



Michigan State Capital / Lansing, MI

PRESERVATION IMPACT

THE HISTORY OF THE EVANS GRAHAM PRESERVATION AWARD



Belle Isle Conservatory / Detroit, MI

photo: <https://www.thenewsherald.com/2021/07/19/belle-isle-parks-conservatory-and-aquarium-reopen-in-detroit/>

FOREWORD

When preservation architect David Evans, FAIA passed away in 1997, Ralph Graham, Honorary AIA and Jeanne Graham, Honorary AIA felt that his voice for preservation was silenced prematurely, and it should live on. Together, we founded the Evans Preservation Award in 1998. No one imagined that over 27 years, over 600 projects would be presented to the jury for a single annual award.

From the beginning, it was apparent that the need for preservation resources far outstripped anything that was available. Grassroots community organizations were taking on critical projects to save their history and the architecture, and artifacts that represented it. The same activism is alive today, as is the demand for resources.

In 2008, architect Park Smith, AIA led the expansion of the endowment to build upon the Graham Family's Clannad Foundation support with the goal of increasing the award from \$5,000 to \$10,000. Upon Ralph Graham's passing in 2012, the Award was renamed to reflect both his contribution and passion as well as that of Jeanne's and the Graham family. In 2022, the Award was raised to \$20,000 as a result of continued generosity. Today it is \$25,000!

Funding is merely one element in the success of such an award. The Evans Graham Jury represents the best minds and the commitment to preservation in Michigan. Their dedication and insights have guided the evolution of the award and its impact. This publication is only a sample of the many preservation causes taken up in the State of Michigan. Every story is different and presents a unique view of the issues facing small community-based groups and individuals in their quest to build a preservation ethic and culture. It is appropriate to reflect, consider, and celebrate the past as a starting point for the next 20 years. Our communities need support, and this award will continue to provide both the resources and the voice of preservation.

Carl Roehling, FAIAE
February 2025

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INTRODUCTION

THE PRESERVATION IMPACT

Since its inception in 1998, The Evans Graham Preservation Award has sought to recognize and support non-profits and individuals dedicated to historic preservation in the State of Michigan. We believe this financial Award should be a positive intervention for threatened historic architecture, and that by recognizing the project we can leverage our goodwill and the recipients' efforts into greater success.

In this twenty-seventh year of the Award, we reviewed our past winners to record and publicize our successes, as well as consider the past to inform its future. The fundamental question we asked was "How can we have a greater impact on historic preservation with the Evans Graham Preservation Award?".

