

# Ypsilanti Historic District Commission 2013 Annual Report

## Membership

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

## Commission and Staff

Throughout 2013, 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.

The HDC was staffed by interns Adam Cripps, Connie Locker and Cynthia Kochanek. In the HDC Assistant role, they worked 15-20 hours per week performing various administrative tasks to enable the Commission to fulfill its responsibilities under the historic district ordinance. 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.

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 completeness. 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 and included with all completed applications into assembled meeting packets. Packets are then posted on the City of Ypsilanti's website and emailed to the Commission by the Friday before each 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;

however, the approvals are provided to the building department the next day so as to expedite the work getting done.

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.

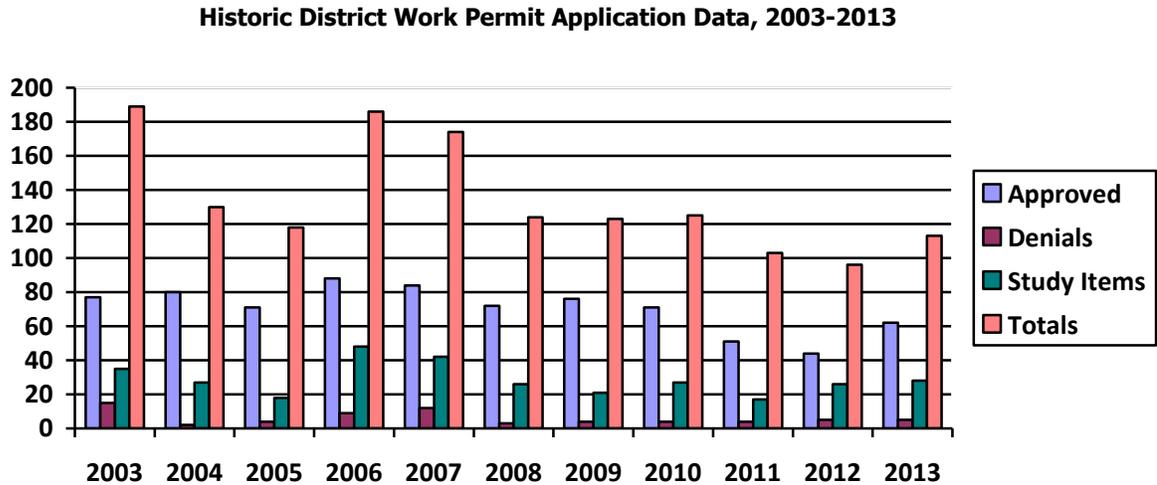
## Statistics and Trends

The number of applications received this year was higher than the previous two years. The lower amounts of applications in recent years reflect the impact of economic issues. The ambitious scope of many of the approved projects reflects the commitment of residents and businesses to the improvement of the local community. The number of applications and actions taken is shown in the table below.

**Historic District Commission Actions, 2003-2013**

	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Applications approved as submitted	77	80	71	88	84	72	76	71	51	44	62
Applications approved with modifications	61	20	22	10	8	2	3	7	15	10	6
Administrative approvals				24	19	11	12	13	11	9	10
Applications denied due to lack of information	3	2	4	6	3	1	3	2	1	2	0
Applications denied due to inappropriateness	12	0	0	3	9	2	1	2	3	3	5
Applications pending at end of year	1	1	3	2	2	1	1	1	0	0	0
Study Items	35	27	18	48	42	26	21	27	17	26	28
Amendments to previous approvals				5	7	9	6	2	5	2	2
<b>Total Applications</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>113</b>

To illustrate the number of projects within the Historic District this year as compared to the past ten years, the chart below depicts HDC Work Permit application activity from 2003 through 2013.



Source: Planning & Development Department Records

## Historic District Fact Sheets

In 2013, revisions continued on the HDC fact sheets. A review of the all fact sheets will be conducted throughout the coming year. Production of house style fact sheets will also continue in 2014. The fence, window, and the alternative energy facts sheets will be the first to undergo revisions.

## Demolitions

Three demolitions were approved in 2013. On February 12, 2013, the shed at the rear of the property at 509 N. Adams St. was approved for demolition because the structure constituted a hazard to public safety. On May 28, 2013 three rear additions on the structure at 302 E. Cross St. were approved for demolition due to the instability of these structures caused a hazard to public safety. On September 24, 2013, the garage at 402 S. Washington was approved for demolition. This garage was the only remaining structure on the property but was not historically or architecturally significant.

## Appeals

No appeals were requested in 2013.

## Significant Projects

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

- 217 W. Michigan Avenue, 76 N Huron, 312 N River, and the Ypsilanti Freighthouse – Application was approved for the installation of temporary artwork at these addresses as part of the Detroit Institute of Art Inside/Out program facilitated locally through the Downtown Development Authority (DDA). Artwork was displayed between July and September of 2013.
- 56 E. Cross (Sidetrack Bar and Grill) - Work was approved to include the creation of 12 new window openings on the north and east elevations at the corner of the building, to be constructed in the size of the window openings that already exist on the former street side elevation.
- Freighthouse (100 Market Place)- Work was approved to include a new entry door, new entry stairs and vent stacks for HVAC and plumbing systems. The installation of fifteen solar panels was also approved for the southwest section of the roof.
- Riverside Park- The installation of the Heritage Bridge to span the Huron River was approved.
- 118 S. Washington- Installation of a solar panel array on the south, west and east sides of the attached garage on the property was approved by the commission.
- 323 Oak- Approval was given for the installation of a solar array on the west face of the roof at the northern most end of the house.
- 328 E. Cross- The installation of solar panels on the 2<sup>nd</sup> story south facing roof on the house was approved.
- Starkweather House- The installation of seven windows on the second story was approved along with the installation of a historic wood door at the front entry and four exterior light fixtures. One of three apartments is now certified for rental!

## Educational Workshops

The HDC did not host any educational workshops in 2013. In previous years educational workshops were held on topics of interest to the residents within the historic district. Some examples of previous workshops are:

- Repairing Historic Windows

- Researching Your Historic Home
- The Basics of the HDC

Due to the success of previous workshops, a series of similar educational workshops are being planned for 2014.

## **Evaluation and Training**

CLG Evaluation- 2012 saw an evaluation conducted of the Ypsilanti Historic District Commission. Created by MSHDA for the purpose of analyzing how historic district commissions in certified local governments operate, the evaluation was filled out and submitted to the state. Results of the evaluation are still forthcoming.

## **Conclusion**

Although of varied scope and scale, the projects completed throughout 2013 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.

---

Anne Stevenson, Chair  
Historic District Commission

---

Date

---

Cynthia Kochanek, HDC Assistant  
Planning and Development Department

---

Date