2021 in Review

Even with 2021’s ups and downs, Preservation Buffalo Niagara was able to take strides to advance our mission to identify, protect, and promote our unique architecture and historic legacy, and connect people to the places they love in Western New York. None of this would be possible without our funders, our wonderful Board of Directors, and most importantly, without our members. Membership is what keeps PBN a strong and viable organization and allows us to do everything that we do.

Check out some of our standout highlights over the past year!

PROGRAMMING

PBN participated in the first annual Preservation Day with the Town of Amherst and the Buffalo Niagara Heritage Village, had the Eliza Quirk Boarding House open twice this year, and hosted one of our Tour de Force Bike tours. In addition, we unveiled our Preservation Passport Program, designed to showcase every National Register Historic District in Western New York.

We also held several lectures and events online which expanded our ability to reach a broad audience. In particular, we inaugurated our Complicating our Relationship with Place series with a discussion around our newly updated City Hall book, specifically around the Indigenous iconography of the building, hosted several Gay Places with Dr. Jeff lectures exploring places of importance in the LGBTQ community, and offered a variety of events associated with our Modern WNY week in September. In total, we reached over 1100 participants.

ADVOCACY

PBN advanced significantly in our hands-on preservation approach this year. We assisted two low income seniors with repairs to their homes in the Hamlin Park historic district through our Historic Home Loan Fund. We also launched our Preservation Receivership Program by repairing – and now selling – an Allentown historic district property that had been in danger of being demolished after decades of neglect by its investor-owner. This pilot project gives a new tool to Housing Court to deal with the worst of the worst neglectful building owners and to...
Happy new year to all our members!

As we enter another year of pandemic uncertainty, here are a couple of things you can count on from PBN:

We won’t stop advocating to make preservation a central part of community development policy in Western New York.

We will continue to find ways to involve our members in developing a deeper appreciation for the history and architecture of our region.

Like many of you, we were devastated when an emergency demolition permit was issued for the Great Northern Grain Elevator. Grain elevators are easily Buffalo’s most original and important contribution to the architectural canon, recognized and lionized by an international suite of architects and architectural critics, and the Great Northern was unique even among its peers. We will continue efforts to fight this demolition, so please make sure you’re following us on social media and signed up for our weekly e-blasts to stay up to date on information in this rapidly evolving situation.

As always, PBN strives to balance reacting to emergencies like the above with our efforts to be proactive in creating an environment where existing buildings and communities are valued for the assets they are. To that end, we are excited to share with you that in addition to our ongoing policy work, we will be partnering with the Richardson Olmsted Campus to bring in the renowned firm of PlaceEconomics to do a detailed study of the economic impact that preservation has had in Western New York. We believe that coming armed with detailed and specific information about the community benefits of preservation will help us in our efforts to work with local governments to ensure that we are properly protecting and utilizing our rich historic building stock.

The work highlighted here plus all of our regular programming promises to give us lots of opportunities to interact with you, our members, and we are looking forward to another year of working alongside you to promote and protect the best our region has to offer.

Cheers!

Yours,

Jessie Fisher, Executive Director
Starting on December 16, the Lipsey Architecture Center Buffalo at the Richardson Olmsted Campus will feature the exhibit *Lenses: Ways of Seeing Buffalo and Its Architecture*, a unique collaboration between four Buffalo institutions engaged in various aspects of the cultural life of our community. Preservation Buffalo Niagara, the Stanford Lipsey Architecture Center Buffalo at the Richardson Olmsted Campus, the Albright-Knox Art Gallery (the future Buffalo AKG), and the Buffalo History Museum have come together to allow our community insight into how buildings and places in Buffalo have been valued and present more inclusive ways of seeing place-based value throughout our larger community.

