

GRAND RAPIDS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

2011 Annual Report

Historic Preservation: An Important Tool to Economic Growth

Community leaders and developers alike have found that preservation is an effective tool in creating desirable neighborhoods in both economic and environmental aspects. In today's economic climate programs such as historic preservation have become ever more imperative in making our inner-city neighborhoods vital and viable. This is accomplished through set standards and enforced regulations that are key in fighting the negative physical and financial impacts caused by economic downturns. Preservation efforts result in more stable property values, ensuring set standards for vacant buildings, and creating healthy and attractive neighborhoods; all items needed to make an area attractive to developers and home owners alike.

The successfulness of preservation in Grand Rapids is very evident in the desirability of the designated areas. A fact that can be clearly exemplified through two simple facts: foreclosed properties do not stay on the market long; and more so that most major development projects occurring in the city have occurred in Historic Districts. Nowhere else in the city, save Michigan Street, do you see this level of intensive development occurring.

Residential Examples:

In the 2010 annual report staff included a brief story of a property on James Street. One year after foreclosure and purchase the house is nearly completely restored. A similar event occurred at 557 Pleasant Street. The stable nature of historic districts adds economic security which is a requirement for renovations of this scale to occur. It allows owners to take on detrimental properties and to return them to the community as an asset



326 JAMES SE, 2012



557 PLEASANT SE, 2012

Commercial Examples:

On a larger scale there are several restoration projects as well as new construction developments occurring in three of our historic districts. Most recently we have the completion of the UICA building, 38 Commerce, 215 South Division, and Brewery Vivant. These projects are merely the beginning; within in the next couple of years one can expect to experience many more substantial restorations and new construction projects in these areas, further exemplifying the desirability and importance of Historic Preservation.



UICA, 2012



BREWERY VIVANT, 2012



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The Benefits of Historic Preservation: Examples Part 2

Although overall building and development activity has slowed in Grand Rapids as is true across the state, the stability and attraction of historic districts remains an active development and revitalization area. In 2011 HPC saw several large projects break ground and numerous restoration and large renovation projects come to fruition. This year alone, many of the City's major development projects occurred or are proposed to occur in Historic Districts. The most active being Wealthy Street, Fairmount Square and Heartside, all three of which have experienced extensive activity in the realm of large restoration projects and new developments. The areas are slated to continue this trend through 2012 with projects that are currently going through the permitting process.



Conceptual Design for 925 Cherry Street SE; Conceptual Design for 927 Cherry Street SE:

925 Cherry Street SE – Adaptive Re-use of Funeral Parlor Site

The Brewery Vivant restoration of the Chapel and Car Garage was completed in December of 2010 while the site improvements wrapped up in the spring of 2011. With Phase 1 complete the owner began focusing on Phase 2, the development of the two associated vacant out lots. Towards the end of 2011 developers came to staff with concepts for the construction of two new buildings at this location. The

completion of the development of this property will mark the last of the large parcels on Cherry Street that needed a new lease on life.

Wealthy Heights Project

As part of a large revitalization effort to breath life back into the Wealthy Heights neighborhood, Habitat for Humanity has been hard at work renovating existing historic houses as well as constructing a new house. The non-profit to-date has completely restored 306 Donald and 353 Visser turning once dilapidated structures into community gems. They have also recently completed construction of a new house at 335 Freyling Place, turning what once was an overgrown vacant lot filled with rubbish into an active and occupied home. All three homes will be owner occupied furthering efforts to help stabilize the property values and to cut down on crime.



