Eau Claire

# LANDMARKS

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The Landmarks Commission is a seven member board appointed by the Eau Claire City Council whose charge is to encourage the preservation of the City's architecturally and historically significant buildings and neighborhoods. The Commission is also involved with educational activities which help inform people about Eau Claire's past and to foster an appreciation for our history.

The City of Eau Claire currently has 70 individual local landmarked properties and 2 local landmark districts which contain a total of 155 properties. The two local landmark districts include the Randall Park Historic Landmark District which was designated in 1983 and the Third Ward Historic Landmark District, designated in 1985. These two areas are also listed on the National and State Register of Historic Places; however the boundaries of the local districts differ somewhat from the national and state districts

The Eau Claire Landmarks Commission is available to answer questions that owners of historic buildings may have concerning restoration or remodeling work. In addition, the Commission is happy to provide general design assistance to property owners concerning exterior work.

Current members of the Landmarks Commission include: Katrinka Bourne, Patrick Kurtenbach, Dave Strobel, Karen Nusbaum, Carrie Ronnander, Jim Seymour, and Ken Ziehr.

## REHABILITATION TAX CREDITS

Owning an historic property in Wisconsin provides an owner with several benefits. One of these is the opportunity to receive federal and state income tax credits for rehabilitation work on historic properties.

Currently there are programs available for both income producing properties and owner-occupied homes which are applicable for major rehabilitation work on a property.

Contact the Wisconsin Historical Society at 608-264-6490 to find out more information about the program or refer to the website for the Wisconsin Historical Society (wisconsinhistory.org). Please remember that rehabilitation work must be approved by the State before work starts in order to be eligible for state tax credits.

## LANDMARKS WEB SITE

Information pertaining to the Landmarks Commission and historic preservation in Eau Claire can be found on the City's website. The City's web address is **www.eauclairewi.gov**. You can get to this information by selecting the Historic Preservation link located on the home page.

There are now 19 historic markers on Eau Claire's recreational trail and riverfront.

## Exterior Renovation Projects

Remember that any exterior renovation work that requires a building permit must be reviewed by the Landmarks Commission prior to issuance of a building permit by the City. This applies to all individually landmarked properties and properties located within the Randall Park and Third Ward Historic Landmark Districts.

Generally, exterior work that requires a building permit is work that is structural in nature or would involve a change in the architectural character of the building. Examples of work that would require a building permit include:

- Additions
- Residing
- Rescue platforms and additional exiting requirements
- Construction of garages or storage buildings
- Window replacement (if size or style is changed)
- Alteration or replacement affecting a structural component of a building (foundation, rafters, columns, posts, etc.)
- Other work resulting in the change or removal of an architectural feature of a structure.

Work which is primarily maintenance related and which does not change the appearance of the building can be approved administratively.

If not sure whether a project you are planning needs review by the Commission, contact the Community Development Department at 715-839-4914 early on in planning of the project. By contracting the Commission early on, the Commission may be able to give you valuable information that may help in your project.

## Historic Residential Loan Program

The Landmarks Commission continues to have loan funds available through the Historic Residential Loan Program. The program provides low-interest loan funds for locally designated landmark properties in the City. Funds are available for exterior work such as: painting, shingling, porch restoration, chimney and gutter repairs, tuck pointing, and foundation work. Interior improvements may be eligible if the work is necessary to correct an item which is a safety issue for the structure. Funds cannot be used for such items as: additions, vinyl siding, landscaping, sidewalk and driveway repair, and the construction of storage sheds or new garages.

The interest rate for these loans is fixed at 3% and amortized over a 10-year period. Up to $17,500 is available for single-family dwellings, with additional funds available if there are additional dwelling units in the building. It is important to note that property owners do not have to be low-income in order to be eligible for this loan program and both owner-occupied homes and rental properties are eligible.

The most recent loan project was at 433 Summit Avenue, a property owned by Mr. Gregg Brandrup. Gregg used the loan program to assist in completing several improvements to his property including: new roofing, new gutters, and dry wall repairs related to the old roof. Gregg also completed electrical upgrades in conjunction with the loan project.

If you are interested in finding out more about the loan program, contact the Department of Community Development at 715-839-4914.

