

MEMORANDUM

To: Historic District Commissioners

From: Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator

Date: January 12, 2023

Re: Braun Court History

The Historic District Commission requested historical information on Braun Court at the December 2022 HDC meeting. A brief history is below. It should be noted that Wickfield Properties is developing a residential project on this site that would replace the structures that it owns or controls. That project is at the pre-submission stage.

The seven buildings at 313-327 Braun Court were built from 1914 to 1918 as single-family homes. They may have been named after carpenter Samuel Braun, who lived in 321 (the eighth house on the court, now demolished). The houses are nearly identical gable-fronters with gabled wall dormers and covered front porches. All are stucco-clad, originally with matching stuccoed front porches, and most retain their triple windows on the second floor.

The street was closed to vehicles by 1974. The houses were slated for demolition in the early 1980s, when a Save Braun Court campaign was undertaken by citizens. The buildings were remodeled shortly after with second floor connections and ramps between some building to accommodate restaurants, bars, shops, and office space. The paver courtyard was installed in 1984.

From the mid-1990s to 2020, Braun Court was the center of the LGBTQ community in Ann Arbor, home to the Jim Toy Community Center, Aut Bar, and Common Language Bookstore. In 2015 the local plaintiffs in the Supreme Court decision that states are required to recognize marriages between same-sex couples was celebrated in Braun Court and attracted national media.

Today the only occupied buildings house The Bar at 327 Braun Court and Trillium Real Estate at 323 Braun Court. Six of the seven are owned or controlled by property developer Wickfield Properties.

May 1984, courtesy AADL



Undated, courtesy Bentley Historical Library



2019, courtesy Destination Ann Arbor