306 Donald SE



306 Visser SE

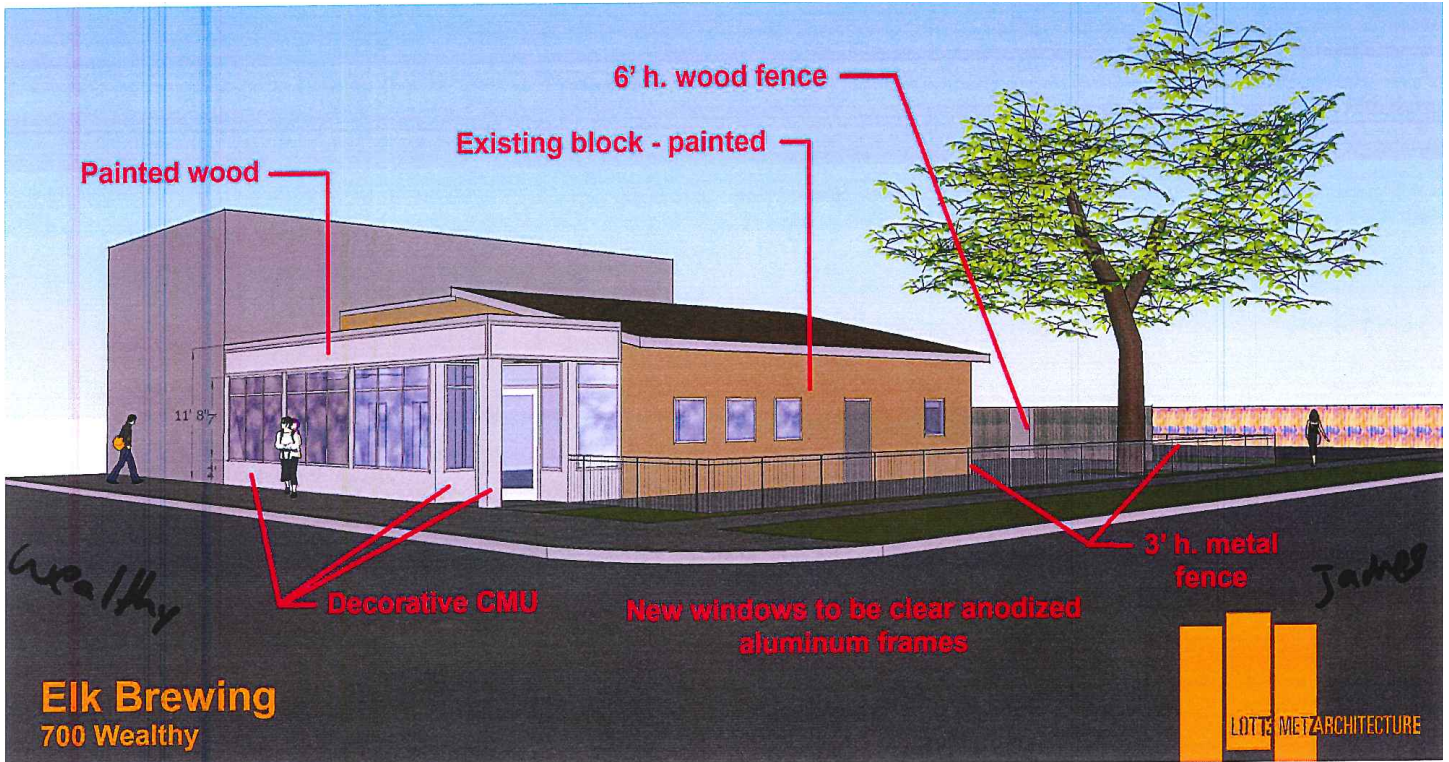


306 Freyling SE



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700 Wealthy SE – Approved new design

700 Wealthy Street SE – Elk Brewing Co. - Redevelopment

A long time eyesore along Wealthy Street is getting a much needed facelift! We happily welcome the Elk Brewing Company and eagerly await their transformation of the existing block structure at 700 Wealthy. The redevelopment of this community distraction will transform this corner into a vibrant community asset and further cement the re-birth of the strip.



700 Wealthy SE – Existing conditions



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17th Annual Historic Preservation Awards

The 17th Annual Historic Preservation Awards ceremony was held at the beautiful Grand Rapids Community Foundation offices in the old Anheuser Busch depot on Grandville Avenue. It was a perfect setting to honor owners and volunteers who have given so much to the preservation and health of our community. The recipients were recognized by City Commissioner Rosalynn Bliss and HPC Chair, Tom Pfister during a power point presentation that highlighted each project. Honorees went home with wonderful full color posters of their project as well as one of a kind awards created by our very own Michael Moore. The ceremony has been very well received and approximately 40 people were in attendance.

