If you were to read the history of our City through the legacy of what we have preserved and how we have interpreted those sites, you would come away with a view of a City built largely by and for wealthy, straight, white men. We know, of course, that our story is much more diverse, and much more interesting than that. Over the last few years, PBN has committed to expanding the stories that are being told and protected through our work, including those associated with women and the LGBTQ+ community locally. However, as Buffalo has been recognized as one of the most segregated cities in the country, it is important that we take special care to focus on sites and neighborhoods that bring attention and protection to the stories of our Black community.

In the United States, sites that commemorate African American history make up less than 2% of listings on the National Register of Historic Places. This is true locally as well. Of the individual sites in Buffalo listed on the National Register, only four are specifically listed for their links to Black history. You can see the impacts of this disparity on the list of what we’ve lost:

- John Brent’s YMCA building
- Mary Talbert’s home
- The Little Harlem
- The MoonGlo
- Dan Montgomery’s
- 90% of Buffalo’s Green Book sites
- Sites that we haven’t even identified yet, but that continue to be lost in hasty demolitions that are disproportionately concentrated on Buffalo’s East Side.

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continued on page 6
Dear Friends,

WOW. 2020. Are there really any words? PBN, like many of you, started the year excited about the possibilities, with a whole host of new and innovative programming planned. And, also like you, we’ve had to put most of that on hold while we juggled social distancing, working from home, remote learning for our kids, and a brave new world of conference calls and Zoom events. We’ve also mourned the losses of community members, cheered on our essential workers, and experienced pride as New York has led the nation in diminishing the effects of COVID-19. We offer our deepest sympathies to the families here in Western New York and around the world impacted by this global health crisis.

We’ve done our best to continue our programming virtually. Hopefully you’ve been able to tune into our social media channels and watch a virtual tour, take a Summer School class, learn from Get to Know an Architectural Style, or tackle a home improvement project with our #FixitFriday series. Several other projects continue to make progress, including our planning for the rehabilitation of the Eliza Quirk House on Sycamore Street and the preservation planning work we are doing on Grant Street. We have also continued our strong advocacy, especially in our campaign to save Willert Park/A.D. Price Courts.

I remain deeply grateful for the community of preservationists and neighborhood activists who support our work. I sit on the Board of the National Preservation Partners Network, and have heard reports of preservation organizations from around the country experiencing dramatic membership decreases this spring and summer. PBN’s membership is actually up from this time last year. When I say that our work is not possible without you, our members, please know that those words are true. And, we have never been more grateful for your continued support in these difficult times.

Our thoughts are with our community and we will continue to fight for the preservation of our region’s unique historic legacy as a path forward to a more just and equitable future.

Jessie Fisher
Executive Director
PBN has been working with various Grant Street stakeholders on a preservation-based planning process since last fall. While conditions have changed dramatically in the last year, our work on Grant Street continues, with a pivot to addressing the needs of the West Side community through these present turbulent times.

We expect to have some exciting news to announce about this project in the coming weeks – in the meantime, we encourage all West Side residents and stakeholders to share our consumer and stakeholder surveys, which can be found on our website at PreservationBuffaloNiagara.org. These surveys are available in English, Spanish, Arabic, Somali, Burmese, and Karen.

In lieu of our planned series of in-person asset mapping workshops, we encourage West Side residents to send us “quarantine” maps or “Jane’s Walk” maps of neighborhood highlights and destinations. This helps PBN see the neighborhood how you see it. We would especially love to see submissions from our younger West Side residents – any format is accepted, from drawings to written descriptions, recordings, or whatever your West Side mind can create. As a bonus incentive, the first ten West Side residents to submit a map will receive a gift card to the West Side Bazaar! All submissions should be sent to brauch@pbnsaves.org.

A snippet from Stephanie Cole Adams’ submission.
Drive Yourself MODern Tour is PBN’s a 15-stop widespread self-guided driving tour which highlights some of the many fine examples of modern-era architecture throughout Western New York. From Jamestown to Niagara Falls and from the Cattaraugus County Courthouse to the Skyway, experience a vast range of modern-era architectural styles. Don’t hesitate. Grab your keepsake map and let PBN take the wheel.

Delaware Acres is PBN’s premier self-guided walking tour of the neighborhoods that surround Delaware Park. Realtors once touted its property placements, moderate prices, and considered it to be the ideal location for suburban homes in the city. Always an area richly appreciated in Buffalo’s history, this walking tour explores its start as a notable piece of Buffalo’s built landscape. Get your keepsake map, put on your walking shoes and get to steppin’.

