



# MICHIGAN HISTORIC PRESERVATION NETWORK

April 2026 Newsletter

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*MHPN supports the sustainability and economic viability of Michigan's historic places through advocacy, education, and direct action.*

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*Aerial view eastward from Detroit to Lake St. Clair. Photo: Mike Kline, Getty Images.*

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## **Remember to register for the 46<sup>th</sup> annual Statewide Preservation Conference!**

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By now, you have received your brochure or postcard about MHPN's 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Statewide Preservation Conference from May 7-9 in Grosse Pointe Shores at historic Ford House.

Register now online using our [Registration Portal](#).

Now that it's April, there are conference deadlines worth noting!

1. Conference Registration closes April 22, at 5 p.m. If you have expressed interest in being a Vendor, please remember to register. Space in the Vendors' Showcase is limited this year, and some who have expressed interest are on a Wait List.
2. Our two hotels offer a conference rate running from Tuesday (May 5) arrival through Sunday (May 10) check-out. They have the following deadlines for the conference rates: Cutoff Date: Tuesday, April 14 for the Holiday Inn Express GM Tech Center, 11500 East Eleven Mile Road, Warren, Michigan 48089. Located on East Eleven Mile Road at Hoover, 10 miles northwest of Ford House (15 minutes). Phone for Reservations: 586-754-0376. \$114-\$124 + tax and fees per night. For reservations requested after April 14, group rates will be honored based on availability only. Free parking is in adjacent lots.
3. Cutoff Date: Monday, April 21 for the Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott, 45800 Market Place Boulevard, Chesterfield, Michigan 48051. Located at I-94 at M-5, 16 miles north of Ford House (20 minutes). Phone for Reservations: 586-267-5300. \$99 + tax and fees per night. Any rooms not reserved by the group cutoff date will be released back into general inventory. Free parking is in adjacent lots.
4. Applications for volunteer opportunities are due by Sunday, April 12, at 5 p.m.
5. Applications for scholarships are due by Sunday, April 12, at 5 p.m.

If you are not able to register for the full conference, there are both free and individual ticketed activities available. See page 39 of the conference brochure to know what's available.

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Top left: SHPO track featuring the Dequindre Cut Greenway which received TAP funds. Photo: Landscape Architecture Foundation. Top right: Mad Men Tour of Southfield. Photo: City of Southfield. Bottom left: Grosse Pointe Modern Tour & the Hawkins Ferry House. Photo: James Haefner. Bottom right: Sacred Places Tour featuring Ste. Anne de Detroit Catholic Church among others. Photo: Quinn Evans.

## Coming to the MHPN’s 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference? Here’s what’s being offered in the SHPO and Tour Tracks

MHPN’s 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Statewide Preservation Conference is Thursday, May 7, through Saturday morning, May 9, at the Visitor Center at Ford House in Grosse Pointe Shores. Over the past several months, we’ve been looking at the programming in each of the tracks at the conference: Track 1: Theme – “Resilient by Design,” Track 2: Information – “What you need to know,” and Track 3: Case Studies and Applied Skills – “Getting to Work.” Last month, we also looked at our exceptional Saturday programming.

In this issue, we’re focusing on two final features of the conference. First, we’ll look at a track of programs provided by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). This is for everyone who wishes to learn how SHPO’s programs and staff can assist them with their first efforts at safeguarding and reusing their historic resources all the way through their most comprehensive revitalization strategies. Second, we’ll look at Track 4: Tours – “Showcasing our Host Community.”

### SHPO Track

Thursday, May 7

2:45–3:45 p.m. “Leveraging Community Preservation Grants for Survey and Planning (Part 1) – Certified Local Government Grants.” During this session, SHPO staff discuss CLG grants and the best ways to leverage them for survey and planning projects.

4– 5 p.m. “Leveraging Community Preservation Grants for Survey and Planning (Part 2) – Preservation Transportation Grants.” In this session, SHPO and MDOT staff discuss how surveying and planning can be used to foster better projects with Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding, which can be used by local governments to fund preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities and provide safe non-motorized alternatives.