Among architecture aficionados, Buffalo has long had a strong reputation as both a repository for great talent (as in Sullivan’s Guaranty Building) and an inspiration point for great talent (as in Le Corbusier’s relationship with our grain elevators). In 1940, the Albright Art Gallery invited Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Jr., widely considered the father of American architectural history, to make an exhibition about Buffalo’s architecture, mirroring one that then Gallery Director Gordon Washburn had seen mounted in Worcester, Massachusetts. The Buffalo exhibition, seen by more than 30,000 visitors to the gallery during its month-long run, concluded with this assertion by Mr. Hitchcock:

*The hope of the future must lie at least as much in the establishment of a new and broader frame of planning, as in the erection of single buildings of distinction. The future ought also to provide some means of preserving the finer moments of the past, instead of allowing that indiscriminate destruction which has, during the present century, removed far more excellent buildings than have been built.*

No mere reprisal, the 2021 exhibition *Lenses: Ways of Seeing Buffalo and Its Architecture* is both based upon, and placed in counterpoint to, the original exhibition, in both intention and display. This exhibit takes a reflective, questioning view of Hitchcock’s pronouncements regarding which parts of Buffalo’s built environment have value and seeks to contextualize Hitchcock’s work by delving into city builders and social histories not represented in his work: women, African Americans, Indigenous people, and all of those outside of the “Great Man” theory of stylistic formalism that Hitchcock espoused.

The *Beyond Hitchcock* portion of the exhibit is a collaboration between Preservation Buffalo Niagara Executive Director Jessie Fisher and PBN Executive Director Jessie Fisher and Executive Director of the Richardson Olmsted Campus and the Lipsey Architecture Center Buffalo Mark Mortenson prepare for the opening of *Lenses.*
University at Buffalo Professor Dr. Charles L. Davis II and his students, in which the canonicity presented in the original 1940 exhibit is re-imagined and re-worked.

*Lenses* includes new graphical and written material to encourage visitors to reflect on how the privileged white male academic gaze has shaped how we perceive value in our built world, and how that perception of value shapes what parts of its architectural legacy Buffalo has protected and what parts it has lost. The exhibit is designed to give attendees a more diverse and inclusive look at architectural and preservation values, and to encourage more equitable community building practices for the future.

In addition to the exhibition itself, a speaker series will take place March through April that will bring local, national, and international scholars and practitioners into Buffalo to discuss the themes of the exhibit in greater depth.

*Lenses* is presented by the Buffalo AKG, the Buffalo History Museum, the Lipsey Architecture Center Buffalo, and Preservation Buffalo Niagara and sponsored by Arc Building Partners, the Charles D. and Mary A. Bauer Foundation, the Center for the Study of Art, Architecture, History and Nature, the Erie County Cultural Board, the John R. Oishei Foundation, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the Preservation League of New York State.

The exhibit will be on display from December 16, 2021 through April 10, 2022 and is open Thursdays 2pm to 8pm, Fridays through Saturdays 10am to 4pm, and Sundays 12pm to 4pm.

More information is available at www.preservationbuffaloniagara.org/lenses
Ways Of Seeing Buffalo And Its Architecture

Lipsey Architecture Center Buffalo
At The Richardson Olmsted Campus
444 FOREST AVENUE, BUFFALO, NY 14213

ON VIEW
December 16, 2021
THRU
April 10, 2022

Thursdays: 2pm to 8pm
Fridays – Saturdays: 10am to 4pm
Sundays: Noon to 4pm
Closed between Christmas Eve and New Year’s Day

www.preservationbuffaloniagara.org

Presented by: Albright-Knox Art Gallery,
the Buffalo History Museum,
the Lipsey Architecture Center Buffalo,
and Preservation Buffalo Niagara
put historic properties back into productive use in their communities, and we look forward to continuing our partnership with the City of Buffalo to take care of endangered abandoned properties in other parts of our historic city.

We also awarded $500,000 in grants to seven endangered East Side commercial buildings to make structural repairs. Across the City of Buffalo, we have seen the role that preservation has played in the health and opportunities of our neighborhoods. We are thrilled to have the opportunity to ensure that the East Side is not left out of the social and economic benefits afforded by a commitment to preservation of place. This program was funded by Empire State Development and is an integral part of the East Side Avenues Initiative at the University of Buffalo Regional Institute.

