

# CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

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

## **“ENDURING DISTINCTION”**

(Working Title)

**Thursday, May 7 - Saturday, May 9, 2026  
Edsel & Eleanor Ford House – The Visitor Center  
Grosse Pointe Shores, Michigan**

Thursday and Friday are our major program days. Approximately 24 in-seat sessions are needed for three program tracks: Theme, Information, Applied Skills & Case Studies. Abstracts are welcomed from Michigan’s Upper and Lower Peninsulas as well as from neighboring states and Canada. They may come from individuals and panels.

**Submission deadline is Sunday, September 21, 2025, 11:59 PM**

### **About Our Theme: “Enduring Distinction”**

The last time we were in Detroit for the MHPN’s statewide preservation conference was in May of 2016. It was on the heels of Detroit being named as UNESCO’s first “City of Design” from the United States. It joined the ranks of UNESCO’s Creative Cities Network – 116 strong at the time - with Budapest and Singapore joining Detroit in the year’s cohort. In 2016, we were celebrating additional landmark events including the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act, the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service, and the 35th anniversary of the Michigan Historic Preservation Network. It made for quite a year!

A decade has sped by! We’ve rejoiced in many victories, mourned losses, and now are confronting challenges to fundamental practices and protections in the field of historic preservation that could place us back to “square one” in terms of progress. It’s good we’ll be together to be inspired by each other’s energy and determination in continuing to expand the preservation movement, stronger in spite of these current trials.

As we kick-off the MHPN’s 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, we’ll celebrate what the City of Detroit offers but also look outward from there. How can we not? Although everyone recognizes that Metro Detroit is Michigan’s most significant metropolitan area, not everyone realizes that, in addition to Detroit proper, over 200 municipalities are included in its 1,285 square miles covering much of Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties.

We’ll definitely be studying Detroit’s preservation activities in our sessions and tours. Over the past months, however, we’ve also discussed our desire to explore the stunning architecture of those communities located outside the heart of the city – the Grosse Pointes, Southfield, Dearborn – as well as the many historic neighborhoods that are gems on the landscape – Indian Village, Russell Woods-Sullivan, Northland Gardens. They feel the gravitational pull of Detroit’s design prominence but have developed their own aesthetic and sense of place. As we explore

Metro Detroit – its dizzying array of commercial and civic buildings, churches, schools, parks, and residences large and small – we are reminded there is much worth stewarding.

This placemaking conversation extends far, far beyond the Detroit area. It can be shared throughout the state because it applies to traditional downtowns and neighborhoods, archaeological resources, vernacular and high-style buildings, and architectural treasures of the recent past. Large Legacy Cities as well as small towns can benefit, as can our fragile shoreline enclaves, agricultural communities, and more. The point of this coming year's conversation is to recognize that in preserving our historic places, we safeguard something distinctive that can indeed endure.

We'll end with the same upbeat welcome we used back in 2016: "Meet you in the D!"

### **Three Conference Tracks and Their Audiences:**

Our host community of Grosse Pointe Shores is furthest away from Detroit proper. Part of the historic communities that follow along the shoreline of Lake St. Clair eastward and northeastward from the city, it is joined by Grosse Pointe Park, Grosse Pointe, Grosse Pointe Farms, and Grosse Pointe Woods. The Grosse Pointes are home to traditional neighborhoods with noteworthy residences, churches, and public buildings; Modern designs are wonderful surprises. Pockets of original commercial activity are limited and in-scale with their neighborhoods, "The Village" in Grosse Pointe being the largest and a participant in the Michigan Main Street Program. Of the varied residences in the Grosse Pointes, the widely spaced lakefront mansions capture the most attention. Among these, the Edsel and Eleanor Ford House, one of Michigan's 42 National Historic Landmarks, stands out.

Against this backdrop of the Grosse Pointes and the City of Detroit itself, we seek a wide array of abstracts for three program tracks. The basic conference program is organized into tracks so that participants have a better idea of each session's content. (No abstracts are sought for the tours that familiarize attendees with the host community. They are developed by each year's Conference Planning Group.)

**Track One: "Theme"** – This track focuses on the conference theme of "Enduring Distinction." The track is for individual property owners, people in business and manufacturing, preservation professionals, craftspeople and tradespeople, elected and appointed officials, and government staff - anyone who is reclaiming and safeguarding cultural resources of importance to their communities. Of particular importance this year is that these cultural resources do not need to be in big cities or National Historic Landmarks to offer important information to conference participants. They can simply be what makes your community distinctive.

**Track Two: "Information - What You Need to Know to Make Preservation Work"** – This track is for those who need to know more about the laws, policies, and designations; the programs of assistance, tax incentives, and economic benefits; and the best practices and educational programs that provide support for cultural resource management.

