

Heritage NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2002
Good News Edition

September
Bed & Breakfast
Restoration
by Lis Knibbe
Wed. Sept. 25 at 7:30 p.m.
Ladies' Literary Club
218 N. Washington Street

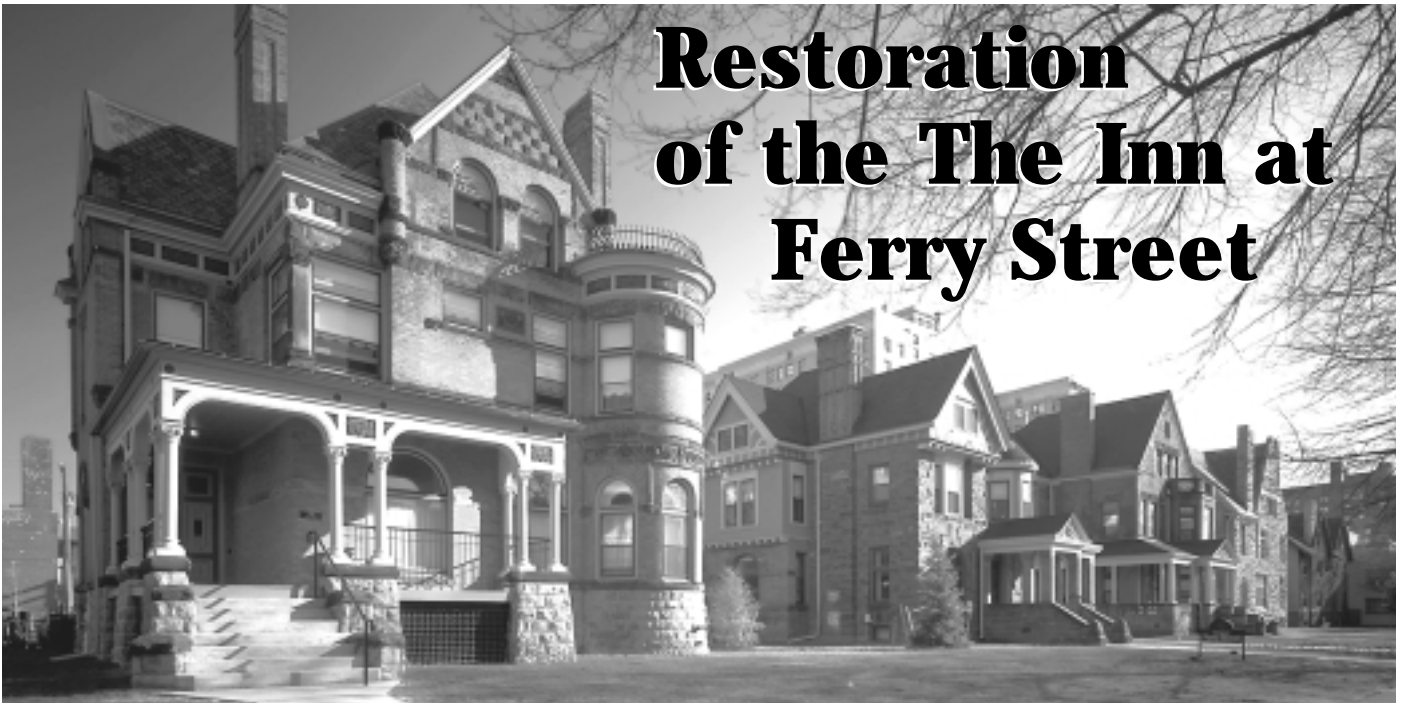


Photo by Glen Calvin Moon

Restoration of the The Inn at Ferry Street

Ypsilanti restoration architect Elisabeth Knibbe specializes in adaptive use of historic and other older buildings. Her firm, Elisabeth Knibbe Architects, employs four architects and is located in the historic nineteenth-century Breakey mansion on North Huron Street. Her two most notable projects in the city of Ypsilanti are both pretty spectacular. In the late 1980s she redesigned the interior of the Gilbert mansion on North Grove Street, transforming it into seven terrific apartments. More recently she was a key architect on the project that changed the forlorn Old Ypsilanti High School on West Cross Street into a charming and successful 104-apartment seniors community called Cross Street Village.

