



Becoming ARCH History & Organizational Background

ARCH Inc. was founded by people who believed Fort Wayne could stand with the nation's finest examples of historic cities if they could just stop its oldest buildings being torn down. So they used the opportunity of local preparations for the U.S. Bicentennial celebration in 1976 to found a historic preservation non-profit, and they got to work.

Since its founding in 1975, ARCH Inc. has led the way as the communities of the Fort Wayne area have learned how to use the tools of historic preservation to not simply save and restore historic places but also to revitalize neighborhoods, towns and cities.

In the process, ARCH has evolved from a fledgling non-profit to a professionalized organization carrying out its mission of investing in history for our future. Advocacy, community education, research, and collaboration with local, state and national partners have all been important aspects of ARCH's work through the years.

Growing out of more than 20 years of community concern over losing historic buildings to post-World War II development, ARCH Inc. was incorporated as a 501(c)3 non-profit in July 1975, a child of a committee created to guide Fort Wayne's celebration of the U.S. Bicentennial in 1976.

Its first 20 years, under three executive directors, were its formative years, when it pioneered the practice of historic preservation on all its levels in the Fort Wayne area, buoyed by its strong partnerships with the local Junior League and the City of Fort Wayne.

Fun fact: According to ARCH's founders, the letters aren't supposed to stand for anything, even though Architecture & Community Heritage has come to be used as a tagline. The name was chosen as a short, catchy, easily understood description for the new organization.

The Junior League partnership helped ARCH create the Operation Preservation revolving fund that it used to move two historic homes from their original locations, where they were going to be demolished, to lots that had become a parking lot in a healthy historic residential neighborhood and return them to residential use. The partnership with the city enabled ARCH to participate in the city's first survey of historic properties, engage in other historic preservation projects and serve as the first administrator of the city's facade grant project until the city organized an in-house administrator for it.

ARCH completed the restoration of Fort Wayne's Canal House and successfully nominated the William E. Edsall House to the National Register of Historic Places. The Edsall House was then incorporated into plans for a downtown affordable housing project. The first neighborhood historic home and garden tour, in what is now the West End Historic district, was organized during this era and continues as a neighborhood association project. ARCH does annual tours with different historic neighborhoods each year.

More National Register nominations were made, other historic structures' preservations were successfully championed, community education programing began, and ARCH established its "Most Endangered List" and presented its first preservation awards in 1978, now known as ARCHie Awards. An early success moved off that list was the Wells Street bridge, which was listed on the National Register, became part of the city parks system, was restored and became a pedestrian-only part of the city's Rivergreenway trails system. ARCH partnered with others to save historic houses for affordable housing.

In 1988, ARCH achieved a significant milestone by becoming a funded member of Arts United, Fort Wayne's umbrella arts and cultural funding organization, one of three in the nation, founded in the 1950s. We continue to qualify for annual operating support funding from Arts United.

In 1994, as the city celebrated its Bicentennial, ARCH was selected by the committee that created it to become the steward of the Heritage Trail, a self-guided walking trail of three loops based downtown and featuring sites of the city's beginnings.

ARCH and the city worked together to complete surveys of historic properties in Fort Wayne and Allen County, with the publication of the city interim survey in 1996.

In 1997, Angle Quinn became Executive Director of ARCH, marking the turning point of the organization toward professionalization. Quinn and her staff member (who followed her as executive director in 2011) Michael Galbraith became the first two ARCH staff members certified by the State of Indiana as Qualified Professional Historic Preservationists. The certification is based on academic credentials and professional experience. Under her

guidance, ARCH continued its advocacy, education and preservation/restoration work, adding a new emphasis on research and documentation that continues today. ARCH continues to maintain certified professionals on its staff today.

Achievements as ARCH professionalized included a series of books, five of which are for sale on ARCH's website today, the completion of five county historic resource surveys under contract with the State of Indiana, annual historic Home and Garden tours that benefit both ARCH and the neighborhood, and 20 historic listing nominations, both National Register and Local Historic District. ARCH also provides professional services for historic tax credit applications and historic home histories for clients.

Historic preservation projects also continued with ARCH rescuing and maintaining ownership of the c. 1840 Mary Rockhill-Tyler House; rescuing stabilizing and selling the c. 1855 Merchant Huxford House; rescuing stabilizing and selling 1016 Broadway but maintaining ownership of 1014 Broadway, and acquiring, restoring and now occupying as our office the 1841 Alexander T. Rankin House.

