

GRAND RAPIDS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION 2012 Annual Report



Local Historic Preservation Ordinance Turns 40: Where Have We Been & Where Are We Now

Historic Preservation can be described in the simplest terms as a national movement to protect historic buildings from destruction. This is only the tip of the iceberg, to see the greatest benefits of historic preservation one must look beyond the structural elements of a single building, to see the social and cultural affects to a neighborhood. Historic designation enhances quality of life and creates a positive sense of community that transcends neighborhood boundaries and in turn creates a desirable City.

Over the past 40 years Historic Preservation in Grand Rapids has been a partner and economic tool in: success-

ful fights against blight; in stabilizing neighborhoods; in protecting and encouraging investments; and in increasing property values. Through the cooperation of the community and government officials, these benefits will continue to grow.

Although Preservation has been a part of Grand Rapids since the 1960s our focus in this report is to celebrate the passing of the Local Historic Preservation Commissioner Ordinance in 1973 and the impacts the ordinance has had and continues to have on our neighborhoods and community as a whole. What better way to recognize past achievements and future goals than from the perspective of those living it every day.



HPC 40 Year Timeline



“Let us not forget the foot soldiers, those that took up the fight by finding code violations created by the overwhelming volume of problem properties and bad landlords... The block captains that handed out informative fliers door to door... those that purchased the house next door out of self-defense... those that gave of their time to serve on boards and committees..”

Jaime Misner – Resident



“My wife and I have lived in Heritage Hill for over 30 years and are amazed at the progress we have made in stabilizing and improving the neighborhood. Historic Preservation has been one of the most valuable tools in this process.”

Larry & Nancy Beckwith – Resident



“The architecture, diversity and potential of the Heartside Historic District is what drew me to the area back in 1989. Preservation has been a very important tool, the ultimate expression of sustainability, in realization of Heartside’s potential. It has been great to see the vibrancy of the area return as the potentials are realized.”

Tom Nemitz AIA –Architect

“We had been working so hard to revitalize Cherry Hill, against so many obstacles – primarily drug gangs and slum lords. Once we began to make progress with our “own your own home workshops” the downside of not being a historic district reared its ugly head. With tremendous help from Heritage Hill and friends, Cherry Hill was granted designation. Within a few weeks there was tremendous interest in houses and within a few months we had doubled our new owners.”

Gabriel Works – Resident



1154 Wealthy SE, before



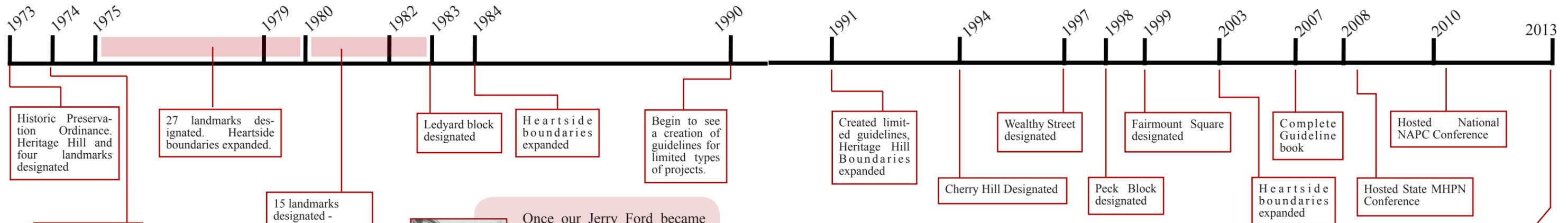
1154 Wealthy SE, after

“The contagion effect was fantastic. Designating the districts of Cherry Hill, Wealthy Street, and Fairmount Square all in the span of just a few years pushed all three neighborhoods out of despair and into prosperity.”

Carol Moore – Resident

“The biggest change we noticed over the years is the adoption of set criteria for rendering decisions by the commission. This gave owners of historic properties a much better idea of whether or not a project had a chance of getting approval as well as instilling a sense of continuity and fairness into the process.”

