

YPSILANTI HISTORIC DISTRICT FACT SHEET

YPSILANTI HISTORIC DISTRICT

This is one of a series of Fact Sheets provided by the Historic District Commission

WHAT IS HISTORIC PRESERVATION?

Historic preservation is the planned and guided protection, rehabilitation, maintenance and reuse of our architectural resources.

As recently as 1960, private efforts at preservation were limited to the rescue of an occasional mansion or monument, the federal government was busily engaged in urban renewal programs which leveled the older parts of many communities, few states had effective preservation programs, and local governments which made preservation an official part of their planning process were few and far between.

Enormous changes in attitude toward preservation have come in more recent years as a result of growing concern for our dwindling resources (including buildings themselves), the escalating costs of new construction, a revived interest in the nation's history, and a new appreciation of the aesthetic and economic value of historic architecture.

Preservation is no longer the sentimental saving of a beautiful old building – it is now a broad concept involving building codes, land use planning, tax law, open space planning, downtown revitalization – a vital tool for the conservation of neighborhoods and cities. Private involvement in preservation is extensive: thousands of people of ordinary means are engaged in the restoration of historic buildings, federal laws and tax benefits now encourage preservation, the states pursue active programs and offer assistance to local communities, and hundreds of cities have adopted preservation as official policy by establishing historic districts.

YPSILANTI

With the designation in 1973 of the Ypsilanti Historic District and the passage in 1978 of an ordinance to protect the District, the City of Ypsilanti recognized its wealth of historic architecture and committed itself to the conservation and careful development of the District for the benefit of the entire community. In so doing, it joined a rapidly growing number of U.S. cities in choosing preservation as one way to deal with an all too familiar array of urban problems.

The Ypsilanti Historic District enjoys the honor of being on both the State and National Registers of Historic Places, the highest possible recognition of the merit of its historic architecture.

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The Historic District Commission reserves all rights to amend or update this Fact Sheet at any time.

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. It is not an architectural museum in which no old building is ever torn down and no new building ever built. It must always be a growing, functioning part of the total community. Ideally, it is protected by a historic district ordinance and administered by a historic district commission.

Communities across the country have established historic districts in order to maintain the unique character of the district, encourage the recycling and continued productive use of fine old buildings, encourage new construction of a compatible nature, prevent the visual and financially harmful effects of neglected property, provide guidance for property owners, stabilize property values, protect investment and encourage new vitality.

These goals are realized through the implementation of an ordinance whose provisions serve to guide the decisions of the Historic District Commission.

WHAT IS THE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION?

The Historic District Commission consists of seven citizens appointed by the Mayor with the concurrence of City Council.

A historic district commission has many duties, but just one basic responsibility – to protect and develop the area so that it can continue to be an asset to the community.

It is, therefore, in the power of a historic district commission to guide exterior alterations and new construction in order to preserve and enhance those features which warranted the designation of the area as a historic district.

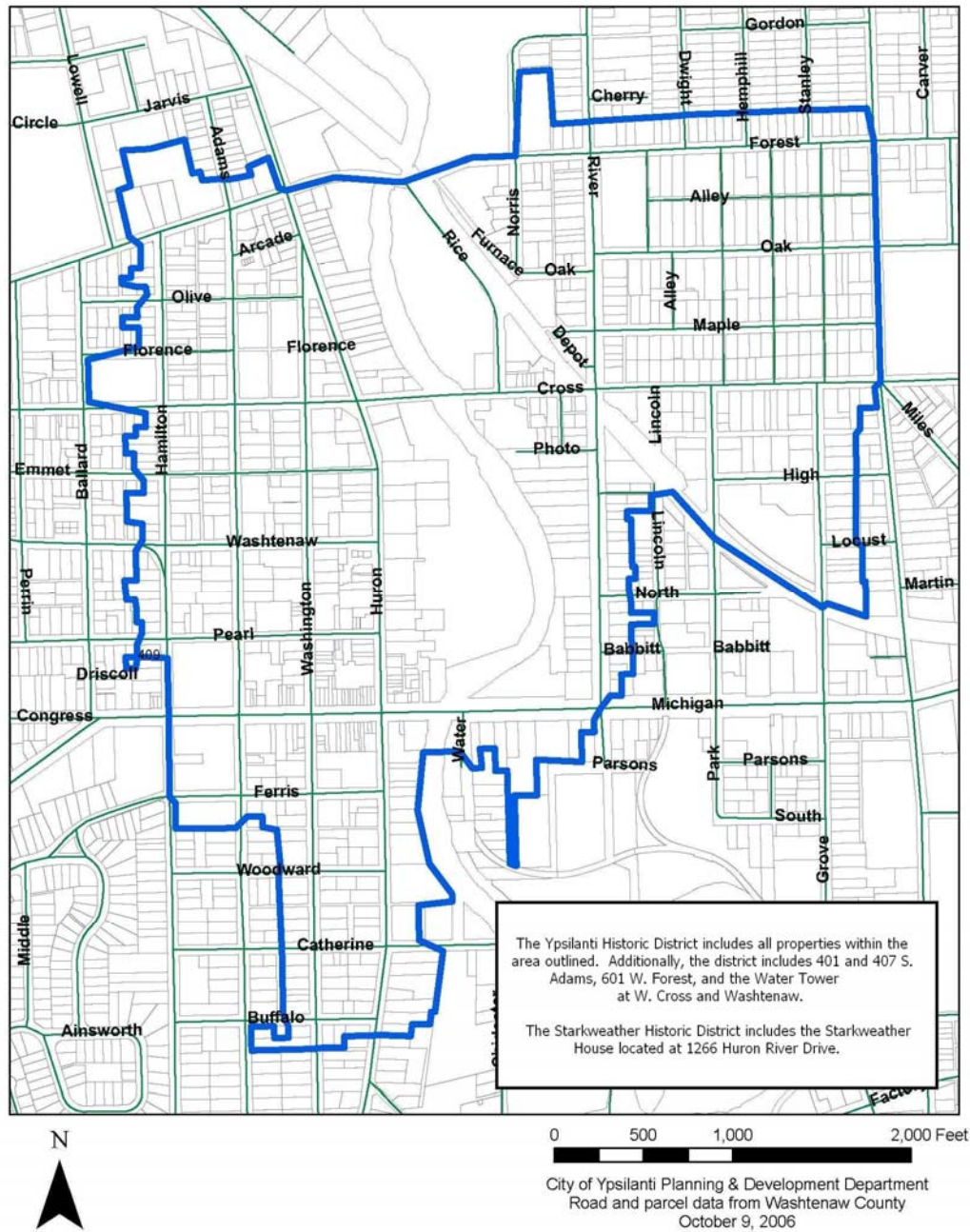
A city administrative agency, the commission reviews and acts upon all applications for building permits in the District for work which will affect a structure's exterior appearance, including, but not limited to, alteration, addition, repair, demolition and moving, as well as fences, signs, painting, etc.

