

# 2026 Governor's Awards for Historic Preservation



## Historic resources and archaeological sites tell us about the past and help us celebrate Michigan's unique identity.

Their preservation is vital to Michigan's present and future as they contribute to vibrant communities and our understanding of the past.

Each year the State Historic Preservation Office and the State Historic Preservation Review Board identify worthy recipients to receive the Governor's Awards for Historic Preservation, which are presented during National Historic Preservation Month in May.

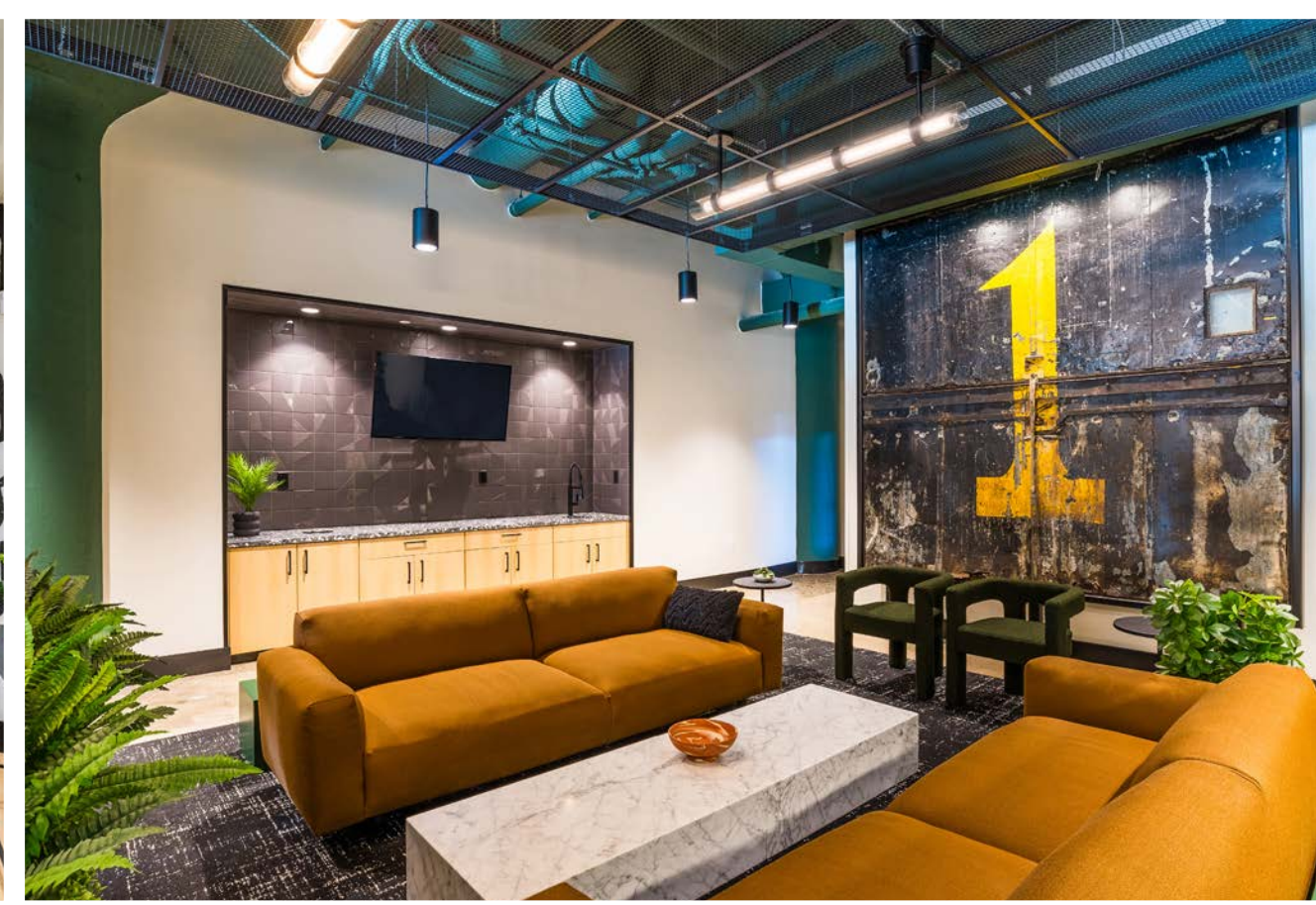
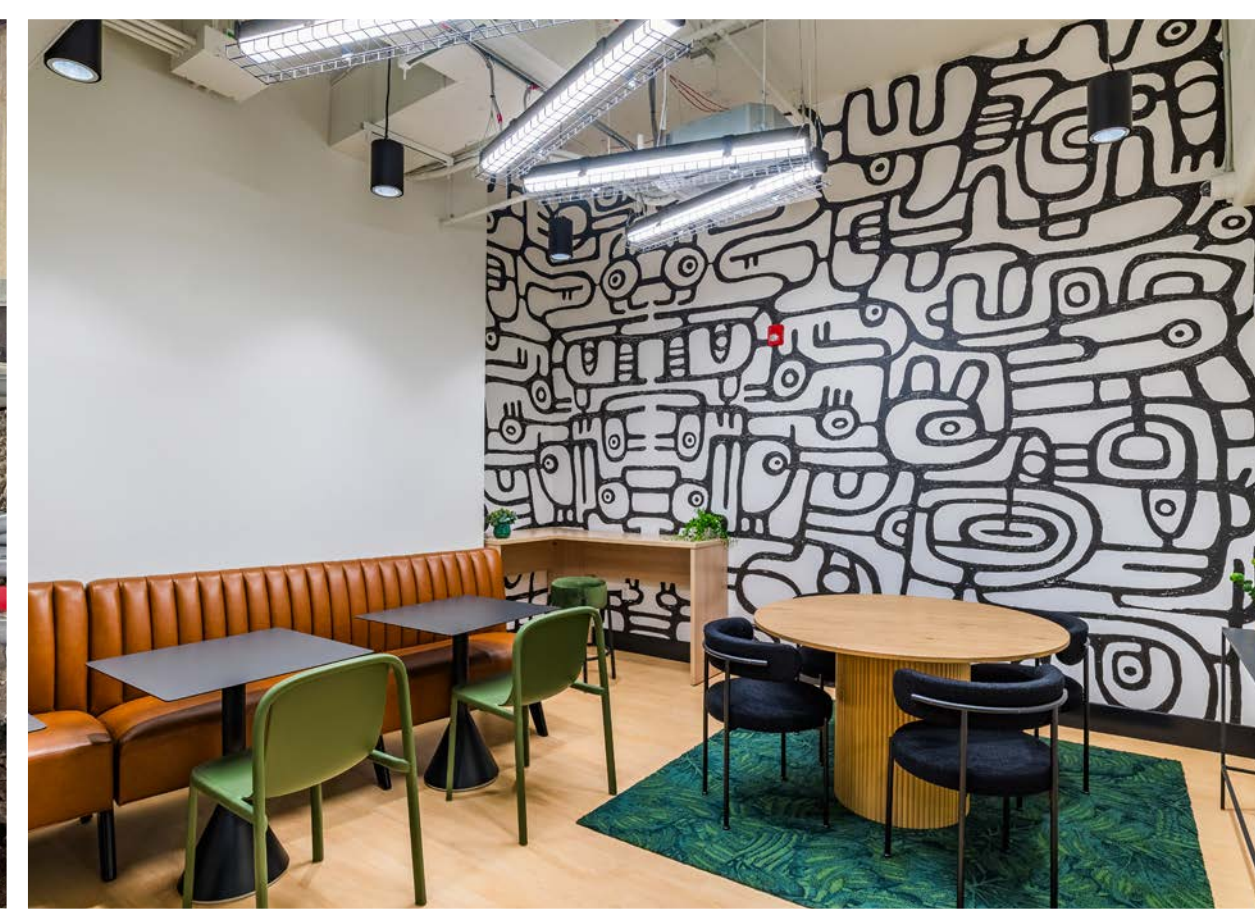
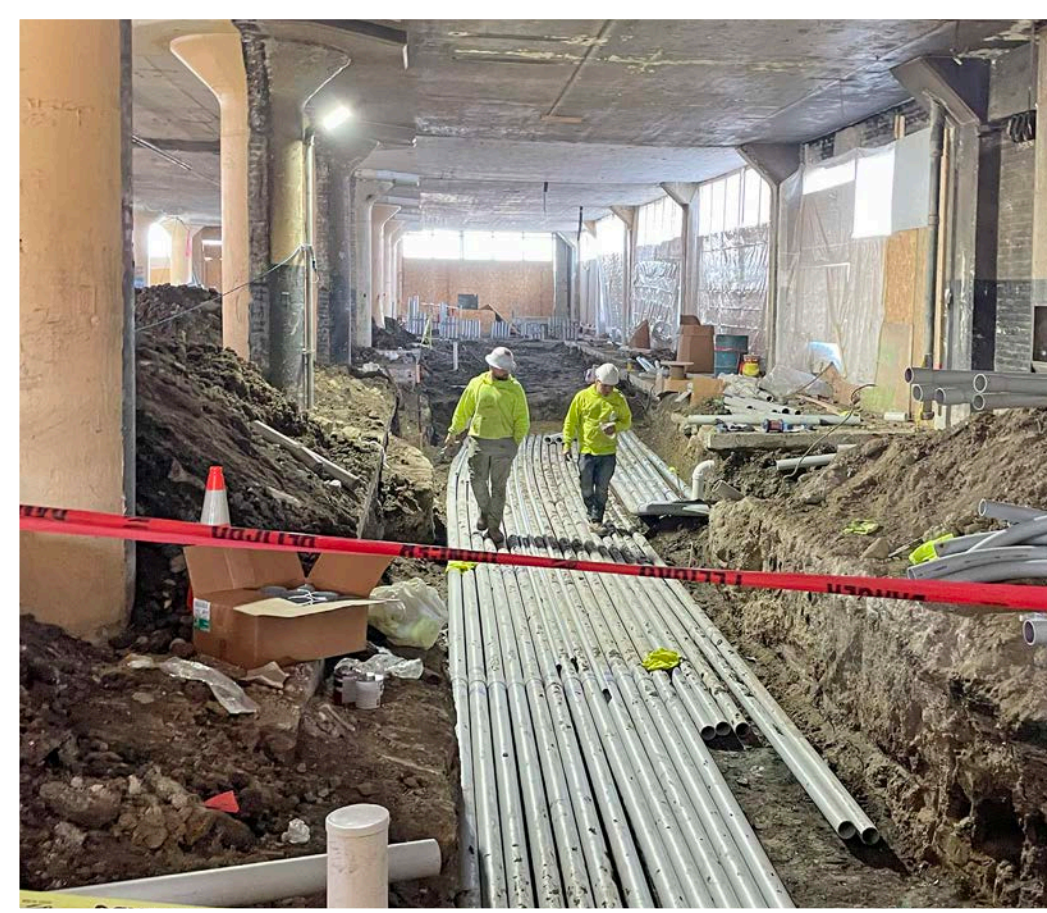
The awards recognize homeowners who rehabilitate their homes; developers who transform underutilized historic structures into vital economic assets; and academic institutions, archaeologists, nonprofits, and units of government—among other partners—who strive to preserve Michigan's important historic and cultural resources.

