Huron River Drive, for consideration as a second historic district.
- Amendments to the Historic District Ordinance.
- Updating/providing more information on the Web Site.

## Demolitions

The Commission approved the demolition of a fire-damaged outbuilding at 406 Maple Street.

## Appeals

- 111 N Adams—Request to demolish the carriage house was denied by HDC. The State Historic Review Board ruled to uphold the HDC's decision.
- 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.

## Significant Projects

The Historic District continued to benefit from 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. The project is currently under construction with an anticipated completion date of May 2005.
- 400 N. River: The Thompson Building is in the hands of a receiver charged with restoring the building.
- 217 W. Michigan: Extensive renovation of this building was recently completed to house a new coffee shop in downtown Ypsilanti.
- 211 Arcade: New four-unit apartment building recently completed.
- 105 Babbit – Second-floor addition to home.
- 19 N. Hamilton – Removal of aluminum siding and restoration/painting of wood siding underneath.
- 12 Oak – Removal of aluminum siding, installation of appropriate windows, restoration of wood siding.

**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.

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Jane Schmiedeke, Chair  
Historic District Commission

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Date

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Karen Wieber, Planner  
Planning and Development Department

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Date