Modern Living: Intro to Postwar Homes is a lecture that explores housing styles in a time when the end of WWII brought drastic changes to America’s residential landscape. Join us virtually on September 8 to learn more.

Built in 1947 as a tribute to those who fought and lost their lives in World War II, North Tonawanda’s Memorial Pool is an undeniable staple amongst the modern architecture in Western New York. On September 10, join PBN for Let’s Swim! North Tonawanda’s Memorial Pool, dive into the history of memorial pools and learn about the background of the only one in Western New York.

When GIs returned from World War II, they were faced with a shortage of homes. Inventor Carl Strandlund tried to solve that with a line of prefabricated enameled steel houses. This lecture will explore Lustrons, the home of the future, and all their possibilities and limitations.

Last year, Preservation Buffalo Niagara was proud to present its first annual Modernism Week: a week dedicated to celebrating the modern architecture, design, art, and culture of the Western New York region. This year from September 6 to September 12, our celebration returns as ModernWNY and will strive to celebrate and highlight the evolution of modernism in the area.

Be sure to visit https://preservationbuffaloniagara.org/modern-wny/ for updates and email any questions to tbrown@pbnsaves.org.
In 1996, titans of Buffalo’s preservation community, including John Conlin, Edward J. Patton, and Paul Redding, were commissioned by then-Common Council President George K. Arthur to identify structures in the City of Buffalo built prior to 1860. The resulting list included approximately 215 buildings, with the oldest (Coit House) dating from 1818. Earlier this year, PBN acquired this survey and found that nearly 30% of the structures then identified have since been lost. Of the ones still existing, less than 20% are protected with local landmark status or listed on the National Register.

Thus, the 1850 Project was born. With the goal of obtaining local landmark status and/or National Register eligibility for those buildings that retain sufficient integrity and significance, PBN issued a call for volunteers to assist with research. So far, over 15 volunteers have contributed, and the following 9 buildings have been identified as pre-1860 structures using primary sources:

- 396 Pearl – c. 1844
- 509 Swan – c. 1850
- 394 Genesee – c. 1850
- 417 Swan – c. 1852
- 189 Dearborn – c. 1853
- 567 Spring – c. 1854
- 49 Buffum – c. 1854
- 212 Ohio – c. 1854
- 91 East – c. 1855

We would like to thank the following volunteers for their work thus far: Timothy Binga, G. Richard Fraas, Mary Ann Kedron, PhD, Emily Kraft, Steve Lakomy, Lisa Parks, Frank Pecenco, the Preservation Committee of the Black Rock Historical Society, Daniel Sheff, and Carl Yerkovich.


396 Pearl Street: Now the home of Prima Pizza on the corner of Pearl and Chippewa; originally built as a residence c. 1844 with the address 226 Pearl. One of the oldest buildings included in the 1850 Project. Ad from The Buffalo Express, 1857.

212 Ohio Street: Built c. 1854 as a freight office for the New York Central Railroad. The oldest remaining railroad building in Buffalo. Photo by Daniel Sheff.

394 Genesee Street: Built c. 1850 as a grocery store and residence for George Schieferstein. Remained in the family into the 1910s and subsequently became Patricola’s Liquor Store, staying in that family until 1995. Photo by Lisa Parks.
Preservation Buffalo Niagara is committed to stopping this wholesale erasure of Black history in Buffalo, and ensuring that moving forward, we are telling and celebrating the full story of our community. Because of the systemic nature of the issues involved in the under-representation of protected Black sites, it is not enough to try to build a preservation movement that is not racist. We believe that most of the people involved in preservation gatekeeping are not consciously biased. However, the outcomes speak for themselves, and so, if we want to change these outcomes, we must construct an actively anti-racist preservation movement.

There are many actors who need to come to the table in creating a more intentionally anti-racist preservation movement, and PBN does not pretend to have all of the answers. But that does not let us off the hook from trying. We are doing this through identification of individual sites, but we are also doing it through larger efforts that are working to change some of the structural biases currently built into the preservation process. And, we are doing all of it in close partnership with local organizations and scholars whose work deserves wider community support.

PBN has been fighting alongside our partners, especially the Michigan Street Preservation Corporation, for the preservation of Willert Park/A.D. Price Courts for ten years. In the last two years, it has been our primary local preservation advocacy issue. Determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places by the New York State Historic Preservation Office, this small-scale International Style public housing complex tells the story of government-sanctioned racism, and one community’s fight for justice. Not just its beautiful design, but its powerful story makes this an important site to save from the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority’s current plan to demolish these ten buildings.

