

35th Annual Ann Arbor Preservation Awards: June 3, 2019



1961



1928



1860s



1959

AWARDS OVERVIEW

Preservation

Presented in recognition of superior maintenance of a significant property to preserve its essential historical, cultural or architectural value for a period of 10 years or more.

Rehabilitation

Presented in recognition of projects that have substantially returned a property to its historic condition.

Adaptive Reuse

Presented in recognition of projects that have repurposed buildings that have outlived their original uses or functions while at the same time retained their historic features.

Special Merit

Presented in recognition of exceptional projects, landscapes or other unique preservation projects, including lifetime achievements.

Centennial Award

In Memoriam

Presented posthumously in recognition of an individual whose contributions to Ann Arbor's history and/or the city's historic preservation efforts were exemplary.

Preservation

532 Fourth, 1868
Rev. John Stanger House
Eileen Dickinson



This 1 ½-story frame Upright and Wing style house was built in 1880 after Rev. John Stanger purchased the lot from Albert Blaess for \$950 in 1879 [Blaess was a German immigrant and leading citizen of Lodi Township]. It still has many original windows, shutters, and wooden storms in addition to clapboard siding and pedimented trim over the windows. Eileen has done a magnificent job of keeping the original structure intact without sacrificing her personal needs. Eileen, a physical therapist, uses her garden to raise chickens and advocate for bees, and was a member of Ann Arbor Backyard Beekeepers (A2B2) and the Bee Safe Neighborhoods movement. She removed some additions that had been made in the 1980s but her main focus has been on her garden. It is spectacular!

703 W. Jefferson, 1898
George Vetter House
Sandy Herbertson



This classic clapboard, two-story, vernacular Old West Side home was built in 1898 by George Vetter, a butcher. Within a few years he had deeded it to his daughter Amanda Greve and her husband Albert. They remained here until 1972 and were the ones who added a two-story lean-to and back porch to match the original house. The house has appeared on the Old West Side Homes Tour twice, once in 1988 and again in 2002. Sandy purchased the house in 1985 and decorated it with family heirlooms and antiques. She also has a fantastic garden in front for all her neighbors to enjoy. She is proud of her landscape improvements including hydrangeas, Korean Lilacs, burning bushes and boxwoods. She has also added a new roof, historically correct gutters, and a new front porch deck.

1460 Cedar Bend, 1968
Anne and Robert Rapp House
Anne Rapp



This home was designed in 1968 by Ann Arbor architect David Osler for Robert and Anne Rapp. It is currently owned by the Anne B. Rapp Trust, established in 2018. The stepped back, vertical window over a cat slide roof is a signature design element used by Osler in the late 1960s. It allowed for lots of indirect light to reach a larger part of the interior while maintaining a striking design presence on the exterior. Originally it was the site of a small bungalow which Osler considered building around. Eventually, he opted to re-use its foundation and built a guest room over the garage. The Rapps loved the house because it felt like country but was near the hospital. Osler was a native of Ann Arbor and attended UM School of Architecture. He won several prizes for his work from the AIA Michigan which gave him a lifetime achievement award.

Preservation

1486 Cedar Bend, 1961
Ruri + Glen Kumasaka House
Ruri Kumasaka



In 1961, David Osler designed this home on Cedar Bend Drive for Dr. and Mrs. Glen Kumasaka, not far from other designs he had created. It was apparently built around an older home dating to 1951. An impressive addition was added in 1971 and in 1974 Osler won an award from the Michigan Society of Architects for it. According to the finding aide at the Bentley Library which has Osler's papers, Glen Kumasaka commissioned another house from Osler on EnGlave Drive in Ann Arbor Township in 1969. Glen Kumasaka was born in Tacoma, Washington and spent World War II in the Tule Lake internment campus. After the war he relocated to Rochester NY where he went to high school. He got a BA from Harvard and an MD from the University of Rochester. He was a radiologist at the St. Joseph Mercy Hospital for 28 years. He died in 2015 and his widow still lives in the house today.