#### Friday, May 8

10:30 – 11:45 a.m. “What is SHPO and the Statewide Historic Preservation Plan?” SHPO’s around the country were established under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. This session provides an overview of the Michigan SHPO’s work, as well as its more recent efforts to develop the next Statewide Historic Preservation Plan.

3:45 – 5 p.m. “The State Historic Preservation Tax Credit for Residential Use.” The State Historic Tax Credit program was re-established in 2020 to promote the preservation of Michigan’s historic resources. An eligible property must be either individually listed or contribute to a district listed in the National Register, the State Register, or be in a local historic district. Applications may be for owner-occupied residences.

***SHPO Track is sponsored by DeStigter Architecture LLC, Grand Rapids***



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#### **Track 4: Tours**

##### Thursday, May 7

1:15 – 5 p.m. “Mad Men Meet Southfield: A City’s Unique Collection of Mid-Century Modern Buildings.” Southfield, a post-World War II boom town, grew rapidly in the 1950s and 60s as an inner-ring suburb of Detroit. With that growth came a unique collection of Mid-Century Modern commercial buildings, religious institutions, homes, and neighborhoods. This city bus tour includes stops at homes, commercial buildings, and churches and synagogues. Quite a few of the buildings were designed by leading architects of the day including Minoru Yamasaki, Gunnar Birkerts, Percival Goodman, Louis Redstone, G. Bruce Boore, Victor Gruen, and lesser known but accomplished designers.

##### Friday, May 8

8 - 11:45 a.m. “Grosse Pointe Modern: Exploring Three Residential Masterpieces – A bus and walking tour.” While Grosse Pointe is known for historic revival-style homes, it also has notable spectacular modern residences designed by renowned architects Alden B. Dow, Alexander Girard, William Kessler, Paul Rudolph, Eliel and Eero Saarinen, Minoru Yamasaki, and others. This tour features three residential masterpieces, including Alexander Girard’s John and Kathleen McLucas House (1950), William Kessler’s W. Hawkins Ferry House (1964), and Paul Rudolph’s Frank and Anne Parcels House (1970). Current owners share their experiences in owning and preserving these exemplars of Grosse Pointe’s modernist heritage.

2:15 – 5:15. “Sacred Spaces, Special Places: Detroit’s Historic Churches – A Bus and Walking Tour.” Detroit’s historic churches offer a remarkable window into the city’s cultural and spiritual heritage. Ste. Anne de Detroit Catholic Church, founded in 1701, reflects the city’s earliest French Catholic traditions, with the current 1886 Gothic Revival structure showcasing soaring vaults and vibrant stained glass. Christ Church Detroit, established in 1845, anchors the city’s Episcopal history with its distinguished English Gothic design completed in 1863. Second Baptist Church, founded in 1836, stands as Michigan’s oldest African American congregation and a key station on the Underground Railroad. Together, these sacred spaces highlight Detroit’s diverse architectural traditions and resilient faith communities.

***Track 4: Tours is sponsored by Bay View Handworks, Michigan***

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*Ford House interior. Photo: Ford House*

There are several more conference tours planned in celebration of MHPN's 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2026. First, because Ford House is aware that conference participants are quite busy, they are offering three opportunities to tour the historic house on Thursday, May 7 from 1:30 to 3 p.m. and on Friday, May 8 from 9:15 to 10:45 a.m. and 2:30 to 4 p.m. The tours provide access to the formal rooms and private living spaces at the heart of the Ford family's estate. Designed by Albert Kahn, the home's Tudor Revival style was inspired by the architecture of the Cotswold region. Built and furnished between 1926-1929, the Fords moved in in 1928. The interior reflects Western European design influences. In the 1930s, Edsel Ford commissioned industrial designer Walter Dorwin Teague to re-imagine four rooms, introducing a Machine Age aesthetic. Featured are paintings by Henri Matisse and Diego Rivera, as well as classic European portraiture, modern sculptures, and ancient Asian and African artifacts. The interior has remained nearly unchanged since the family was in residence.