## 2026 Recipients of the Governor's Awards for Historic Preservation

- ❖ Clarkston Historic District, Clarkston
- ❖ Capri Drive-In Theater, Coldwater
- ❖ Piquette Flats, Detroit
- ❖ Isle Royale Archaeology, Isle Royale
- ❖ Walter French School, Lansing
- ❖ Rural Survey & Designation, Northfield Township



# 2026 Governor's Award for Historic Preservation



**Awardees: 411 Piquette LLC; Kraemer Design Group; PCI Dailey Contracting; Grunwell – Cashero; and Graham Architectural Products**

## ***Rehabilitation of the Studebaker Service Building into Piquette Flats, Detroit***

Albert Kahn designed this four-story reinforced concrete building for the Studebaker Corporation in 1920, in an era when car companies were expanding at a feverish pace. Studebaker used it as a tool and die shop, to assemble chassis, and for painting. After serving in a variety of other industrial uses, it was recently used for storage. A complete rehabilitation project began in 2023 to convert the building into 161 apartments, providing much-needed workforce housing in the historic Milwaukee Junction neighborhood.

Rehabilitation work restored the historic character of the exterior, repairing the red brick walls and replacing the large, infilled window openings with custom, functional replicas of the originals, based on historical

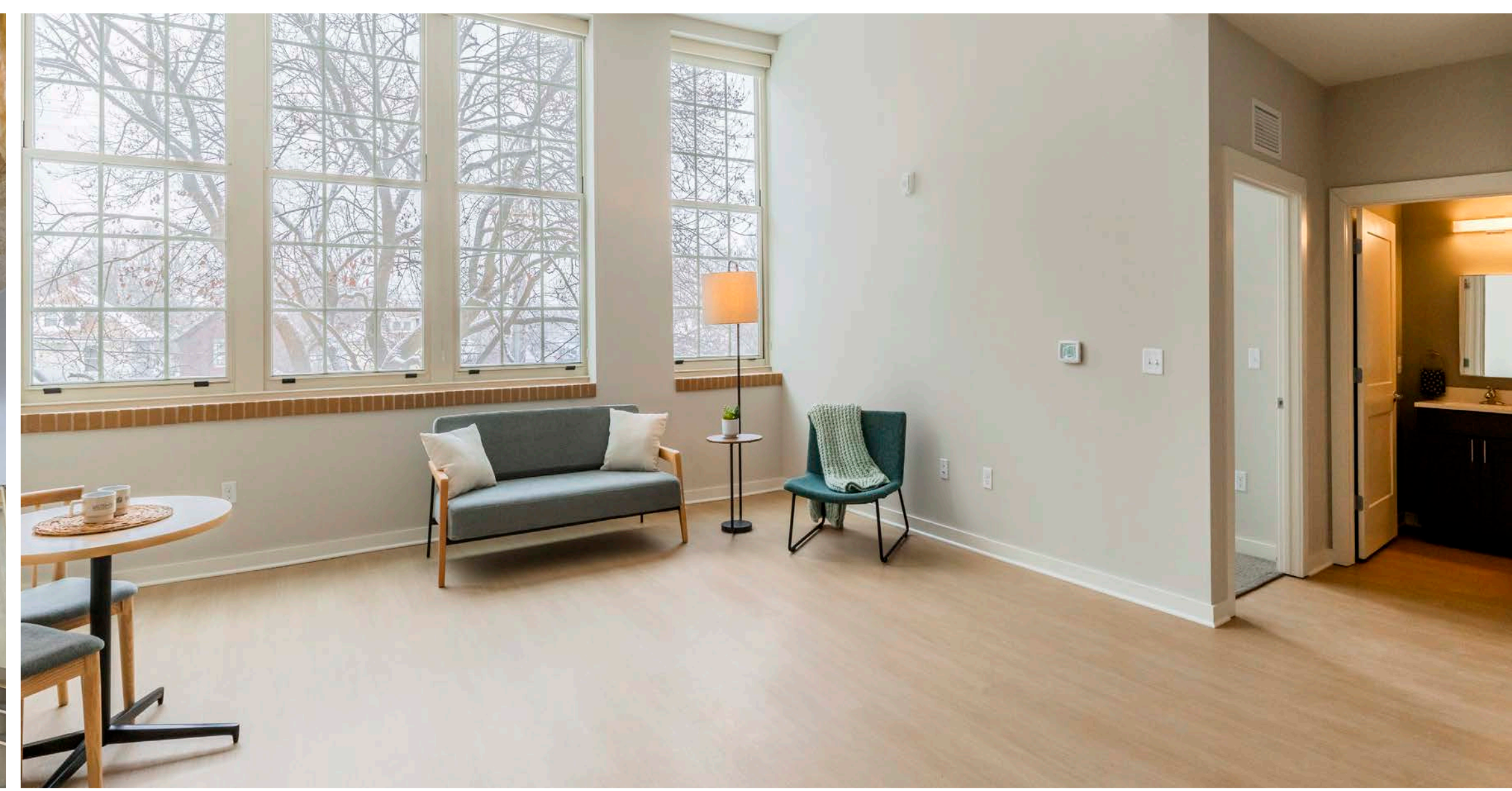
photographs. On the interior, careful wall placement preserves the architect's iconic 'martini' columns, celebrating the building's structural identity. Following the Secretary of the Interior Standards, the rehabilitation utilized both Federal and State Historic Preservation Tax Credits and also received support from the Michigan Community Revitalization Program. The total rehabilitation investment was nearly \$40 million.

Rechristened as Piquette Flats, the adaptive reuse of the former Studebaker Service Building has brought new activity to an area that had been largely vacant for years, while providing a new affordable housing option in this part of the city.

Piquette Flats



# 2026 Governor's Award for Historic Preservation



## Walter French School

**Awardees: Capital Area Housing Partnership; Quinn Evans; Rohde Construction; and Housing Links, LLC**

### ***Rehabilitation of the Walter French School into The Residences at Walter French, Lansing***

Walter French School was built in 1925 to offer a modern, state-of-the-art school for the young scholars of south Lansing. The building helped to usher in progressive educational practices and featured decorative architectural features including large banks of windows, intricate stone carvings, and multicolor brickwork designs. After the school closed in 2004, it spiraled into disrepair. The building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2014 as the first step in an adaptive reuse journey that would eventually span more than 10 years.