One of PBN’s largest accomplishments in 2021 was successfully listing 72 Sycamore, the Eliza Quirk Boarding House, on the National Register. Preservation Buffalo Niagara would like to thank the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the National Park Service, and Barbara Campagna for helping PBN make this happen. This has been years in the making, with at least three separate drafts of the nomination written. But, finally, Eliza is officially a part of our national story.

Additionally, we engaged in several consulting projects, including one for 248 East Utica Street, the Prince Hall Masonic Temple, an emblem of Buffalo’s African American past and present and a place with an incredibly rich history. Thanks to our technical assistance, they received a grant from the Preservation League, and PBN is assisting in undertaking a Building Conditions Survey as well as doing historic research in anticipation of a potential National Register or Local Landmark application. Once the building conditions survey is complete, we will continue to work with them on fundraising efforts to make necessary repairs to ensure that this building retains its special place in the community for the next generation.

GAY PLACES INITIATIVE

In 2021, our programming and preservation services sought to highlight and advocate for the LGBTQ historical significance in Western New York’s architectural landscape. We hosted a wide range of lectures including From the Queen City to the Big Apple: LGBTQ Historical Connections in WNY and NYC and Leslie Feinberg’s Buffalo: Historic Sites in Stone Butch Blues. And in July, the house of transgender activist Peggie Ames in Clarence Center was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places – the first property in Western New York to be determined eligible specifically for its connection to LGBTQ history, and the first property in New York State to be determined eligible because of its association to transgender history.
THE GREENEST BUILDING IS THE ONE ALREADY BUILT.

In addition to the cultural benefits to the community, preservation is an important component of fighting climate change.

Historic preservation is economically, environmentally, and culturally sustainable. Building preservation is the ultimate in recycling. 20% of the solid waste stream is highly toxic construction waste. Preserving a building can keep construction materials out of landfills. Many traditional building practices in historic buildings are already “green”; features like covered porches, thick walls, attics, and cellars are passive methods that help to keep buildings cooler in the summer and warmer in winter.

It's also an important component of a strong economic development program!

**Construction vs. Rehabilitation**

What’s the difference in benefits between spending $1 million in new construction and $1 million in rehabilitation?

- $120,000 more dollars will initially stay in the community
- Five to nine more construction jobs will be created
- Seven more new jobs will be created elsewhere in the community
- Household incomes in the community will increase by a total of $107,000
- Retail sales in the community will increase by a total of $34,000
- Real estate companies, banks, hairdressers, and restaurants will all receive monetary benefits

In 2021 PBN:

- Pioneered the groundbreaking Preservation Receivership Program, giving Buffalo’s Housing Court a new tool for dealing with problem properties and intractable landlords;
- Worked with a coalition of State preservation organizations to increase the State Commercial Historic Tax Credit for smaller projects;
- Obtained a National Register listing for the Eliza Quirk Boarding House/72 Sycamore Street;
- Awarded $500,000 in grants to nine endangered East Side buildings through our East Side Commercial Building Stabilization Fund; and
- Provided over 600 hours of technical support to Western New Yorkers.

TO GIVE TO PBN’S ANNUAL APPEAL:
MAIL A CHECK TO 617 MAIN STREET SUITE 201, BUFFALO, NY 14203,
VISIT HTTPS://PRESERVATIONBUFFALONIAGARA.ORG/ANNUAL-APPEAL/,
OR SCAN HERE TO HELP US PRESERVE OUR HISTORIC LANDSCAPE RIGHT NOW.
NYS HISTORIC REHABILITATION COMMERCIAL TAX CREDIT EXPANDED

Back in April as part of the 2021 state budget agreement, NYS passed enhancements to the commercial historic tax credit, increasing the credit from 20% to 30% for projects under $2.5 million in size. When combined with the federal commercial historic tax credit, those projects can now get a 50% tax credit. In addition to the spending limit, to be eligible for the 30% credit, projects’ placed-in-service date must be after January 1, 2021.