The commission is guided in its decisions by the provisions and guidelines of the historic district ordinance and by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation.

Copies of the ordinance are available at City Hall or online at the City's website www.cityofypsilanti.com.

IS MY PROPERTY LOCATED IN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT?

Ypsilanti Historic District



HOW DO I GET A PERMIT?

1. If your property is in the Historic District and you need to do any work which will affect the property's exterior appearance, you must apply for a building permit at the Building Department on the third floor of City Hall, and submit your plans (include samples of materials and colors, and as much information as possible) and a completed work permit application for Historic District Commission approval. Once your properly prepared application has been submitted, you will be charged an application fee. This is in addition to the fee charged when the building permit is issued.

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2. Your application will be forwarded for review to the Historic District Commission and you will be told on what date it will be reviewed. The Commission meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month in City Council Chambers. The deadline for permit applications is noon of the preceding Wednesday.
3. It is advisable for you and/or your contractor/architect to meet with the Commission to discuss your permit application, any possible changes, and to answer questions. Lack of information and/or unanswered questions will prevent the Commission from taking action and, therefore, delay your project.
4. Following Commission action, your application is returned to the Building Department. If it has been approved by both the Commission and the Building Official, you can pay your permit fee at the Building Department and pick up your permit. You must then begin work within six months of the approval date. If your application has been denied (rare), you may meet with the Commission as soon and as often as you wish in order to work out a plan which can be approved.

You are encouraged to discuss your needs and ideas with the Commission well before you plan to start work and before you spend time and money on architectural drawings, blueprints, materials, etc., so that a satisfactory plan can be decided upon and delays avoided – this is called a “study item” on the agenda. The Commission is able to offer you a great deal of assistance and can often help you achieve what you need in an appropriate and sometimes less expensive way.

INFORMATION TO ACCOMPANY APPLICATION

Please be clear and complete. Furnish manufacturer’s specifications, catalog illustrations and samples whenever possible.

SCOPE OF WORK: Give written description of proposed work. Will it involve repair, addition, alteration, new construction, sign, fence, demolition, moving, painting, etc.?

ALTERATION OF EXISTING STRUCTURE: Furnish detailed set of working drawings, including plan view of each floor, elevations of all exterior views, and specifications detailing kinds of materials, colors and textures of surfaces.

REPAIR OF EXISTING STRUCTURE: State conditions which necessitate repair. Specify type of existing materials which require repair, such as asphalt shingle roof, wood shingle roof, metal roof. Give species of wood involved in repair, such as cedar siding, tongue and groove clear fir porch flooring, pine railing or column, etc. State whether gutters, downspouts, decorative trim, or other material exists in the area of repair. Specify whether the repair will change any condition which presently exists.

ADDITION: Show plot plan (copy of mortgage survey) and relationship of the addition to existing structure, property lines and neighboring structures. Provide all drawings in scale. Give specifications of construction as required for new construction.

FENCES: Show plot plan (copy of mortgage survey) and relationship of the fence to existing structure, property lines and neighboring structures.

DEMOLITION: Refer to Historic District Ordinance for relevant provisions and state your proposal accordingly.

MOVING STRUCTURES: Refer to Historic District Ordinance for relevant provisions and state your proposal accordingly.

SIGN: Provide elevation drawing and section drawing, in scale of proposed sign, and indicate its relationship to the building or site. Indicate proposed materials. Provide sample of colors and lettering. Include details of any proposed lighting of the sign.

AWNING: Provide elevation drawing and section drawing, in scale of proposed awning and indicate placement on building. Indicate proposed materials. Provide sample of colors and any lettering.

PAINTING: Provide color chips. Indicate portions of building on which each color will be used.

QUESTIONS? Call Planning and Development Department at 483-9646 or the Building Department at 482-1025.