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Nobody Enforcing Historic Area Law

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Eleven months after signing an ordinance designed to protect the city's oldest and most gracious homes, Mayor Young has yet to appoint a commission to enforce the ordinance.

City preservationists, including home owners living in Detroit's three officially designated historic districts, say the mayor's failure to act has hindered their efforts and made the ordinance virtually useless. They say that respect for the ordinance is fading and their neighborhoods are suffering as a result.

"Basically people can paint their house purple, do whatever they feel like doing," Jerome Bojarski, president of the Indian Village Association, said last week. "Without a commission, they're being lax and so the village is deteriorating.

"The longer we go without a commission the more people lose respect for the ordinance and the more difficult it will be to ever have it enforced."

INDIAN VILLAGE, as well as West Canfield and Boston-Edison, have been designed by the City Council as historic districts and fall under the provisions of the Historic District Preservation Ordinance, which became effective Nov. 5, 1976.

The ordinance is intended to protect the districts' historic nature by calling upon the commission to review building permits and housing repair plans. It uses guidelines that guarantee compatibility among homes in each district.

The ordinance also gives the commission the power to fine home owners who allow their houses to deteriorate through neglect.

A federal law passed in 1965 asks state and local governments to make attempts to preserve historic buildings and landmarks.

The problem is that preservationist efforts have frequently clashed with those of developers and government officials who say economic growth, including new commerce and industry, requires new buildings to draw investors.

Detroit preservationists claim Young favors the developers at the expense of historic preservation. "The fact is the mayor has given preservation very low priority," said Beulah Groehn, president of the Detroit Historic Preservation Committee and one of Young's most vocal critics.

"The mentality is clearly tear things down, tear things down. If the mayor were seri-

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