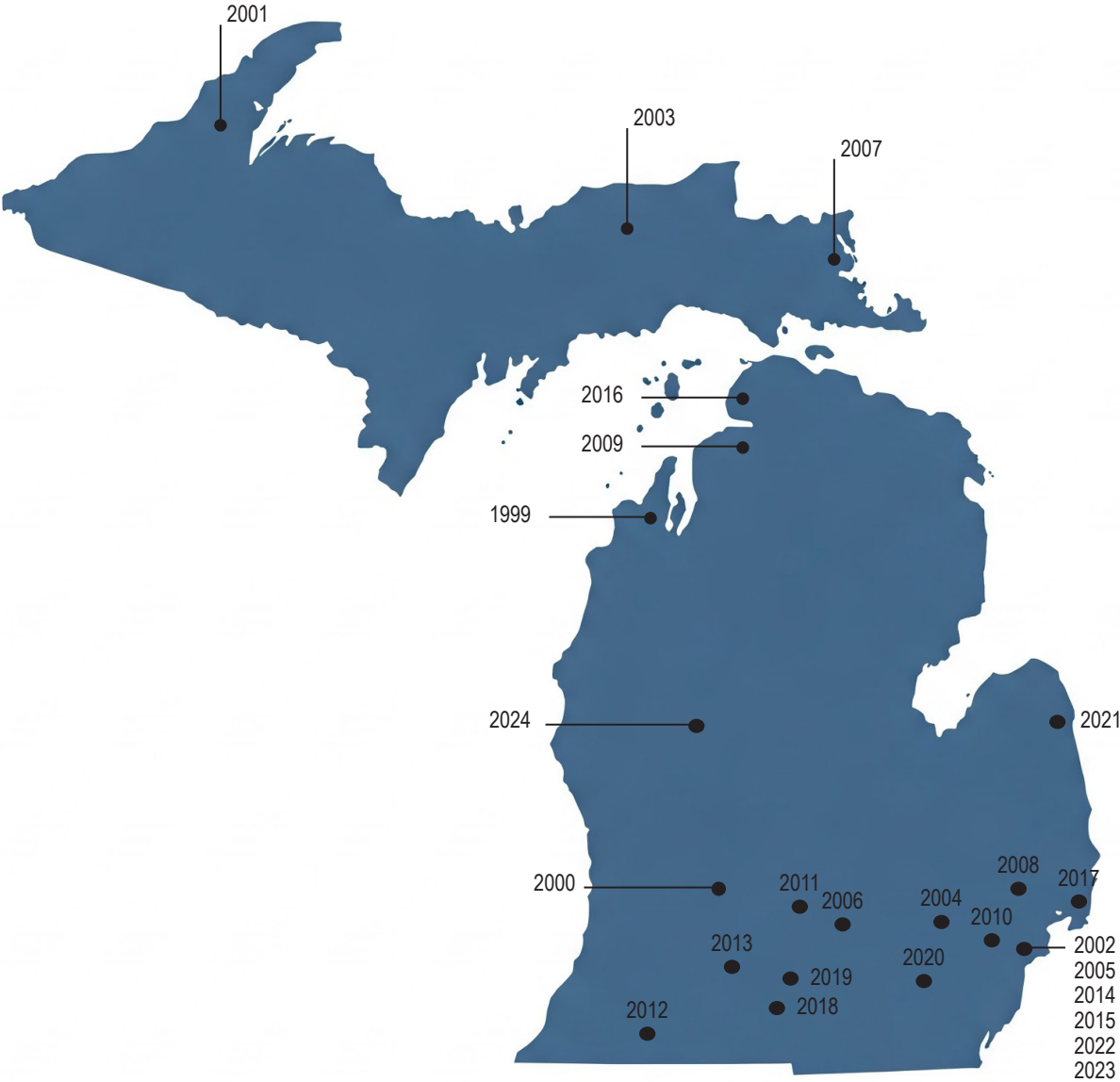
The purpose of this report is to provide a more detailed overview of our past winners, their influence on the organization that supported them, and even more so, the benefits to the community.

We expect to continue to increase the impact we have on the historic resources and the public's awareness on how our architectural history enriches our lives. We hope these stories will inspire you to do the same.

The Evans Graham Jury 2025

EVANS GRAHAM PRESERVATION AWARD

Winner Locations



UNIQUE NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP SAVES A STRUCTURE

Historic Port Oneida Rural District remains an asset today

1999

Lawr Farm Restoration

Shielding Tree Nature Center

Historic Port Oneida

Lake Leelanau, Michigan

The partnership of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Park Service and Shielding Tree Nature Center activists successfully launched the Lawr Farm restoration. Threatened by a lack of interest from Park Service leadership, the farm located within Historic Port Oneida was unfunded and without an advocate. Local activists including Kathryn Eckert, organized and brought both attention and resources to the issue.

The inaugural Evans Graham Award supported the development and execution of a barn preservation initiative. According to Kimberly Mann, the historical archivist at the Park, the Shielding Tree non-profit organization disbanded five years after receiving the grant award but used the funds well. The sub floor of the Barn was repaired and a new floor was installed. Tours, work sessions, exhibits, and sales were conducted for the four days, and a Barn Dance took place at the close of the festival. The work area still displays the finished floor.

Today, the buildings which are part of the Lawr Farm—the Farmhouse, Barn, Chicken Coop, and Garage—are owned by the National Park Service. The Park Service has painted the buildings and maintained the roofs to protect the structures.



RESTORATION IGNITES PASSION FOR HISTORICAL TRAINS

Vibrant Train Museum contributes to Coopersville community identity

2000

Interurban Train Car Restoration
Coopersville Area Historical Society
363 Main Street
Coopersville, Michigan

In the year 2000, the fledgling Coopersville Area Historical Society had never received recognition despite active and passionate members. The Evans Graham Preservation Award not only provided the funds required to restore an old train car, it gave the Society credibility and momentum. The restored car touched off a series of projects that included a train museum. Today, the museum is an important community resource and source of pride.

Coopersville is a small agricultural town of 4,321 residents and it's Historical Society was founded in 1980. The MAF grant helped put the Historical Society on the map in their town. Lill Budzinski, a Historical Society member, explained the impact of receiving the MAF grant and the enthusiasm it created for this community by saying, "It elevated the project in the community." The society still proudly displays the plaque received from the Michigan Architectural Foundation for this award.