Knibbe will speak to the Heritage Foundation on Wednesday evening, September 25, at 7:30, at the Ladies' Literary Club, 218 West Washington Street. Her topic will be the Inn at Ferry Street, a Detroit project she worked on

for eleven years (she spent seven of those years patiently waiting for the financing to come through). The Inn at Ferry Street is a classic example of what Knibbe does so well. She turned four late-nineteenth-century buildings and two carriage barns in Detroit's Ferry Street Historic District, a National Register district near the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Medical Center, and Wayne State University, into a forty-two-room hotel.

**Knibbe will speak
to the Heritage Foundation
on Wednesday evening,
September 25, at 7:30**

Knibbe will explain and illustrate with slides how she architecturally transformed single-family residences into a modern hotel, while retaining the original character of the original building. Parlors, hallways, and grand

stairways are all intact, blending in well with the forty new bathrooms, fourteen new mechanical systems, and extra stairways that were required for code.

Today the Inn at Ferry Street is thriving. On weekdays it houses visitors to the DIA, Medical Center, and WSU; on weekends it draws people into the city for overnight getaways. Knibbe says that before the project was approved the neighborhood was deteriorating rapidly. Today, taking a cue from the substantial investment of money and taste nearby, people on the blocks surrounding the hotel are in the midst of their own preservation projects.

We hope to see a big crowd on September 25. Bring your friends with you to learn from this outstanding local architect how financial investment in historic preservation can shape an exciting economic and aesthetic future. As always, coffee and cookies will be served.

Good News in Ypsilanti

The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation presents its

2002 Good News Issue

reporting on some of the improvements that have occurred in Ypsilanti over the past year, for our own delight and that of our Festival visitors. It's also a chance to say Thank You to everyone who cares for and about Ypsilanti!



False Facades are still disappearing!

103 W. Michigan – this commercial building is finally rid of its false front and is sporting a very nice new paint job.

Next door, **105 W. Michigan**, has also shed its false front and will soon undergo repairs to the ground level storefront, to be followed by fresh paint.

The **house at the corner of Hamilton and Washtenaw** is stripped of its synthetic siding, has had its original siding replaced where necessary, and is displaying a handsome new paint scheme.

And the handsome Italianate at **302 Oak** appears once again as it did originally since the asbestos siding has been removed and every decorative detail has been



highlighted by beautiful paint colors.

As we go to press, the **RIVERSIDE WEST LINK**, adjacent to the Riverside Arts Center and designed to connect North Huron

Street to Riverside Park, is nearing completion. A handsome addition to our parks system, it consists of a stunning pergola, a brick plaza, landscaping and an impressive flight of stairs leading down into Riverside Park.

The long-abused, pre-Civil War **THOMPSON BUILDING** in Depot Town, has been placed in receivership by the court and is scheduled to be stabilized, repaired and converted to yet-to-be-determined productive uses.

STREETS, beautiful streets! Residents on the east side of town have gladly put up with dirt, dust, closed streets and blocked driveways this summer as the city replaced water mains and sewer pipes and completely rebuilt streets in this year's phase of a 4-year project.

For many years, the Heritage Foundation has given a **\$500 scholarship** to an EMU historic preservation student who would serve as an intern to the Historic District Commission during the summer term. Now, under a new arrangement, the Heritage Foundation, EMU and the City of Ypsilanti each contribute dollars to pay an intern's tuition for the entire year. The Historic District Commission benefits signifi-

cantly from the consistency provided by an all-year intern. A great arrangement!

