

## “Proactive Preservation”

# CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

The Michigan Historic Preservation Network announces its  
38<sup>th</sup> Annual Statewide Preservation Conference

**Thursday-Saturday, May 17-19, 2018**  
**East Lansing, Michigan**

headquartered at the East Lansing Hannah Community Center.  
You are invited to submit a session abstract to be considered for presentation.

**Deadline: Sunday, September 10, 2017, midnight.**

***Abstracts are welcomed from Michigan's  
Upper and Lower Peninsulas as well as from neighboring states and Canada  
and may come from individuals and panels.***

### **About Our Theme “Proactive Preservation”**

Historic preservationists are skilled advocates for the work we do although few of us would think of ourselves that way. Our efforts generally attract little attention. We work alone or in a variety of partnerships focused on a goal. Patience is a hallmark.

Think, for example, of the volunteers surveying the architectural resources in their town. Up and down the streets they go taking photos every Saturday; the library research takes months. The volunteers talk with their neighbors about recognizing and protecting what's special about their community. The best way to do that is with a local protective ordinance they explain. These are not easy conversations because property owners can be wary, but their methodical work leads to passage of an ordinance and designation of the first local historic district.

Or we think of the development team that wants to save an abandoned historic building. They seem to be the only ones, however, who see its potential for adaptive reuse. Seeking financing, the team finds lenders who are skeptical that a worn out building can be reclaimed. The resulting loan-to-value ratio is low so the developers, undeterred, employ their best negotiating skills to secure layers of grants, private equity, municipal loans, and tax credits. The project is a success.

Is this kind of everyday advocacy effective? Yes, just look around. Over 70 governmental units in Michigan have passed protective ordinances because surveys are completed, property owner questions are answered, and public hearing presentations are compelling. For the historic buildings that few see as ripe for development, the

developers negotiate their way through the maze of financial packaging. Elsewhere, effective OpEd pieces go into local papers, challenges to state enabling legislation are thwarted, foundations make grants to game-changing projects, and blogs speak to the unlimited possibilities of historic properties. Preservationists masterfully use the facts to convince, persuade, influence, and win over. With tact, they coax people and projects along. When energies are flagging, they inspire and encourage. And it goes without saying that they applaud, encourage, praise, and cheer on!

Our conference this year recognizes just how much proactive preservationists have accomplished in Michigan to maintain their traditional downtowns and neighborhoods, understand and protect their archaeological resources, safeguard architectural treasures of the recent past, revitalize their Legacy Cities, counter development pressures on shoreline and agricultural communities, and more. We'll ask the question: Can we recognize that we do indeed possess finely-tuned advocacy skills that can be harnessed to overcome bigger challenges, take on daunting projects, and bring people along with us on our mission to save what's special about Michigan?

We'll use East Lansing – as well as Lansing and surrounding communities – to come up with answers together. Your session could help assure the success of the conference!

### **Conference Tracks:**

Conference programming gives participants an opportunity to experience the university community of East Lansing, our capital city Lansing, and some of the smaller communities in the area. Against this backdrop, we seek a wide array of abstracts for our three program tracks and welcome submissions from individuals and panels from Michigan's Upper and Lower Peninsulas as well as from neighboring states and Canada. Would a session idea of yours have a good fit?

Track One: "Theme" - focuses on the conference theme of "Proactive Preservation."  
Some session ideas might include:

- Discussing efforts through which the public was convinced to safeguard its historic resources - including buildings, structures, sites, objects, features, natural open spaces, and human-made landscapes, either alone or as cultural ensembles.
- Emphasizing preservation's power to spur economic revitalization, placemaking, destination tourism, the reclamation of traditional downtowns and neighborhoods, and other efforts when diplomacy was needed to bring together groups with varied opinions.

Track Two: "Information" - looks at the laws, policies, designations, incentives, and best practices available to those advocating for the protection and continued use of historic resources. Session topics could include:

- Discussing the laws, policies, codes, and procedures needed to effectively support people who will proactively advocate for preservation.

- Studying the various programs of tax credits and loans, assistance, easements, etc., used by those involved in negotiating the financial packages that make preservation projects succeed.

Track Three: “Applied Skills” – taps those who participate in the MHPN’s Historic Resource Council and focuses on the traditional trades, crafts, and hands-on techniques that result in projects for which people can advocate. Ideas might include:

- Presenting case studies of historic buildings saved from demolition, adaptively reused, and returned to inventive new uses when, at first, public opinion was not supportive.
- Considering the most compelling arguments that prove how historic buildings can be energy efficient by tapping green technologies.
- Showcasing the people doing hands-on work with historic resources, both trade professionals and do-it-yourselfers, to consider the challenges their own proactivity has overcome.

#### **Abstract Submission:**

An abstract must include the following six parts. Prepare and submit them via e-mail as a Word document. No scanned or .pdf documents please.

- **Title:** Provide a title that will capture an audience’s attention.
- **Summary:** In 300 words or less, describe the session. This summary allows the selection committee to understand what you propose to achieve. The MHPN endorses the *U.S. Secretary of the Interior’s Standards* and, if appropriate to your topic, asks that you describe your adherence to them in this summary.
- **Learning Objectives:** Provide at least four (4) brief learning objectives fulfilled by your proposed session. These help secure continuing education credits from the American Institute of Architects, American Institute of Certified Planners, etc.
- **Topic Statement:** A topic statement of 50 words or less becomes the description in the conference brochure – if your abstract is selected – meant to engage the participant’s interest.
- **Speaker’s Contact Information:** For *each* speaker provide:
  - Name as it would appear in the conference brochure
  - Any suffixes to the name – i.e. Ph.D., AIA, Esq., CPA, etc.
  - Title
  - Affiliation
  - Mailing address including address, city, state, and zip code
  - Best phone for contact
  - Cell phone
  - E-mail
  - Availability on Thursday and Friday, May 17 and 18, 2018.
  - For a panel, who is best to contact with any questions.

- **Biography:** 150 words or less for *each* speaker, covering such things as education, relevant experience, role in a project, role in the session, etc.

**Deadline:** Abstracts are due on or before Sunday, September 10, 2017, by midnight, to Ruth Mills ([ruthmills@gmail.com](mailto:ruthmills@gmail.com)), conference Co-Manager. She will acknowledge its arrival by return e-mail. Ruth, or another Co-Manager, can respond to e-mailed questions you may have as you prepare your abstract. *Sample abstracts are available on request.*

**Acceptance/Decline and MHPN Terms of Participation:** The selection committee will notify selected speakers on or before Sunday, October 8, 2017, by midnight. Declines will also be acknowledged and those abstracts archived.

If a speaker is selected, the MHPN hosts them on the day he or she speaks, including registration fee, food and beverages, and evening activities. The MHPN offers much-reduced registration fees for any additional conference days attended. In return, the speaker agrees to present during the assigned time slot without compensation, reimbursement for travel or overnight costs, or an honorarium.

**Speaker Recognition:** Although speakers are not remunerated, their names and affiliations are included in a well-recognized conference brochure with a distribution of over 10,000 copies in Michigan, in the Midwest, and around the country; their participation is noted on preservation-related websites, social media sites, and in e-blasts; and they are featured at a conference with 375-400 participants.

Thank you for submitting your abstract for a great session!