HISTORIC BARN REHABILITATION TAX CREDIT

On December 10, 2021, Governor Hochul signed the Historic Barn Rehabilitation Tax Credit into law, which will establish a 25% NYS tax credit for the rehab of barns constructed before 1945. The bill will go into effect 120 days after its signing, on April 9, 2022. Previously a federal program, the original barn rehabilitation tax credit was eliminated in 2018 due to the Federal Tax Cuts and Job Act of 2017. Thank you to State Senator Michelle Hinchey and Assemblymember Didi Barrett for sponsoring this bill and bringing this much needed financial incentive back to NYS.

GREAT NORTHERN GRAIN ELEVATOR PARTIAL COLLAPSE

During a windstorm on December 12, 2021, the Great Northern Grain Elevator sustained significant damage to its north wall. Locally landmarked since 1990, the Great Northern Grain Elevator is believed to be the only surviving example of a “brick box” elevator. It is because of that ingenious, well-documented construction method that we know that the brick exterior serves as a protective skin around the steel elevator bins within, and is not integral to the overall structural integrity of the building. While this damage currently does not immediately jeopardize the structural integrity, if the wall is not repaired, the conditions will worsen and potentially more of the building may collapse. To support the advocacy effort to preserve and repair this important historic resource, you can fill out our advocacy form on our website or social media. Or you can reach out directly to Mayor Byron Brown and Council Member Scanlon, asking them to make sure the City will hold property owner ADM Milling Company accountable for these necessary repairs.
BUFFALO LANDMARKING UPDATES

At their July 8, 2021 meeting, the Buffalo Preservation Board recommended the landmarking of Voelker’s Lanes, 680-692 Amherst Street. Since c. 1886, Voelker’s has been a community landmark as a saloon, hotel, and now bowling alley. Now having received the recommendation of the Preservation Board, the nomination has been tabled in the Legislation Committee for over five months awaiting a Common Council vote.

On January 20th, the Legislation Committee of the Buffalo Common Council recommended approval of the landmark application for 1100 Niagara Street. Nominated by the building owner, Giles Kavanagh/1100 Niagara LLC, the building was built in 1898 as the Charles G. Curtiss Company Malt House. The nomination will now go before the Common Council for final approval on January 25th.

NEW PRESERVATION PLANNING LEADERSHIP IN NIAGARA FALLS

Niagara Falls welcomed new preservation and planning leadership recently with the addition of Eric Coper as the new Director of Planning and Grace Celik, a recent graduate of the University at Buffalo’s Master of Urban Planning program, as planner assigned to the historic preservation commission. As the newest members of PBN’s Municipal Outreach Program, we look forward to working with Eric and Grace to advance preservation projects in Niagara Falls.

NORTH TONAWANDA HITCHING POST LANDMARKED

The newest local landmark in North Tonawanda is the original hitching post near 286 Goundry Street, within the Sweeney Estate National Register Historic District. Approved by a unanimous Common Council vote, the hitching post, made of Medina sandstone, dates from the original development of the neighborhood, approximately 1890-1900, and is the last surviving hitching post on City property. Congrats to the NT Historic Preservation Commission on their newest landmark!

NEW DOORS AT THE CHERRY CREEK PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Cherry Creek Public Library in Chautauqua County recently upgraded their building with the addition of new oak wooden front doors, which replaced the previous modern replacement doors. The library, originally built c. 1899 as the Robert James Hardware store, was able to use funds from the Cultural Resources Mitigation Plan of the Cassadaga Wind Project. The Mitigation Plan sets aside designated funding for historic properties in communities affected by the wind farm in order to “offset” potential visual impacts to historic properties resulting from the introduction of wind turbines and related components into their visual setting. In addition to the new doors, the library was also able to install new LED lighting while at the same time maintaining the remaining original tin ceiling.