After the award, a book was published on the impact of interurban transportation by Central Electric RR Association, Chicago. One chapter highlights the Coopersville Interurban Car, and it is on the back cover of the book. This particular car was built in 1902; "Merlin #8". Interestingly, cars were issued a number and a mythological name when built. Today, the Society thrives and the community has firm documentation of its heritage.



CLAY WITH A COPPER COLOR

Hancock home of Mary Chase Perry Stratton to commemorate her work

2001

Pewabic House

Houghton County Historical Society & The Celtic Quarter

Hancock, Michigan

In 1969, historian Lillian Myers Pear confirmed that the Pewabic House was the home of the founder of Pewabic Pottery. Mary Chase Stratton was born in 1867 and lived in the home during her childhood before moving to Detroit. She gave Pewabic Pottery its name after a mine located near her childhood home. At the time, she did not realize the word “Pewabic” was Chippewa Indian for clay with a copper color, but it reflected her artistic contribution to contemporary pottery.

The Evans Graham Award was used to stabilize the exterior of the 1863 home, the oldest in Hancock, in preparation for it becoming a museum about Mary Chase Stratton’s life. The Celtic Quarter, a non-profit organization dedicated to Celtic history and culture in the Keweenaw Peninsula, assumed ownership and today continues the interior restoration. Leadership’s vision was to make it a memorial to Mary Chase Stratton, the history of Hancock and the Celtic influence in the area.



AWARD WINNER IS THE FOUNDATION FOR CORKTOWN RESURGENCE

Row House is symbol of community's historic ethic

2002

Worker Row House
1420 Sixth Street
Detroit, Michigan

In 2002, the Evans Graham grant went to Corktown Development Corporation, a non-profit dedicated to developing the 1850 Worker Row House into a museum. Its Director at the time was Tim McKay, a resident and next-door neighbor to the house. Though the Corktown Development Corporation dissolved in 2010, McKay and his newly formed 501(c)(3) owned the house and developed a business plan to make into a community center using the house and two adjacent properties. The non-profit was formed in 2015 and holds title to the house. The latest trend in "cultural tourism" has generated strong interest in Corktown tours. But the story begins with the house-saving grant that restored the roof on the house in 2002 and led to further grants of \$100,000 toward its restoration.

According to McKay, "The Evans Graham Award saved the house." The owner at the time, the adjacent Trinity Church, wanted to tear it down. The award was evidence of the potential success of the strategy and led to the title being transferred to the Corktown Development Company. Ralph and Jeanne Graham took a personal interest in the House and continued to support it. Tim credits them for the generating the momentum and credibility required to keep it from depreciating further.

After the roof was restored, a Cool Cities grant was achieved in 2004. Later, Tom Killian, a Wayne State University cultural anthropologist, conducted a dig in the backyard of the house providing new evidence of the residents and their lifestyles. The house turned out to not be a "worker" house for new Irish immigrants but domiciled middle class residents active in commerce.

Today, Corktown enjoys a renaissance of development. Ford Motor restored the historic Train Station in the district. Historic preservation continues to be the community's value, and the basis for a thoughtful new community development approach.



EXTERIOR RESTORATION ACCELERATED

Small Upper Peninsula town of Newberry builds museum momentum

2003

Luce County Historical Museum Turret Restoration
Newberry, Michigan

Newberry is a small town of 1500 people and the correctional facility is the biggest employer. Despite those limitations, the Luce County Historical Society delivered on a big vision for a great building.

The Luce County Historical Museum is in the historic 1894 Queen Anne-style Jail and Sheriff's residence combination. It was rescued from demolition in 1975 and placed on the State Register of Historic Sites in 1976 and the National Register in 1982. Today it shows the results of a 10-year exterior restoration program helped along by the reputation and money provided by the Evans Graham Award. The museum is open in the summer months. Admission is not charged but people donate. Additional funds have come from membership dues and from memorial gifts – the latter is the largest source of income.

Sterling McGinn, Vice President and Secretary of the Historical Society reflected on the project, "The golden turret is visible from a long way off and has helped in the Society's efforts to fund-raise and continue the work." Improvements have included a new boiler, roof, repaired and tuck pointed brick, sandstone exterior, a handicap ramp, a restored stone fountain, zinc crane and 1908 recirculating fountain. There is no question that this building is a gem of the Upper Peninsula. The combination of passion and resources have made a lasting impact on the community.