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Willert Park/A.D. Price Courts deserves to take its place alongside the Richardson Complex, the Darwin Martin House, and the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural site as a Buffalo site that has a place on the national stage. But most people interact with historic preservation in less assuming ways – through historic districts that celebrate the larger context of a community. Because of a trifecta of urban renewal, redlining, and racist disinvestment, much of the East Side of Buffalo struggles to qualify for inclusion on the National Register. This is largely because criteria for physical “integrity” create a barrier in neighborhoods which have experienced demolitions, or which have experienced too much change in the physical fabric of individual buildings and houses.

PBN is working on this issue on two scales. Locally, we have initiated a project called the East Side Context Study. With funding provided by NYS Assembly Majority Leader Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes, the Preservation League of New York State,
and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, PBN is working with a steering committee of scholars and local neighborhood historians on a detailed analysis of the development of Buffalo’s East Side. Not only will this give us a more detailed record of how this area grew and developed over time, it will allow us to consider what makes certain neighborhoods significant. For too long, the period of significance of a neighborhood or community has been assumed to be at its origin, and all changes are measured against the initial development. Expanding our understanding of neighborhoods opens the door for acknowledging importance beyond the origin story — for instance, due to changes associated with specific urban renewal plans or specific programs or events. We have seen this approach work locally in the Hamlin Park district. We are hopeful that upon its completion, the East Side Context Study will provide a road map for additional preservation opportunities on the East Side.

In addition to local work, our Executive Director has been using her role on the Board of Directors at the National Preservation Partners Network to both learn best practices in other places to apply here, and to advance a national conversation on these issues.

What can you do to help ensure that Buffalo and Western New York are working toward a more anti-racist preservation movement? Your ongoing support for PBN and our work is a great start and we encourage you to support and follow the Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor Commission, the Nash House, the Michigan Street Baptist Church, the Colored Musician’s Club, and the Buffalo and Western New York African American History Group on Facebook, among others.

PBN is not saying that we have all the answers. We continue to listen and learn, and to work closely with our community partners. But each beginning is of our choosing, and to make necessary change, we must begin. We are grateful for the support of our members, and we are looking forward to continuing this journey with you.

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2,756 parcels/282 acres of vacant land, noted in yellow, within one mile of Willert Park/A.D. Price Courts.

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Fall 2020
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COURSES OFFERED:
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• Landmarking and Tax Credits: Historic Preservation Regulations & Incentives

All of the courses have been approved by NYS for Real Estate CE and AICP Certification Maintenance credits.

ENROLL TODAY
www.PreservationBuffaloNiagara.org

Due to COVID-19, all of the continuing education courses will occur virtually using Zoom. Once registered, participants will receive instructions of how to log-in to the meeting and access course materials.
MICHIGAN SYCAMORE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Despite initially being tabled, PBN’s nomination to expand Buffalo’s Michigan Sycamore Historic District to include the buildings at the southwest corner of Michigan and Sycamore successfully received the Preservation Board’s recommendation at their July 9th meeting. The nomination has now moved on to the Common Council’s Legislation Committee where it is expected to have its next public hearing in September after the Committee’s summer recess. This local historic district designation will provide protections for an intact stretch of buildings along the Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor that are critical to telling the true story of Buffalo’s growth, from a raucous canal town to an industrial powerhouse, to the ravages that racism and redlining have had on our community.

FRUIT BELT HISTORIC DISTRICT EXPLORATION

Members of the Fruit Belt Community, including our long-time partners at the Fruit Belt-McCarley Gardens Task Force, are exploring the potential for a local historic district to protect the character of the community and ensure that this special place in our City continues to exist and nurture its residents. PBN is proud to serve as a technical partner in this endeavor, building off the Fruit Belt Cultural Resource Survey that was completed several years ago. Through community meetings, neighborhood leaders and residents will explore the pros and cons of this designation and figure out together if this is the right step forward. We will keep our members posted as this important effort moves forward.