3 Highland Drive, 1966
Gilbert Ross House
Christina Marie Spencer



This home within the Highland Lane enclave (5 buildings mostly designed by George Brigham) was built in 1966 and designed by local architect David Osler. It was built for Gilbert Ross, a founding member of the Stanley Quartet and named after Albert Stanley, director of the UM School of Music from 1889-1922. Ross arrived at the University in 1942 and retired in 1970. The Stanley Quartet was well known for playing contemporary modern music. Mrs. Ross sold it in 1996 to Richard and Mary LeFauvre, and their daughter Christina Marie Spencer acquired the house in 2012.

This house and garage are completely covered in cedar shakes and makes a strong impression on the viewer. It is a small lot with a very steep incline in the back and the house had to be squeezed in and built on many levels.

501 Onondaga, 1928
Emily + Samuel Stanton House
Elizabeth + Robert Oneal



This house is a wonderful example of the Georgian Revival style. It was built in 1928 to plans by local architect Samuel McCoskry Stanton, who designed many of the Georgian Revival houses in Burns Park and Ann Arbor Hills. Notice the symmetrical style of balanced windows, a center entry, original windows with multi-paned glass and shutters. Brick gable end chimneys are also a feature of this style. It was referred to in Stanton's obituary as "the Stanton family home". Stanton died in 1946 in a car accident. Mrs. Emily Stanton, Samuel's widow, continued to live here until ca. 1967. The Oneals are only the second owners.

Preservation

2576 Devonshire, 1959
Mae + Everett Brown House
Sonia + Forrest Shaw



This mid-century modern house was designed by renowned local architect Robert Metcalf in 1959 for Mr. and Mrs. Everett Brown. Mrs. Brown was an art collector and there are less windows and more walls as a result. Everett S. Brown was a professor of Political Science and his death in 1964 rated an obituary in the New York Times. He served on the faculty from 1921 until his retirement in 1956. From 1943-1947 he was Chair of the Department of Political Science. His wife Mae continued to live here after his death

The house displays many of the defining features of the mid-century style with its flat roof, emphasis on long and low, with a hidden doorway off to the side. Decorative screening was another feature of many of Metcalf's works, which number in the hundreds in Ann Arbor. It is a wonderful example of the mid-century aesthetic and of Metcalf's work has beautified our city for over 50 years!

2019 Historic District Commission Awards

1602 Granger, 1924
Clara + Frank Judson House
Rita Chin + John Cook, Jr.



This traditional bungalow-style home was built in 1924, probably by Frank T. Judson, a carpenter and contractor, who is living here with his wife Clara by 1928. It exhibits all the classic attributes of the bungalow style including the 1 ½ story size, the battered columns on the porch (they get bigger from top to bottom), the long sloping roof to the street, and side entrance with a covered porch. In 1961, John and Helen Judson are still living here—she may be his daughter. He was later an engineer with Detroit Edison. By 1968, however, the house changed hands.

In 2004, Rita Chin and James Cook Jr. purchased the house. They have maintained it in excellent condition and preserved the original windows. We applaud their preservation instincts for this wonderful bungalow.

933 Aberdeen, 1963
Joseph Yamagiwa House
Daniel Sherrick



This 1963 house is another example of a mid-century modern home transitioning from the 1950s look to a lower, leaner look in the 1960s. It has fewer and smaller windows facing the street and the garage is now almost in the forefront of the house. The architect is unknown. The current owners purchased the house in 1992 from Zuckerman and Meyerson, who in turn purchased it from Donald Klaasen in 1989. Klaasen's deed dates to 1984. In 1964 it was occupied by Joseph Yamagiwa. It seems likely that Yamagiwa was the first owner of the house.

Yamagiwa was a Professor of Far Eastern languages and Literatures at UM from 1937-1968. He worked quite closely with the US military during World War II. His wife Hanako, an artist, continued to live here until 1983. He had many affiliations later with the Center for Japanese Studies, the Far Eastern Language Summer Institute and the US-Japan Conference on Cultural and Educational Interchange.

