Here at PBN we know that neighborhoods that have managed to conserve their historic-built environment are more prosperous, stronger communities housing more startups, more young people, and more women and minority-owned businesses. Historic preservation is a necessary building block in WNY’s smart growth strategy, ensuring that the region’s unique history, beauty, and sense of place are retained through its architecture, landscapes and urban design, and reversing the decades-long practice of demolishing historic building stock. However, disinvestment and demolition have taken their toll on many neighborhoods in the City, especially on the East Side, limiting their ability to participate in the ongoing economic revitalization of the City.

Recognizing this, Empire State Development has tapped PBN to develop and oversee, in conjunction with the City of Buffalo and UBRI, a Building Preservation Fund supporting the stabilization of at-risk historic buildings in target investment areas as part of its East Side Avenues initiative. To avoid crisis-level failures in the future and additional emergency demolitions of the existing urban fabric along these corridors, the program will support smaller stabilization efforts. East Side Avenues initiative will partner with the City of Buffalo and PBN to undertake building stabilization initiatives, identify candidate buildings in need of preventative maintenance, and ensure that these buildings are protected for future redevelopment.

This fund will provide emergency repair funding to historic buildings on Buffalo’s east side, ensuring that buildings with code violations or structural deficiencies, but where there is not a current project, are not torn down as a short-sighted solution. These buildings will be kept viable.
Happy Fall, Preservation Friends!

“The character of an epoch is epitomized in its buildings.”

So states Walter Gropius in “The Theory and Organization of the Bauhaus,” and in honor of the 100th Anniversary of that famed school we spent much of September exploring the character of Modern Architecture and how it came to define the spirit of mid-20th Century America with our first annual Modernism Week in Western New York. We hope you were able to join us for one of our lectures or tours, but don’t worry – we plan to host a Modernism Week every fall so you’ll have more opportunities to explore our region’s treasure trove of modern architecture. From Buffalo to Niagara Falls, from Lockport to Lackawanna, our region helped to shape the sensibilities that resulted in new forms and theories, and in turn, was shaped by this important era in building.

In that same treatise, Gropius goes on to state: “The art of architecture and its many branches should not be a luxury, but the life-long preoccupation of a whole people.” We couldn’t agree more, and have launched several initiatives this year to ensure that the places and stories of our entire community see more systematic and intentional preservation. From our East Side Context Survey to the Building Preservation Fund, we will be working directly with neighborhoods that have been heavily impacted by redlining and urban renewal practices so as to lift up and protect a more diverse cross section of our history.

As always, nothing we do would be possible without your membership and support. We hope you take as much pride in these accomplishments as we do and hope to see you at the Annual Members Meeting on November 6th!

Jessie Fisher
Executive Director
“Western New York helped to shape modern architecture, and in turn, was shaped by some of the finest architectural minds of the period.”
– EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JESSIE FISHER

In September, Preservation Buffalo Niagara held its first annual Modernism Week in Western New York launching an entire week of events to guide participants through the buildings of the Modernist era.

The week opened with Drive Yourself MODern, a 14-stop self-guided tour highlighting a few of the fine examples of modern era architecture throughout Western New York.

Christiana Limniatis jumpstarted the live events with her lecture, “Modern Living: Intro to Postwar Homes”. She discussed the housing needs of returning GI’s and their new families after WWII as well as the development of new building types and styles that incorporated new materials and philosophies.

The week continued with two tours, the first of Temple Beth Zion led by guides Bob Skerker and Rabbi Jonathan Freirich. Attendees shared a moment of silence beneath the stained glass windows in the temple and were impressed by an intimate explanation and reading of the Torah by Rabbi Freirich.

The second tour took place at the Earl W. Brydges building, the City of Niagara Falls Public Library, and was led by former Preservation Buffalo Niagara Executive Director Tom Yots. Participants were guided through the Paul Rudolph structure and allowed to experience pieces of its design often gated off such as the u-shaped gradual staircases and the third floor stacks.

Modernism Week’s finishing event was Dr. Irene E. Ayad’s lecture “Modern Architecture: Louis Sullivan’s Guaranty Building Reconsidered”. Dr. Ayad focused on Sullivan’s contribution to the development of the skyscraper, its relationship to Modern architecture, and emphasized the organic relationship between function and form.
Preservation in Progress

FRUIT BELT
Work is underway at 238 Carlton Street. With PBN provided financing, the African Heritage Food Co-Op (AHFC) has completed necessary stabilization work, and for the first time in 3 years, there’s a roof on the building! Next up for the 143-year-old landmark, AHFC and PBN will be working together to raise the remaining funds and complete the vision of bringing this community-owned and community-controlled grocery store to the Fruit Belt.

