

Heritage NEWS

MARCH 2008

General Meeting
Wednesday,
March 26, 2008
at 7:30 p.m.
Ladies' Literary Club
218 N. Washington St. • Ypsilanti



Schloss Pillnitz just east of Dresden

On Wednesday March 26, 2008, at 7:30 p.m., Bonnie Ion, president of the Ann Arbor Garden Club and a trained landscape architect, will speak to the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation and present a slide show on the Historical Gardens of Eastern Germany. The location is the historic 1840s Ladies' Literary Club at 218 North Washington Street. Ion, who is also president of the Ann Arbor Rhododendron Society, says that public gardens and those surrounding royal palaces in East Germany suffered tremendous neglect during fifty years under

communism. Since the fall of the Berlin wall, the gardens have been under restoration, although the process is very slow and expensive. Ion cites as an example an enormous rose garden that was created in 1900. "People risked their lives to keep it going" during the communist years, says Ion. "One guy even died for the garden, he thought it was so important."

Ion has a master's degree in landscape architecture from the University of Michigan. Her thesis was an analysis of a historical landscape in Seattle. Today she doesn't

HISTORICAL GARDENS



OF EASTERN GERMANY



Gross Sedlitz Baroque Garden outside Heidenau

work as a landscape architect but she does teach history courses for Michigan garden clubs.

Please join us on March 26. The public is welcome and, as always, refreshments will be served. For more information, call Penny Schreiber at (734) 483-5688.

GOTHIC STYLE BUILDINGS IN YPSILANTI

By Jane Schmiedeke (from a series of articles published in *The Courier*)

The very attractive Gothic style, familiar in its two American versions – Carpenter Gothic and Gothic Revival – became popular in this country in the mid-to-late 19th century.

Buildings constructed in this style are considered to be some of the finest examples of American craftsmanship.

Common to both versions are several characteristic features: tall, narrow, usually pointed windows; steeply pitched roofs, often with several sharply pointed gables; and richly embellished bargeboards in gables and at roof edges.

Picturesque cottages of frame construction, whose characteristic decoration is often whimsical, typify the charming Carpenter Gothic style.

Frequently the exterior was finished in vertical boards and battens. So popular was the Carpenter Gothic style that houses were constructed all across the country by carpenters who invented their own endless variations of the style.

Lester Walker, author of "American Shelter, an Illustrated Encyclopedia of the American Home," described the Carpenter Gothic style as "characterized chiefly by its profusion of decorative sawn details (sometimes called 'gingerbread'). The fact that most of these details were originally designed to be built of stone did not deter American carpenters from interpreting them in wood. Armed with a steam-powered scroll saw and a pattern book that provided floor plans, elevations, framing plans, and sometimes details, a carpenter with a small crew could build a relatively large, elaborate house in a matter of months."

Excellent local examples of the Carpenter Gothic style are the houses at 301 North Grove, 410 North Huron, and 513 N. Adams.

The handsome Gothic Revival style is derived from medieval Gothic church design, with strong vertical emphasis in form and detail and is generally built of masonry (brick or stone) with a slate roof.

"In England," continues author Walker, "the Gothic Revival was blossoming because of craftsmen who had passed



left
301 N. Grove
below
103 North Adams

top right
321 E. Cross
bottom right
601 Emmet

Examples of Gothic Revival



on techniques from generation to generation since the Middle Ages and because architects, too, had become interested."

In this country, also, the style became popular, particularly with people who could afford to build the large, stately

Gothic Revival structures that grace many of America's cities.

Local examples of the Gothic Revival style include the houses at 103 North Adams and 302 West Cross and the rare commercial example at 118 West Michigan.



Examples of Carpenter Gothic



GOTHIC STYLE 1830-1870

FORM: combinations of rectangular shapes, some with multi-sided bay windows.

ROOF: steeply pitched, often with several sharply pointed gables; iron ridge cresting and spires common, along with pendants at cave corners.

WINDOWS: tall and narrow, usually with pointed arches, often crowned with an emphasized hood; richly leaded glass in diamond shaped panes, often colored.

DOORS: frequently paired, with pointed-arched tops or panels.

PORCHES: if present, generally framed with Tudor (shallow pointed) arches and embellished knuckles at the spring line.

TRIM: richly embellished bargeboards (vergeboards) at roof's edge; battlements common on parapets of institutional buildings; often a balustrade on roof edges of porticoes.

CHIMNEYS: often richly ornamental, enhanced by three-dimensional, geometric brickwork, polygonal shafts, and prominent caps.



The Annual
YHF Marker Award
Banquet
will take place
May 21, 2008

Historic House Markers

Nominate a home or building for this special award

The time is coming again for The Heritage Foundation's Marker Award Banquet. It will take place Wednesday, May 21, 2008 at the Ladies' Literary Club. At the banquet, owners of houses that meet certain criteria are recognized for their efforts and Historic Building Markers are awarded in order to publicly identify buildings of special merit.

You can nominate a home or building for this special award.

How about bringing places that you think deserve an award to the attention of the selection committee?

Here are the criteria used by the committee:

- The building is within the boundaries of the City of Ypsilanti.
- The building predates 1950 and has an identifiable architectural style.
- The building is well and appropriately maintained (maybe it has just been rehabilitated).
- The grounds are maintained.
- If it is a rental property, the property has had appropriate maintenance for at least two years.
- The building has been developed sensitively.

The following example gives an idea of what is meant by "appropriate maintenance."

- The siding on the building is what was originally intended or could have been used originally. Vinyl siding on a 19th century building is never appropriate.
- The windows are original or identical to the original in size and configuration.
- Porches, railings and steps are appropriate to the period and style of the building.
- Any additions are compatible.

One-of-a-kind markers are possible in order to recognize the preservation and stabilization of a significant or high-profile building that has had a history of mistreatment. These will be selected after a case-by-case review.

If you would like to nominate a building for a Historic Marker designation send (before April 1, 2008) a very brief description of the building and its address to:

Don Randazzo
Chair, YHF Marker Committee
6101 Hitchingham Road
Ypsilanti, MI 48197
e-mail: drandazzo@provide.net



The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation

Heritage News

c/o Don Randazzo
6101 Hitchingham Road
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

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See you at the General Meeting - Wednesday, March 26, 7:30 pm

Heritage News is the newsletter of the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation. It is published five times a year: September, November, January, March and May, and distributed, free of charge, to the membership by mail, and made available to the public at City Hall, Farmers' Market and various business locations in the three business districts in the City.

Have you visited the YHF website lately? There are new features you may find interesting • www.yhf.org

Michigan in Perspective: The 50th Annual Conference on Local History April 4-5, 2008

McGregor Conference Center
Wayne State University

The Walter P. Reuther Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, in conjunction with the Department of History, is proud to offer this annual conference. The local history conference enjoys a long history - we are fast approaching our 50th anniversary - and includes premier offerings on topics in Michigan and regional history. Special areas of interest include genealogical research, historic preservation, maritime history, and museumship. The fees for the conference are low, typically less than \$20, to encourage involvement by both scholars and the general public.

Come join us in April for this interesting, lively discussion of local history!

More information on the web...

<http://www.clas.wayne.edu/unit-inner.asp?WebPageID=853>

***Yes!** I would like to support preservation and become a member of the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation.*

Please check the appropriate box and return with your check to:

Joe Mattimoe, YHF Treasurer
301 N. Grove, Ypsilanti, MI 48198

- Students & Seniors \$5
- Individual \$10
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- Contributing \$25
- Supporting \$50
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