433 Summit Avenue

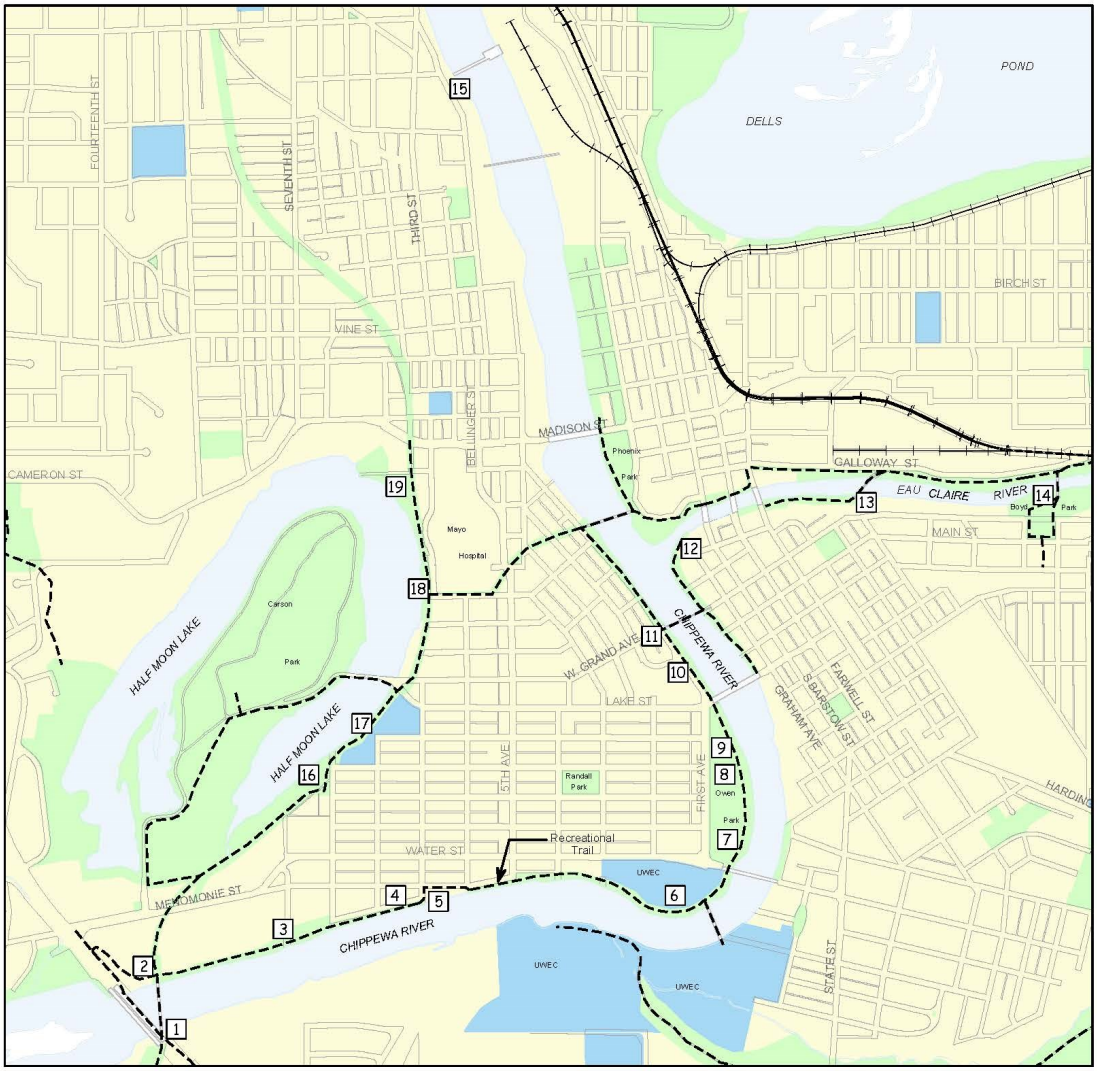
# Waterway Historic Marker Program

The Eau Claire Landmarks Commission recently dedicated a new historic marker along the City's recreational trail and riverfront. This brings the total number of markers to 19, all located along Half Moon Lake and the Eau Claire and Chippewa Rivers. The purpose of the plaques is to inform and educate the public about Eau Claire's history and call attention to persons, places, events, and businesses that were significant in Eau Claire's colorful past. Each marker is sponsored by a local business, family, or organization.

The most recent historic marker (#8) is sponsored by the Friends of Donald "Sarge" Boyd and the Eau Claire Historic Preservation Foundation. It recounts the history of Donald "Sarge" Boyd who organized and directed the Eau Claire Municipal Band. This marker is located to the west of the Donald "Sarge" Boyd band shell in Owen Park.

Other plaque sponsors include Mayo Hospital, Northern States Power (Xcel Energy), the Eau Claire Landmarks Commission, Water Street Business Improvement District, West Grand Avenue Business Improvement District, the Business Improvement District of Downtown Eau Claire, Joan and David Angell, Anton and Rae Shilling-Smets, UW-Eau Claire, the Hobb's Foundation, Judy Lien, Carol and Michal Benrud, the Guettinger Family, Helen and Jeffrey Benrud, Barbara Ellen Miller, Jack Hoard, Carolyn Books Hoard, Jean and David Mickelson and Family, and the Eau Claire Historic Preservation Foundation.

The Commission is currently looking for sponsors for additional plaques along the trail. Details about sponsoring one of these plaques can be obtained by contacting the Department of Community Development at 715-839-4914.




