



Historic District Commission

CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

The City Farmington Hills Historic District Commission is charged with preserving historic districts within the City that reflect elements of the architectural, cultural, economic, political, or social history of the community. This seven (7)-member commission is comprised of City residents working diligently over the past year to further this goal. This report summarizes the Commission's activities in 2022.

2022 Commission Membership

Alec Thomson
James Paulson, Chair
John Trafelet
Ken Klemmer, Vice Chair
Lisa Martin, Recording Secretary (resigned)
Marleen Tulas
Steve Olson

City Council Liaison: Valerie Knol, Councilperson
City Staff Liaison(s): Kris Canty, Staff Planner (newly assigned)
Erik Perdonik, City Planner (outgoing)

2022 Historic District Commission Goals, Objectives, and Initiatives

- Assist the City's Special Services Department with continued restoration work on the fieldstone wall at the Sherman-Goodenough House (Historic District Site No. 312).
- Assist the City's Special Services Department with upcoming work on the Spicer House (Historic District Site No. 508) and implement a comprehensive restoration plan for the site.
- Continue collaboration between the Historic District Commission and City's Department of Public Works in implementing the cemetery preservation plan, including additional monument cleaning and resetting.
- Continue the oral history project using online meeting software and other digital tools to capture interviews of residents, officials, and community stakeholders.
- Continue to update the "Blue Book," the City's official guide to its Historic Districts, for accuracy and comprehensiveness, and explore a potential internship opportunity within the Planning Office to assist in such process.
- Comprehensive video and photo documentation of Sarah Fisher property since development may begin soon.
- Continue to monitor the preservation status of the Botsford Inn and work with the responsible parties to address various issues regarding the exterior of the structure.
- Complete study of properties identified in the 2019 reconnaissance survey by contacting property owners and informing them of benefits of local historic designation and continue to identify new sites for potential historic designation.
- Develop a standardized "welcome package" for new owners of designated historic sites.



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Historic District Commission Meetings

In 2022, the Historic District Commission held ten (10) regular meetings; meetings in January and August were cancelled due to lack of business.

Review of Work Within Historic Districts

Certificates of Appropriateness are granted for a project which meets the United States Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, as set forth in Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 67, as amended.



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Certificates of Appropriateness

In 2022, ten (10) Certificates of Appropriateness were issued for work within the following districts:

Historic District Site No. 206 – Drake House – 28804 Drake Road

Site Overview

This homestead is for Theodore Francis Drake II and his wife, Emma, who raised eight children on the family acres. The house was originally built ca. 1830 by a member of the Wixom family. Hand-hewn beams are visible in the basement. The Drake brothers, William and Theodore, purchased the property in 1867. They farmed the acres, with the help of their sister, Esther, who kept the house.

William and Esther left, and the farm went to Theodore who named Drake Road when the Edison line came through the Township in the early 1900's. Extensive remodeling was done to the house in 1938 giving it a historic Federalist and Greek Revival style. There is an early barn on the property.



Certificate of Appropriateness 22-1

The Historic District Commission issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement of the existing six (6)-foot-tall, white, wooden privacy fence enclosing the property with a six (6)-foot-tall, white, vinyl picket fence.



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Historic District Site No. 508 – Spicer House – Heritage Park on Farmington Road

Site Overview

The long low English Country House was designed to blend in with the landscape by talented architect Marcus Burrowes. The house was built in 1926 for attorney David Gray and his wife, Martha. It originally stood on twelve acres of land.

The house was designed with two wings; the outdoors was visible from all rooms. This design was not only beautiful, but practical, because of the cross ventilation.



The land is now Heritage Park with this jewel of a house as its heart. The Spicer House serves as the Park's Visitor Center, with the wings modernized to serve as classrooms and meeting areas. The four (4) historic rooms: the hall, living room with cathedral ceiling, library and dining room, serve for gatherings and displays.

Certificate of Appropriateness 22-2

The Historic District Commission issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the removal of the existing wood shingle roof and replacement with a synthetic shake roof, and minor stucco and trim repairs, subject to:

- The Commission making the final selection of the color of the roofing product.
- The existing ridge cap being refurbished and reused or an alternative ridge cap that resembles the existing cap be used, if feasible.
- The existing copper gutters being refurbished and retained.
- New copper valleys being installed.

Site Overview

Built between 1854 and 1856 by Addis Emmett Green on land purchased for him by his father, Zephaniah Green, in 1853. Zephaniah and Zerilla Green, Addis Emmett's parents, were pioneer settlers of West Bloomfield; the family farm was across Fourteen Mile Road from the house Addis Emmett Green built.

