

## Introduction

This year, as Grand Blanc Township celebrates its 175<sup>th</sup> birthday and becomes a “quartoseptcentennial” community, the desire to preserve and protect its rich heritage is of strongest interest. A grant was awarded to the township under the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 through the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG). The purpose of this funding is to conduct a Historic District Resource Identification and Preservation Plan.

Over the years, interest in historic preservation has become increasingly popular. Not only is it a method of preserving a community’s rich heritage for future generations, it is also seen as an ecologically conscious way of preserving the environment by utilizing existing structures rather than destroying them for new and not always quality structures. Under the guidelines of Michigan’s Local Historic Districts Act, PA 169 of 1970, “historic preservation safeguards a community’s heritage, stabilizes and improves property values, fosters civic beauty, strengthens the local economy and promotes the use of historic buildings and properties for the education, welfare and pleasure of our citizens.” This law enables local governments to adopt a historic district ordinance that contains design review guidelines based on national standards. It allows an appointed Historic District Study Committee to decide which historic resources are significant to its history.

PA 169 provides the process for preserving and protecting those resources and ensures that the law is fairly and equitably applied to all residents in the community.

Under the premise of PA 169, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) of the Michigan Department of History, Arts and Libraries has established a very detailed multiple step process for creating historic resource surveys and local historic districts in Michigan. First, the guidelines state that a Historic District Study Committee (HDSC) must be appointed which was completed prior to the award of this study project (the appointed study committee members are listed under the acknowledgment in the preceding section).



The Kerr Memorial Farm  
6136 Belsay Road



The next step is conducting a Potential Historic Resource Survey. Funded primarily with CDBG funds, this survey is the basis for evaluating potential historic resources and includes areas recommended for further review for possible local historic districts (under “areas of further interest”). This survey is in accordance with the guidelines as stated in the Michigan SHPO Local Historic District Manual and the Manual for Historic and Architectural Surveys in Michigan.

The team of Gould Engineering, Inc., as lead consultant, along with Ted Hu Associates Architects, and A.H. Kunderling, have worked closely with the Historic District Study Committee to prepare this document as an initial step toward preserving the township’s history. We are confident this study will be a highly useful tool to the Committee in making determinations, recommendations, and applying for local historic district designations under the Local Historic District Act PA 169 and historic registries of federal, state and local levels under the National Register Program of the National Park Service, also administered through the SHPO.



The Fletcher Barn  
1414 Grand Blanc Road

## What is a Historic Resource Survey?

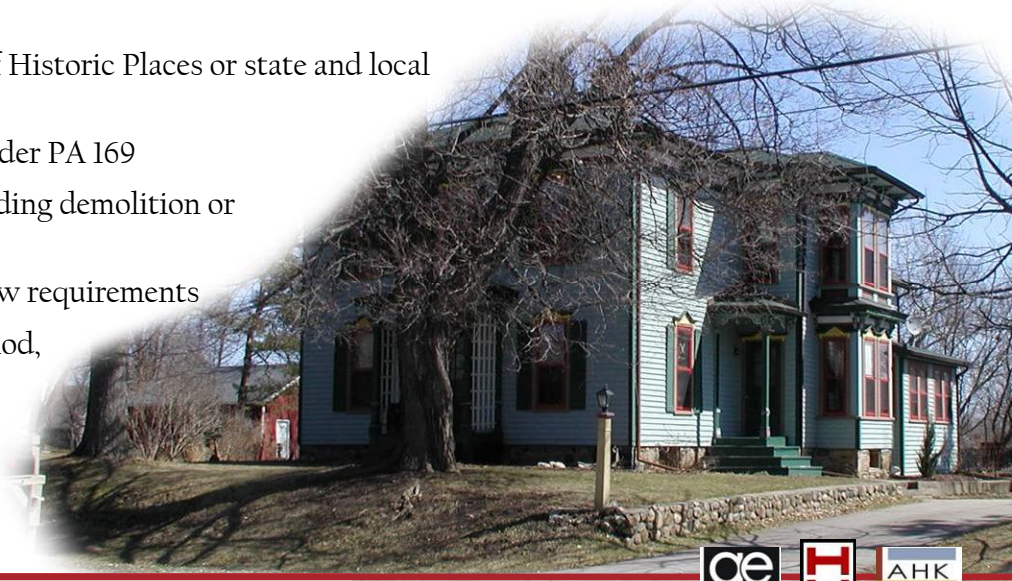
The Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) oversees historic and architectural surveys in Michigan. A “survey” provides the means by which we identify and document historic resources. Historic resources are districts, buildings, sites, structures, or objects that exemplify a period of history. Their value may be significant through historical events, associated with persons significant to our past, and/or representing a particular method of construction, style, or artistic value. According to the national standard, historic resources are typically fifty years of age or older. However, due to the extensive geographic boundaries of this study, the township has chosen a threshold date of 75 years, thus established in 1933 or older. This threshold is also in recognition of the township’s anniversary date of 175 years being celebrated this year. Some resources of lesser age may qualify if they have extraordinary significance.