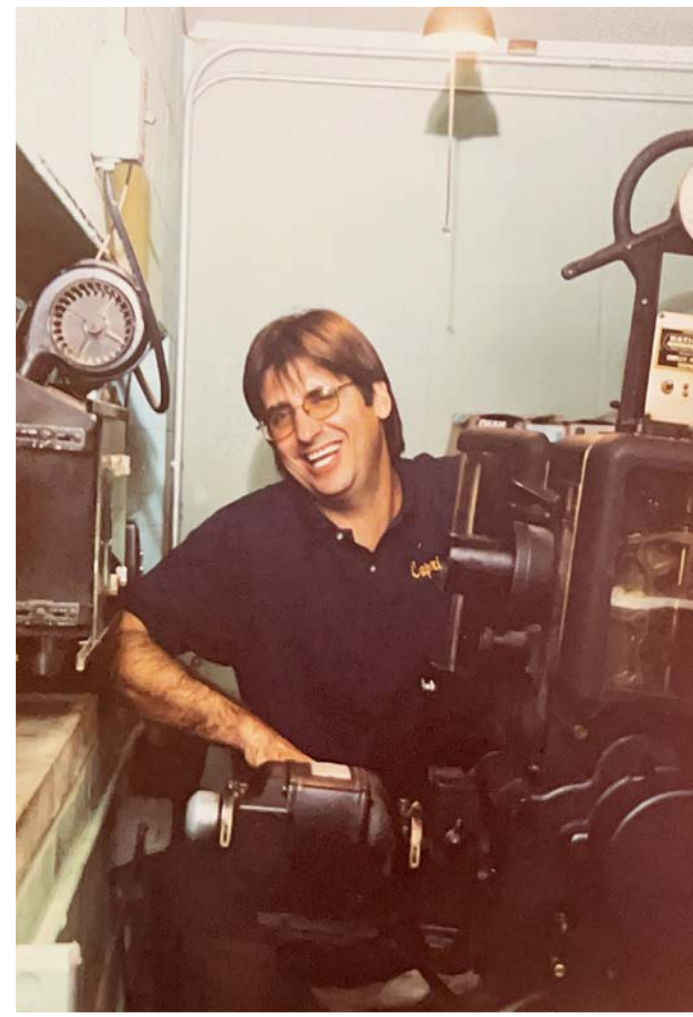
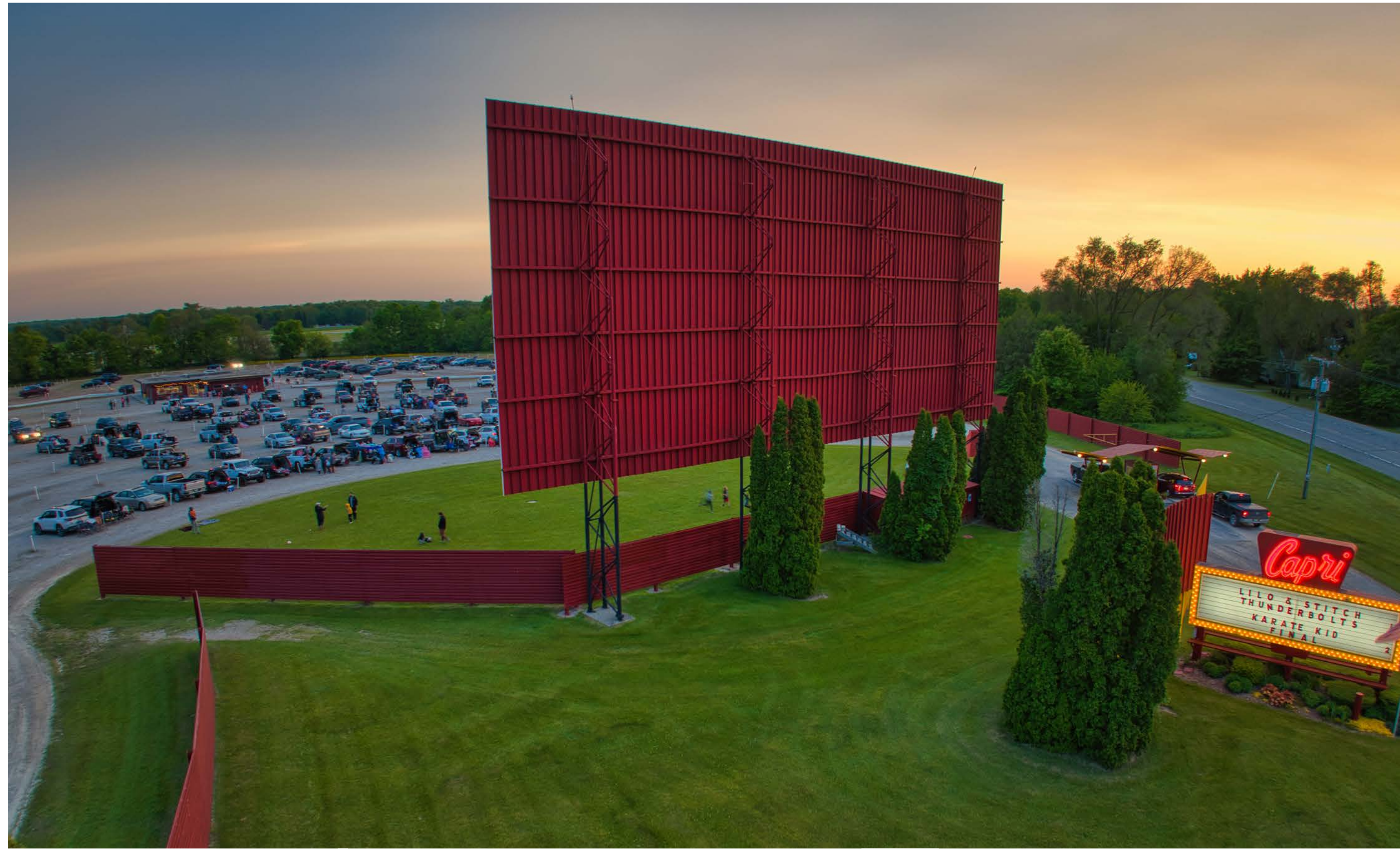
Starting in 2023, the interior was strategically redesigned into 76 affordable apartment units, while retaining character-defining features such as terrazzo floors, large window openings, and wide interior stairways. Ceiling skylights were reconstructed to

illuminate the third floor. The grounds were improved with new greenspace, and new city bus shelters provided residents with better connectivity to the city around them. The \$40 million rehabilitation effort was funded in part by Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits, Low Income Housing Tax Credits, an award from the MEDC Revitalization and Placemaking program, and several other sources.

