The City of Buffalo boasts many beautiful historic religious buildings. While plenty still serve their original purpose, others have been successfully adapted for new uses. The former Delaware Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church is now home to Babeville, a performing arts venue. St. Francis Xavier Church in Black Rock, which closed in 2007, became the home of the Buffalo Religious Arts Center in 2008, a gallery of artwork from other closed churches in Buffalo. St. Mary of Sorrows on Genesee Street was closed in 1985, just shy of its 100th birthday, but re-opened in 1998 as the King Urban Life Center, which serves the surrounding community with a variety of programs and events.

However, throughout the city there remain many vacant religious buildings with no plans in their future. In creating an inventory of all Buffalo’s current and former religious buildings, PBN has determined that at least 15 are currently vacant. Many of these are in poor shape due to neglect, having suffered from deferred maintenance since, or even before, their closure.

Adaptive reuse of church buildings can be difficult for multiple reasons. One major obstacle can be the cost, especially when extensive repairs are required. The Catholic Church is, at times, resistant to selling their buildings for non-religious uses, meaning that following the closure of a parish, the church might be left to fall into disrepair even when there are interested buyers. In addition, in order to access the historic tax credits made possible through listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), the integrity of a building’s interior must be retained—meaning the sanctuary space can only be subdivided in such a way that it remains recognizable. (St. Mary of Sorrows is a good example of overcoming this hurdle, as HHL Architects came up with a unique design that kept the sanctuary open while still allowing for smaller, divided classroom...
Dear Friends,

As the warm weather starts to come back to Western New York, and the hustle and bustle of construction projects get into full swing, it feels like an appropriate time to reflect on what preservation is and what it means to our community.

While there are some groups out there who seem chiefly motivated by nostalgia—preservation as an effort to pick some imagined, idealized time to try to re-build and re-live—PBN sees preservation as a way to build the future. We are committed to telling the full story of everyone’s past because that is the best way to build a community based on mutual respect and understanding. Ensuring that we have a habitable planet for future generations means that we must conserve natural resources and reduce greenhouse gasses by re-using existing buildings. The neighborhoods that have the most older, smaller buildings are also the ones that have the most small, locally-owned businesses: the building blocks for a resilient economy. And this spring we have so many wonderful events (mostly virtual, but a few in-person) to help you engage in all of these aspects of preservation.

As always, we are so grateful for your support—this work would not be possible without you, nor would it be as much fun, and we hope to see you (in-person or virtually) soon!

Best wishes!

Jessie Fisher
Executive Director
The Skyway


continued on page 11

Guest contribution by long-time PBN Member Francis Kowsky, FSAH, SUNY Distinguished Professor Emeritus, and author of The Best Planned City in the World: Olmsted, Vaux, and the Buffalo Park System.

The Skyway is a major historic element of engineering in the service of urban planning in a city famous for its contributions to this discipline. It bears particular comparison with Frederick Law Olmsted’s 1880s proposal to link North and South Buffalo by means of a huge concrete viaduct that would safely and easily carry vehicular traffic over the many railroad tracks that intervened between the two parts of town. His daring idea, however, evaded serious consideration. In the 1950s, when the city erected its great Skyway to carry auto travelers over its busy waterfront, it created a far more audacious feat of engineering than even Olmsted had envisioned.

It is a remarkable piece of engineering from the recent past that embodies the values of function, beauty, and history. It is surely eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The last great project for the Buffalo waterfront, it was constructed from 1950 to 1955 to plans by Buffalo’s Edward Payson Lupfer (who thirty years before had designed the Peace Bridge to Canada). Its purpose was to carry traffic over the busy port facilities. Lupfer surely took as the model for his gracefully curving structure Le Corbusier’s 1933 plan for a sinuous elevated highway to carry traffic across the city of Algiers.

Together with its valuable travel function, the Skyway is one of the scenic treasures of Buffalo. The view of the lake that greets travelers from town as they arrive at the top of the roadway is breathtaking, a waterfront vista that few cities can rival. In his article “Ribbon of Steel and Concrete: A Cultural Biography of the Buffalo Skyway (1955)”, in the Spring 2007 issue of American Studies (which can be read at https://muse.jhu.edu/article/37), William Graebner described the strong impression the Skyway made on its first users:
NEW DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR LANCASTER

The Village of Lancaster Historic Preservation Commission received a NYS CLG Grant in 2019 to develop and adopt Local Historic District Design Guidelines. Clinton Brown Company Architecture, PC of Buffalo, NY was hired by the HPC to work with the Commission to develop and compile these design guidelines. The Design Guidelines are a comprehensive guide for property owners within the historic district for historically appropriate treatments for the exterior of their buildings. They include information about the historic architectural styles within Lancaster’s historic districts and the history of Lancaster, and provide accurate information about the proper treatment of historic materials and features within historic districts as well as tips and guidance for proper maintenance of historic buildings for local property owners. This is an important, informative tool for property owners to help maintain and enhance property values as well as the aesthetic of Lancaster’s historic districts and to continue to improve the Village. The HPC adopted the Design Guidelines at their October 2020 meeting. They can be accessed on the HPC’s website, villageoflancasterhpc.com.