Major work is underway at the downtown **Library**, the **Sidetrack** has a new rear patio and **City Body** shop has great new signs.

Many years ago, the metal plaque which identified the home of the **Reverend John D. Pierce** went missing from the large boulder at the corner of Emmet and Ballard Streets, presumably stolen. Recently, Heritage Foundation Board member Bill Nickels spear-headed an effort to replace the missing plaque. Just days before the new plaque was to be ordered, the original one reappeared at EMU! Who removed it from the boulder, where it was for so many years, and how it turned up where it did all remain a mystery. But now, polished and reinstalled, it again marks the site of John Pierce's home. Eastern Michigan University, the Ypsilanti Rotary Club and the Heritage Foundation all contributed to the success of the project.

John D. Pierce devised the first school system for Michigan in



January 1837 and held the office of Superintendent of Public Instruction for five years. In 1850, he was elected a member of the Michigan Constitutional Convention. In 1852, he delivered the leading address at the opening of the Normal School here in Ypsilanti. A man of many

attainments, he has always been considered the guiding light for Eastern Michigan University. The plaque on the boulder reads:

"This boulder marks the site of the house where Reverend John D. Pierce, founder of the Public School system of Michigan lived from 1867 to 1880. Erected by the Rotary Club of Ypsilanti, 1923."

Rehab Jobs that deserve recognition

Appropriate reconstruction, particularly of the front porch, has brought the beautiful Italianate at **318 W. Forest** back from long, dreary years as multi-apartments and fraternity house. It was awarded a Historic Structure marker in May.

The **Tucker House** (remember Tucker automobiles?) on North Park, purchased by Marsh Plating, looks splendid after careful repairs and an attractive paint job.

At **203 Maple**, the collapsing garage has been repaired, reroofed and painted.



Downtown Ypsilanti got a wonderful present when the building at **126 W. Michigan** was rehabbed inside and out and given a handsome paint job. *henrietta fahrenheit*, the shop which occupies the building, is on this year's Home Tour.

At **516 N. River**, not only is there a new and appropriate garage designed to complement the house, but the house itself has been stripped of synthetic siding and will soon assume its original appearance.

Major Restoration projects undertaken this year

The **Presbyterian Church** on North Washington at Emmet underwent significant restoration, including the installation of clear glass over the lovely stained glass windows, which can once again be enjoyed.

The lovely Italianate at **108 N. Huron** is now being restored after a damaging fire.

The beautiful Queen Anne at **118 S. Washington** is currently undergoing restoration of its spectacular interior features with plans being drawn for exterior work and paint colors.

New planters and street lights enhance the **Michigan Avenue median**. And, yes, we will solve the parade-viewing problem!



January 2002 saw a seven-day **Water Street design charette** during which architects, developers and any and all interested citizens shared ideas and together developed a design concept for the residential neighborhood planned for the area bounded by Michigan Avenue, Park Street and the Huron River.



Historic Structure markers were awarded in May by the Heritage Foundation to the Old Flour Mill at 11 W. Michigan (handsomely restored), the 1864 Italianate house at 318 W. Forest (appropriately reconstructed) and the lovingly cared-for 1895 Queen Anne house at 213 Oakwood.

The Heritage Foundation was surprised and pleased to be awarded a trophy for the best small float in the **4th of July parade**, but more pleased to congratulate and thank the 130 participants who entered floats, bands and decorated bicycles and celebrated in a variety of ways! Special recognition and thanks went to area police, fire fighters and emergency workers.

Notice the beautiful **new paint jobs** at 14 W. Cross, 126 W. Michigan, and 35 S. Summit.

Don't miss visiting the **FIRE EQUIPMENT MUSEUM**, on Cross Street between Huron and Washington, with its new addition completed just this summer!



FLOWERS are thriving everywhere in half barrels and window boxes, on street corners and curbsides. Thanks to everyone who plants and tends these beauties! Special thanks to all the apartment renters who plant flowers!