Jim Payne - Resident



Once our Jerry Ford became president, it was determined that his high school day’s home on Union just south of the district should be added to Heritage Hill, and so the boundary of the district was expanded in 1991.

John Logie, Resident and Former Mayor

40th Anniversary of the local Historic Preservation Ordinance!



GRAND RAPIDS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

2012 Annual Report

New Development in Historic Districts

The stability and attraction of historic districts continues to attract developers. This year the HPC approved several large new construction projects; all in various states of progress, from complete to just breaking ground. Although much of the activity is located in the Heartside Historic District it is not solely found downtown. Neighborhoods such as Fairmount Square and Wealthy Street Historic Districts are also experiencing booms in new development. With the completion of the renovation

of the old Metcalf Funeral site, now Brewery Vivant and the construction of the Maru building the Cherry Street business corridor is complete. The hustle and bustle has now moved south to Wealthy Street where one can find four historic houses undergoing full renovations and three new houses already fully framed in. The new construction and renovation projects are further testaments to the vitality and desirability of historic districts and the success of preservation as an economic catalyst.



205 S Division & 26 Cherry SW

Brookstone Capital strikes again! This time with the construction of two 5+ story residential buildings with commercial on the first floor. The buildings will fill in vacant lots located at the corner of Division and Cherry; returning vitality to a highly visible and traversed intersection.



GRAND RAPIDS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

2012 Annual Report



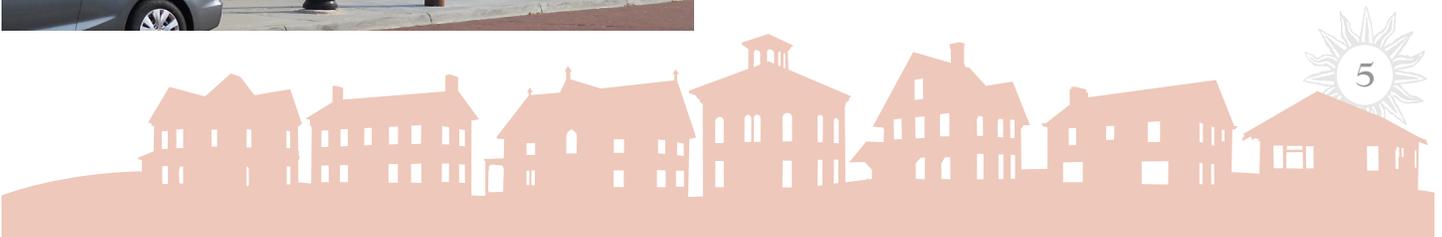
Habitat for Humanity/Wealthy Heights

As part of the larger revitalization effort to breathe life into the Wealthy Heights neighborhood Habitat for Humanity has already restored two historic houses and completed construction on one new house. Additionally they are well underway on the restoration of four more historic homes and the construction of three more new houses. The affects this large project has had on the neighborhood is already evident. Since this project began several existing homes that are not part of the project have been purchased by young professionals for their residence while others have been rehabilitated by private developers; something you would not have seen before in this area.



◀ 927 Cherry SE/Maru Restaurant

Another piece of the redevelopment of the old Metcalf Funeral Parlor site was completed with the construction of the Maru restaurant on the vacant site at 927 Cherry. This one story modern structure completes the streetscape by adding compatible diversity with its modern design and pedestrian interest with the official opening of the restaurant a few months ago.



GRAND RAPIDS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

2012 Annual Report

18th Annual Historic Preservation Awards

The 18th Annual Historic Preservation Awards ceremony was held at the beautiful Grand Rapids Community Foundation offices in the old Anheuser Busch depot on Grandville Avenue. It was a perfect setting to honor owners and volunteers who have given so much to the preservation and health of our community. The recipients were recognized by

City Commissioner Ruth Kelly and HPC Chair, Tom Pfister during a power point presentation that highlighted each project. Honorees went home with wonderful full color posters of their project as well as one of a kind awards created by our very own Michael Moore. The ceremony has been very well received and approximately 40 people were in attendance.

