A Note from the Board President:

On February 3, 2022, members of Congress introduced the Historic Preservation Enhancement Act (H.R. 6589). This bill would double funding for the Historic Preservation Fund and make it a permanent program for the first time in its history.

Getting the bill introduced was a major step – but now we have to build support for it so that congressional leaders move it forward.

Please take a moment to send a message to your U.S. House representative to ask them to support the Historic Preservation Enhancement Act. You can use the sample email message [here](#) or write your own. If you have examples of projects in your community that have benefitted from preservation activities, be sure to mention them.

(Don’t know your House representative? Click [here](#) to enter your Zip code or address, and then click on your representative’s page. There, you will find a “Contact” button that will let you send a message.)

Every message Congress receives makes a difference. Please contact your representative today!

With you in preservation,
THE MICHIGAN HISTORIC PRESERVATION NETWORK presents the
FORTY-SECOND ANNUAL STATEWIDE PRESERVATION CONFERENCE
at Venue One Eleven, part of The Holly Vault Collection

OUR TOWN
Preserving Places Together

MAY 11-14, 2022
Holly, Michigan
In-person, live-streamed, and recorded
Former Rochester High School Building For Sale

Rochester Community Schools (RCS) is seeking proposals for the sale of the 4.43 acres of property located at 501 W. University Drive in the City of Rochester, Michigan. The property includes an existing three-story structure, currently known as the RCS Administration Building, which contains a total of 89,716 square feet of gross building area. “We invite all qualified purchasers to consider submitting a proposal,” said RCS Superintendent Dr. Robert Shaner. “We are particularly interested in learning about creative or unique proposals for alternative use or redevelopment that respect the heritage of the property.” A proposal package that contains the terms and conditions to purchase the parcel may be obtained by written request to: Collins & Blaha, PC, RE: Rochester Community Schools Administration Building, 31700 Middlebelt Road Suite 125, Farmington Hills, MI 48334. The RFP will also be posted on the district website. To be considered, all proposals to purchase this site must be submitted in writing by March 28, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. using the required form in the proposal package.

More about the former school building:

The Harrison Building/Rochester Community Schools Administration Building complex sits on the site of the first private high school in Avon Township, which was constructed in 1847. The school became part of the public school system in 1857 and was known as Avon District No. 5 School, offering classes for first through twelfth grades in one building. This building was destroyed by fire in the summer of 1889, and the new building (later renamed the Harrison Building) was erected on the site that fall. The new building continued to house all grades in a single structure, but as the community grew, so did enrollment, and it was enlarged several times before the first separate high school was constructed on the northeast corner of the property in 1916. The new building enabled the elementary school to occupy the entire Harrison Building.
Changes in laws impacted the school complex, such as the requirement that classes were to be offered to those without a high school in their district, and later the need to provide a gymnasium to accommodate the requirement for physical education. As a result of both regulations, additions were made to the building complex. The first was the addition of the gymnasium wing to the south side of the 1916 High School, and then, just over a decade later, the construction of another new high school off of the gymnasium.

For almost three-quarters of a century, the building complex provided an education to the residents of Rochester and many of the surrounding areas. The final classes were held in the building in 1963, at which point the building complex was converted to administrative uses.

In addition to the major role it played in educating generations of Rochester’s citizens, the building is also significant for art. The building includes a mural painted by the artist Marvin Beerbohm as part of the Works Progress Administration program known as the Federal Art Project. The 1937 mural, entitled Industrial Environment of Rochester High School, was painted in the central stairwell in the high school and depicted scenes from the nearby Ferry-Morse Seed Farm and the Parkedale Biological Farms, along with an image of Abram L. Craft, the Rochester school district superintendent from about 1898 to 1908.

The mural was covered in 1961 and was rediscovered almost thirty years later in 1990. The work went into storage for 20 years before the Rochester Avon Historical Society undertook the restoration of the work, commissioning noted conservator of antiques and art LaVere Webster of Rochester. The Smithsonian American Art Museum also aided in the restoration of the mural by providing a high-resolution black and white photograph of the mural taken shortly after its completion. Following restoration in 2011, the 23-foot long by 57-inch high mural, with missing pieces printed at the same scale from the photograph in sepia tones to distinguish from the original piece, was reinstalled on the balcony in the Harrison Room.

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**Historic Preservation Advocacy Week**

**March 7-10, 2022**

Register today for [National Historic Preservation Advocacy Week 2022](#). Preservation Action and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers are excited to host Historic Preservation Advocacy Week virtually, March 7th – 10th with the primary day of programming on March 8th. Advocacy Week will feature in-depth virtual trainings, policy briefings, networking opportunities, virtual meetings with elected officials, and of course virtual hill visits, providing the opportunity to meet with your members of Congress and their staff directly.

While we’ll miss being together in Washington, D.C., we’re excited to have an even bigger impact
with the potential of reaching more members of Congress and allowing more advocates to bring our message of preservation-positive legislation directly to lawmakers. This year will be a critical year for advocates, as we’re closer than ever before to bringing long over-due enhancements to the Historic Tax Credit, and are on verge of fully funding the Historic Preservation Fund for first time in history, but we need your help! Register today!

Upcoming MHPN Workshops

MHPN's monthly webinars are free and open to everyone to register. Miss the live event? Recordings on our YouTube channel. Check out the line up below and register today!

March 24, 2022, 1 p.m.: Restoring the Tower at Michigan Central Station

Preservation In the News


“Historic Grand Rapids theater aiming to host events ahead of $5M restoration project,” MLive, Brian McVicar, February 2, 2022.


"Rogers City takes next step in Main Street transformation process," PIAdvance, by Richard Lamb, February 18, 2022.

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**Preservation Calendar**


April 27-May 1, 2022: Conference - Society of Architectural Historians 2022 International Conference, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania


May 16-18, 2022: Conference - Main Street Now Conference. Richmond, Virginia