***The three "Inside Ford House" tours are sponsored by Merry Go Round Stained Glass, Inc., Clinton Township***





*Ovation Yacht. Photo: Infinity-Ovation Yacht Charters*

After the Opening Reception on Thursday evening, we have an opportunity to see the Detroit Skyline from the Detroit River with the "Detroit River Sunset Cruise" aboard Ovation from 7 to 10 p.m. (boarding is from 6:30 to 7 p.m.). Participants will meet two miles north of the Ford House at Jefferson Beach Marina and board Ovation, a three-deck yacht. The cruise travels to the western end of Belle Isle to see the lights of Detroit and includes strolling dinner and an open bar.

***The twilight cruise is sponsored by RAM Construction Services***



To view all of the conference sessions, tour details, learning objectives, and speaker bios, visit our [Conference Page on our website](#). As always, conference attendees can mix and match activities and tracks.

***Thank you to our conference underwriters!***



**2026 slate of officers & board of directors' candidates**

MHPN's Officers and Board of Directors are one of the foundational elements of the organization. Each of the volunteers serving on the Board have made a commitment in time and willingness to share their expertise in carrying out the MHPN's mission. The strength of the MHPN Board is reflected in the range of expertise, experiences, geographic breadth, and diversity of community affiliations of its members. This is, of course, augmented by a great support staff, a host of volunteers, and the membership at large!

As it was constituted in 2025, the Nominating Committee consists of five members, per the bylaws, including Samantha Malott Brown (Detroit), Lindsey Dotson (Charlevoix), Janet Kreger (Ann Arbor), Tim Scarlett (Houghton), and, the committee chair, Michael Hambacher (Williamston). Initially, the Committee Chair canvassed the exiting group of Officers about their interest in running for another one-year term. All four agreed to stand for election again, so the slate of Officers includes:

- Melissa Milton-Pung, Ann Arbor: Running for a 3rd one-year term as President. Melissa also is running for her 3rd and final three-year term on the Board. (Note: she served as President in 2012-2014).
- Michael Hambacher, Williamston: Running for a 3rd one-year term as Vice President. Mike also is running for his 3rd three-year term on the Board.
- Emily Cauzillo, Gowen: Running for a 3rd one-year term as Treasurer. Emily is in her 2nd three-year term on the Board.
- Samantha Malott Brown, Detroit – Running for a 2nd one-year term as Secretary. Sam is in her 2nd three-year term on the Board.

Secondly, the Committee Chair canvassed the seven Board members whose terms were ending and were eligible to serve another three-year term. No Board members had exhausted their eligibility to serve another term. Six of the current Board members agreed to run for another three-year term. They are:

- Aaron Sims, Inkster: Running for his 2nd three-year term.
- Laura Steenwyck, Grand Rapids: Running for her 3rd and final three-year term.
- Devan Anderson, Detroit: Running for his 3rd and final three-year term.
- Lindsey Dotson, Petoskey: Running for her 2nd three-year term.
- Joe Frost, Bay City: Running for his 2nd three-year term.
- Eric Gollanek, East Grand Rapids: Running for his 2nd three-year term.

These results were reported at the February full Board meeting and again at the March Executive Committee meeting. At the March meeting, it also was reported that Board member David Jackson was declining running for another three-year term on the Board. We would like to express our appreciation to David for his six years of service to the Board and his presence will be missed.

The Committee Chair indicated at the March meeting that at least one additional new person to stand for election to the Board of Directors would be identified. Two people, having expressed previous interest, were approached about joining the slate of candidates. Both agreed and they are:



**Kemba Braynon, AIA**  
**Historic Preservation Architect**  
**Quinn Evans. Ypsilanti. MI**

Kemba Braynon, AIA, attended the University of Michigan where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Architecture, a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature, and a Master of Architecture. She began her career as an

architect working in Chicago, but the Great Recession hit the building industry particularly hard. Unable to find work in her field, she accepted a position researching and writing local historic district reports with the City of Detroit. What appeared to be a professional detour instead became an introduction to the field of historic preservation and the ways that communities can save, repair, and reuse historic buildings. While working at the City of Detroit, Kemba authored local historic district reports and wrote and administered preservation grants to repair Detroit's cultural resources, including the Belle Isle Aquarium, Scarab Club, and Ford Piquette Museum.

