

to do study -

May 15, 1968 - Organizational Meeting
WOOD - Woodland Room
8:00 PM

Welcome & Introduction of : Mr. & Mrs. Ed Shea
Mr. & Mrs. Wendell Warnock
Mr. Dave Soet
Mr. Weldon Frankforter
Rev. Lyman Parks
Mr. Frank DeJong

Reason for organization of the Association: Something has to be done by those of us who enjoy living and working in the area and who wish to combat the slow, but sure, deterioration of the area.

Purposes of the Association: mimeo sheet

Projects of the Association (suggested): mimeo sheet
PRIVATE POLICE PATROL (?)

Who will be eligible for membership: Homeowners
Rental Property Owners
Tenants
Businessmen
Interested people

What do we want to ask those present to do: Stir up community interest
Sign up to act on committees
Contact their neighbors
Assist in compiling list of homeowners

* Refer to Hand-Out Sheets - ask to have them handed in after meeting to Pat

Things which the Association must accomplish immediately:

Draw-up a Constitution
Articles of Incorporation - Dave Soet
Select an official name for the Association
(Heritage Homes Assn., Hillside Homes, etc)
Elect a Board of Directors
Settle on types of membership
Decide how much dues will consist of
GET MOVING!!!!!!!

WHY YOU SHOULD BECOME A MEMBER OF THE HERITAGE HILL ASSOCIATION

There are, of course, many reasons and we hope that this information sheet will help explain some of the more tangible ones. If you would like to discuss any of the facts presented or have questions, please don't hesitate to contact the Heritage Hill office at 120 Madison Avenue, SE or call 459-8950.

First of all, the what. What is Heritage Hill? It is one of the largest urban historic districts in the United States and is noted for the unique diversity of architectural styles which are located within its boundaries. It is included on the National, State and Grand Rapids Registers of Historic Places and, consequently, is protected by the laws of the country, the state and the city. Locally, the Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Commission is the body responsible for safe-guarding the integrity of the historic district and the homes therein.

But, most important, Heritage Hill is people. And, now the Who. The Heritage Hill Association was organized in 1968 by a small group of neighbors who got together over a cup of coffee to discuss what could be done to promote the area as a GOOD place to live and to halt the deterioration and pending demolition of homes in the district. By 1969, they were 100-strong and had incorporated under the laws of the State of Michigan as a non-profit charitable trust. Today, the Association has more than 500 members, most of whom are property owners and/or residents of the district.

Following are some examples of what the Association and its members have done to improve the quality of life in Heritage Hill, while preserving and enhancing its historic and architectural character.

The Heritage Hill Association has been directly responsible for stopping the demolition of many homes:

In 1970 the Grand Rapids Board of Education and the City of Grand Rapids planned to demolish all of the homes located in the area bounded by Fountain, Lafayette, College and Lyon and a part of the proposed College Park Urban Renewal Project. Because the District was then listed on the National Register, the Association was able to call upon the Federal Government and request the protection provided under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. As a direct result, meetings were held, the project plans were revised and the above-mentioned area is now slated for rehabilitation and beautification as a part of the Project. Only selective demolition was allowed.

The Immen House at 35 Lafayette, NE was slated to be sold and demolished to make room for a parking lot! The Association actively opposed this action and sought out the current owners, Steenwyk & Thrall Architects, who rehabilitated the home and have made it one of Heritage Hill's most outstanding examples of an adaptive use.

Throughout the years there has been continuing talk about closing and demolishing Fountain Street Elementary School. The Association continues to actively oppose this and the school is still standing!

To maintain and improve the residential character of the District, the Association and its members have opposed requests for zoning variances to increase the density of the neighborhood. Two examples are: 340 College Avenue, SE - to allow an increase from a two-family to a three-family with two sleeping rooms - request for a variance denied; 147 Prospect Avenue, NE - to allow an increase from a four-family to a six-family - request denied.

Also, because of the size of the homes in Heritage Hill, institutions seek them and the Association and its members have had to be constantly on the alert to prevent the granting of a zoning variance which would allow institutional use. Two examples of requests which were successfully opposed are: 455 Morris Avenue, SE and 33 College Avenue, SE.

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Many vacant and abandoned homes in Heritage Hill have been or are in the process of being rehabilitated. Heritage Hill has been directly responsible for the salvation of several of these homes. Three examples are:

305 Paris Avenue, SE - This home suffered a bad fire and was vacated. Heritage Hill acquired the home and, in cooperation with the Grand Rapids Public School System, rehabilitated it to its original four-family condition and is now offering it for sale.

532 Paris Avenue, SE - This charming single-family home was repossessed by FHA who planned to demolish it. Heritage Hill acquired the home and it is now being rehabilitated by Heritage Hill and the Grand Rapids Public School System. It will be offered for sale as soon as the work is complete, early summer.

334 Union Avenue, SE - Vacant for three years this four-family home stood open to vandals and the elements. Heritage Hill acquired the house and sold it to a family who have restored it to its original single-family condition and are now living in it.

Members of the Association have been individually responsible for the rehabilitation of many homes in Heritage Hill. Some examples are:

264 Paris Avenue, SE	152 Lafayette Avenue, NE
19 Lafayette Avenue, NE	33 Union Avenue, NE
332 Morris Avenue, SE	508 Lafayette Avenue, SE
310 College Avenue, SE	50 Lafayette Avenue, NE

Members have also been responsible for major up-grading of multi-family residences:

222 Madison Avenue, SE	218 Madison Avenue, SE
319 College Avenue, SE	127 Prospect Avenue, NE
119 Prospect Avenue, NE	120 Union Avenue, SE

Heritage Hill initiated a program of streetscape rehabilitation/restoration, in cooperation with the Planning Department, to enhance the historic character of the district and provide it with its own unique visual identity. This project is now underway and the first phases of the work can be seen in the 500-block of College Avenue, SE.

The Association has been directly responsible for organizing and assisting all but one of the block clubs in the District. These block clubs have been extremely effective in combatting neighborhood problems and in sponsoring a sense of community among their members.

The Heritage Hill Association was one of the first effective neighborhood associations to be organized in Grand Rapids and is recognized as such by City Hall, the Board of Education and other neighborhood groups. Through its efforts and its work with local realtors, Heritage Hill has become one of the most desirable residential areas in the city. Because of these and many more reasons, people want to live in Heritage Hill and they want to be a part of their neighborhood. They have a feeling of pride and a sense of belonging which is visually evident in all of the exterior painting and landscaping which is being done. And, they have a feeling of security because they know that the Association stands ready to help them protect the environment and the homes in which they chose to live and raise their families.

The Heritage Hill Association offers its members many things such as informative meetings, social activities, an opportunity to participate in an historic Home Tour, a newsletter, rehabilitation consultant services, a service directory, a voice at City Hall, a chance to become involved in your block club, rising property values which protect and enhance your investment in your home and an office staff to advise on a wide variety of things. But, most important of all, through the Association you have an opportunity to actively participate in the programs and projects which continue to increase the viability of this downtown, historic residential district. As an historic district, Heritage Hill is a three-dimensional record of the growth and development of the city of Grand Rapids; as a neighborhood it is a thriving community of individuals which offers something for everyone. Won't YOU join us!