THE QUIRK HOUSE PROJECT

For those of you following along at home, you already know that at the end of 2019, local developer Rocco Termini gifted PBN 72 Sycamore Street, our #littlebrothelthatcould. PBN has spent the spring and summer working with Flynn Battaglia Architects and our preservation consultant Barbara Campagna Architects to finalize design plans, which currently include six units of affordable housing, office space for Heart of the City Neighborhoods, and PBN’s Preservation Resource Center, a workshop space where we will be able to provide direct programming in the community. These uses will take place in the existing building, as well as in a new building to be constructed next door on the site of 68 Sycamore Street. Funding for the design and feasibility phases has been provided by M&T Bank and the Cravens Family Foundation, and we’ve secured initial capital funding through the Better Buffalo Fund and will be pursuing additional funding in the coming weeks. Stay tuned for more announcements!

NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Western New York is on its way to having three more National Register Historic Districts. Buffalo’s University Heights-Summit Park-Berkshire Terrace Historic District was added to the NY State Register of Historic Places back in March after the State Review Board recommended the nomination. Next, the nomination is headed to the National Park
PLANNED GIVING

our future starts with you

Make a gift that can impact the future work of Preservation Buffalo Niagara and leave a lasting statement about what matters to you.

Contact us to leave a legacy gift through your will.

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617 MAIN STREET, SUITE 201 BUFFALO, NY 14203
Get to Know an Architectural Style: MINIMAL TRADITIONAL

The Minimal Traditional house was the star of WWII-era residential architecture. Technically a building typology rather than a true architectural style, the “little house that could” was actually developed during the 1930s. While the construction industry was virtually shut down due to the Great Depression, the need for quality, small-scale housing remained and was even more pressing. Recruiting underworked architects and developers to assist, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) developed efficient house plans that would meet the needs of a “modern” family all while being affordable to the average working household as they got back on their feet.

Affordability was further ensured through the FHA’s new insured loan programs which offered long-term, low-interest mortgages specifically structured to meet the expense of building a Minimal Traditional house. Whether in the FHA’s own bulletins, Principles of Planning Small Houses, or in professional journals and commercial magazines, the market was flooded with variations of the Minimal Traditional house plan and information about the federal loans that would help get you one of your very own.

From its roots in the Depression, the Minimal Traditional seamlessly transitioned into meeting housing needs during WWII for the millions of Americans who relocated for wartime production jobs. After the war, it provided the promise of homeownership to returning G.I.s and their families. Between 1946 and 1949 over 5.1 million houses were built, the vast majority of which were Minimal Traditionals.

AREA EXAMPLES

These examples from Niagara Falls (top left), Lockport (top right), North Tonawanda (bottom left), and Cheektowaga (bottom right) all share the same form and massing, i.e. small, one-story house with a low or intermediately pitched gabled roof. While keeping it pretty low-key, each does pull decorative elements from other styles: the Lockport example uses wood shingles in the front-facing gable end, the North Tonawanda example has a Tudor Revival inspired entryway, and the Cheektowaga home incorporates a patterned masonry exterior cladding.
It is important to remember that this promise of affordable homeownership was not intended for nor available to all Americans. The FHA refused to insure mortgages in or near African American neighborhoods, a process known as “redlining.” This policy to ensure segregation on a street level was based on the overtly racist idea that if African Americans purchased homes in or near white neighborhoods, then property values would drop and devalue the insured FHA loan. Combined with other racist federal housing and transportation polices implemented during and after WWII, the FHA loan program basically rolled out a red carpet for white flight, maintained segregation of the built environment, and allowed for the disinvestment of our urban core.

Because the Minimal Traditional house is a building typology and not an architectural style, in identifying them, focus should be on the form and massing rather than specific decorative elements. The Minimal Traditional house is usually a small, one-story house with a low or intermediately pitched gabled roof. Early examples have little to no eave overhang and very little architectural detailing. Later examples often incorporate elements from earlier styles like Tudor or Colonial Revival, or from fashionable mid-century trends. Simple one-story side-gable roof examples are often referred to as a “Cape Cod,” a term originally used to describe the early folk-house form emblematic of Colonial New England. Later examples of Minimal Traditional houses show the influence of the newly developing Ranch style and are often called Minimal Ranches or Ranchettes. (If PBN started a band, we’d totally be called “The Ranchettes”.)

Examples of the Minimal Traditional house can be found across Western New York, in both urban and suburban settings. Neighborhoods like the Spruce Street area in North Tonawanda, Cleveland Hill in Cheektowaga, and LaSalle in Niagara Falls have some.

Do you have a great Minimal Traditional in your community? Share it to social media with the hashtag #PBNMinimalTraditional.
There are always ways and new opportunities to support PBN.
For more information about how to get involved visit
www.preservationbuffaloniagara.org or call us at 716-852-3300.
We'd love to hear from you.