

Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation

37TH ANNUAL

Historic HOME TOUR

www.yhf.org



Photo Lynda Hummel

SUNDAY, JUNE 22, 2014 • NOON-5 P.M.



Welcome to the 37th Annual Ypsilanti Historic Home Tour. Since 1977, the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation has been pleased and proud to present one of the community's most important resources, its wealth of historic architecture. This year's homeowners and business owners have graciously agreed to open their doors so that we all may see and appreciate the results of historic preservation efforts in the Ypsilanti area. We take this opportunity to thank them. Enjoy the tour!

Although the structures are numbered for your convenience in the brochure, you are free to visit them in any order you wish.

Visitors may be asked to remove shoes. As a courtesy to the homeowners, PLEASE no food or drink, smoking, pets, unsupervised children, strollers, or photography inside the homes.

The ticket holder expressly assumes all responsibility for any personal injury or property damage occurring while on tour.



ABOUT THE *Foundation*

The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to the idea that one of Ypsilanti's greatest resources is its wealth of historic architecture. The Foundation seeks to increase public understanding and appreciation of these architectural links with our past and works to promote the conservation, rehabilitation, and utilization of these important community assets. The Foundation publishes its



newsletter, *Heritage News*, several times a year and distributes it free of charge to its membership by mail and to the general public at various locations throughout the city. The Foundation's Web site is www.yhf.org. Since 1977, the Foundation's Historic Structure Marker Awards Program has recognized more than 150 homes, businesses, churches, and other community buildings in Ypsilanti for significant historic architecture and continuing sensitive maintenance. The annual Historic Home Tour is sponsored by the Foundation. Proceeds from the tour fund the Marker Awards, community projects, and education programs on preservation-related topics, which are held every year in September, November, January, and March and are open to the public. For more information on the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation or to find out about becoming a member, contact Henry Prebys, president, at 487-0595, or yhf.org



1315 Kingwood Street

Mark Fain & Rachael Damitio

This lovely brick mid-century ranch, built in 1951 for Dean and Mary Jane Allward, fits in well with the charming colonials, Tudors, and ranch houses that typify the College Heights neighborhood. With its large wooded lots and winding streets, the neighborhood is an early manifestation of the modern suburban lifestyle.

Mark Fain and Rachael Damitio purchased this time capsule of a house in September 2013 as a work-in-progress. They are the third owners of the largely untouched 1950s space. Second owners Claudia Wasik and Lucy Parker lived in the house for nearly thirty-five years and were excellent stewards of the space. They only removed the vintage elements from the main-floor bathroom and kitchen.

The house's somewhat open floor plan serves as an appropriate and appealing setting for Mark's growing collection of Mid-Century Modern furniture, lighting, and art pieces. Favorites in his collection include an unmarked walnut and Naugahyde sofa that he has paired with a walnut Drexel Declaration coffee table designed by Kipp Stewart and Stewart MacDougall.

Future plans for the house are to further emphasize the mid-century theme. Mark has reconnected the original built-in speaker system. The couple are currently studying paint colors, thinking about window treatments, and planning major changes to the kitchen and basement. A mock-up of their upcoming vintage kitchen will be displayed on the day of the tour in the adjacent three-seasons room.

2



Lynda Hummel

309 Maple Street

Bayne & Sarah Roland

The Morhous Tudor at 309 Maple Street was constructed in the late 1800s as a two-story Italianate. In 1915 Charles and Emma Deist purchased the home. In 1936 Mabel Deist Morhous inherited the property after the death of her parents. Her dad had been a partial owner of Michigan Ladder, and the sale of his shares left Mabel and her husband, George, with a tidy sum.

Labor was cheap in the 1930s, so Mabel and George used their windfall to transform their “dated” Italianate into a more fashionable Tudor-style house. Mabel’s daughter, Dorothy, says the home was taken down to the studs and redone precisely to her mother’s wishes. Dorothy said Mabel was unhappy with the way some of the stones were set and recalls her instructing the mason to redo his work. The house is almost perfectly preserved as Mabel designed it in 1936, from toilets to tile work.