The winners for 2012 were:

Residential Project



Before



After

July and Bob Connors - 311 Pleasant SE



Before



After

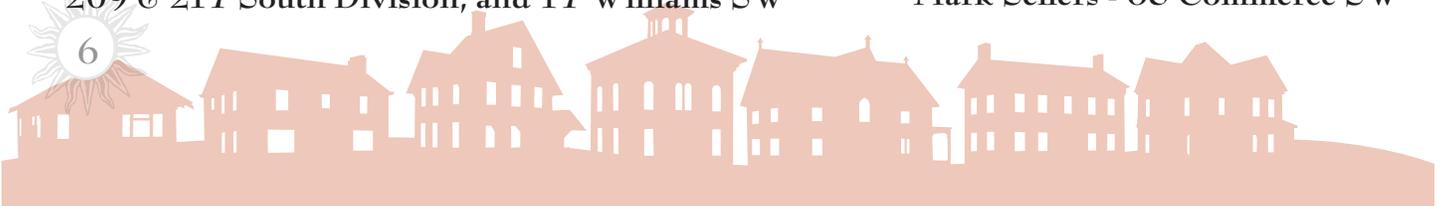
Brent Ahmicasaube of Heritage Craftsmen
302 James SE

Commercial Project



Brookstone Capital LLC
209 & 217 South Division, and 17 Williams SW

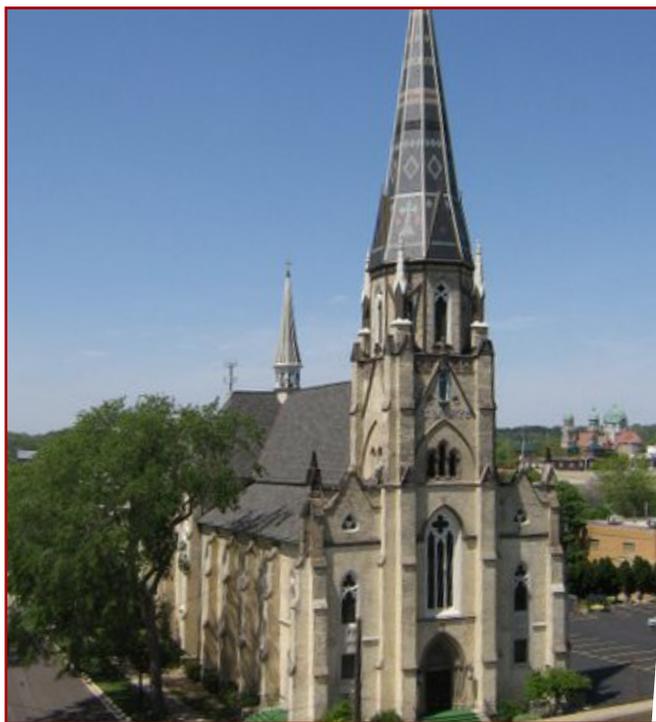
Tammi & Jeff Vandenberg, and
Mark Sellers - 68 Commerce SW