SAVE THE DATE: PRESERVATION DAY

The Town of Amherst Historic Preservation Commission in partnership with Buffalo Niagara Heritage Village and PBN will be hosting Preservation Day, a celebration of the history and architecture of the Town of Amherst, at the BNHV campus on August 7, 2021. A free and family-friendly event, Preservation Day will give visitors an opportunity to explore the BNHV Historic Village, learn more about the architecture of town landmarks, and learn more about how the Amherst HPC works to protect and enhance Amherst’s historic, architectural, and cultural heritage. This event is made possible through the support of a Certified Local Government Grant and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

Do you have preservation news to share? Maybe a success you want to brag about or an advocacy issue you need extra support on? Then reach out to Christiana at climniatis@pbnsaves.org to see how PBN can assist and raise awareness of your work.
On April 8th, Preservation Buffalo Niagara joined our partners at Empire State Development and the East Side Avenues Initiative to announce the first awardees of the East Side Commercial Building Stabilization Fund. Out of over seventy initial applicants, nine projects received awards in this funding cycle:

- 343-345 Broadway Avenue
- 349 Broadway Avenue
- 512 Broadway Avenue, the Broadway Theater
- 339 Genesee Street
- 696 Genesee Street
- 1362 Jefferson Avenue, the future home of Golden Cup Coffee Company
- 1380 Jefferson Avenue
- 625 William Street, the home of the Criterion Newspaper
- 1500 Clinton Street, the Niagara Frontier Food Terminal

In total, $499,800 was allocated across these nine projects. Construction on these projects will commence this spring and summer, and we will keep you apprised on the progress. More information on each of these projects can be found in the press release, available at https://eastsideavenues.org/.

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- Asbury Development Corporation
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- National Endowment for the Arts
- The Charles D. and Mary A. Bauer Foundation
- The Cravens Family Foundation
- The Margaret L. Wendt Foundation
APRIL

The Peggie Ames House: Preserving Transgender History in the Rust Belt

April 27
6:00 PM | Virtual | Suggested Donation: $10

PBN and local queer historian Jeffry J. Iovannone examine the life and legacy of Peggie Ames, an early trans activist from Western New York who created a blueprint for trans activism in rural communities and mid-sized cities.

(DIS)Investment: Demolition as Public Policy

April 29
7:00 PM | Virtual | Suggested Donation: $10

A deep dive into the City of Buffalo’s ‘5 in 5’ Demolition Plan, which sought to stabilize challenged neighborhoods by investing in large scale scattered site residential demolition. SUNY Buffalo State Associate Professor Jason Knight has done extensive research into the results of this program, including the relationship between demolitions and overall neighborhood vacancy rates, and longtime East Side resident and neighborhood leaders Brandi Barrett and Mark Paradowski will discuss the impacts of residential scattered site demolition in more personal terms as it relates to the places they each call home.

Preservation Month/May

Preservation 101

May 6
6:00 PM | Virtual | Suggested Donation: $10

This introductory course provides an overview of the history of historic preservation, discusses how preservation projects are accomplished, and explores the social, economic, and environmental benefits of preserving our historic built environment.

Historic Tax Credit Webinar

May 12
6:00 PM | Virtual | Suggested Donation: $10

At this webinar we will look closer at the application process, discuss how to use the homeowner credit if you have a rental unit in your home, and answer your questions. Please note that this is meant as Part 2 of our mini tax credit workshop, so make sure you head over to PBN’s YouTube account to watch Part 1.