Shortly after the house’s transformation, the United States entered World War II. People streamed into town to work at the Willow Run Bomber Plant, creating a housing shortage. The house was converted into two apartments by walling in a central archway and transforming the library into a second kitchen. Mabel and George continued to live in the back of the house, while the front was rented out. From 1947 to 1953, Dorothy and her husband, Rodney Hutchinson, lived in the front apartment with their two daughters. Rodney became mayor of Ypsilanti a few years later, serving for four years. The couple still live in the area and have been back to visit the house.

An owner in the 1990s slowly chipped away at improvements, removing the wall between the apartments. In 2009 Michael and Janice Condon of Ypsilanti Restoration purchased the property and went to work fixing fallen plaster, building custom storm windows, and repairing years of leaks, creaks, and neglect.

In 2012 Bayne and Sarah Roland bought the house, after walking past it for years. They had pegged it as their “dream house” and immediately began adding their own personal touches: refinishing wood floors, adding a new fence and patio, and tackling gardening projects. “We love the history and character of our house. We find ourselves saying ‘What would Mabel think of this?’—we can’t believe we live here,” says Sarah. They are excited to show it off today to the city they love.



317 North Prospect Street

Marty Keeter & Erika Lindsay

In 1923 the Richters, a German family, built 317 North Prospect, a simple American vernacular house, and remained there until 2005, when the estate parted ways with the property. The 1923 balloon frame is anything but typical of that era—the Richters included some rare features when the home was built: specifically, fire stops on the first floor and direct heating vents to the second floor.

Over the years, the home has had many updates. Marty Keeter and Erika Lindsay purchased it in 2009 and immediately began adding their own personal touches. They have made the historic integrity and beauty of the home a priority, while modernizing in ways that align with their design and architectural tastes. Marty works in the technology industry and has spent his free time making the needed updates with Erika's help—she is a recent conservation architecture graduate.

Marty and Erika often use found materials and allow themselves the freedom of not adhering to a strict historical period. The house has been in a constant state of flux since they moved in. Projects have included removing plaster placed over wallpaper, taking the walls back to their original luster, updating the electrical, constructing built-in desks and shelving out of wood salvaged from the attic (and unearthing the Richter family Bible in the process), and creating a modern patio and garden space.

A recent and notable update was the removal of over ninety years of paint on the outside to reveal the original wood cladding. The three new colors allow the unique but previously hidden attributes of the house's exterior—especially the trim—to stand out.



Lynda Hummel

109 North River Street

William & Anne Engerson

This brightly colored Italianate house, built in 1888, was the home of Milo and Margaret (Maggie) Gage for seventy-three years. During that time, Milo was a grocer, on what is now Michigan Avenue; proprietor of Billiards, Pool, and Cigars, also on Michigan Avenue; chief of police (1912); and city marshal (1922). He died in 1934, but Maggie lived on for another twenty-seven years. She was active in the Emmanuel Lutheran Church next door to her home.

Estella Rama lived alone in the house from 1961 to 1986. Very little is known about her, except that she never married. Alice Whitney and her five children lived in the house from 1987 to 1995, and she is credited with removing the stucco and painting the house in subtle shades of pink and green, which was a great improvement. Two of her sons ran an auto repair service in what was then the garage.

William and Caroline Engerson bought 109 North River in July 1996. They had been looking for an older home that was close to his work at Willow Run Airport. While Bill said he had some experience with home construction, he claims he had not really been aiming to “rebuild” a place. But Bill ended up rebuilding the foundation; replacing the plumbing and electrical systems; installing a new furnace; adding a second-floor bathroom; transforming the first-floor bedrooms into a parlor, living room, and office; replacing the roof; and building a new side porch and garage. Bill is pleased that he has been able to keep this old house standing—others may have considered tearing it down. With its original floors, doors, and lovely front porch, this old house was worth rescuing, and we are grateful to Bill.

Bill, widowed since purchasing the home, now lives there with his second wife, Anne, who was also widowed. They share the home with their three dogs, including their Newfoundland “puppy.”