**Track Three: "Applied Skills & Case Studies"** – This track is for individual property owners, professionals doing design and hands-on work, and community officials who need to know more about the special design needs of historic buildings, traditional trades, and current building and development practices.

### **Conference Abstract Submission Form:**

A session abstract includes the following component parts. Your submission including these components is due on or before Sunday, September 21, 2025, by 11:59 PM. Submit it following the instructions on the conference landing page of the MHPN's website – [www.mhpn.org/conference/](http://www.mhpn.org/conference/).

**NOTE:** *It is not uncommon for speakers to be included in more than one session. While open to this, the Selection Committee asks speakers to limit themselves to two sessions.*

- **Session Title for the Brochure:** Provide a title that will capture the participant's attention.
- **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 so they attend your session.
- **Summary for Accreditation and Promotional Use:** In 300 words or less, describe the session. This summary allows the Selection Committee to understand what you propose to achieve. NOTE: 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. TIP: Prepare this Summary first! You'll often find that your opening and closing lines are what create a very good 50-word Topic Statement!
- **Learning Objectives:** Provide at least four (4) brief learning objectives fulfilled by your proposed session. These objectives help secure continuing education credits from the American Institute of Architects, American Institute of Certified Planners, Michigan Citizen Planners, etc. Format each objective so that in response to "After attending this session, participants will be able to \_\_\_\_\_", you can start each objective using a word such as "Describe," "Explain," "Identify," "Compare," "Integrate," "Summarize," "Demonstrate," "Discuss," or other words that reflect your attendees will have gained new abilities through your presentation.

SAMPLE: After attending this session, participants will be able to *describe* the key differences between historic and modern mortars.

- **Program Track:** Tell us which of the three Program Tracks might be best for your session (see above). Do know that if chosen, however, your session may be assigned to a different track based on how it fits into the overall program.
- **Time Needed:** Tell us how much time might be best for your session: 1 hour, 1.25 hours, or 1.5 hours. If chosen, you may be asked to adjust your time based on other submissions and timeslot availability.
- **Level of Difficulty of Session Content:** Basic – no prior knowledge of the topic is needed. Intermediate – some prior knowledge of the topic is useful. Advanced – background in the topic is preferred.
- **Type of Presentation:** Help us anticipate your tech and AV needs.

- **Sharing your Power Point:** Let us know if, after the conference, you are willing to send your power point to the MHPN to share with conference attendees.
- **Moderator:** Is there someone in your session who would like to serve as Moderator? If not, an MHPN Board Member or Emeriti Leader will be assigned.
- **OPTIONAL: Photos or Illustrations:** If there are visuals that can help the Selection Committee review your session, please upload them. Provide credits and an indication of whether we have permission to use them – i.e. in the MHPN newsletter, on the MHPN website or conference landing page.
- **Speaker's Contact Information:** For *each* speaker provide:
  - Name as it would appear in the conference brochure if the session is chosen. (For a panel, the first speaker listed should be the best one to contact with questions.)
  - Any suffixes to the name – i.e. Ph.D., AIA, Esq., CPA, etc. We do not use prefixes in the brochure.
  - Work Title
  - Work Affiliation
  - Mailing address including address, city, state, and zip code
  - Phone
  - Cell phone for calls and texts
  - E-mail address
  - Note your availability on Thursday, May 7, and Friday, May 8, 2026.

NOTE: Your personal information is used only for conference communications and is not shared outside the MHPN.

- **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:**

Your Session Abstract Submission is due on or before Sunday, September 21, 2025, by 11:59 PM. Submit it following the instructions on the conference landing page of the MHPN's website – [www.mhpn.org/conference/](http://www.mhpn.org/conference/). Receipt will be acknowledged. Conference Co-Manager, Janet Kreger, can respond to e-mailed questions about preparing your abstract – [kregerj1981@att.net](mailto:kregerj1981@att.net). *Sample abstracts for each Track are available on request.*

### **Acceptance/Decline and MHPN Terms of Participation:**

The Selection Committee will notify selected speakers the first week of November. 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 for the registration fee, food, and beverages; tours and evening activities are discounted. In return, the speaker agrees to present during the assigned time slot without compensation, reimbursement for travel or overnight costs, or an honorarium. If a speaker attends the conference beyond the day(s) they present, they can register with the Student Discount as a small means by which we can say thank you.

**Speaker Recognition:**

Although speakers are not paid, their names and affiliations are included in a conference brochure with a distribution of 5,000 copies in Michigan, the Midwest, and around the country. Their participation is noted on preservation-related websites, social media sites, and in e-blasts. They are featured at a well-respected conference that draws 300-350 participants.

*Thank you for submitting your abstract for a great session!*

Current to: June 17, 2025