The Residences at Walter French opened in September 2025 and has full residential occupancy. The property also provides office and commercial space, and is home to an on-site children's daycare. The renewed Walter French School addresses several needs in the Lansing community, which will keep the future bright long into its second century.



# 2026 Governor's Award for Historic Preservation



## Awardee: The Magocs Family

### Long-term stewardship of the Capri Drive-In Theater, Coldwater

Americans were obsessed with car culture in the 1950s and 60s, and drive-in movie theaters boomed. In 1964, John and Mary Magocs opened the Capri Drive-In on the west side of Coldwater along highway US-12. The property included a single screen, folded plate roof ticket building, a concessions stand, a neon sign on the highway, and room for 800 cars. Operating the Capri was a family affair and the Magocs, along with their sons John Jr. and Tom, spent many nights together running the theater.

Although the golden era of the drive-in did not last, the Magocs family invested in the Capri over the decades, making early transitions from speaker boxes to AM radio to FM stereo sound, and investing in digital

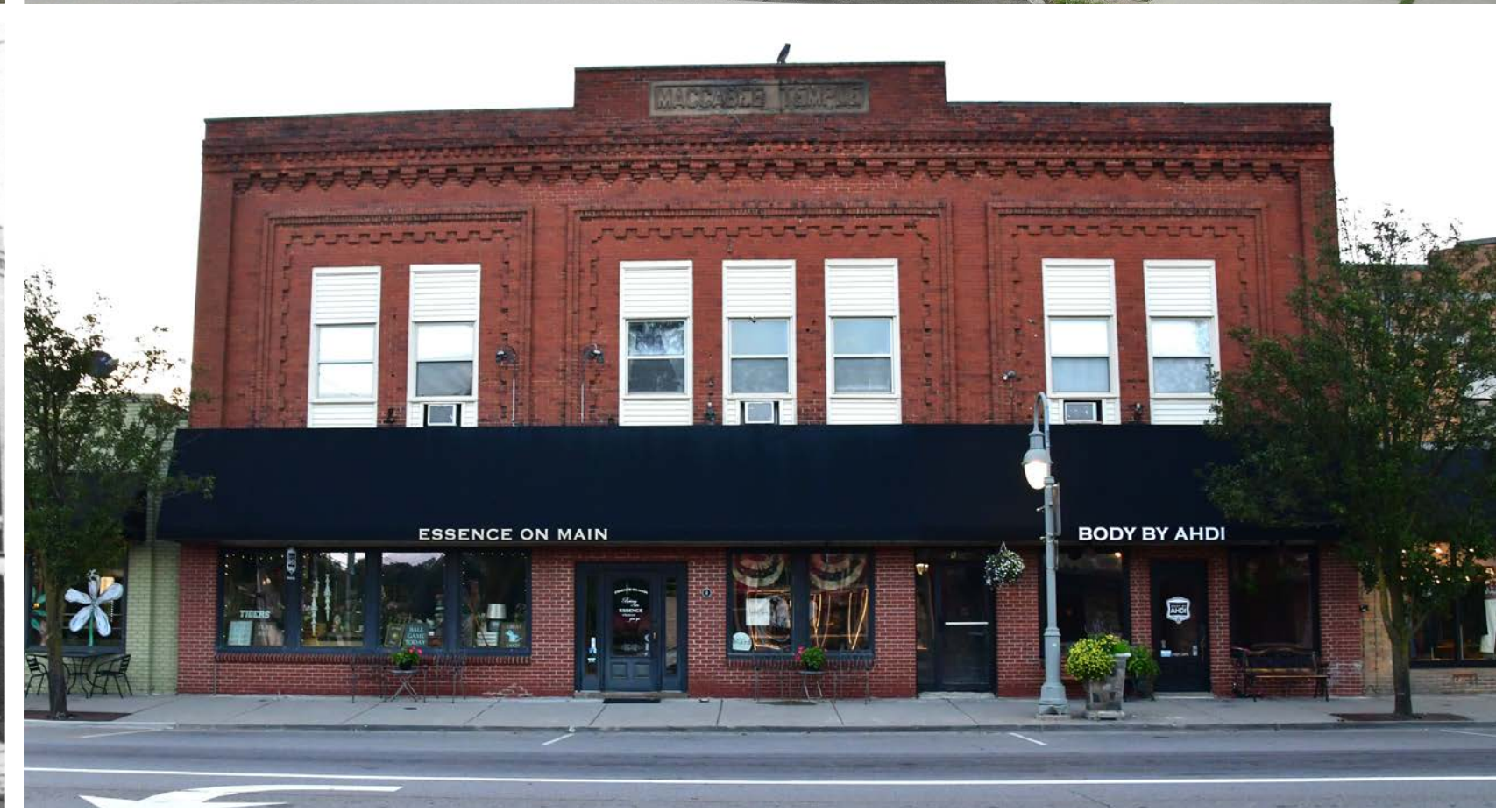
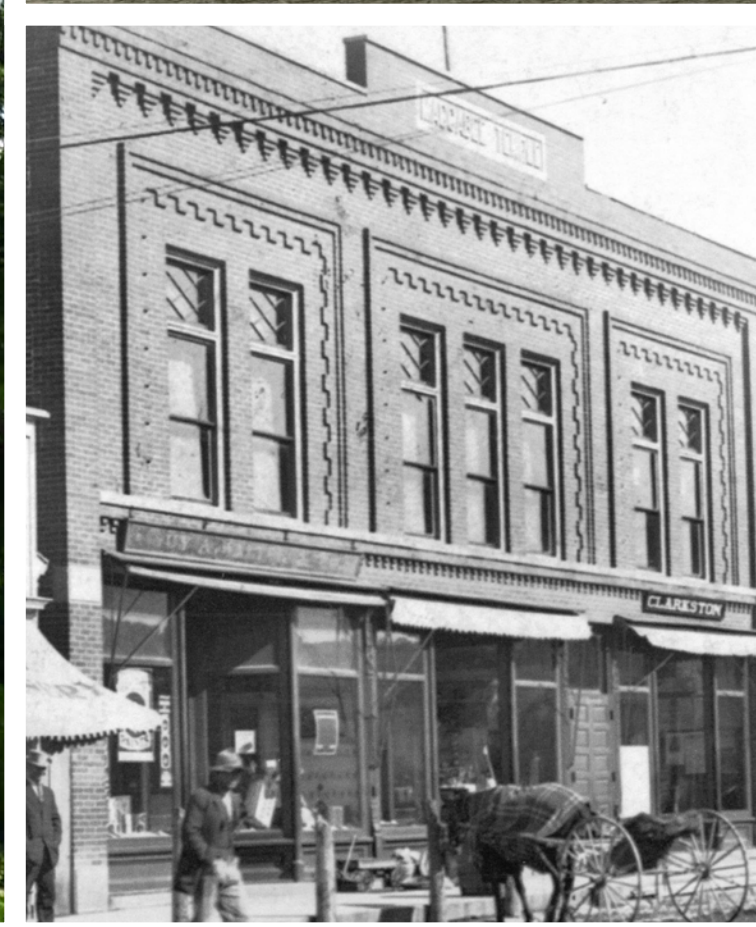
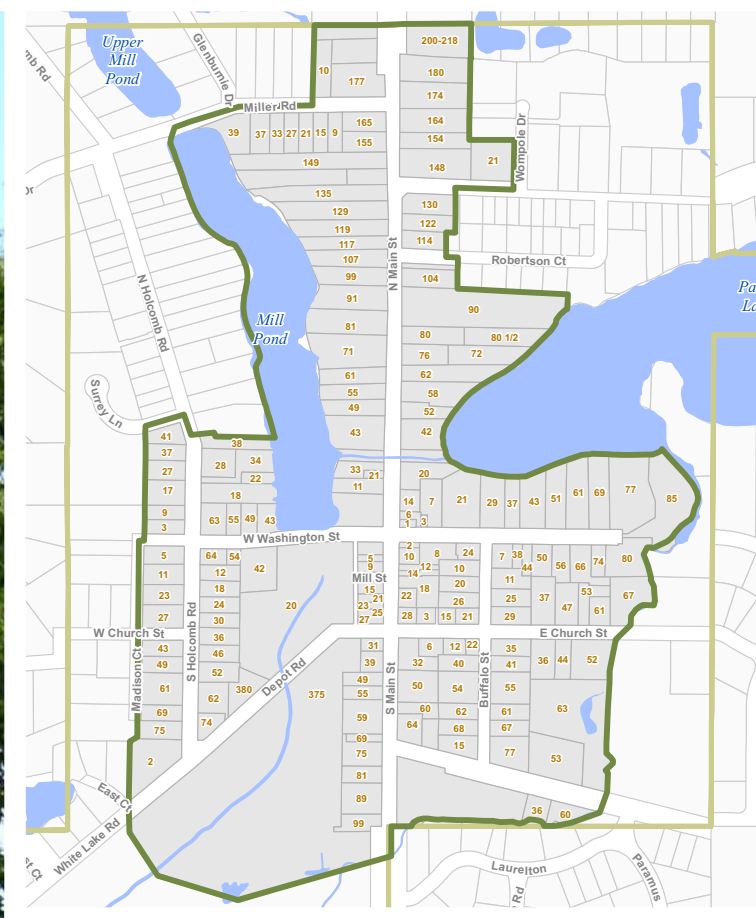
projection equipment in recent decades. In 1980, the family twinned the theater when they moved and installed a second screen tower from a former drive-in near Detroit.