Rehabilitation

116 S. Main, ca. 1871
Wines + Worden Clothing Store
Ed Shaffran



This narrow, commercial vernacular brick building is in the 100 block of S. Main St. -- the first block that was commercialized shortly after Ann Arbor was founded in 1824. Some of the buildings in this block are very old with newer facades and could date to the 1840s. This building dates to at least 1871 as the home of the Wines and Worden Clothing store but it could go back further. It had many uses thereafter including Weissinger Signs (1910), Martin Schaller's wallpaper and book company (1900), Trubey's Confectionary Shop (1909-1916), Grinell Bros. Piano store (1920s), the Mayfair Shop (1955), Ball Office Supply (1985), and lastly Kai Gardens Restaurant. Shaffran purchased the building in 2017 and obtained approval for a complete makeover from the HDC in May of that year to remove panels on the front façade. This building is in the Main Street Historic District.

The floors above street level were covered with gray metal panels and no windows were visible for years. When Mr. Shaffran removed the paneling, he discovered that the bowed window that had been there had been removed, along with much of the original façade. Using historic photos, Shaffran remodeled the front to once again have windows that maintain the proportions of the originals. We salute Mr. Shaffran for his dedication to downtown and historic buildings.

Adaptive Re-use

2230 Pontiac Trail, ca. 1930s
Otto Moehrle Complex
Rudolf Steiner High School



This award for adaptive re-use goes to the Rudolf Steiner High School which has repurposed an old stone cottage that once belonged to Moehrle, Inc., a tool-and-die company which produced custom machine jobs for large industrial accounts. Prototype custom work was their specialty and this thriving business was organized by Otto Moehrle Sr., a German immigrant who in 1935 bought the site of the cottage. He incorporated as Moehrle, Inc. in 1963. The company still operates today at 1081 E. North Territorial Rd in Whitmore Lake by Moehrle's son Otto Jr. and grandson.

Initially, the land was occupied by the local Indians from about 1100 CE and was the site of a winter and spring camp. The site underwent an archaeological dig for this reason and many arrowheads were found. Later the site was used by a local potter in the 1920s who made bird baths from the porcelain-like clay. The area was also planted with fruit trees, mostly apple and cherry. The first attempt to build a house was in the late 1920s and was stopped because of the Depression. Otto Moehrle Sr. and wife Louise acquired the property in 1935 and completed the stone house. In the 1940s an addition was built by Moehrle to accommodate his expanding family. Next door an attorney George J. Burke (a Nuremberg Trail legal consultant) built the frame house, later bought by Moehrle. The factory building of concrete block and steel roof was built in 1945. Many students of Professor Knowlson Stephensen worked there to earn money for school and helped with his inventions, including an anti-snoring device and the AAA Garage Door Holder. In 1978 this building was razed and replaced with another of cinder block. At least 6 expansions were done by Moehrle before selling it to the Rudolf Steiner School. A 5-page history of Moehrle Inc and the Steiner School was provided to us by the school. It includes old photos of the Moehrles and detailed architectural drawings of the changes made.

The Steiner School purchased the original factory and several residential buildings that made up the complex beginning in 2001 and later 2005. They restored the stone cottage which dates to the 1920s and served as Otto Moehrle's residence. They also renovated the old abandoned industrial building from 1930 into an environmentally conscious high school building, including classrooms, labs and a new gym. To accomplish this, they have used solar panels on the roof, work with low impact building materials and have a 'green' certification. Other buildings on the site include a red shingle building dating to the early 20th century.

Special Merit

1085 South University, 1904
Old West Engineering Hall
University of Michigan



The distinctive copper lanterns on towers of the Old East Engineering Building have been landmarks since the building was designed and built by Albert Kahn in 1904. It was his first commission with the University and led to him designing most of the significant buildings on Central Campus (Hatcher Library, Hill Auditorium, Krause Natural Science Building, Angell Hall, Clements Library, Ruthven Museums building, and the old Medical School Building, now 1100 North University Building).

The copper clad lanterns had suffered from weathering over the years and restoration became a priority. The original copper cladding was carefully removed, restored and re-installed over reconstructed and structural strengthened framing, giving them another lease on life. This restoration was recognized by the statewide organization Michigan Historic Preservation Network (MHPN) in its awards for 2018. The university was cited for “making the investment in a building to preserve its aesthetic and historic character for future generations.”

Special Merit

Ann Arbor District Library

The HDC would like to recognize the work of the staff at the library who are digitizing the Ann Arbor News.