12 West Michigan Avenue

Eric & Lisa Walters

Lisa and Eric Walters raised their three sons on Wallace Boulevard in Ypsilanti's Normal Park neighborhood. In 2008 they took on a new project almost as daunting, although of slightly less duration. Lisa had toured many downtown loft apartments on the annual YHF home tour and nurtured a secret desire to live in one herself. She and Eric decided to buy 12 West Michigan Avenue, a mid-nineteenth-century building, which is more or less nestled between Materials Unlimited Architectural Antiques and Haab's Restaurant (Riverside Park is their nearby "backyard").

The long-ago Hillside Hotel needed a complete redo before it could become Eric and Lisa's new home. The plan was to live on the top two floors and remain flexible about what to ultimately do with the ground floor space (right away Eric, a weekend musician, began using it for band practice). They finished the second floor in 2009, moved in, and agreed to be on that year's home tour. The third-floor renovation took four years, but today it is finished.

The couple did almost all of the work themselves. The second floor includes a spacious and comfortable living room surrounded by bookshelves that house English-major Lisa's 3,500 books (all organized according to category). You will have already identified her twenty favorite titles, because this winter she painted them on the stair risers you've just walked up. The new kitchen is beyond the living room. Lisa worked hard on that, while Eric was solving endless impossible problems elsewhere. Blue abounds on this floor, because it is Lisa's favorite color.

The third floor features Lisa's office at the front and Eric's at the back, with a bath and sunny yellow master bedroom in-between. Lisa's collection of theater and movie posters are a highlight of her space and Eric's man cave is partly furnished with family antiques and partly with furniture he made. A long hallway displays lots of family photos.

"People always say, 'So do you still like it?'"—as if we are going to come to our senses sooner or later," laughs Lisa. "We like being downtown, we like being near everything—I can walk to Haab's, the Red Rock, the post office, the library, my yoga class, the Dairy Queen, and the park." These empty-nesters are clearly enjoying life in downtown Ypsilanti.

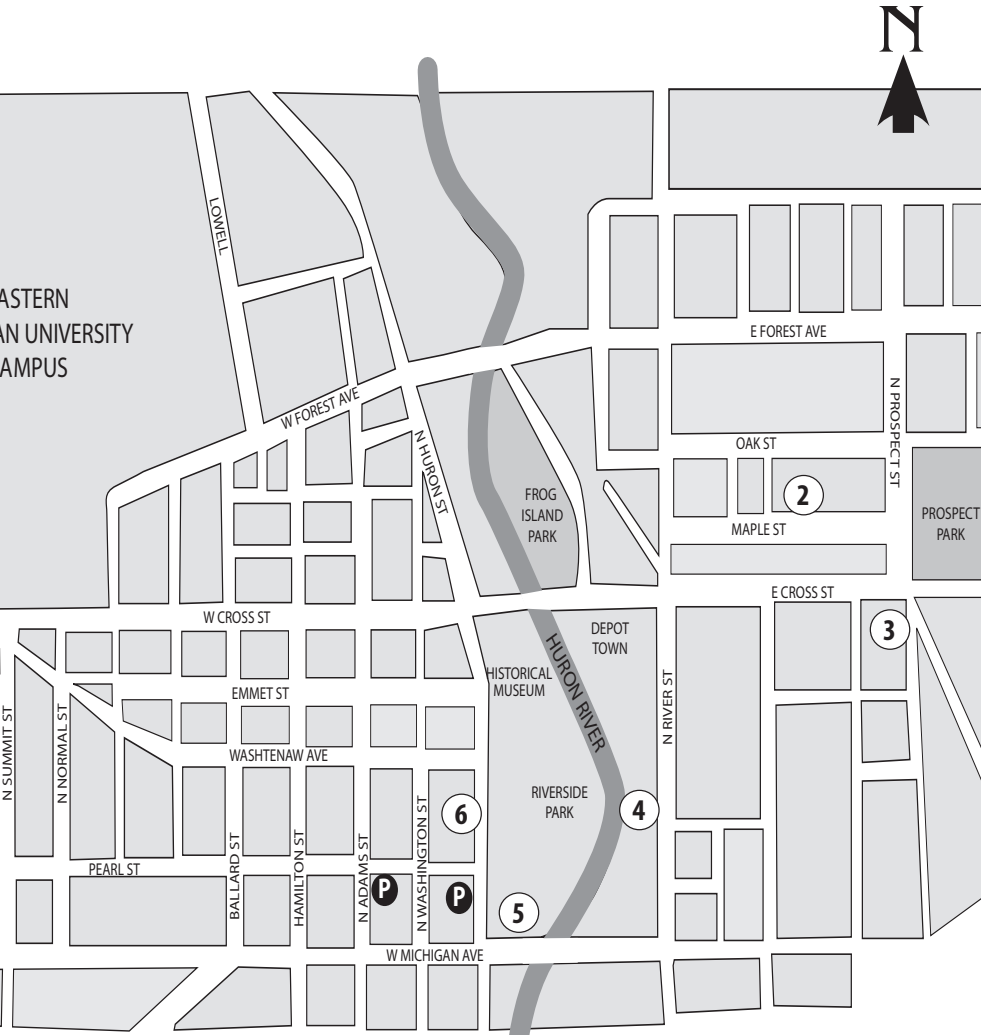
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Key to the Tour