GRAND RAPIDS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

2012 Annual Report

Group Project



St. Mary's Church & Grand River Builders
423 First NW



St. Adalbert Parish & Grand River Builders
701 Fourth NW

Special Recognition



Grand Rapids Community College
415 E. Fulton - White Hall



Jan Earl



Gabriel Works



GRAND RAPIDS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

2012 Annual Report

The Old House Expo

Grand Rapids welcomed back the Old House Expo to Park Street Church on March 24, 2012. The Expo was created seven years ago by the non-profit Old House Network. The March 2012 event marked the 7th annual Expo and the second year in Grand Rapids. 2012 also marks the first year the Expo had two shows, one in Grand Rapids and one in Kalamazoo. The HPC and Staff worked alongside Expo founders in creating this one day event in Grand Rapids. The Expo had 15 educational sessions on a wide range of topics from our Stump the Chump panel of experts to weatherization and FHA loans. Speakers came from across the state to volunteer their time and knowledge to make the event a success. In addition we managed to fill the Vendors hall with over 20 local and west Michigan based crafts people and non-profits. This not only helps the economy by enabling local crafts people to meet future clients and obtain possible jobs it assists the home owner in finding the person who can address their specialized concern. It can also help you find that hard to find object or to simply chat with and learn from our pros or other old house owners.

The Old House Expo brought the attention of the creators of the Grand Rapids Antiques Market, an annual show held at the DeVos place with an average attendance of 5,000. The Old House Network has come to an agreement with the Antiques Market and will be partnering with them and the City of Grand Rapids HPC in a combined show for 2013!



GRAND RAPIDS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

2012 Annual Report



Restoration Projects

Numerous restoration projects were undertaken in 2012. Among the more notable projects are: 344 Visser; 428 Pleasant SE; and 47 Williamson SW.



GRAND RAPIDS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

2012 Annual Report

HPC News

- 1) Staff is partnering with Kalamazoo to bring the Old House Expo to Grand Rapids for a 3rd year.
- 2) Staff worked with the Old House Network to combine Old House Expo with the annual Antiques Market.
- 3) HPC sadly said goodbye to two commissioners in 2012; Wesley Beck and Tom Pfister. We greatly appreciate and thank them both for their service and will miss their insight and input.

The Purpose of the Historic Preservation Commission

1. Stabilize and improve property values in Historic Districts.
2. Strengthen the local economy.
3. Safeguard the Heritage of the City of Grand Rapids by preserving Historic Districts and Historic Landmarks that reflect elements of the City's cultural, social, economic, political or architectural history.
4. Foster civic beauty.

These purposes were successfully served during 2012 through 300 decisions made by staff and the Commission. These decisions preserved the integrity of the structures and district while at the same time enabling practical changes which allow for economic use of historic buildings. The significant amount of investment in improvement and renovation of many buildings in the historic districts speaks to the impact of historic preservation on economic development.

Customer Service

The 2012 Annual Report Statistical Information enclosed shows continued success in customer service by the Historic Preservation Commission and HP Staff. A substantial number of applicants continue to have projects approved on first consideration.

Statistical Information

Approved Applications

- The ratio of approved applications remained steady an outstanding 95%. In 2012 the HPC and HP staff approved 286 of the 300 applications submitted.

Applications Processed

- In the year 2012 the HPC and staff reviewed a total of 300 applications a substantial number given today's economic climate, further testament to the stability and investment security investors and owners experience in a historic district.

HPC Reviewed Applications Per Historic District

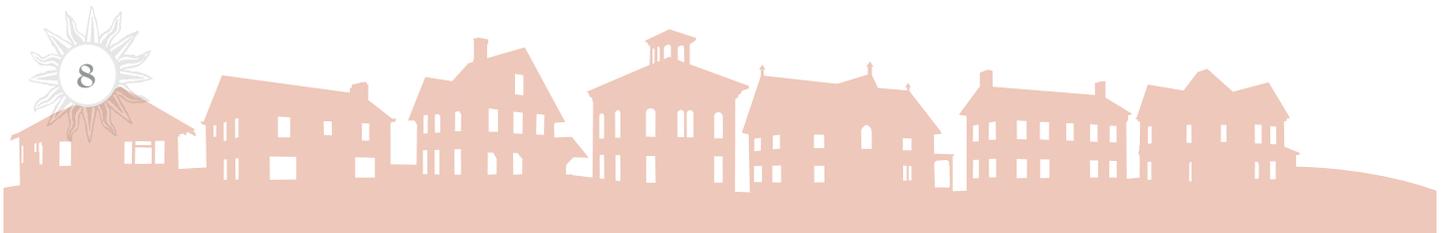
- Applications to the HPC from historic districts other than Heritage Hill have held around a 43% share of the activity over the past five years.