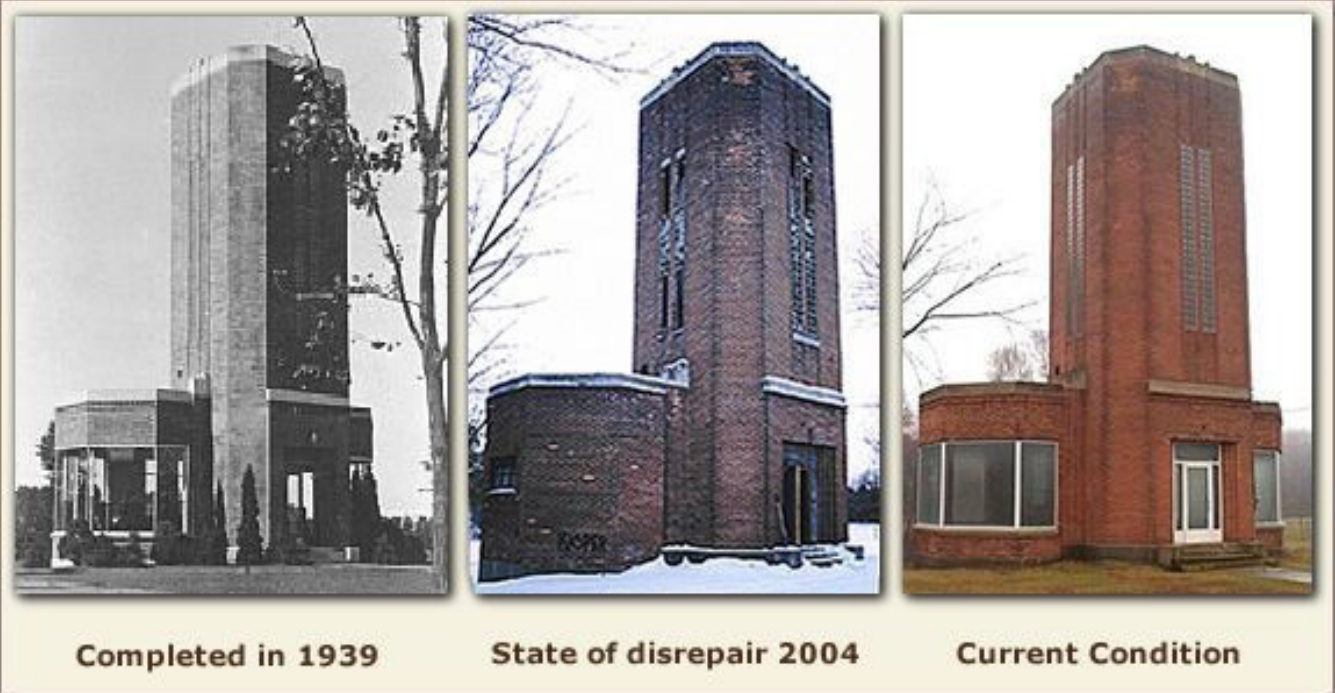
POWERHOUSE BUILDING BECOME COMMUNITY CENTER FOR EVENTS

Central Park location provides symbol for the Milford community

2004
Pettibone Creek Hydroelectric Station
Milford Historical Museum
Milford, Michigan

The Albert Kahn-designed power plant has attracted over \$300,000 in restoration funding since the Evans Graham Award and was recognized by Preservation Wayne with their Honor Award in 2008. The structure has become a community asset and marks the southern entry to the Historic District.

Built by Henry Ford in 1939, the technology was a demonstration of renewable electrical generation for the Ford Carburetor Plant. In the years since receiving the Evans Graham Award, the exterior has been restored as well as the tile floors on the interior. The building has become a symbol of Milford's role in the auto industry and its growth as a community.



ENGINE II FIREHOUSE BECOMES SYMBOL OF DETROIT AFRICAN AMERICAN FIREMEN

Phoenix of Detroit Firemen adopt preservation in support of their mission

2005

Engine II Firehouse
2801 Benson Street
Detroit, Michigan

The mission of the Phoenix of Detroit Firemen is to both increase minority involvement in the profession and to assist communities struck by fire. Since receiving the Award, the 1884 Firehouse has been stabilized and continues to represent both the history of Detroit firefighters as well as their future.



IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO SAVE A VILLAGE

Historic cabin completes Meridian Township story

2006

Perkins-Copland Cabin

Meridian Township Historical Village - Central Park

Okemos, Michigan

Sited in Meridian Township Historical Village at Central Park in Okemos and comprising seven historic buildings - all rescued from demolition — and one chapel replication, Perkins-Copland Log Cabin (1870s) is one and one-half stories with a full-width porch. The funds from the 2006 Evans Graham Award and volunteer labor from the community achieved the reassembly of the cabin. Moved from a site in Williamston, then from a location behind the Haslett Public School in Haslett, the board of the Historic Village team oversaw its rebuilding and created programs related to pioneer life that attract some 800 visitors annually to the village. Another connection to the award is the fact that Okemos is the childhood home of David Evans, whose father once served as minister of Okemos Community Church.

The relocation of the 1820's cabin was completed in 2007 and dedicated in September of that year, with the ribbon cutting by Robert Copland. Since then, the cabin has been used as a teaching tool for students and members of the community. The project has allowed expanded programming to school students throughout the area in the lower grades of K-1. The award helped rescue an important and unique piece of local history.



NEW HOME AND NEW LIFE FOR 1919 HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Adaptive reuse of 1889 building supports downtown Sault Ste. Marie

2007

News Building

Chippewa County Historical Society

115 Ashmun Street

Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan

Built in 1889, the former home of the local newspaper, The Sault Ste. Marie News, the building was adapted for offices and exhibit space for the Chippewa County Historical Society. A strong element in the downtown building facades, the rusticated sandstone base and two-story arches make it a distinctive component of the City. Purchased by the Chippewa Historic Society in 2006, the Evans Graham Award was used to start restoration, but more importantly, signaled the momentum the Society had gained in its rebirth. Founded in 1919, the Historic Society activity had waned until this project brought new energy to the members.

The building is recognized in both *The Sandstone Architecture of the Lake Superior Region (2000)*, and *An Architectural Survey for the Eastern Upper Peninsula (1977)* and is considered the best surviving commercial example in Sault Ste. Marie.



RECLAIMED LANDSCAPE GEM FOUND IN NORTHERN OAKLAND COUNTY

SCRIPPS ESTATE SITE OF UNIQUE OUTDOOR ROOMS

2008
Williams E. Scripps Estate Outdoor Room Restoration
1840 W. Scripps Road
Lake Orion, Michigan

A unique cultural landscape, the 1916 estate of the William E. Scripps was originally 3000 acres in northern Oakland County and was a functioning “hobby” farm. The landscape around the Tudor house was a series of outdoor rooms designed by architect Bryant Fleming. Though the property was split up, the unique 75 acres of gardens remained, but were in disrepair until the original drawings were found. Guest House Inc, founded in 1952, and the Friends of the Scripps Estate led an initiative to restore the grounds. The Estate was put on the National Historic Register in 2007 and the Evans Graham Award was given the following year.

Seemingly under the radar for years, the awareness of this great site is now rising. A \$2,200,000 three-year restoration project was proof of its new support.

The mansion served as a Catholic Guest House and Retreat Center.



CONTROVERSIAL COLOR RESTORATION LIGHTS UP CHARLEVOIX

Community debate raised preservation awareness

2009

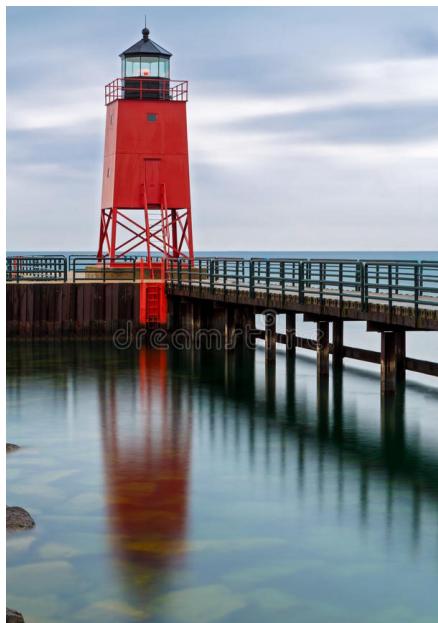
Pier Lighthouse

Charlevoix Historical Society

Charlevoix, Michigan

One of the most vibrant historical societies in Michigan, the Charlevoix Historical Society was founded in 1879. The Pier Lighthouse was built in 1885 and today is one of three properties saved and owned by the Society. In 1988, the Lighthouse was in disrepair and threatened with demolition. In early 2000, the Society saved the structure and committed to recommissioning it in its original color of red. Research proved that the white color was not original and, despite community controversy, it was restored to its original color.