Historic Windows 101 with Steve Swiat

May 19
6:00 PM | Virtual | $10-$15

Love your historic wood windows, but not sure how to make repairs, like reattaching counterweights or replacing a broken pane? You can always hire a professional, but these used to be common repairs that every homeowner knew how to do – join us for a workshop covering the basics!
The Little Brothel that Could: Talk and Tour
May 20
6:15 PM | In-Person | $35

Learn about the past and future of the Eliza Quirk Boarding House. Architect Barbara Campagna and PBN’s own Christiana Limniatis will share the history of the home and its infamous owner, and PBN’s Executive Director will give an update on plans for the rehabilitation of the home. Small group tours will be led inside the building. As this event is in-person, all New York State protocols will be followed, and participants will be required to wear masks and socially distance. Light refreshments will be available. This event is members-only, and participation will be limited; tickets sales will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

2021 Preservation Awards
May 27
6:00 PM | Virtual | $35-50

Celebrate the best of the best in preservation in Western New York and find out who our 2021 Preservation Award winners are LIVE! Featuring raffles sponsored by local businesses and a conversation with Jonathan Moody, President and CEO of the award-winning Columbus, Ohio based architecture firm Moody Nolan. As a keynote speaker at the 2021 Preservation Awards, he will probe the future of preservation practices concerning cultural and sustainable community planning highlighting preservation projects across the country and right here in Buffalo.

June

Historic Tax Credit Webinar
June 9
6:00 PM | Virtual | Suggested Donation: $10

At this webinar we will look closer at the application process, discuss how to use the homeowner credit if you have a rental unit in your home, and answer your questions. Please note that this is meant as Part 2 of our mini tax credit workshop, so make sure you head over to PBN’s YouTube account to watch Part 1.

East Side Commercial Building Stabilization Fund
June 17
5:30 PM | In-Person | $20

Learn more about the East Side Commercial Building Stabilization Fund, the first nine projects selected for participation, and get an inside look at the Broadway Theater (formerly the Sattler Theater) and the Western New York Minority Media Professionals’ plans to re-use it. As this event is in-person, all New York State protocols will be followed, and participants will be required to wear masks and socially distance. This event is members-only, and participation will be limited; ticket sales will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

Gay Places Lecture“Revolutionary Males”: Jim Zais & Charlie Haynie
June 24
6:00 PM | Virtual | Suggested Donation: $10

This event examines the life and work of two queer Buffalonian activists, Jim Zais and Charlie Haynie, through the lens of LGBTQ spaces and historic sites. From the 1960s onward, Zais and Haynie were involved in various social causes including the Civil Rights, Anti-War, and Gay Liberation movements, and their work influenced the course of LGBTQ liberation in Buffalo and beyond.
In celebration of the opening of the Panama Canal, San Diego hosted the Panama-California Exposition in 1915-1917. This effort was steered by the San Diego Chamber of Commerce as a way to not only celebrate this incredible engineering feat, but also bring much needed attention and tourist dollars to this small, developing city that had the distinction of being the first American port of call for ships traveling north after a westward voyage through the canal. With a population of less than 40,000, San Diego was the smallest city to host an international exposition and was in direct competition to the official Panama Canal exposition, which was hosted concurrently in San Francisco.

Situated in Balboa Park, the Exposition was designed by Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue and influenced by Spanish Colonial architecture. Goodhue’s designs for the Exposition would go on to popularize what we now call the Spanish Revival style. Prior to Goodhue’s designs, there were already some examples of Spanish Colonial inspired architecture in the United States. Mediterranean Revival style, as popularized by Carrère and Hasting’s Ponce de Leon Hotel (1882) and Alcazar Hotel (1887), both in St. Augustine, Florida, borrowed the smooth plaster walls and bright red terracotta tile from Spanish influenced architecture and mixed it with the opulent designs and decoration found in Beaux Arts style. There was also Mission Revival, which was a reinterpretation of mission buildings constructed in California by Spanish priests in the 18th and 19th century.

While Mediterranean Revival and Mission Revival borrow from specific aspects of Spanish influenced colonial design, Spanish Revival style cast a more liberal net, borrowing elements from all preceding Spanish architecture, just as Colonial Revival style borrows from all colonial-era American architecture. The diversity within the style was furthered expanded by many American architects who, wanting to study European architecture, were forced to do so from Spain because the fighting of World War I prevented them from freely traveling the continent or attending schools like the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. As the style grew and developed in the late 1910s, it reached its height of popularity during the 1920s and 30s.

**Get to Know an Architectural Style:**

**SPANISH REVIVAL**

**STYLE EXAMPLES**

*Private residence in Williamsville (left)*
*Private residence in Buffalo (right).*
While there is a wide range in the decorative detailing found in Spanish Revival style buildings, the key character-defining features of the style include low-pitched red terra cotta tiled roofs, smooth stucco wall surfaces, the use of arches above doors or primary windows, and asymmetrical facades. In more high-style and commercial examples, we see doors emphasized by spiral columns, carved stonework or patterned tiles, arcaded walkways, and round or square towers.