On September 21st, PBN and the Fruit Belt/ McCarley Gardens Housing Task Force hosted “Fruit Belt Preserves,” a community event celebrating the completion of the Fruit Belt Cultural Resource Survey. Supported by a Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus Spark Grant, we produced a brochure that not only highlights the history of the neighborhood but encourages continued conversations about future steps to celebrate and preserve the Fruit Belt.

MICHIGAN-SYCAMORE HISTORIC DISTRICT
In our commitment to preserving the historic built landscape of the Michigan Street African American Cultural Heritage Corridor, the Michigan Sycamore Historic District successfully expanded to include 82 Sycamore and 608 Michigan Street by vote of the Common Council on June 11th. This summer, the properties were under threat of a demolition application, but at the September 5th Buffalo Preservation Board, the application for 82 Sycamore was unanimously denied by the Board and the applicant withdrew the demolition application for 608 Michigan. Thank you to everyone who voiced their opposition to the demolitions, especially Council President Darius Pridgen, Assembly Majority Leader Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes, and Empire State Development. While this is a monumental win for preservation of the Corridor, the advocacy fight over these buildings is not over. We look forward to working with the City and the owner to find a positive solution for these historic structures.

EAST SIDE CONTEXT STATEMENT
With the support of a $20,000 Preserve New York Grant from the Preservation League of New York State and matching funding from NYS Assembly Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes, PBN, and project consultant Bero Architecture of Rochester, will be conducting a complete East Side historic
context study. Once completed, the study will expand preservation initiatives on Buffalo’s East Side by documenting the architectural and cultural history of the area and detailing how and when it developed. With this valuable information, we’ll be able to make informed preservation planning choices and help ensure that the benefits of preservation are applied equitably across our entire City and region.

SACRED SPACES ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
PBN is pleased to announce that Niagara Falls’ First Congregational United Church of Christ (822 Cleveland Avenue) is the latest participant in our Sacred Spaces Assistance Program (SSAP). Made possible by the generous support of the Charles D. and Mary A. Bauer Foundation, SSAP provides technical assistance to religious and non-profit organizations as they work to be stewards of the historic sacred spaces that mark our skylines and anchor our neighborhoods. PBN will assist the Congregation with listing the 1857 Greek Revival/Italianate style limestone church in the National Register of Historic Places and will provide technical services as they kick off a capital campaign. If you’re interested in learning more and supporting this historic sacred space, keep an eye on our calendar for the announcement of future tours and open house events.

WILLERT PARK COURTS
Our work to save the Willert Park/AD Price Courts housing complex on Spring Street in Buffalo has taken a great leap forward. In July the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) rescinded their approval of the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority’s (BMHA) mitigation plan. This would have allowed demolition of all buildings except for the Administration Building and would have required saving only the sculptural elements. We are hopeful that this change in course will encourage the BMHA to work with us to find a way to save the entire complex and bring it back to use as affordable housing for families. The rescinding of SHPO’s previous approval comes just two months after Willert Park Court was named one of the United States’ 11 Most Endangered Historic Places by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

HISTORIC HOMEOWNER REHABILITATION TAX CREDIT
With the approval of the 2020 NYS Budget back in April came a small but significant change to the homeowner historic tax credit. Previously, one of the key eligibility requirements was that the property had to be in an eligible census tract. But now, if you’re located in a city that has a population under a million and a poverty rate of at least 15%, you no longer need follow that requirement. So, why is this important? Looking specifically at the City of Buffalo, before this rule change only parts of the Elmwood Village and Parkside Historic Districts were located in eligible census tracts therefore eligible to access historic tax credits. For more information about historic tax credits join PBN at one of our monthly tax credit workshops on the second Wednesday of every month. Visit our events calendar on our website to get all the details.

KENSINGTON-BAILEY HISTORICAL COMMITTEE
In their continued work to preserve and promote the history and historic built environment of the Kensington-Bailey neighborhood, the Kensington-Bailey Historical Committee is kicking off a new project called “Our Neighborhoods, Our Stories”. Under the direction of Doris Corely, the project focuses on neighborhood-based storytelling by collecting the personal narratives and photographs of current and former residents and business owners. For more information about the Kensington-Bailey Historical Committee or how you can participate in the project, contact continued on page 6
COMMUNITY OUTREACH

PBN was out in force this summer bringing preservation information to local communities. In May we were in East Aurora for our “Landmarks 201” program which was a deeper dive into the landmarking process. The Williamsville Historic Preservation Commission invited PBN to present our “Historic Districts 101” workshop, and the Iron Island Museum hosted us for our “Preservation 101” workshop. We also hit the streets tabling at Juneteenth, the Flutterby Festival, and the Elmwood Avenue Festival of the Arts to share advocacy updates and answer questions. We closed out the summer at the sold out first annual COT Neighbors United Victorian Home Tour in the City of Tonawanda. PBN’s Director of Preservation Services Christiana Limniatis shouted from porches and stoops educating the crowd about the eclectic historic architecture found in the City.