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- ☐ 2. 309 Maple Street
- ☐ 3. 317 North Prospect Street
- ☐ 4. 109 North River Street
- ☐ 5. 12 West Michigan Avenue
- ☐ 6. Bredell and Bredell
Attorneys at Law
119 North Huron Street







Lynda Hummel

119 North Huron Street

Bredell and Bredell
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Dating to 1892, this building was the first in Michigan to be designed exclusively for the practice of dentistry. It was the dental clinic of Dr. John Watling and his partner, a Dr. James. Dr. Watling cofounded the School of Dentistry at the University of Michigan. He lived in the Italianate house next door, and one can imagine him slipping in and out the back door of his office for lunch or a break. The dentists maintained their partnership until shortly after the turn of the last century, when Dr. Watling retired to Washington, DC. Dr. James was joined, in 1912, by Dr. Edward George, who maintained a practice in Ypsilanti well into the 1940s. The first floor then became a real estate office. The building went through a spell of being vacant until it was bought in the 1970s by Oscar Haab, who began its restoration under the direction of Ypsilanti architect Denis Schmiedeke. After serving as a residence for seventeen years (as the second floor was always intended to be), it is now returned to its original use as a business, the office of Bredell and Bredell Attorneys at Law.

Designed by Detroit architect George D. Mason or perhaps by James Watling Martin, a Mason apprentice and nephew of Dr. Watling, the building is a robust example of Richardsonian Romanesque style. Typical of that style is the facade with its rough-cut red and gray sandstone, the second-story large arched window, and the slightly projected first-floor bay window trimmed in delicately carved floral motifs in limestone.

Inside, the paint-encrusted doors and woodwork in oak and yellow pine have been stripped, repaired, and varnished. The asphalt tile and pitch was removed to reveal a patterned floor of oak, fir, and pine. Tragedy was averted when robbers made off with the carved oak fireplace mantel. They were intercepted en route to Tennessee and the mantel re-installed. In 2002, when the Bredells bought the building, they continued the renovations by stripping the woodwork upstairs, removing the dropped ceiling to uncover the transoms, and creating sunny, inviting offices with new colors and fixtures. The whole building is now united for you to visit.



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- ≈ All of the homeowners, volunteer guides, and ticket sellers
- ≈ Penny Schreiber, for editing the home tour booklet
- ≈ Lynda Hummel, for her outstanding photography
- ≈ Pattie Harrington, for her terrific design of the home tour booklet and poster
- ≈ Jan Arps-Prundeanu, for recruiting sponsors for the home tour booklet
- ≈ Haab's Restaurant, Salt City Antiques, and Materials Unlimited, in downtown Ypsilanti; Nelson Amos Studio, in Depot Town; Norton's Flowers and Gifts, on Washtenaw Avenue; and Downtown Home and Garden, in Ann Arbor, for selling tickets before the day of the tour

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