Galbraith left ARCH in 2016 and was succeeded by historic preservationist Jill McDevitt, who resigned in 2018, when Connie Haas Zuber became Executive Director. It was a time of transition for ARCH, with the years of survey work ending, staffing changing and the board sensing a change in the environment in which ARCH was working. ARCH now operates with a professional manager who is not a certified historic preservationist, an office manager with library and historic preservation training and a certified historic preservationist on staff who does not have any management or operational responsibilities and can concentrate on historic preservation, plus the ongoing support of our board and volunteers.

The organization has adopted a policy governance style of operations, with a newly revised policy manual and governance calendar. The board adopted a new five-year strategic plan in early 2019. The first big project of that plan has been completed, a task force to create a policy and process for ARCH to use as it fields and evaluates any future opportunities to acquire and restore a historic property.

Since 2018, ARCH has begun a new Lunch at ARCH program that brings members to the ARCH conference table over lunch as often as once a month to talk with an interesting historic preservation, architecture or community development professional along with the executive director and a board member. ARCH has revived its partnership with Indiana Landmarks and begun new partnerships with an alliance of historic neighborhoods on Fort Wayne's south side and with the student history club at Purdue Fort Wayne. We

have contributed Op Ed advocacy pieces to the local newspaper on two key development projects with significant historic preservation issues. We have partnered with the Friends of the Parks of Allen County on a fund drive to restore a WPA-era park pavilion. We introduced new haunted tours researched and written by our very talented intern. A volunteer tour coordinator has created a searchable database of all the sites we have featured on our tours, enabling us to create new tours and customize tours much more easily.

Our goals for the next phase of our strategic plan include continuing to focus on good governance and financial sustainability. Our next task force based on our strategic plan will study membership and marketing and recommend changes to our policies and practices it believes will benefit the organization. Our Program Committee has identified walking tours as the right candidate for expanded offerings, and we are looking for how our volunteer coordinator can become a part-time staff member. As an offshoot of the first task force, the Facilities & Finance Committee studied how ARCH was handling its ownership of the Mary Rockhill-Tyler House and decided to prepare a proposal to turn it from an occasionally used house museum into a viable residential rental property, thereby restoring it to its original purpose through updating its interior for 21st century use. That proposal was thoroughly debated and approved by the board in February, 2020, and we are moving forward with that project. This property will join 1014 Broadway as a restored historic property that ARCH owns and receives rental income from to support its mission and programming as part of our effort to improve our financial sustainability.

The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a shutdown of programs and a reassessment of how we provide programming. We are reformatting programming into virtual formats as we can and working with our partner arts and cultural organizations in town to present a unified voice and experience in reopening to emphasize safety and reassurance for both our patrons and our staff and volunteers. We have made extra appeals to our members and friends and to the foundations and corporations who have generously invested in us in the recent past to help us through this crisis time in which we are not receiving the income we would have had from our programs.

We look forward to the coming years as being especially challenging but a challenge we plan to meet.

Advocacy now means pro-active advocacy at ARCH, as economic development officials and developers have taken notice of historic properties for their value in deals, and ARCH is using its network of partners and contacts to be in the right places at the right time and make the right connections among people to give historic buildings a chance at a new life. We have had some quiet

successes we take great pride in, situations where we never had to go to a public meeting and remonstrate because we had made the right connections well in advance.

Community education has never been more important. Even our haunted tours must achieve the most overarching goals of historic preservation — connecting people to place and welcoming them into the ongoing story with the realization that you need to protect the places to achieve that. Our newest community education campaign, the First Option campaign, uses research from PlaceEconomics, among others. It works to raise awareness of the impressive, more than \$3-billion heritage investment in our city’s oldest residential, commercial and industrial neighborhoods and urges residents, property owners and potential developers to consider existing buildings as their First Option for every development project as the smartest way to capitalize on that heritage investment and help their project succeed.

In conclusion, ARCH Inc.’s history is, on one level, the story of a small, good-hearted non-profit coming into being, maturing into a credible, trusted organization and surviving to serve for now nearly 50 years. On the larger level, though, it is the story of how historic preservation established itself in the Fort Wayne area through diligent effort, advocacy, community education, networking with partners and providing engaging examples of preservation projects. ARCH is the local example of a profession that is a necessary and contributing part of a vital and thriving city of the 20th and now 21st century.



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