NORTH TONAWANDA’S SWEENEY ESTATE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Supported by grants from the Preservation League of New York State and the NY State Historic Preservation Office, the North Tonawanda Historic Preservation Commission is moving closer to securing a National Register nomination of the Sweeney Estate Historic District. Sometimes referred to as the “Lumber Baron” neighborhood, the survey area is centered around Goundry, Tremont, and Christiana Streets. Project consultant kta preservation specialists surveyed over 400 included properties in November 2018 and prepared the National Register nomination, which is expected to be reviewed by the State Review Board in December. Once listed on the National Register of Historic Places, properties within the historic district will be able to access state and federal historic tax credits.
Brutalism gets a bad rap out there. Yes, it’s “brutal”. Yes, it’s big honking piles of concrete. But, just like any other architectural style, Brutalism evolved as a distinct artistic movement with a unique and thought-out ethos.

The term “Brutalism” derives from the French phrase béton brut, meaning raw concrete. It was coined by British husband-and-wife architect duo Alison and Peter Smithson and further popularized by architecture critic Reyner Banham who referred to it as “New Brutalism”. The Smithsons were inspired by the work of famed architect Le Corbusier, notably his Cite Radieuse in Marseilles and the buildings of Chandigarh, India. With these buildings, Le Corbusier replaced the smooth white surfaces emblematic of 1920s and 1930s architecture with expanses of raw concrete. What the Smithsons, and other early Brutalist style architects, aimed for was a reinvigoration of “street culture” that was either destroyed during WWII or was being removed as part of ambitious rebuilding campaigns in cities all across Europe.

The key movement in the emergence of Brutalism came in 1956 with the “This is Tomorrow” exhibit at London’s Whitechapel Art Gallery. Conceived by architect and writer Theo Crosby, the show was a collaborative exhibit with 38 participants forming 12 groups. Each group, comprised of artists, designers, and architects, worked toward producing one artwork around the theme of a “modern way of living”. The outcome transformed the Whitechapel Gallery into a vibrant interactive space of installations.

The defining feature of Brutalism is the use of raw concrete, which gives the building a visceral roughness. Brutalist buildings explore the sculptural potential of this material, either by utilizing dramatic angles or by using void-like window openings to form modular elements. By incorporating a sculptural form to the building, designers showed the emotional and expressive depths that concrete can hold. Another common characteristic is the concept of “streets in the sky”. Whether it was to navigate within a single building or travel between neighboring complexes, Brutalist buildings often have spacious “street decks” or corridors that encourage social interactions once common on actual streets.

Notable local examples of Brutalism include: The Buffalo News Building at 1 News Plaza in Buffalo; Earl W. Bridges Building/Niagara Falls Public Library at 1425 Main Street in Niagara Falls; Buffalo City Court Building at 50 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo; and the Shoreline Apartments at 262 Niagara Street, Buffalo.

Do you have a great example of Brutalism in your community? Share it to social media with the hashtag: #PBNbrutalism 🌟

**BUFFALO NEWS BUILDING**

1 News Plaza, Buffalo;
1973; Edward Durell Stone

Sculptural form: In the Buffalo News Building it’s created by the void-like window openings and at the Niagara Falls Public Library by the large angled dormers and roof line.

**NIAGARA FALLS PUBLIC LIBRARY**

1425 Main Street, Niagara Falls;
1969-74; Paul Rudolph
Preservation for a vibrant, equitable commercial district

Originally laid out in the 1860s, Grant Street began its growth in the 1890s as a vibrant neighborhood commercial hub, allowing successive waves of migrants to build homes and business strengthening the community. A fine complement for the industrial nature of Niagara Street, Mom and Pop stores set the pattern for early development along Grant Street as it became the primary commercial corridor for a dense neighborhood.

Small-scale owner occupied commercial development is a fitting foundation for a locally-based economy that continues to serve its neighborhood and generate social and economic resiliency for its members. Preservation-based planning can spot the existing strengths of a community and ensure that growth is guided intentionally, opening new pathways of opportunity for existing residents.

Thanks to City of Buffalo Common Council member David Rivera and New York State Assembly member Sean Ryan, two million dollars in funds have been committed to fund Grant Street improvements. GObike Buffalo will lead this planning effort with funds provided by the Oishei Foundation and PBN will develop strategies to support a vibrant Grant Street commercial hub that continues to support its neighborhood.