Even today, the controversy continues. The Society received another State grant and it was again repainted in 2017 but not without public demands for the white to return. The notoriety of both the award and the controversy over the color have raised public awareness about preserving Charlevoix's history for future generations.



USONIAN HOME BECOMES A TEACHING LAB

Public gets rare view of Frank Lloyd Wright genius

2010

Affleck House

Lawrence Technological University - College of Architecture & Design

925 Bloomfield Court

Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

Arguably one of the best examples of Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian homes, the Affleck House was obtained by Lawrence Tech University in 1978. Its gradual restoration began, and the Evans Graham Award was given to further the restoration of the interior. Today, the home is used for student architects, education, conferences, and public tours.



WALKING THE PRESERVATION TALK

Headquarters restoration reflects MHPN values

2011

T.J. Osteen Comfort Station

Michigan Historic Preservation Network (MHPN)

312 E. Cesar E. Chavez (formerly Grand River)

Lansing, Michigan

One of the best examples of involving the community in preservation projects, the T.J. Osteen Comfort Station reflects the Michigan Historic Preservation Network's philosophy both technically and in process. The T.J. Osteen Comfort Station was built in 1914 and served the interurban railway system. It was a key element of Old Town and the frontage on this main street. The restoration supported the MHPN's office on the second floor. The first floor was an incubator space for new companies.

The MHPN leadership learned to be a preservation developer. The organization worked through the Community Revitalization Program (CRP). In addition, the Main Street Community Program has helped others bring their historic buildings back to life.



PIVOTAL POINT IN SOCIETY’S SUCCESS COMES WITH AWARD

Freedom Seekers residence restoration inspires activism

2012

Bonine House
Cass County Underground Railroad Society
Cass County, Michigan

The 1853 James E. Bonine House is a fine example of Victorian architecture. More importantly, it was a landmark because its Quaker owner was a staunch abolitionist and supporter of the Freedom Seekers coming from the South before and during the Civil War.

Acquired in 2010 by the Cass County Underground Railroad Society, the house was in poor condition and some thought it was within six months of falling down. New organization leadership was unsure of how to address the issues, but applied for the Evans Graham Award as a starting point. The Award changed everything. It gave a sense of confidence and a “soul” to the whole project and inspired a granter to give \$100,000 a year later! The Society had a board of 8 and 400 members. Many descendants of the Quakers and the Freedom Seekers still live in the area and are members.

The Carriage House next to the Bonine House where the Freedom Seekers stayed is in process of restoration and was to open as a museum in 2018. A wagon with a secret compartment to hide the Freedom Seekers just like the one owned by the Bonine family has been restored and donated. Another house on the railroad owned by a church is being donated with a 100-year lease for \$1/year. It sits on its original historic site as do the Bonine House and Carriage House.



Purchase December, 2010

Spring, 2014

Fall, 2015

DEDICATED TEACHER ADVANCES HOME RESTORATION IN KALAMAZOO

Old house become classroom for learning how to care for homes

2013

Ted's House

826 Vine Place

Old House Network

Kalamazoo, Michigan

The Old House Network was founded in 2003 to teach traditional home repair and restoration. Workshops are the main vehicle through which the Network changes both quantity and quality of old homes restored. In 2012, Ted Molby received a donated old house from a WWII veteran. He wanted to use the house to teach people to take care of old homes. Ted submitted plans to the State Historic Preservation Office before his death. The Evans Graham Award money was used to repair Ted's House and to develop four years of workshops to teach owners how to restore their old homes.



RESTORATION PROVIDES HOME FOR 146 AQUATIC SPECIES

Kahn classic becomes State Park attraction

2014
Belle Isle Aquarium
3 Inselruhe Ave
The Belle Isle Conservancy
Detroit, Michigan

Designed by Albert Kahn and opened in 1904 as the third largest aquarium in the world, the Belle Isle Aquarium fell into disrepair and closed in 2005. The Belle Isle Conservancy obtained control and embarked on restoration and reinvestment in the facility. It reopened in 2012 and work continued. The Evans Graham Award advanced the exterior restoration work. Today, attendance tripled from 2014 and it remains free to the public.