The survey process is an essential first step in any preservation effort. The survey requires the recordation of basic data, photographic documentation, and mapping of individual resources in a specific area. For this survey the specific area is the entire township (not including areas within the City).

### The purpose of a Historic Resource Survey includes any of the following:

- Stimulation and public awareness
- Database of information to be used by the local unit of government which may lead to attainment of “Certified Local Unit of Government” Status (see preservation plan section)
- A database used for community action programs for rehabilitation and neighborhood improvements
- Identification of nominees for National Register of Historic Places or state and local commemorative markers
- Identifying possible local historic district areas under PA 169
- Documentation of resources that may involve building demolition or land disturbance
- Information for use in certain environmental review requirements
- Information on resources representing a style, period, method of construction, or theme

The Cheney/Schumaker  
Home - 6189 Belsay Road



## Reconnaissance Level -vs- Intensive Level Surveys

Per the SHPO Manual for Historic and Architectural Surveys in Michigan, there are two levels of survey. The first being a **Reconnaissance Level** which is the first step in the survey process and the level of survey performed herein. This level provides a preliminary look at a larger area of potential resources to determine where to focus a more **Intensive Level** survey later. It involves collecting general data from public records, information provided by owners, and a photographic inventory.

*Beginning the survey project with a reconnaissance level survey of the entire survey area and following it up with an intensive level survey of those areas and individual properties that appear to merit the additional research is an efficient and cost-effective approach to obtaining the types of property-specific historical background data that is essential for informed decision-making concerning historic properties - **Manual for Historic and Architectural Surveys in Michigan.***

### The process of this reconnaissance level survey involved the following steps:

- 1) Research of general Grand Blanc history as documented in various local publications and at the Grand Blanc Heritage Museum
- 2) Develop a photographic inventory of each potential historic resource (multiple photos were taken if visibility and accessibility were not a concern)
- 3) Mapping of potential resources in an overlay method to the 1873 settlement map for reference
- 4) Develop an Information Contribution Form for public use and community input
- 5) Prepare materials for and facilitate a Public Information Contribution Meeting by way of direct invitation and public notice in three local publications
- 6) Various progress meetings with the Historic District Study Committee
- 7) Research of available historic records, assessing information, and oral interviews
- 8) Organize a file database for each potential site to include data provided by property owners and/or the general public (i.e.: contribution forms, photos, abstracts, etc...)
- 9) Mapping potential historic resources to the present day township map from the GIS department
- 10) Research of tax records and GIS database information for each potential property
- 11) Prepare a photographic inventory with general site information (when available) which includes a site name (if available), address, tax parcel number, year built (and source of date), architectural style, other structures or features, and history/descriptive notes (when available)

Residents participate at the Public Information Contribution Meeting  
Photo courtesy of Stacy Lukasavitz



An **Intensive Level** survey requires historical research on each of the surveyed properties the committee deems necessary for further study. This level will be required as part of the process to provide the historical background on individual properties considered for national, state, or local registry. It will also be required as part of the supporting documentation the Study Committee prepares during the process for establishing local historic districts.

**Evaluation Criteria:** Starting with a pre-1933 age criterion, resources were further evaluated based on the following criteria:

- 1) The potential for historic significance to the community's history
- 2) Noteworthy architectural or structural elements and/or materials
- 3) Relationship to other potential sites nearby thus identifying potential "settlement areas"
- 4) Geographic relationship to early settlement maps
- 5) Preservation of structural integrity and character

Resources were not necessarily discarded based on decline or neglect, particularly if any of the other attributes listed above appeared significant to its existence.

For this survey we separated resources into the following colored coded categories:

- Houses, Farmsteads, and Barns
- Churches and Cemeteries
- Commercial, Office, and Industrial Properties
- Government Buildings and Schools
- Miscellaneous

It is imperative to note that this survey was prepared using information from available sources (i.e.: current owners, historic records, assessing records, oral interviews, and public contribution). It is deemed as accurate as its sources. We do not guarantee the accuracy of the historic information stated for each resource. When unknown or questionable, we strongly recommend further research be conducted for verification. History is an ongoing process that strengthens and expands with time and therefore makes this a "living document" that should be reevaluated every 5 years for additions, corrections, and possible deletions as resources age, are removed, or as historic events occur.



The First Baptist Church  
6106 S. Saginaw Street

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