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Preservation Eastern

Eastern Michigan University

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Hello!

Welcome to the first edition of the Preservation Eastern newsletter. Co-sponsored by the Historic Preservation program and Preservation Eastern, this newsletter will be published several times during the coming year. Our format will include a listing of events, announcements and feature articles of interest to preservationists.

The continued growth and success of the preservation movement relies to a great extent upon mutual support and communication among all involved. It is hoped that this newsletter will serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas and information, both among those within Eastern's preservation program and the local community. Those wishing to contribute articles or list an event can get in touch with Preservation Eastern at 203 Strong Hall, EMU, or call Barbara Morse at 487-0438.

WILL IT BE SAVED?

In 1896, when Detroit Architects, Malcomson and Higginbotham, built Welch Hall, they endowed it with structural integrity and architectural details that could withstand the ravages of time and fashion change. What they couldn't foresee, however, were the apparent needs of some in the University community to remove historic monuments in order to erect others to themselves.

Ever since a 1966 report by Jickling and Lyman, of Birmingham, there has been a concerted and systematic policy of doing "...only such maintenance as is necessary to maintain safe conditions within the building." The long range goal is to"...raze and replace (Welch Hall) with a new structure for the College of Business." Even though most of us would agree that the world and technology have changed incredibly since the 1960's, the University seems unable to perceive that its adherence to this demolition by neglect policy is both retrogressive and inappropriate in the 1980's.

For further information about anything in this newsletter, the Historic Preservation Program at EMU or Preservation Eastern: ☑️ (313) 487-0218

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Perhaps the whole University does not support this backward policy, however. In the Spring of 1982, a small group of preservation students began asking questions about the fate of our oldest remaining building. For the most part, they were told that no plans had been made for Welch's future. Only their diligence and refusal to be turned aside by facile answers led to the unfolding of the policy for which no one wants to take responsibility. Both students and faculty at Eastern have begun to speak out on Welch Hall. Unwittingly, the University administration helped to galvanize community support to save Welch from the wrecking ball. This they did by knocking a hole in an exterior wall with sledgehammers. This wanton act was performed in order to remove office equipment. These objects, which originally went up the stairs, reportedly were impossible to bring down the stairs—even with gravity helping out.

Local community members, students and faculty were appalled by this assault on the symbol of Eastern Michigan University's origin and continuing mission. They registered their displeasure with the Board of Regents. At the December 15th Regents Meeting, students, faculty, and community members attended to support three proposals concerning Welch Hall. Although the Regents refused to turn the building's heat back on, they agreed to two other proposals. As a result, a committee of seven has been appointed to study alternatives to Welch's demolition and to make adaptive re-use recommendations. This committee is scheduled to meet soon and will design questionnaires to sample community opinions on Welch Hall and to help determine alternative uses for the building.

We in Preservation Eastern can be encouraged by the results of our beginning efforts on behalf of Welch Hall. We can now begin to mobilize to inform the community of the historic and architectural significance of Welch. More importantly, we can put our Historic Preservation knowledge to work in a practical way in our own local laboratory. Now is the time to formalize the plans that we have already made and to put them into action. Welch Hall and Preservation Eastern need your ideas, your support, and your abilities. Now is the time to SAVE WELCH HALL.

* *

Tuesday, March 15- 6pm- Membership Meeting, 201 Strong
7pm- Michael Aiger, of the Ypsi Community Development Department, will speak of the technical aspects of writing Grants.
Informal gathering following.

Reception
At: Starkweather Hall On: Friday, February 18th, at 7pm
Bring an appetizer and a few unusual architectural slides; we'll provide the Beverages!
With the designation in 1972 of the Ypsilanti Historic District and the passage in 1978 of the ordinance to protect the District, the City of Ypsilanti recognized its wealth of historic architecture and committed itself to the conservation and careful development of the area for the benefit of the entire community. In so doing, it joined with many other cities across the country in using this method to protect the historic character of the community, end the deterioration of historic neighborhoods, stabilize and frequently increase property values, and in general improve the quality of life.

The Ypsilanti Historic District is of such merit that it has been placed on the State and National Register of Historic Places. It is administered by the Historic District Commission, consisting of seven citizens appointed by the Mayor. This Commission is guided by the provisions of the Historic District Ordinance, the intent of which is to "safeguard the heritage of the City of Ypsilanti by preserving a district which reflects elements of its cultural, social, economic, political and architectural history and natural environments."