LIGHTING THE FUTURE

Historic Indian Village streetlights restored

2015

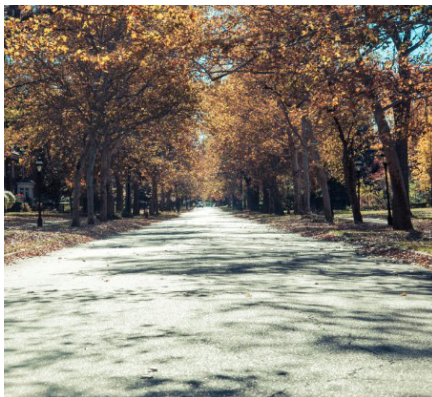
Indian Village Street Lights

Indian Village Historical Community & Lighting Fund

Detroit, Michigan

Founded in 1895, the Indian Village neighborhood in Detroit is unique in its architecture, street-scape and community. In 2015, the Relighting Detroit program was initiated and the community embraced the opportunity to become the only neighborhood in the City of Detroit to have the original street lights operational but with contemporary lighting technology.

Fifty-seven lights were restored in part by the Evans Graham Award. According to Judy Delusky, President of the Historic Indian Village association, the impact was immediate. She said, "What a difference it makes – it is beautiful." Peter McGrezzy, another resident, said the award was very helpful and the final product was fantastic. Forty-nine more lights were to be restored in a future phase.



LAST REMAINING HOUSE OF THE ODAWA MIDDLE VILLAGE IS SAVED

Good Hart community comes together to change the outcome

2016

The King House

The King House Association

Good Hart, Michigan

In the 18th century, the Odawa Indian nation spread between what is today Petoskey and north to Cross Village. Located in Good Hart, the Middle Village was a group of 52 buildings of the mid-19th century housing the descendants of the Odawa. The King family built their home in this Village in the 1850s and today it is the only remaining structure.

The first reconstruction of the house was done in 1980, and the King House Association bought the home in 2015. The house was near to being lost to the elements and neglect. However, a preservation plan was made and a Challenge Grant program developed. The Evans Graham Award went toward the roof restoration and is included with other grantor's: Americana Association, Bairardi Family Foundation, the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation and the Great Lakes Peoples Fund.



WONDER AND CURIOSITY

Adaptive reuse provides new home for arts association

2017

Seafoam Palace Museum Building

6460 Kercheval

Detroit, Michigan

Seafoam Palace is an arts organization dedicated to engaging people's sense of wonder and curiosity. They purchased the 1924 Kercheval building to provide a physical presence to their community-wide programs. The immediate need was façade stabilization. The Evans Graham Award was the first step in moving the building toward its museum vision. The building is now viewed as an anchor in the revitalization of the neighborhood.



CONNECTING PEOPLE TO THE NATURAL WORLD THROUGH HISTORY

Historic home restoration provides view into settler's life for 170,000

2018

DeLano Farms Homestead
Kalamazoo Nature Center
555 West E. Avenue
Kalamazoo, Michigan

The DeLano Farms Homestead is the venue through which the Kalamazoo Nature Center connects residents to nature. The 1858 Greek Revival DeLano house is part of 1400-acre site preserved and dedicated to portraying the interaction human beings have with nature over time. The Evans Graham Award contributed to the restoration of this house and positively impacted the experience of thousands of school children and other visitors. The preservation was expected to save the cultural landscape of the time as well as be an example of sustainable practices both past and current.

The Kalamazoo Nature Center was founded in the late 1950s and is one of the most successful in the Midwest. Programs include Farm Explorers Camp for first through third graders, Life on a Pioneer Farm for fourth graders, and public programs for all ages throughout the year.



PUTTING A VICTORIAN STAKE IN THE GROUND

Restored 1870 Residence is Neighborhood Revitalization Catalyst

2019

23 Fremont Street

Calhoun County Landbank

Battle Creek, Michigan

The historic Fremont/McKinley neighbor on Battle Creeks north side has been the focus of the Calhoun County Landbank's efforts to revitalize the district and give it new life. This sentinel Victorian home at 2 Fremont Street was the residence of one of the first and most prominent settlers in Battle Creek. Its restoration was both symbolic and functionally important for the future of this community.

Viewed as both a model for preservation and for re-development, the Calhoun County Land bank engages the community with seminars, planning participation and educational support. The project's impact not only sends a message about the value of our history, it makes advocates of all of us. Funds were used to stabilize the building and stop its deterioration before restoration begins.



CEMETERY CHAPEL COMES ALIVE

1888 Richardsonian Gem Provides New Cultural Venue

2020

Starkweather Memorial Chapel Restoration

Highland Cemetery Association

Ypsilanti, Michigan

The Starkweather Chapel located in the Highland Cemetery was a somber introspective space for over 100 years. Its deterioration caused it to close. Stabilization started in 2017 and a new vision for its function includes lectures, tours, non-profit events, poetry readings, weddings and a cultural sanctuary.