Addis Emmett Green traveled to California after he was educated but returned to marry Adaline Smith of Novi. They settled in this house that



he built for his bride. The house has been in the Green family for six (6) generations. It was probably originally a "Michigan Farmhouse" style with two enclosed staircases. The basic lumber is sawn. Extensive changes have been made to the house, including a second wing added as well as Gothic trim.

Certificate of Appropriateness 22-3

The Historic District Commission issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement of twelve (12) existing vinyl replacement windows with twelve (12) vinyl replacement windows of a similar style.



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Historic District Site No. 15 – Botsford Inn – 27900 Grand River Avenue

Site Overview

Built in 1836 by Allen Weston, this Inn was used as a hotel and tavern. It was significant as the Sixteen Mile House when owned and run by Stephen Jennings on the Detroit to Howell Plank Road. Milton Botsford purchased the Inn in 1860 and gave it his name. In 1924 Henry Ford became owner of the Inn and did extensive restoration. He also moved the Inn back to make room for the widening of Grand River Avenue.



This Inn is listed in the National Registry of Historic Places and Michigan State Registry of Historical Places.

Certificate of Appropriateness 22-4

The Historic District Commission issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of ninety-four (94) new prefinished black wood shutters; repair of two (2) chimney top caps; removal and replacement of eighty (80) lineal feet of handrail on the second-floor balcony; and the preparation and repainting of the new railing, existing wood siding, existing wood columns, existing wood storm windows, prefinished shutters prior to installation, and existing soffit and fascia.



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Historic District Site No. 3 – Lemuel Botsford House – 24414 Farmington Road

Site Overview

Lemuel Botsford was a Connecticut farmer who came to Michigan in 1836. He moved to Farmington soon after; attracted by the Quaker community. The current house replaced a smaller structure that was on this property in 1837.

Lucy and Lemuel had ten children, several whom were prominent in the Farmington community. Rhonda Botsford married P.D. Warner. Milton Botsford became proprietor of the Botsford Inn. Orville was known for the fine horses he raised.



The Greek Revival house was located on a hill called Botsford Hill overlooking the Village of Farmington. Subsequent owners included John Pettibone of the pioneer Pettibone family. The 1837 house has had numerous additions including a bedroom wing added in the 1930's by Ralph Finneron, a Ford Motor Company executive.

This fine Greek Revival house is listed on the Michigan State Registry of Historical Places.

Certificate of Appropriateness 22-5

The Historic District Commission issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement of the asphalt shingle roof, aluminum gutters, and wood and plastic shutters with an asphalt shingle roof intended to simulate wood shake, new seamless aluminum gutters, and new wood shutters to include shutter dogs.

Historic District Site No. 6 – The Theron Murray House – 30943 Halsted Road

Site Overview

Built between 1833 and 1837 by Theron and Rebecca Murray, this Greek Revival house changed hands many times before Horace Green purchased it in 1863.

The house, like the barn, features hand-hewn framing construction, pegged together; some of the original woodwork is still visible.



The little pond on the property is part of the legendary Minnow Pond. When the Murrays, who were part of the prominent pioneer Welfare family of Commerce Township, left the Farmington property after four (4) years, they farmed in West Bloomfield.

Horace Green purchased the house in 1863. Horace was the grandson of Levi Green, a Revolutionary War veteran who is buried in North Farmington Cemetery with his wife, Asenath. Horace Green's parents were Zephaniah Ripley Green and his wife Zerilla Gould Green. The Zephaniah Greens came to West Bloomfield in 1832. Horace Green's wife was Mary Eliza Seeley. They farmed the property from 1863 to 1911.

This house is listed on the Michigan State Registry of Historical Places.

Certificate of Appropriateness 22-1A

The Historic District Commission issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of a generator in the south side yard.

Historic District Site No. 504 – Kirby White House – 24200 Farmington Road

Site Overview

Kirby and Alice White and their five children moved into this Federalist Revival House by 1928. Kirby White was general manager, vice-president and director of the Ferry-Morse Seed Company, which by the 1930's was the largest seed company in the United States.



The estate home was built for the Whites on five acres along Farmington Road and was designed by Marcus Burrowes who was a prominent architect in

Detroit and Michigan. He designed public buildings for cities and houses for wealthy clients.

The Kirby White House has some unique architectural features. The house is supported by steel beams, unusual for houses dating from the 1920's. The Federalist-Revival style features many gables, arches and bays.