The winners for 2011 were:

Residential Project



Before



After

Susan Sheardy – 407 Madison SE



Before



After

Brendan Bonthuis & Ben Damstra –
557 Pleasant SE

Projects by a Group



Before



After

Don Rietema – 221 College NE



First Park Congregational Church
10 East Park Place



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Commercial Projects



Before



After

Kameel Chamelly –
200 Union NE



Before



After

Todd Ponstein –
632 - 638 Wealthy SE



Before



After

Special Recognition



Mark Miller



Carol Moore



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Grand Rapids Hosts the Old House Expo

Grand Rapids welcomed the Old House Expo to Fountain Street Church on March 19, 2011. The Expo was created six years ago by the non-profit Old House Network. The March 2011 event marked the 6th annual Expo and the first time it has been held outside of its home base in Kalamazoo. The HPC and Staff worked alongside Expo founders in recreating this one day event in Grand Rapids. The Expo boasted over 16 educational sessions on a wide range of topics from what makes an old house historic to weatherization and FHA loans. Speakers came from across the state to volunteer their time and knowledge to make the event a success. In addition we managed to fill the Vendors hall with over 15 local and west Michigan based crafts people and non-profits. This not only helps the economy by enabling local crafts people to meet future clients and obtain possible jobs it assists the home owner in finding the person who can address their specialized concern. It can also help you find that hard to find object or to simply chat with and learn from our pros or other old house owners.

The Old House Expo in Grand Rapids was a great success with the event pulling in over 300 people. The founding organization, Old House Network, was so pleased with the outcome that they have decided to create two Expo's in 2012, one in Kalamazoo and one in Grand Rapids. In addition to this success, the Expo brought the attention of the creators of the Grand Rapids Antiques Market, an annual show held at the DeVos place with an average attendance of 5,000. The Old House Network is currently in talks with the Antiques Market in a possible partnership of shows for 2013.



OLD HOUSE EXPO

FIFTEEN SPEAKERS • HANDS-ON DEMONSTRATIONS

\$7 ADULTS \$5 STUDENTS/SENIORS

VENDORS HALL FEATURING A VARIETY OF LOCAL CONTRACTORS AND SUPPLIERS

FEATURING MATT GROCOFF OF GREENOVATION TV

MARCH 19TH, 2011 9AM – 4PM
FOUNTAIN STREET CHURCH
24 FOUNTAIN STREET, NE – GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49503

OLD HOUSE NETWORK
269.349.2022
OLDHOUSENETWORK.ORG



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“In 2011, the Old House Expo was introduced to Grand Rapids. After five successful years in Kalamazoo, the Grand Rapids Expo brought together over 300 old home owners, contractors, and preservationists at the Fountain Street Church. The move was a great success and we look forward to returning in 2012”

Sharon Ferraro- Board of Directors Old House Network



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Restoration Projects

Numerous restoration projects were undertaken in 2011.

Among the more notable projects are: 353 Visser; 215 Warren SE; and 135 South Division.

135 South Division, before



135 South Division, after



353 Visser SE, after



353 Visser SE, before

215 Warren SE, before



215 Warren SE, after



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HPC News

- 1) Staff is partnering with Kalamazoo to bring the Old House Expo to Grand Rapids for a 2nd year.
- 2) Staff is working with the Old House Network in talks to possibly combine one of the Old House Expo's with the annual Antiques Market.
- 3) HPC welcomed a new member to the Commission in 2011, David Maxam, we thank him for contributing his time and energy to the historic preservation of our community.

The Purpose of the Historic Preservation Commission

1. Stabilize and improve property values in Historic Districts.
2. Strengthen the local economy.
3. Safeguard the Heritage of the City of Grand Rapids by preserving Historic Districts and Historic Landmarks that reflect elements of the City's cultural, social, economic, political or architectural history.
4. Foster civic beauty.

These purposes were successfully served during 2011 through 315 decisions made by staff and the Commission. These decisions preserved the integrity of the structures and district while at the same time enabling practical changes which allow for economic use of historic buildings. The significant amount of investment in improvement and renovation of many buildings in the historic districts speaks to the impact of historic preservation on economic development.

Customer Service

The 2011 Annual Report Statistical Information enclosed shows continued success in customer service by the Historic Preservation Commission and HP Staff. A substantial number of applicants continue to have projects approved on first consideration.

Statistical Information

Approved Applications

- The ratio of approved applications rose from 91% to an outstanding 96%. In 2011 the HPC and HP staff approved 302 of the 315 applications submitted.

Applications Processed

- In the year 2011 the HPC reviewed a total of 315 applications a substantial number given today's economic climate, further testament to the stability and investment security investors and owners experience in a historic district.

HPC Reviewed Applications Per Historic District

- Applications to the HPC from historic districts other than Heritage Hill have held around a 40% share of the HPC activity over the past five years.