Designed by architects Mason & Rice, the building is an example of the Romanesque style with rusticated granite block, sandstone trimming and clay tile roof. Its was put on the National Historic Register in 2020. Its unique Tiffany stained glass windows were restored with the grant.

The Highland Association is a non-profit restoration powerhouse. Volunteers come from a cross section of preservation, technical and cultural experts. They are doing it right.



ENDANGERED BUILDING SPECIES SAVED FROM EXTINCTION

Great Lakes Maritime History Buoyed by Preservation

2021

Pointe Aux Barques U.S. Life-Saving Station & Captain's Quarter

Pointe Aux Barques Lighthouse Society

Port Hope, Michigan

The Great Lakes of Michigan are a unique and very important part of our history. Our waterways have served as transportation, a source of food, and for recreation. The Lakes are our geographic and political boundaries. As a result, our Michigan maritime heritage is special.

The 1876 Port Aux Barques Life-Saving Station is the only building of its kind still in its original condition. It provides insights into the Michigan maritime culture and the technology from 1876 to 1937. The structure is a subset of the many historic lighthouses on the Great Lakes.

The restoration provided tourists, school children, and community a rich but highly specialized glimpse into our Great Lakes culture



AN URBAN CABIN THAT IS COOKING

A 296-acre Detroit Park is home to a rare architect-designed log cabin

2022

Palmer Park Log Cabin Kitchen

People for Palmer Park

Detroit, Michigan

Senator Thomas Palmer and his wife, Lizzie hired architects Mason & Rice in 1885 to design an eclectic log cabin for them on their Detroit northside farm. Today, the cabin's Victorian interior and unique setting serve the community as a venue for cultural, educational and recreational events. The striking contrast of a functioning log cabin set in one of the most significant urban parks in the country provides history lessons for us all. Palmer Park was the Palmer Farm made up of orchards, farm animals and vegetable gardens. Today, the Park is a recreational oasis of trails, courts, picnic areas and biking routes.

The cabin's kitchen is a reminder to children and adults of turn of the century living in a growing City.



THE BIRTHPLACE OF BEBOP JAZZ

Epicenter of African American Musicianship Returned to Life

2023

The Bluebird Inn

Detroit Sound Conservancy

Detroit, Michigan

Before the Motown sound, The Bluebird Inn was a hearth to Black musicians exploring jazz, rhythm, melody and improvisation. Local musicians such as Roy Brooks (drummer), Wendell Harrison (saxophonist) apprenticed in this venue. Charlie Parker and Miles Davis made regular appearances in the 1950s. Restoring the building not only preserves this important history, it gives rebirth to the eighty years of African- American music creativity.

The space will become an intimate music venue, a music archive and a community gathering space on Detroit's west side.



MEMORIES FUEL ECONOMIC REBIRTH

Historic resort hotel’s restoration a big first step

2024

Hotel Casa Blanca Restoration

First Neighbor, LLC

Idelwild, Michigan

The resort community of Idlewild was a vacation destination for African-Americans beginning in the 1950s. It was listed in the Green Book, the listing of “safe” travel locations for the targets of the Jim Crow laws of the time. As the need for safe havens diminished, the Idlewild community economy suffered. The Hotel Casa Blanca went into disrepair. The restoration of the hotel into a bed and breakfast will not only improve the local economy, it will remind us of our civil liberties and our progress in combating racism.

The founders of this initiative, First Neighbor, LLC have fond memories of their Idlewild experience. The restoration of the Casa Blanca will provide others with those same memories.





Fisher Building / Detroit
photo: <https://www.fisherbuilding.city/history>



Wayne County Building

ADVANCING AWARENESS OF HOW ARCHITECTURE ENRICHES LIFE

HOW TO GIVE.

The growth of MAF's endowment and programs is due to the generosity of our donors.

There are many ways you can support MAF with your resources, time, energy, or passion. Donate to a specific fund, program, or scholarship, or start a scholarship or endowment; donate in honor of an individual or donate an auction prize. You can also volunteer for a committee or tell your friends and family about MAF and its resources. Whatever the form of your gift, it contributes greatly to our mission of advancing how architecture enriches life.

Visit michiganarchitecturalfoundation.org/donors for more information on how to donate.