Staff Approved Applications

- Staff-approved applications are those that receive instant consideration and approval. Applicants utilize the one-stop convenience of the Development Center for review.
- A total of 1,149 applications have been approved by staff over the past five years.

Customer Service Performance Measured by Tabled Applications and First Approvals

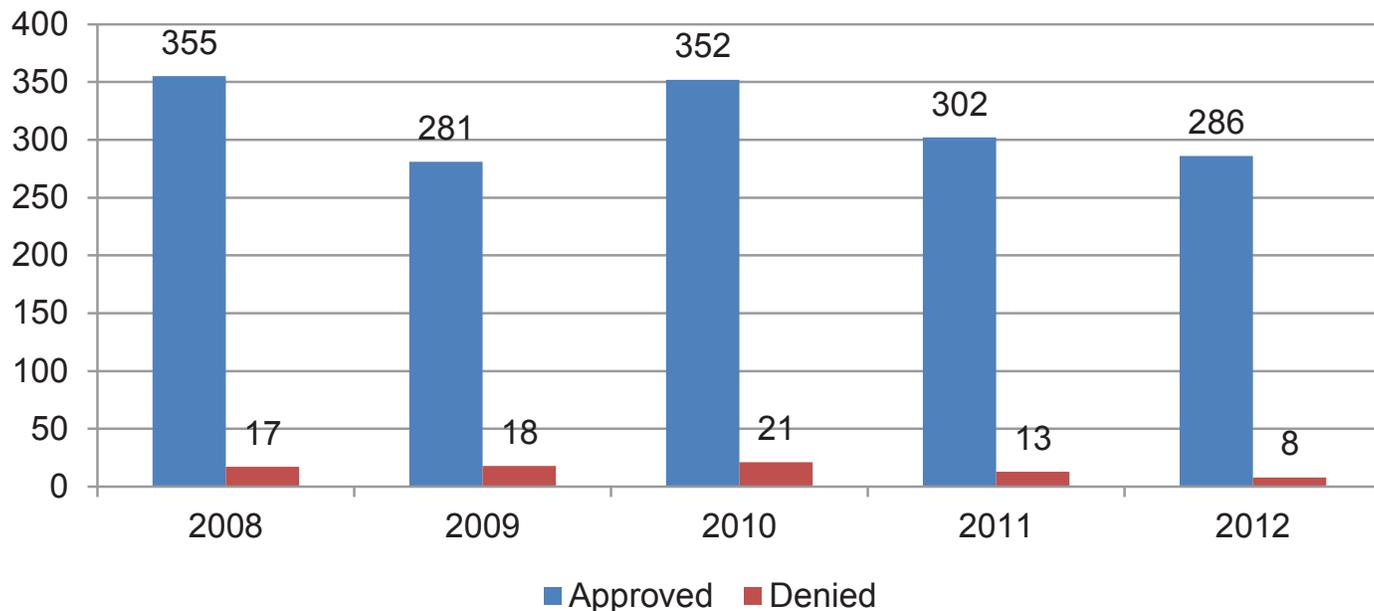
- In the year 2012 the HPC continued to exemplify good customer service with an outstanding 95%, first time approval rating.



