

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

The Michigan Historic Preservation Network announces its
47th Annual Statewide Historic Preservation Conference

"THE ROOF OVER OUR HEAD: Preservation's Role in Solving Michigan's Housing Crisis"

Thursday, May 13 – Saturday, May 15, 2027
The Capital Area

Headquartered at the Hannah Community Center in East Lansing

Thursday and Friday are our major program days. Approximately 24 in-seat sessions are needed for three program tracks. The Theme Track welcomes presentations that explore the housing options provided by older buildings of all types, for different housing markets, at varied price points. *As usual, however, the Information Track and the Case Studies & Applied Skills Track provide participants with the latest practices and tools needed for any kind of project, housing or otherwise.* 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 27, 2026, 11:59 PM

About Our Theme: "The Roof Over Our Head"

Many people involved in the early planning of the 2027 conference also took part in the stakeholder meetings held around the state by SHPO to help define goals for the state's next long-range plan. One issue came up repeatedly: Michigan's housing crisis. Those of us involved in historic preservation well know the housing options Michigan communities open for themselves when they work with their older building stock, but not everyone else knows this!

The "working" theme for the conference thus immediately took shape: "The Roof Over Our Head: Preservation's Role in Solving Michigan's Housing Crisis." It provides a rich vein of topics to tap. The adaptive upcycling of non-traditional buildings into housing throws open the possibility of using schools and mills and office buildings and everything in between. There are pros and cons to consider if proposing to increase the density in historic neighborhoods with Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) on the properties of extant homes. Many communities are succeeding with "Lights on Downtown" initiatives that add housing in the upper stories of downtown buildings. "Missing Middle" housing can provide communities with new, multi-unit, residential-scale buildings - duplexes, fourplexes, and courtyard apartments – designed to be compatible with detached single-family homes. "Pattern Book Homes" revive housing styles from beloved catalogues to create new infill housing in neighborhoods – think Sears, Montgomery Ward, and Michigan's own Aladdin Homes. And, of course, there is the basic reasonableness of just keeping existing historic residential stock in full use.

There already are so many options being considered in our communities that we know there are others serving varied housing markets and at all price points. Do YOU have a session to propose for the Capital Area Conference in 2027?

Three Conference Tracks and Their Audiences:

The Capital Area has worked over the years to draw the public's attention to its historic resources and to put them to full use. Considering Ingham County, in which the Capital City is located, there are 47 individual properties and 7 historic districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places. One of those – the Michigan State Capitol – stands among our state's 42 National Historic Landmarks. More recently, 3 downtown areas have qualified to participate in the Michigan Main Street Program - Downtown Lansing, the Old Town Commercial Association in North Lansing, and REO Town Lansing. The 2 also participating in the Certified Local Government Program include East Lansing and Downtown Lansing.

Against this backdrop of the Capital Area, we seek a wide array of abstracts for the three program tracks from all over Michigan, as well as the Midwest and Canada. 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 "The Roof Over Our Head." 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 working with historic properties that are helping meet the state's housing crisis. These cultural resources do not need to be in big cities to provide inspiration to conference participants. The housing crisis is felt in every corner of the state.

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 all types of preservation projects.

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 appropriate to preservation projects of any kind.

Conference Abstract Submission Form:

The conference landing page is located at: www.mhpn.org/conference/

Please know you must have a Whova account to submit your session abstract. If you are already using Whova, your current login and account information is all that is needed to upload your abstract submission. New users will be required to create an account. To do so, click the "Session Abstract Portal" button on the conference landing page; when you then click on "Start Proposal," the system will have you create your account first. **Contact Xiaohan Bao Smith with any questions you may have about your account: xbaosmith@mhpn.org.**

This "Call for Abstracts – Information for Speakers" lets you see what you need to have ready to complete the abstract before you begin. It is the same as in years past.

A session abstract includes the following components. Your submission, including these components, is due on or before Sunday, September 27, 2026, by 11:59 PM.

NOTE: Speakers occasionally are included in more than one session. While open to this, the Selection Committee asks speakers to limit themselves to no more than two sessions.

- **Session Title for the Brochure:** Provide a title with a maximum of 125 characters-including-spaces that will capture the participant's attention when they read the conference brochure or look through the Whova registration site.
- **Topic Statement:** A topic statement with a maximum of 350 characters-including-spaces becomes the description in the conference brochure and on the Whova registration site if your abstract is selected. It engages the participant's interest so they attend your session.
- **Summary for Accreditation and Promotional Use:** In a maximum of 2,000 characters-including-spaces, 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 you to describe your adherence to them in this summary. **TIP: Prepare this Summary first! You'll often find the opening and closing lines create a good 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 use a word such as "Describe," "Explain," "Identify," "Compare," "Integrate," "Summarize," "Demonstrate," "Discuss," etc. that reflect the new abilities your attendees will have gained 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 track descriptions 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 MHPH 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 indicate if we have permission to use them – i.e. in the MHPN newsletter, on the MHPN website, etc.
- **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 contact for 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 13, and on Friday, May 14, 2027.

NOTE: Your personal information is used only for conference communications.
- **Biography:** Provide a maximum of 1,000 characters-including-spaces for *each* speaker, covering such things as education, relevant experience, role in a project, etc.

Deadline:

Your Session Abstract Submission is due on or before Sunday, September 27, 2026, by 11:59 PM. Submit it following the instructions on the conference landing page of the MHPN's website – www.mhpn.org/conference/. Receipt will be acknowledged within the week. Conference Co-Manager, Janet Kreger, can respond to e-mailed questions about abstract preparation – kregerj1981@att.net. *Sample abstracts for each Track are available on request.*

Acceptance/Decline and MHPN Terms of Participation:

During the first week of November, the Selection Committee will notify speakers who have been selected. Declines will also be acknowledged and those abstracts will be archived. If a speaker is selected, the MHPN hosts them on the day he or she speaks for the registration fee, food, and beverages; while the Opening Reception on Thursday and the Keynote Address on Friday are included in registration, additional tours and evening activities are at the published fees. 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 350-400 participants.

Thank you for submitting your abstract for a great session! Current to: June 30, 2026