Kirby White died in June 1933 and the family moved from their country estate to Birmingham, Michigan. A series of owners for the lovely estate were executives of Ford Motor Company.

The Presbyterian Church purchased the property and house in 1956. The needs of the church for religious purposes caused the house to be moved a mile south on Farmington Road in 1993. It has been adapted to its new location and carefully maintained in the unique Federalist-Revival style architecture.

Certificate of Appropriateness 22-2A

The Historic District Commission issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the removal of the existing asphalt shingle roof and replacement with a charcoal laminate/dimensional asphalt shingle roof.

Site Overview

This Greek Revival house with a Federalist influence was probably constructed between 1831 and 1838 by John Garfield. The outer portion has hand-hewn beams, and the inner basic beams are logs with bark still on them.

The house experienced extensive remodeling and modification over the years but has been restored to its original Federal-Greek Revival appearance.



The property at one time contained an orchard and a dairy farm. The barn, which has been remodeled into a home, is on neighboring property. A carriage house, to the east of the home, was moved here from its original location near the Botsford Inn.

The John Garfield House is on the Michigan State Registry of Historical Places.

Certificate of Appropriateness 22-3A

The Historic District Commission issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the removal of the existing wood deck material and replacement with composite materials.

Certificate of Appropriateness 22-4A

The Historic District Commission issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of a generator in the rear yard.

Historic District Site No. 202 – Boorn-Halsted Cottage – 28325 Halsted Road

Site Overview

Built around 1830 by James Boorn and his wife, Olive Pettibone Boorn, this farm remained in the family for three generations.

James Boorn took out forty acres on the west side of today's Halsted Road and forty acres on the east side.

He was a cobbler, ran a slaughterhouse, and the farm. The Boorns' daughter, Hannah, married William Halsted.

William and Hannah's son, Harvey Halsted started growing fruit on the farm after the Civil War. When his children, Charles and James Halsted, farmed the property, they specialized in Steel Red Apples.

The house has been extensively remodeled. There is a Michigan stone wall along Halsted Road.

Certificate of Appropriateness 22-5A

The Historic District Commission issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement of the existing asphalt shingle roof with a similar asphalt shingle roof.



Selected Historic District Commission Activities in 2022

Cemetery Master Plan Implementation

Beginning in 2019, the Historic District Commission undertook leading the preservation of the two (2) City-owned cemeteries: Farmington West Cemetery and East Farmington (Utley) Cemetery.

The Master Plan developed by a Historic District Commission subcommittee is a multi-year, phased approach. The phases, which overlap, include documentation, cleanup of the landscape, cleaning of markers, and resetting and restoration of the markers.

Progress has been steady and includes both volunteer efforts and the engagement of professional services.

Throughout 2022, the Commission continued implementation of its Cemetery Master Plan. Commissioners, with the assistance of the City's Department of Public Works, Fenton Memorials, and volunteers, cleaned and reset monuments in East Farmington (Utley) Cemetery, including the resetting of larger, heavier monuments.

In October 2022, on two (2) separate occasions, Boy Scouts assisted Commissioners and volunteers with releveling smaller tombstones and touchup cleaning at East Farmington (Utley) and West Farmington Cemeteries.



Historic Resource Survey

In November 2022, a Historic District Commission subcommittee toured sections two (2) and eleven (11) of the City, with a focus on identifying noteworthy midcentury modern homes for potential inclusion in the Historic District. The subcommittee identified five (5) midcentury modern homes for further study and contacted each of the homeowners. The subcommittee is currently in communication with three (3) of the homeowners regarding their interest in potentially being added to the District.

Botsford Inn Exterior Restoration

Throughout 2022, the Historic District Commission and City officials worked closely with the owners of the Botsford Inn regarding finding a use for the structure and restoration of several aspects of the exterior that have fallen into disrepair. Although discussions regarding potential future uses of the structure continue, thanks to the Commission's efforts, the owners have committed to restoration of key aspects of the exterior, including the shutters.

Spicer House Roof Replacement

In late 2022, the Historic District Commission worked closely with the City's Department of Special Services to find an appropriate solution for replacement of the Spicer House's aged cedar shake roof. A subcommittee of the Commission assessed the condition of the roof and explored various options from repair to complete replacement.

Ultimately, a compromise was found in which the roof is planned to be replaced with synthetic shakes, but the distinctive copper gutters, and potentially the terracotta ridge caps, are to be reused to maintain the distinct character of the roof to the extent possible.