Is there preservation news you want to share from your community in our next newsletter? Let PBN know the juicy details by reaching out to Christiana at climniatis@pbnsaves.org.
The American architectural styles that developed during the middle of the 19th century, specifically the 1820s through 1880s, are known as the Romantic styles. The name comes from Romanticism, which began in England during the 1790s, and emphasized imagination, emotion, and the natural world. This was a direct response to the previous era, the Enlightenment, where reason, restraint, and formality dominated philosophy and culture. During the Enlightenment we see ridged and formal architectural styles like Georgian and Federal, but during the Romantic era we see Greek Revival, Italianate, and Gothic Revival. The first two styles get most of the attention, but it’s Gothic Revival that is the unsung hero of the era, and the style that truly embodies the Romantic ethic.

Gothic Revival starts in England in the 1740s as part of the Picturesque movement, where designers incorporated medieval, i.e. gothic, elements into remodeled or new buildings. But the first truly Gothic Revival building in America, Glen Ellen in Baltimore, Maryland, was designed in 1832 by Alexander Jackson Davis (and sadly demolished in 1929). A.J. Davis is considered the first American architect to design using Gothic Revival, who then solidified his role as godfather of the style with his 1837 book Rural Residences. The book included beautifully illustrated drawings of gothic-inspired homes and their floor plans and is considered the first house-plan book published in America. Despite all that amazingness, the book didn’t make as much of a splash as A.J. Davis had hoped. That all changed when he hooked up with buddy Alexander Jackson Downing.

A.J. Downing was a pioneering landscape architect and architectural theorist who expanded upon his friend’s ideas in his own two books, Cottage Residences, published in 1842, and The Architecture of Country Homes, published in 1859. Both were bestsellers. Also, the guy was kind of a babe, totally giving off Mr. Rochester from Jane Eyre vibes.

Over the next twenty years, the American countryside was dotted by picturesque country cottages inspired by both men’s work, AJD2 if you will. While the style started to fall out of fashion around the Civil War, it continued in some parts of the country into the 1880s. But it’s important to note that many of those later examples are currently categorized as a separate style known as High Victorian Gothic and were influenced by another major proponent of the style, John Ruskin.

Looking to its character-defining features, Gothic Revival is all about steeply pitched gable roofs, dramatic pointed arched windows or square windows with decorative hoods, highly decorative vergeboards, and exterior wall surfaces extending...
into gables without breaks. While wooden examples, often referred to as Carpenter Gothic, predominate, there are many masonry Gothic Revival buildings, most notably Lyndenhurst in Tarrytown, NY, a National Historic Landmark designed by A.J. Davis in 1838.

Notable local residential examples of Gothic Revival include: 60 Arlington Place in Buffalo; the Holley-Rankin House, 525 Riverside Drive in Niagara Falls; and the Gail-Bleak House, 12331 Stykersville Road, Wales. Not to mention the many ecclesiastical examples including St. Paul’s Episcopal Cathedral in Buffalo, St. Peter’s Episcopal Church in Forestville, and St. John’s Episcopal Church in Ellicottville.

Do you have a great example of Gothic Revival in your community? Share it to social media with the hashtag #PBNgothicrevival.

Goodbyes and Hellos: Board and Staffing Changes

During PBN’s Annual Meeting in November, we said goodbye to three Board members. We are incredibly grateful to both David Kinyon and Sandy White for their service. After ten years of service, we also bid adieu to Board Chair, Tom Knab. During some of PBN’s most difficult times, Tom helped not only to keep us afloat but ensured that instead of sinking, we thrived. To Tom, thank you for everything you’ve done for PBN.

We also welcomed four new board members: Charles Grieco, Anne Noble, Linda Schineller, and Eric Stenclik. We look forward to what all four of them will bring to the table and to building with them moving forward.

In 2022, you will see some new faces around the office. We were saddened by the departures of Bridge Rauch and Mary Begley over the last few weeks, but we know that they will both have tremendous success in the next chapters of their lives, and we are thankful for the myriad of ways they helped move preservation forward in their time at PBN. We will be looking to fill both positions early in the new year, but it will not be easy fill their very big shoes.

Mary Begley
Bridge Rauch

Charles Grieco
Linda Schineller
Anne Noble
Eric Stenclik