We salute Amy Cantu, Eli Neuburger, Andrew McLaren and Director Josie Parker who negotiated the agreement with the Ann Arbor News. They have worked tirelessly to digitize it and older newspapers and make Ann Arbor's history accessible to the general public. With the establishment of "Old News" in 2011, they have revolutionized how many of us do research on local history. It has provided a depth of knowledge we couldn't have dreamed of 10 years ago. The library has also digitized the Signal of Liberty---the Anti-Slavery newspaper published in Ann Arbor--- and the Ann Arbor Argus, Ann Arbor Courier and other historic newspapers. Every day new items are being added for public access, many of which include photographs. Thank you so much from your fans!

Ann Arbor District Library

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Construction of Church of the Good Shepherd on Independence Blvd, April 1958

Photo

Subjects

- Historic Buildings
- Old News
- Ann Arbor News
- Huron street
- 300 Block E Huron St



Month
April

Year
1958

Caption
Construction Progress: The first unit of the long-range building program of the Church of the Good Shepherd (Evangelical and Reformed) takes shape at the building site on Independence Blvd. June has been set at target date for completion and dedication of the unit, which will serve as worship and fellowship center until other units are built and then will become a fellowship hall. Designer is local architect Robert C. Metcalf.

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Centennial Award

Ann Arbor Farmers Market

This year marks the 100th year of the Ann Arbor Farmers Market and festivities are already underway to recognize this milestone. They will be posting weekly photos and memories on the Parks Department website. They hope citizens will send in old photos and memories. A big birthday party is planned for Saturday August 31, 2019.

The original market began as a curb market outside the old 1870s Courthouse at Fourth and Ann Streets. Farmers would back their horse-drawn wagons onto the lawn of the courthouse and sell their produce directly to the consumer. The current market began in May 1919 and was started by the Community Federation---a group of women's organizations that wanted to bring down food costs after World War I. In those days you could find chickens, geese, ducks and turkeys as well as fresh produce and flowers (grown by a former chief gardener for Hapsburg Emperor Franz Josef!). The city took over running the market in 1921 and it has been a city-run market ever since, regulated by a Market Commission that is appointed by the Mayor. In the 1930s, former mayor Emmanuel Luick donated his lumberyard at Fifth and Detroit to be used for the market. Permanent sheds were designed and built by the WPA in 1938-1940. They still stand today.

Competition for stalls is fierce as some 13,000 people may shop there in the summer. It is open during the winter with a much-reduced attendance. Discussion is still underway as to how to heat the market better over the winter and even expand onto the site of a former house. Some vendors go back generations but a new group of young people are discovering the joys of growing foodstuffs. Farmers markets all over Michigan are thriving. We're glad to have had ours for such a long time. Bravo and Bon Appetit!



Photos: Courtesy of Ann Arbor Farmers Market

In Memoriam

Louisa Pieper

Louisa Pieper, longtime Ann Arbor Historic Preservation Coordinator for the Historic District Commission (HDC) died in August of 2018. She had been suffering from multiple problems for many years. She was 80 years old.

Pieper in her job for the HDC helped create 12 historic districts, including the Old West Side, Old Fourth Ward, Main St., State Street, Division Street, Ann Street, Cobblestone Farm and others. If historic architecture was involved, Louisa's fingerprints were on it! She was a founding member of the Kempf House Society and the Downtown Historical Street Exhibit program --we have her to thank--- along with Ray Detter and Grace Shackman--- for the glass frames and porcelain wall images found throughout the city. She served on the Board of the Michigan Theater and gave us the Ford Gallery of Ann Arbor Founders hallway which leads to the Screening Room. She was also involved with the Washtenaw County Historical Society and the Museum on Main Street as well as with the Ann Arbor Historical Foundation. She played a major part in publishing several books about Ann Arbor history and architecture. She was also one of the founders of the statewide advocacy group Michigan Historic Preservation Network (MHPN) which gave her a Lifetime Achievement Award. Her goal all along was to preserve the feeling for people that the past is all around them and they can feel connected to it through buildings. With her hearty laugh and infectious smile, Louisa charmed us all and made Ann Arbor a much better place. She was my mentor and my good friend. We are so grateful that we had her for as long as we did.



Photo: Courtesy of Ann Arbor District Library



Photo: Courtesy of Michigan Historic Preservation Network