**PLAQUE TITLES**

1. Early Exploration & Settlement
2. Daniel Shaw Lumber Company
3. The River Did Its Part
4. Adin Randall
5. Water Street: Growing Up Along the River
6. "Indian Country" Anishinabe Akhi
7. Owen's Gift to the City
8. Donald "Sarge" Boyd Band Shell
9. Immigrants
10. Fournier's Ballroom Academy & Ballroom
11. Eau Claire: Wisconsin's Second City
12. Haymarket Square: Where the Rivers Meet
13. Eau Claire's Connection to the Soo Line Railroad
14. The Eau Claire River Suspension Bridge
15. Lumber & Politics: Building Dells Dam
16. Former Industries
17. Recreation on Half Moon Lake
18. Luther Midelfort
19. The Log Flume

## Websites on Historic Preservation

***National Trust For Historic Preservation***

www.**preservation**nation.org

www.savingplaces.org

***Wisconsin Trust for Historic Preservation***

*www.wipreservation.org*

***Wisconsin Historical Society Historic Preservation***

www.wisconsinhistory.org/hp

***The Eau Claire Historic Preservation Foundation***

*www.eauclairehistoricpreservationfoundation.info*

***A National Initiative***

*www.preserveamerica.gov*

***A Shining Example of Historic Preservation as an Economic Revitalizer***

*www.sanangelo.org*

***The National Park Service***

*www.nps.gov/history/preservation.htm*

***Recommended Methods and Approaches to rehabilitating Historic Structures***

http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm

# New National Register Property

## Lustron House

The Einar and Alice Borton House, located at 1819 Lyndale Ave, was recently placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The house was built in 1949 by the Lustron Corporation and is one of Eau Claire's examples of prefabricated, post-WWII housing. The house was produced by the Lustron Corporation of Columbus, OH, which began the production of enamel coated, all steel houses in a former airplane production factory and brought the ideas of assembly line production to a flourishing housing market. The Borton house is a highly intact example of Lustron's Westchester Deluxe model and is located in Eau Claire's East Side Hill Neighborhood.

With the end of World War II, the economy needed to make a drastic change from war production to the needs of a rapidly industrializing country. One of the greatest needs that was expressed was the need for housing. Returning soldiers and the families they would start were expected to create the need for 12 million new homes in the US by 1950. The United States Government gave direct support to three of the 300 companies entering the prefabricated housing market after WWII. One of those three companies was the Lustron Corporation.

The Lustron Corporation completed the construction of 2,680 homes during its years of business, 1946 – 1950. Thriving from the idea that prefabricated all steel houses would help provide the country with necessary housing at an affordable price, the company hit the ground running, and by 1949 it had 46 houses in Wisconsin alone. Yet setbacks due to a failure to develop proper production equipment slowed production to a crawl. By 1950, the Lustron Corporation went out of business as their houses missed out on the burgeoning housing market and were unable to offer competitive pricing.

There are three other Lustron houses in the Eau Claire area: 1700 Fairway St, 1831 Badger Ave, and on Highway 12 east of the city.

For more information on Lustron Houses visit: www.lustronpreservation.org

Lustron House, located at 1819 Lyndale Avenue

# New Local Landmark Properties

## Hoover and Putnam Chapels

The Landmarks Commission recently designated two City-owned chapels as local landmarks. They include Putnam Chapel, located in Forest Hill Cemetery, and Hoover Chapel, located in Lakeview Cemetery. Both chapels were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2000.

Putnam Chapel was constructed in 1908 and is an example of Neo-Gothic Revival style architecture. The construction of the chapel was funded by a bequest from Jane E. Putnam, wife of Henry C. Putnam. Upon her death in 1907, she bequeathed that the chapel be constructed for the people of Eau Claire, to be used for holding services, and as a receiving vault for those who died during the winter, when the frozen ground made burials difficult. Its construction cost between $8,000 and $10,000.

The chapel is architecturally significant as a fine example of the Neo-Gothic Revival style incorporating many of features of this style such as: the random ashlar construction, steeply-pitched roof with gables and finials, buttresses, and gothic-arched openings. The chapel is in need of repairs and the City hopes to initiate a fund-raising program to assist in the restoration.

Putnam Chapel, 1908

Hoover Chapel, 1936

Hoover Chapel was constructed in 1936 at a cost of $25,000 by Hoeppner-Bartlett Company. It also is a Neo-Gothic Revival building that was designed by architect, John Tilton, of Armstrong, Furst, and Tilton from Chicago. This is the same firm that designed the chapel addition to Christ Church Cathedral in 1935.

The construction of the chapel was financed by Fannie Hoover Buffington, who was an active member of Christ Church Cathedral. She funded the chapel in memory of her parents, James Stephen Hoover and Elizabeth Borland Hoover. It was intended for use as a receiving vault for those who died during the winter. The chapel is architecturally significant as it also is a fine example of the Neo-Gothic Revival style that was popular in the early twentieth century primarily for churches and chapels. This style is known for its random ashlar or brick construction, with irregular massing, and steeply-pitched roofs. The Gothic-arched openings are a hallmark of the style.

The chapel was refurbished by members of Christ Church Cathedral in 2000 and can be reserved through the City for weddings and similar gatherings.

**Putnam Chapel is in need of some restoration work including a new heating system, floor repair, electrical work, etc. If you are interested in assisting in fundraising for these repairs, contact the City Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department at 715-839-5032.**