Staff Approved Applications

- Staff-approved applications are those that receive instant consideration and approval. Applicants utilize the one-stop convenience of the Development Center for review.
- A total of 1,190 applications have been approved by staff over the past five years.

Customer Service Performance Measured by Tabled Applications and First Approvals

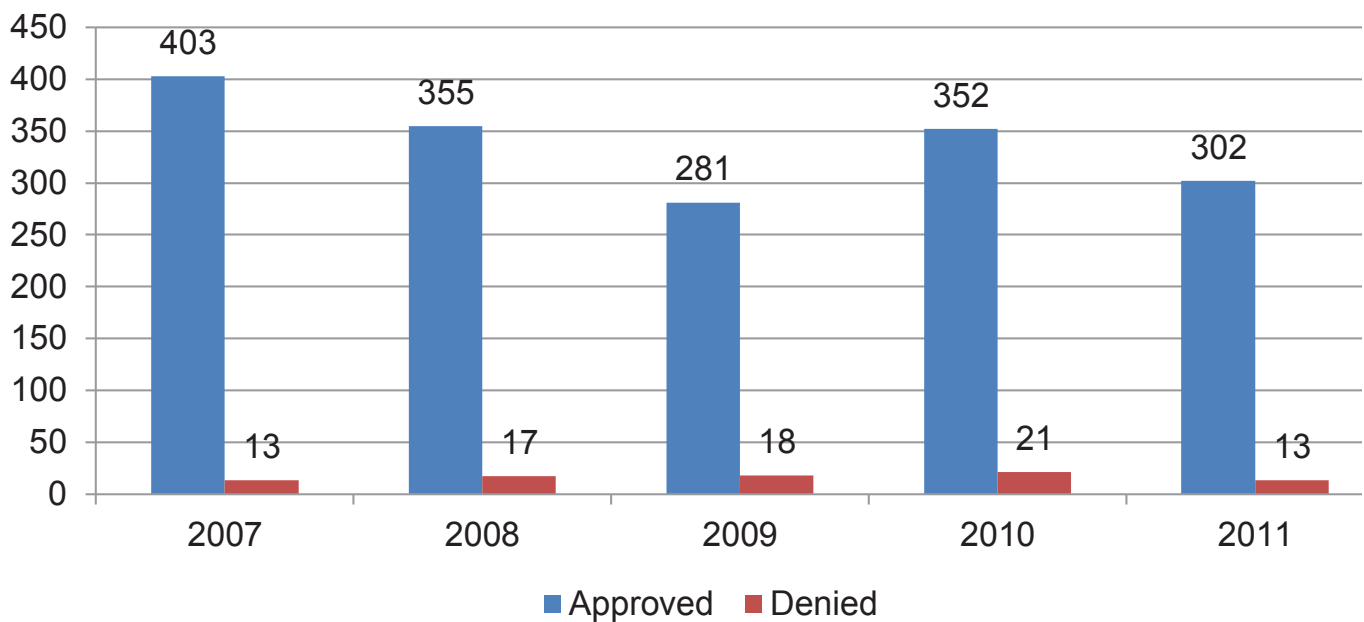
- In the year 2011 the HPC continued to exemplify good customer service with a 92%, first time approval rating.