In 2015, she joined Quinn Evans as an historic preservation architect. Her portfolio includes projects that seek to reuse historic buildings, reflect important and often disregarded history, and provide much-needed community resources. Kemba is the former Chair of the Michigan State Historic Preservation Review Board and has served as President for the Detroit-Chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architects. In 2023, she received the President's Award from AIA Michigan which recognizes outstanding contributions to the advancement of the built environment, the profession, and service to the community. Kemba lives in Ypsilanti with her husband, two children, and their family pets – an affectionate cat and a stoic bearded dragon.

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**Luis Peña**  
**Historic Preservation Coordinator**  
**City of Kalamazoo, MI**

Luis Peña is the City of Kalamazoo's Historic Preservation Coordinator. A native of Kalamazoo, Peña earned his BA in English from Western Michigan University and a Master of Historic Preservation from Eastern Michigan University. As Preservation coordinator, Peña is dedicated to preserving Kalamazoo's historic built environment which is integral to its unique heritage. Peña works with property owners to navigate the process for acquiring historic district permission to conduct work on the exterior of their properties in an effort to make process simpler. Peña also serves as the staff liaison to both the Historic District and Historic Preservation Commissions, the latter of which works to distribute funds to the community through the O'Connor Fund for Historic Preservation.

The above slate of Officers, current Board members whose terms are ending, and new Board members was approved by the Executive Committee by electronic vote. The Nominating Committee presents these slates of candidates to the Membership for review prior to a vote taken at the annual meeting in Grosse Pointe Shores on Thursday, May 7, 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM. The Nominating Committee sincerely thanks each nominee who has agreed to have their name put forward.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Luis Peña". The signature is stylized and written in cursive.

## Upcoming Webinars

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### **Beacon of Hope: St. Joseph Church Bell Tower Restoration** **Thursday, April 30. 1 - 2 p.m.**

**AIA: 1 LU/ HSW**  
**AICP: CM 1 #9325964**

Speaker: Julie Jones, Senior Associate, Wiss, Janney, Elster Associates, Inc.

Originally founded by German immigrants in 1855, St. Joseph church was built in the Gothic Revival style between 1870 and 1892. Following the decline of the catholic population within the City of Detroit and damage to the steeple roof after a wind event in 2016, the future of the parish and church building were uncertain. At this time, the Institute of Christ the King took over management of St. Joseph Shrine and launched a restoration program of the church building and master planning for the community as a whole. This dramatically revived the parish, which has recently swelled to large numbers and is becoming an increasingly influential presence within the City of Detroit.

When unexpected safety concerns were identified by Wise, Janney, Elster Associates Inc. (WJE) in 2023, the Shrine took on major facade repairs at the bell tower located directly above the main entrance to the church building. Though the magnitude of this restoration project was unexpected, the community at St. Joseph Shrine has embraced the call to preserve their bell tower for future generations and dubbed this important structure a 'Beacon of Hope.'

This session will discuss the unique challenges associated with accessing an occupied, bustling church building; the behavior of and failure mechanisms related to historic stone structures, particularly those with inaccessible elements; and examples of design challenges when incorporating modern building methods and technologies into existing structures.

Register for Free

*Did you miss a webinar or wish to review it again? [View past webinar recordings](#). Do you have a great webinar idea you would like to explore with us? Let us know by emailing us at contact [info@mhpn.org](mailto:info@mhpn.org).*

*MHPN workshops are supported in part by the Michigan Arts & Culture Council and the National Endowment for the Arts.*





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