To effectively match needs with capacity, PBN will be deep diving into the existing and historic conditions of the neighborhood, including mapping the buildings, business, and lots along Grant Street. Market trends in the form of consumer and business data will be collected to give direction about what types of goods and services are needed to support a strong community, along with a stronger sense of what opportunities for successful entrepreneurship exist within the community. And the National Main Street Center will conduct trainings with existing businesses on how to best attract and retain customers, and provide insights into what new businesses would prove to be most beneficial and most likely to be successful.

Planning is especially critical in this community as the neighborhood is in a state of rapid change. Intention and awareness are required to ensure changes to the commercial corridor support existing residents rather than bending toward external economic development “fixes” that can result in displacement and loss of community identity and control. Through this planning process, existing businesses and community members will be engaged in a thoughtful process that will build on the commercial corridor’s strengths and the community’s diverse identity. While this project will focus specifically on Grant Street, the primary commercial corridor serving the neighborhood, it will generate data and information that could be helpful in undertaking any future neighborhood-wide planning process.

Look for project kick off this fall, with completion expected in the Summer of 2020.
Meet Our New PBN Staff

In the past few months, Preservation Buffalo Niagara has built a bigger staff to help us do more preservation work in more communities. In addition to our Executive Director, Jessie Fisher, and our Director of Preservation Services, Christiana Limniatis, we have added Mary Begley, Tia Brown, and Tabitha O’Connell.

Mary Begley

Mary Begley, Operations Manager, is an artist and connoisseur of wine, food, art, and music. She comes to Preservation Buffalo Niagara after a long career in the music business as General Manager at Righteous Babe Records. When she is not at PBN she spends time in her renovated attic studio in her Medina Sandstone house on Richmond Ave.

Tia Brown

Tia Brown, Community Engagement Coordinator, is an educator, a writer, and a Buffalo, NY native. She holds an MFA in Writing from Pacific University, has taught English in three countries, seen the sun set in over 70 cities, and is currently an editor at Qween City – a lifestyle blog that documents women and their achievements in the Western New York region. She’s living proof that English majors can find gainful employment and that you can go home again.

Tabitha O’Connell

Tabitha O’Connell, Preservation Planner, will complete her master’s degree in Historic Preservation at the University at Buffalo in December 2019. She previously obtained a BA in Writing at Houghton College and worked at an immigration law firm for seven years. In her spare time, she explores the Greater Buffalo region, hangs out with her two pet rats, and says hi to as many dogs as possible.
through this fund, and when there are market opportunities, the resources themselves will be intact and available for re-use.

The preservation and restoration of historic buildings on the East Side is imperative to the resurgence of the entire community.

For more information about the Building Preservation Fund you can visit www.eastsideavenues.org or, as always, updates will be included in our weekly e-newsletters and other communication outlets.
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

For Real Estate Professionals

Join Preservation Buffalo Niagara for a 5.5 hour Historic Preservation course designed to help real estate professionals increase their awareness of preservation principles and best practices, the various regulations affecting historic properties, the common misconceptions about preservation, and tips for marketing and selling historic properties.

**WHEN:** Saturday October 19, 2019
9 AM - 3:30 PM

**WHERE:** Market Arcade conference room
617 Main Street, Buffalo

**COST:** $85 for PBN members
$125 for non-members

**REGISTRATION:** Online at www.PreservationBuffaloNiagara.org

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**Annual Appeal**

Over the last year, we’ve helped many essential preservation milestones roll out. With the support of our members and donors, we’ve spent the last eleven years hard at work to preserve the rich legacy of this region. As the end of 2019 approaches and we embark on our annual giving campaign, we hope you will consider donating to help us continue to do this important work throughout Western New York communities.

**YES, I’d like to support Preservation Buffalo Niagara with a tax deductible contribution of $____________.**

Name: ____________________________
Address: __________________________
City: _____________________________
State: _____________________________
Zip: ______________________________
Email: ____________________________
Phone: ____________________________

Please charge my credit card.
Name on card: _____________________
Signature: ________________________
Card #: __________________________
Expiration date: ___________________
POP QUIZ:
WHAT DOES YOUR SUPPORT FOR PBN DO?

A. Puts roofs on at-risk buildings.
B. Educates homeowners about the sinister nature of vinyl windows.
C. Makes the kids of WNY smarter, one city hall tour at a time.
D. Makes the Buffalo renaissance, a renaissance for everyone.
E. All of the above.

For more info visit www.preservationbuffaloniagara.org or call us at 716-852-3300. Either way, we’d love to hear from you.