Nice Work!

St John Catholic Church and **First Baptist Church**, both on Cross Street, have removed the chain link fences from their parking lots!

Repairs to the historic and handsome brick Italianate at **223 N. River**, damaged a year and a half ago by fire, are nearly complete. It will soon be ready for new tenants.

There's been more work done this year to the historic **Millworks Building** on N. River – part of an ongoing rehab program.

The residents of the **600 block of North Adams** deserve applause for ongoing improvements, including new porches, fresh paint and good maintenance.

The long-neglected house at **213-215 W. Forest** has been appropriately repaired and treated to bright, fresh paint.

Many Thanks

AGAIN, to **YCUA** (Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority) for the wonderful care lavished on the historic stone Water Tower, for the lights which circle the Tower during the winter holidays, for the flower beds and, now, for a top-quality re-roofing job.

AGAIN, to the **SIDETRACK** for the enormous lighted tree in the courtyard at Christmas.

To the **Department of Public Works** for great service year-round, for SUPER snow removal and for never missing their scheduled rounds even during the chaos of street repair.

TO EVERYONE WHO WORKS TO MAKE YPSILANTI A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE: POLICE, FIRE FIGHTERS, CITY MANAGER, CITY DEPARTMENT HEADS, CITY EMPLOYEES, MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL, BOARDS & COMMISSIONS and VOLUNTEERS! What a great bunch! They've never been better!

AND SPECIAL THANKS to all those folks who quietly and faithfully maintain their properties – who sweep and water, pick up and plant, repair and paint. If we missed mentioning you, know that without your effort Ypsilanti wouldn't be the great place it is!

Ypsilanti Heritage “tidbits”

National Park in Ypsilanti

The Automobile National Heritage Area has recently become affiliated with the United States National Park system. As a hub of the Automobile National Heritage Area, our auto museum is now part of the National Park System along with the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, and our other national treasures. We can all look with pride at the national park logo now in front of our auto museum!

Heritage Foundation Wins First Place

The Heritage Foundation won overall first place in the 4th of July parade. “Honor Our Own” was the parade theme this year. Following the theme, the float featured the facade of our old fire station surrounded by toy police cars, fire trucks, and emergency vehicles all with City of Ypsilanti identifications. Some of the toy vehicles were purchased while others were provided by members. The purchased toys were repackaged and will be donated to toy collections at Christmas.

Ypsilanti: A History in Pictures

Available in Area Bookstores Soon

Ypsilanti: A History in Pictures by James Thomas Mann will soon be available in area stores. The book is 128 pages with about 200 pictures with captions, that tell the story of Ypsilanti from 1823 through 1900. The book is published by Arcadia, publishers of books of regional and local interest. *Ypsilanti: A History in Pictures*, is part of Arcadia's Images of America series.

2002-2003

HERITAGE FOUNDATION PROGRAMS

Location: Ladies' Literary Club • 218 N. Washington
Time: 7:30 p.m.

WED., SEPT. 25:

Ypsilanti resident and preservation architect Elisabeth Knibbe on her now completed project restoring a series of old houses near the medical center in downtown Detroit for use as Bed and Breakfasts.

WED., NOV. 20:

Henry Ford Museum curator of domestic life Nancy Bryk on the history of wallpaper, what makes a good reproduction, and where you can get good reproductions today.

WED., JAN. 22:

Scott Kunst, owner of Old House Gardens Antique Bulbs in Ann Arbor, on “Antique Bulbs: Four Seasons, Forty Centuries.”

WED., MARCH 26:

Ann Arbor preservation architects Mitchell & Mouat on the restoration of Ypsilanti's historic First Presbyterian Church.

WED., MAY 28:

Annual Marker Awards Banquet



The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation

Heritage News

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

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See you at the September Meeting - Wednesday, September 25 at 7:30 p.m.