Three generations of the Magocs family have led the Capri since its inception, nurturing the nostalgic vibe of what has become a regional destination. The Capri bills itself as a community theater and supports many activities in Coldwater, but each night the audience comes from miles around to enjoy the special experience. Fewer than a dozen drive-in theaters survive in Michigan today, and the Capri stands out for its long-term family ownership and investment.

Capri Drive-In



# 2026 Governor's Award for Historic Preservation



## Clarkston Historic District

**Awardees: City of the Village of Clarkston; and Clarkston Historic District Resurvey Committee**

### ***Clarkston Historic District Resurvey Project, Clarkston***

Clarkston was founded nearly 200 years ago. The village prospered into the early 1900s, resulting in a fine collection of vernacular and high-style homes and businesses. In the mid-20th century, the community became better connected to growing metropolitan areas, spurring additional growth.

The Clarkston Village Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 and established as a local historic district the following year. Early historic district documents did not require the same level of detail as today, making them less useful when making present-day preservation decisions. Several buildings constructed during the mid-20th century were considered to be too new in 1980, and weren't included in the initial district, even though they would be considered historic today.

To solve this, the volunteer Clarkston Resurvey Committee documented and reevaluated all of the resources located within the village's historic district over a period of four years. Beyond simply documenting buildings, the committee sought to learn more about the village's shared history by researching deed and cemetery records and collecting oral histories and photos from their fellow citizens. Despite the challenges of continuing the project during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Clarkston Historic District Resurvey Project is a model for citizen-led efforts to better document and celebrate the historic buildings within our communities. It has renewed the village's interest in its own history and provides an opportunity to better steward this shared past.



# 2026 Governor's Award for Historic Preservation



**Awardees: Isle Royale National Park; Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa; and Grand Portage National Monument**

## ***Collaborative Stewardship of Archaeological Resources, Isle Royale***

For no less than five thousand years, people have made the water journey to Isle Royale, known as Minong to regional Anishinaabe cultures. Their time on the island and related activities left imprints on the rugged, wild environment. Isle Royale National Park was established in 1931. The archipelago is a continued place of significance to the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, and its status as a Traditional Cultural Place celebrates the tribe's lasting connections to Minong.

Since 2012, the cultural resource program at Isle Royale has conducted archaeological survey work along the island's Nipissing beach, a relict Lake Superior shoreline approximately five thousand years old. The Relict Shoreline Survey project has enriched our understanding of Minong's human past, identifying new archaeological resources and placing them into the wider context of archaeology in the Lake Superior Basin.

Among the successes of the project are the long-term connections forged between project research and the regional Ojibwe community. For the past several years the National Park has hosted a tribal culture camp, or Agaaming Aki, where Ojibwe youth immerse themselves in the island wilderness. The curriculum provides opportunities for young tribal members to engage with history and ecology in a field-based setting. Participants tour an extensive pre-contact mining district where they can appreciate the scale and significance of the activities that occurred here. Strong, collaborative partnerships such as this help us all better understand and respect the people who came before us.

**Isle Royale Archaeology**



# 2026 Governor's Award for Historic Preservation



**Awardees: Washtenaw County; Northfield Township Historical Society, Inc.; and Firefly Preservation Consulting, LLC**

## ***Northfield Township Rural Survey and National Register Project, Northfield Township***

Northfield Township was established in 1832 and has long been known for its productive agricultural industry and rural character. Preserving these assets is a key part of the Township's master plan.

In 2018, the Northfield Township Historical Society completed an extensive survey of more than 1,300 properties in the township. The next year, Washtenaw County received a Certified Local Government grant from the State Historic Preservation Office to research historic contexts for agriculture and other themes in a survey report. Completed in 2021, the goal of this phase was to identify and prioritize farmsteads and other properties for preservation and provide a foundation for historic designation efforts.

In 2022, the County received a second CLG grant to build upon these efforts by completing a Multiple Property Documentation Form, and up to five individual nominations to the National Register of Historic Places. The nominations recognized several properties for their early architectural significance and two properties for their association with the Township's German ethnic heritage. The project concluded in early 2026 with the completion of the form and listing of five new rural properties in the National Register. These property owners are now eligible for historic preservation tax credits, among other benefits.

This multi-phase project to survey and designate rural properties is a model which could be followed in other townships across the state.

**Northfield Township**

