Historic resources and archaeological sites tell us about the past and help us maintain 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 in May during National Historic Preservation Month. The awards recognize homeowners who rehabilitate their homes; developers who transform underutilized historic structures into vital economic assets; and academic institutions, archaeologists, nonprofits and local governments—among others—who strive to preserve Michigan’s important historic and cultural resources.

2017 Recipients of the Governor’s Award for Historic Preservation

- Michael McCarthy and Marcia Myers, Richard Meier & Partners Architects, McBride Construction, Inc. and Garon Gopigian for the restoration of the James and Jean Douglas House, Harbor Springs

- LC Consultants LLC; Concept Design Studio, Inc.; Rockford Construction, Inc.; Nehil-Sivak Structural Engineers; and Past Perfect Inc. for the rehabilitation of Century Furniture and Central Furniture Co./H. E. Shaw Furniture; Grand Rapids

- Michigan State University Department of Anthropology, Michigan State University Office of the President, and the Michigan State University Department of Infrastructure Planning and Facilities for the MSU Campus Archaeology Program, East Lansing

- LC Consultants LLC; Concept Design Studio, Inc.; Wolverine Building Group; and Kidorf Preservation Consulting for the rehabilitation of the Peoples National Bank Building, Jackson

- Wabash & Main LLC, Kincaid Henry Building Group, and Kraemer Design Group for the East Main Redevelopment, Milan

- McCormack Baron Salazar, Inc.; Midtown Detroit, Inc.; The Monahan Co.; and Hamilton Anderson Associates for the rehabilitation of the Strathmore Hotel, Detroit

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Although built during the second half of the 20th century, Modern architecture comes with its own preservation issues, including materials. The James and Jean Douglas House near Harbor Springs faced many challenges, not the least of which its location high on a bluff overlooking Lake Michigan. Designed by internationally acclaimed architect Richard Meier, and completed in 1973, the Douglas House is a masterpiece of Modern design.

Current owners Michael McCarthy and Marcia Myers completely restored the house, including the three-story signature window wall, cantilevered exterior stair, chimney stacks, interior surfaces and Richard Meier-designed furniture. They consulted with the original architectural firm regarding the 40-foot entry bridge between the land and the house to be sure the newly engineered structure respected Meier’s original design. In addition, they consulted with Garon Gopigian who lived across the street when the house was built and had a collection of materials from the original construction.

McCarthy and Myers welcome visitors from all over the world to their iconic home in Michigan. Their exceptional stewardship of the Douglas House saved what they call a, “jewel in the state’s crown.”
LC Consultants LLC created a walkable neighborhood where blight once existed by transforming vacant furniture industry complexes into affordable housing. Century Furniture Co., known as Baker Furniture, and the Central Furniture Co./H. E. Shaw Furniture Co. factory, known as Klingman’s Warehouse, were unused and moldering until LC Consultants rehabilitated the buildings into modern housing and commercial space.

Many developers would have walked away when met with such challenging projects, but LC Consultants did not. A corner of the Klingman’s building had sunk nearly two feet and had to be stabilized, so they worked with Nehil-Sivak Structural Engineers to solve the problem and moved forward with their plans. The developers used Federal and State Historic Preservation Tax Credits and Low-Income Housing Tax Credits. Together the projects represent an investment of $60.7 million in the area. The rehabilitation of these furniture industry-related structures preserved Grand Rapids history and contributed to the revitalization of the Heartside neighborhood.

2017 GOVERNOR’S AWARD FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

LC Consultants LLC; Concept Design Studio, Inc.; Rockford Construction, Inc.; Past Perfect Inc.; and Nehil-Sivak Structural Engineers

Rehabilitation of Century Furniture Co. and Central Furniture Co./H. E. Shaw Furniture, Grand Rapids

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Inspired by the success of the first on-campus excavation by university archaeologists in 2005, Dr. Lynne Goldstein of the Department of Anthropology, in collaboration with the Department of Infrastructure and Planning Facilities, developed the Campus Archaeology Program. With support from the Office of the President, a line item in the budget and additional funding from the Graduate School, the program is a model that could be—and should be—replicated at other institutions.

Today all construction on campus is preceded by investigations by the graduate student Campus Archaeologist and crews. Infrastructure Planning and Facilities employees assist with clearing ground, moving obstacles and securing sites, and they automatically include archaeology in all project planning and construction.

Students use social media and blog posts to engage faculty, staff, students and alumni. In addition, they create exhibits, hold special events and participate in events such as MSU’s ScienceFest, Grandparents University and Archaeology Day at the Michigan History Museum.

Perhaps the greatest education has been among formerly skeptical administration and staff who once thought there was nothing left to find on campus. They now realize that archaeological resources are present, important and must be incorporated into future planning.
The Peoples National Bank Building opened in 1917. It is the oldest of Jackson’s tall office buildings built between 1915 and 1930. The building eventually housed a women’s clothing store, the Elaine Shop, which gave the apartments their name when the building’s upper stories were converted in 1972.

Elaine Apartments housed senior residents for years, but the building lacked desirable amenities for tenants. When rehabilitation began in 2015, the residents were relocated. Most of them returned at the conclusion of the project.

Using Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits and Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, the developer, LC Consultants LLC, rehabilitated the exterior and interior, constructing community spaces and a fitness room, and adding extra security and handicap amenities that did not exist prior to the rehabilitation. Representing a $10.3 million investment in downtown Jackson, the project is the first historic rehabilitation in the city in many years and is spurring investment in other historic buildings in the area.
Wabash & Main LLC’s rehabilitation of four buildings on Main Street as a single project changed the face of downtown Milan. The buildings had deteriorated for years, and a couple of them had been vacant for a decade. Within the 14-month construction period beginning in 2015, the project stabilized all four buildings, removed exterior cladding from two buildings to reveal the original brick facades, repaired masonry and installed historically appropriate windows. Fifteen one- and two-bedroom upscale apartments were created on the second and third stories, and eight storefronts were rehabilitated on the street level.

The East Main Redevelopment has inspired additional investment in the area. Major work has been done by owners of 12 other downtown buildings and businesses. In addition, Milan has become a Select Michigan Main Street community, which will strengthen the business district and encourage additional historic preservation activities. Citizens showed their enthusiasm for the project by attending an open house of partially completed buildings in February 2016. An estimated 1,100 visitors passed through in just three hours.
According to the Guardian, “when Midtown Detroit Inc bought [the Strathmore Hotel] they noted that it had been through the hands of five different developers in the previous five years, all of whom found themselves flummoxed by the idea of how to renovate such a huge and devastated space.”

Midtown Detroit, Inc. (MDI) partnered with McCormack Baron Salazar, Inc. of St. Louis, to rehabilitate the 142,000-square-foot structure. They formed Strathmore Apartments Limited Dividend Housing Association, LLC and put together financing that included Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits and Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, among other incentives, to rehabilitate a monumental eyesore in the North Cass Neighborhood of Midtown.

The rehabilitation of the Strathmore fulfills many directives of MDI’s strategy to target investment in the North Cass Neighborhood block-by-block to mitigate blight and spur redevelopment. The $27.9 million investment provides a mix of rental housing in Midtown and creates a new anchor along the Woodward Avenue Corridor M1 light rail line. Strathmore Apartments put “eyes on the street” and contributes to a more vibrant, attractive neighborhood.