Before any new construction, reconstruction, restoration or exterior alteration can proceed on a designated landmark, an application for approval must be submitted to the Building Inspector and the Historic District Commission. Currently, there is some controversy as to whether the downtown business area will remain within the Historic District. A number of businesses in the area have expressed displeasure at the right of the Commission to regulate exterior alteration. Due to the difficulties encountered in resolving this issue, there may be a one year moratorium on the issuance of permit applications within the Historic District. This would allow the parties involved to reconsider their options.

At this point there appear to be three options: removing the downtown business district from the Historic District, changing the ordinance to allow for voluntary cooperation or working out an agreeable solution within the jurisdiction of the current law.

The architecture of historic Brewer's Hill in Milwaukee, Wisconsin was surveyed recently by six students from Eastern's Historic Preservation program. This section of old Milwaukee is both rich and diverse in its architectural heritage. Queen Anne houses, Art Deco apartment buildings and Romanesque malthouses are only a sample of the wide range of styles which grace this area of the city.

The surveyors task consisted of documenting individual structures by taking a photograph and recording pertinent information such as style, condition, etc. This data was later transcribed onto permanent forms for the Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office. Participants were paid a set rate for each building surveyed.

Resource Design Group, the firm which conducted the survey, is now compiling the results. This promising young Ann Arbor firm hopes to put together other such surveys this coming summer, in various cities throughout the midwest. As with the Milwaukee survey, these should afford members of our program an opportunity to garner much needed experience and a little extra cash in their careers as preservationists. Anyone interested in working on these surveys should contact Resource Design Group at 995-0538 or Bob Schweitzer at 434-2368.
Announcements

Spring, 1983 Course Listings

GEO 115 Observing the Human Landscape, T-Th, 10-11:50
M. McLennan

GEO 541 Material Culture: A Disciplinary Overview, T-Th, 3-4:50
Wright; held at Edison Institute, Lovett

GEO 680 Architectural Photography M-W 5:15-6:55, S 9-11:00
R. Oltmans

GEO 436 Historic Preservation Project, M-T-Th, 7-9:40
M. McLennan; tentatively, an urban survey, poss.

There are several Independent Study Projects still available this semester. These include:

1. Intern with the Canton Planning Office to assist with the development of a comprehensive preservation plan for the township.

2. The Historical Society of Saginaw County needs someone to assist with PR and Community Education, building up local interest in the development of 12 recently proposed historic district ordinances; development into full-time position possible. Contact Chuck Hoover, Director, (517) 752-2861.

3. The community of Port Hope, Michigan, needs an intern to screen over 300 local buildings, determining style, National Register potential, etc. Photos have been taken, some site work.

Dr. McLennan may be contacted for further information.

Current job openings in Preservation are posted on the board outside of 203 Strong Hall. They are updated periodically.

Preservation Eastern is interested in developing walking tours of Ann Arbor and Windsor. Anyone with information or knowledge of possible guides, please contact one of the officers.
Elections for new officers of Preservation Eastern were held on February 7. The position of chairperson went to Robin Haynes, while Jill Priebe was chosen for the newly combined offices of secretary and treasurer. Diana Moran and Michael Heinel, the former chairperson and treasurer respectively, will remain in an advisory capacity through this semester.

Preservation Eastern has been involved in a variety of activities this year. Members participated in the campaign to preserve Ypsilanti's historic Towner House, which is presently being converted into a Children's Hands-On Museum. Of more immediate concern is our on-going battle to save the University's oldest structure, Welch Hall. We have also sponsored a walking tour of Detroit by art historian Michael Farrell, as well as lectures by faculty member Jack Harris and noted geographer David Lowenthal. The annual reception to welcome new students to the program was held under the auspices of Preservation Eastern.

Regarding upcoming plans for the organization, Ms. Haynes stated that these will include further involvement with the Welch Hall campaign, the publication of a "survival manual" for incoming students and a greater degree of interaction with the community. Tentatively scheduled are walking tours of Ann Arbor and Windsor and several speakers including Michael Aiger from the Ypsilanti Department of Community Development. Announcements of meetings and other events can be found in the Eastern Echo and on the bulletin board in Strong Hall.

Name: ____________________________________________
Address: _________________________________________

Interest:
Welch Hall Committee Special Events
Public Relations Newsletter

Dues: $4

Preservation Eastern
203 Strong Hall, EMU
Ypsilanti, Mi 48197