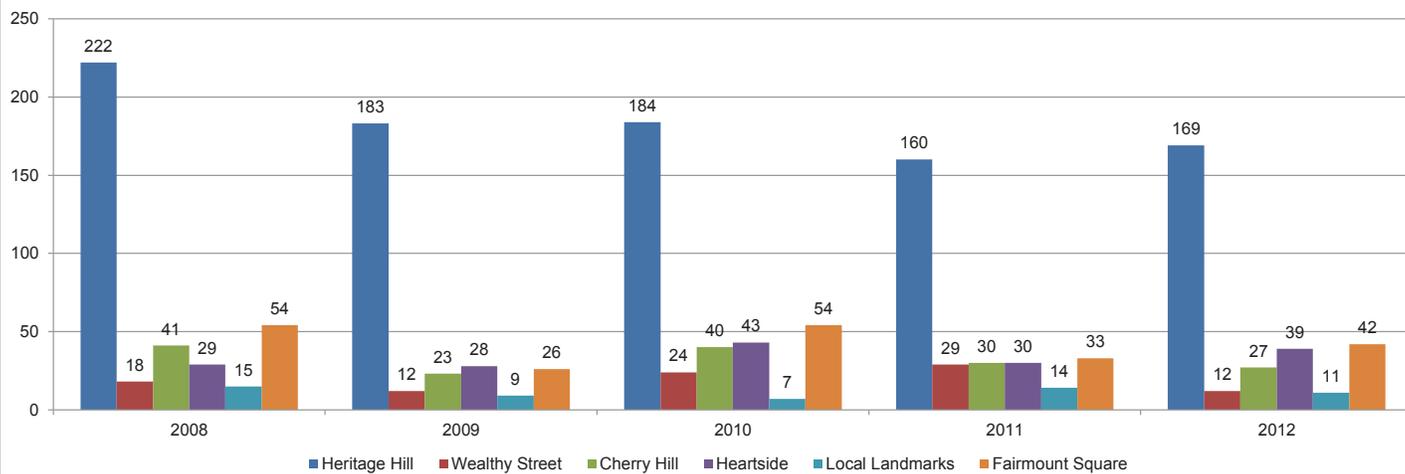
GRAND RAPIDS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