While a dominant regional style in California, Hawaii, and Florida, examples of Spanish Revival style can be found here in Western New York and across the United States. At the height of its popularity in the 1920s, some WNY developers used it to create small distinctive neighborhoods that could be marketed for their unique flair, including “Garrisons Meadows” in Williamsville and “New Spain” on Linden Avenue in Kenmore.

Do you have a great Spanish Revival building in your community? Share it to social media with the hashtag #PBNspanishrevivalstyle.

Our Hamlin Park Historic District tour is now available!

Participate in Preservation Passport, a series of self-guided tours focused on Western New York’s Historic Districts. This tour program will take you on a self-guided preservation journey of the National Register listed historic districts of WNY.

Get your preservation passport at
areas. Likewise, Lafayette Presbyterian was able to access historic tax credits for its residential conversion by only converting the ancillary building spaces, leaving the sanctuary space intact for continued use as worship space by a variety of different congregations.)

Besides the issue of vacant buildings, there are churches that remain in use by religious congregations but which need maintenance and repairs if they are to remain usable. For buildings in this situation, the funding provided by grants can be essential. By the early 2000s, Buffalo’s 1909–constructed Corpus Christi Church needed repairs to its two distinctive towers and leaking slate roof. Receipt of an Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) grant in 2008 provided significant funding toward these repairs, with the slate roof being replaced in kind in 2010 and work on the towers completed in 2014.

Access to the EPF grant as well as other funding sources for religious buildings, both those in and out of use, is made possible through listing in the NRHP—which is where PBN’s Sacred Spaces Assistance Program comes in. Through this program (supported by the Charles D. and Mary A. Bauer Foundation), we provide free technical assistance to active congregations who would like to stay in their historic buildings but may be struggling with the financial burden of maintaining the space. We work with these congregations in order to facilitate listing of their buildings in the National Register so that they may access available funding for repairs and maintenance. We also work to secure National Register status for vacant church buildings, making the associated funding opportunities available as an incentive for potential buyers, which makes future repair and reuse efforts more feasible.

Churches currently participating in the program include Blessed Sacrament on Delaware Avenue and the former St. John the Baptist Church in Black Rock, now home to RiverRock Church and the Buffalo Myanmar Indigenous Christian Fellowship. The latter came to our attention after they began deconstruction of the building’s tower; PBN is now preparing a National Register nomination for the complex so that grants will be available for the tower’s repair and reconstruction. The complex was recently determined NR-eligible after PBN’s submission of a determination request. Determination of eligibility requests are also in the works for several of Buffalo’s prominent neglected churches, so that hopefully they will not continue to deteriorate for much longer.

PBN wants to see our region’s historic sacred spaces live on, whether they continue to serve a religious purpose or are adapted to new uses. If you are associated with a building that you think could benefit from this program, contact us today at info@pbnsaves.org.
The Skyway’s two twenty-four-foot lanes, separated by a five-foot mall, beckoned to motorists eager to experience a highway unlike any they had ever driven. They joined the official opening-day cavalcade, taking the big curves slowly, “their attention caught by the panoramic vistas of docks, lake steamers, the Coast Guard base, grain elevators and buildings far below.” “I just crossed it to see what it was like,” said a city-bound motorist, referring to the Skyway as if it were a great river to ford. “The view is terrific.” A driver from the suburb of Hamburg described his virgin voyage over the Skyway as “a thrill I’ll never forget. The waterfront area certainly has no claim to beauty at close range, but seen from the Skyway it compares favorably with famous views around New York City. There is breath-taking beauty in every direction—all this and time-saving, too.” (With many of the first round of motorists tooling along at twenty or twenty-five miles per hour and hugging the pedestrian sidewalks to get the best view, the first commuters actually didn’t save much time).

On the Sunday after the Wednesday opening, the bridge was bumper-to-bumper from “noon to bedtime” with curious and enthralled motorists, some, incredibly, defying common sense to stop at the top and get out for a better look or to take photographs of Lake Erie, its waters seemingly suspended in mid-air over the open metal railing.

Time has not diminished the Skyway’s compelling scenic magnetism.

Denying present and future descendants of those first drivers the convenience and beauty of the Skyway would be an urban planning blunder. It would surely result in increased traffic congestion on nearby city streets, and, by destroying an elegantly conceived feat of engineering and valued scenic artifact, would diminish the quality of life in the city. 🗽
2021 PRESERVATION AWARDS

MAY 27 | 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
TICKETS: $35-$50

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