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Approved Applications

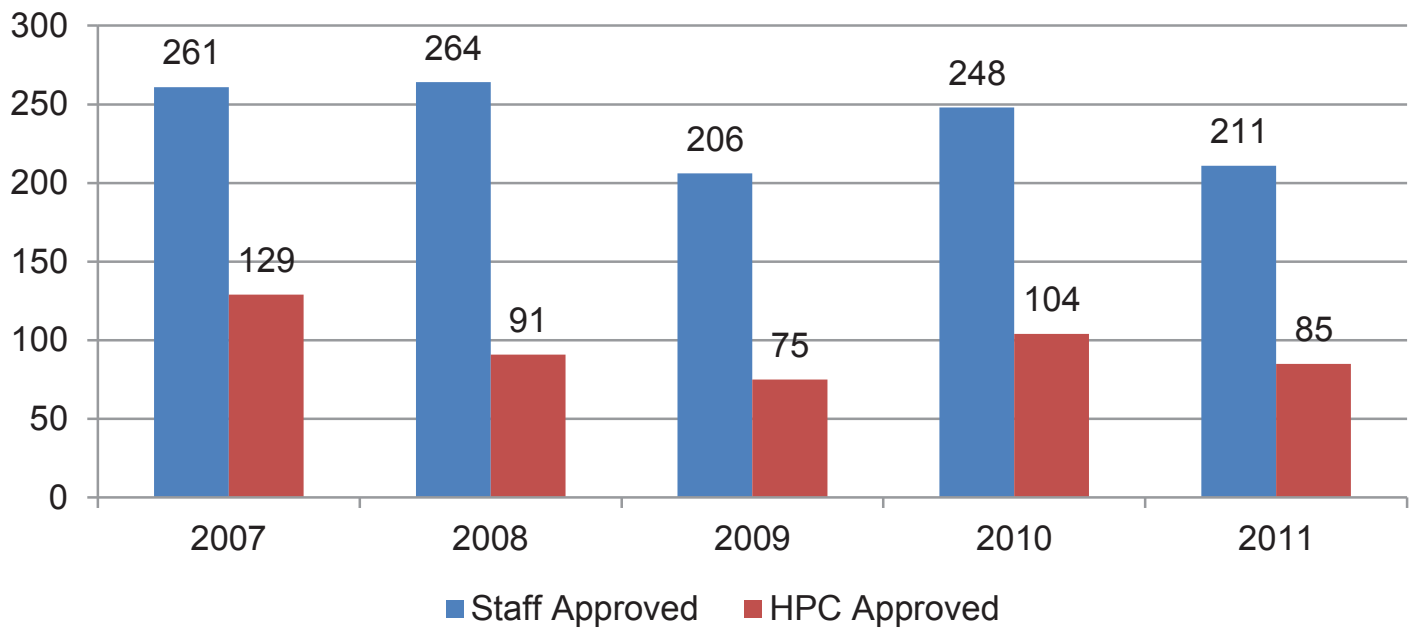


“Historic renovations and preservation have been key factors in attracting new businesses and we are pleased to be apart of it.”

-D. Sturtevant - Heartside



Approved Applications Processed



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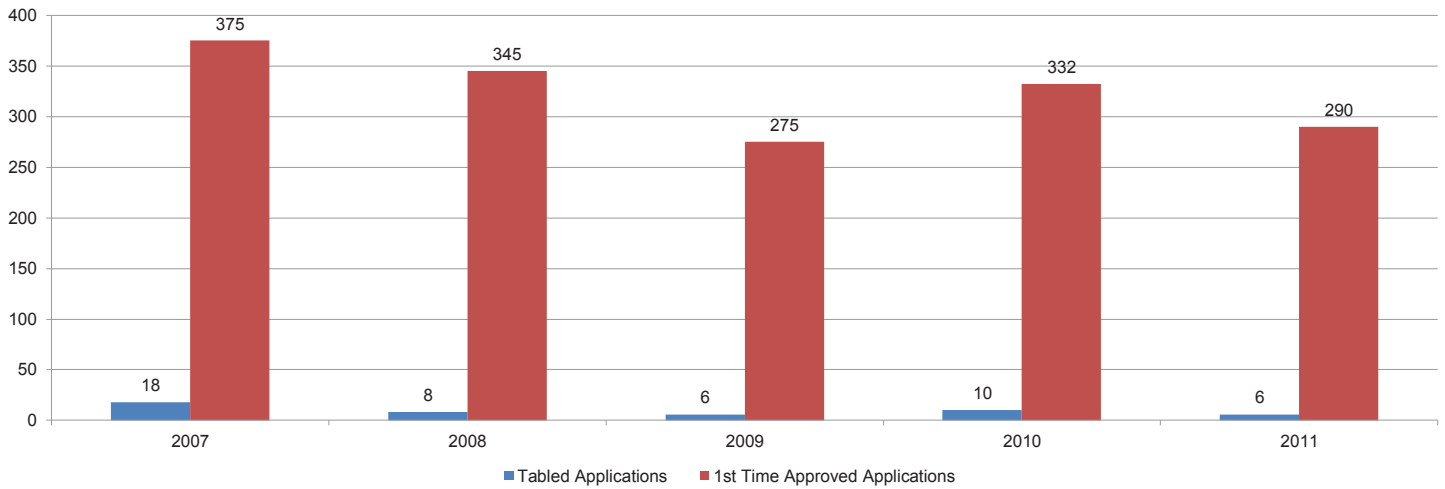
Approved Applications Per Historic District



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Customer Service Performance





CITY OF
GRAND
RAPIDS

HISTORIC
PRESERVATION
COMMISSION