2012 Annual Report

Approved Applications

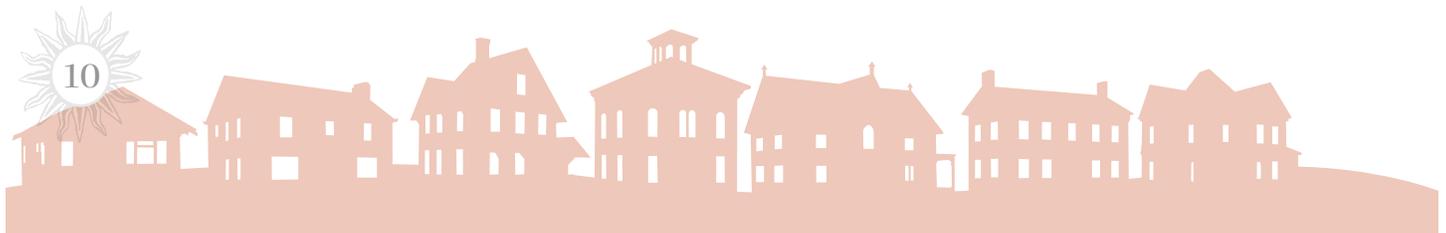
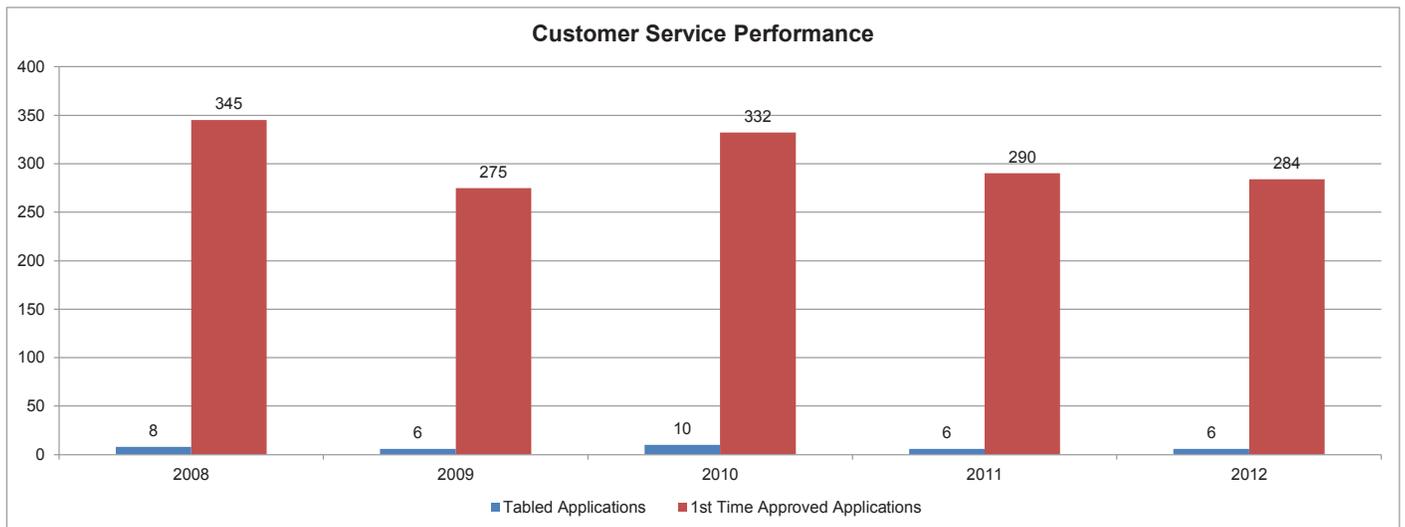
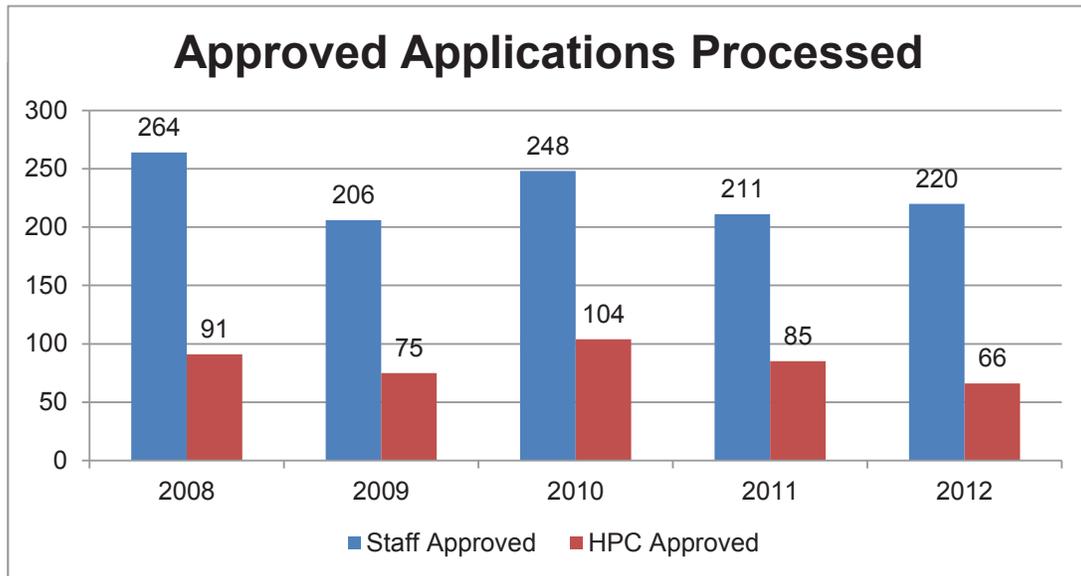


Approved Applications Per Historic District



GRAND RAPIDS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

2012 Annual Report





CITY OF
GRAND
RAPIDS

HISTORIC
PRESERVATION
COMMISSION