Advocacy is at the heart of what PBN does. Working with our community-based partners to identify and protect endangered places has long been at the core of our mission, and that will never change. If anything, our advocacy efforts have grown more robust over the last five years. But we have known for a long time that this advocacy is not enough, and that we need to be prepared to take direct action to preserve the special buildings and places that make up our unique architectural and historic legacy.

2020 has seen great strides in our ability to intervene on behalf of endangered properties, to ensure as much as possible that we do not lose more historic fabric. As 2021 progresses, watch for more announcements and work on these programs.

PRESERVATION RECEIVERSHIP PROGRAM
For the last several years, PBN has been working with our legal advisors to try to find alternatives to demolition when deteriorating buildings are referred to housing court. All too often, preservationists have been left between a rock and a hard place: demolition by neglect on the one hand, and demolition by order of the court on the other. But after several years of working directly with the City Department of Permits and Inspections as well as the City Law Department, we were able to outline a pilot program to allow PBN to make repairs to "designated historic" properties on a case-by-case basis as assigned by Housing Court. For our first step, we are taking on 40 Cottage Street, allowed to deteriorate over decades by one of the most prolific absentee landlords in Allentown. We will use this as a test case to work out remaining issues and will hope to use it more widely as the year progresses to ensure that we do not lose any more buildings to neglect.

From Advocacy to Action: The Evolution of a Preservation Organization

Current state of 40 Cottage Street, rear cottage.
Dear Friends,

As we close out 2020 and begin a new year, we are reminded daily that if we want a more just and hopeful world, that we will have to be active participants in creating that better reality. We know that coming together in our communities and working together to solve problems is our shared obligation to one another.

Here at PBN, we have been hard at work as usual, and we are excited to share this issue of our newsletter with you, which provides details on all sorts of preservation happenings in the region from both ourselves and our community-based partners.

We also suffered losses in our preservation community this past year. We want to dedicate this issue to two titans of preservation: George K. Arthur and Robert J. Kresse, two dedicated Buffalonians who saw the value in community, history, and preservation. Their contributions cannot be oversold. As we move forward into a busy and productive 2021, we will keep their memories close in all that we do and try to live up to the examples of citizenship that they offered.

We hope that we will be able to see you at some of our upcoming virtual programming, and we are looking forward to finding ways to get together safely in-person before the end of the year.

Best wishes!

Jessie Fisher
Executive Director
While it covers approximately one-third of the city, Buffalo’s East Side has very few historic districts, whether locally designated or listed on the National Register of Historic Places —meaning it largely lacks the protections and funding opportunities provided by such designations. In an effort to help rectify this, PBN has been working with a steering committee of scholars and local neighborhood historians, as well as project consultant Bero Architecture, on an East Side Context Statement funded by NYS Assembly Majority Leader Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes, the Preservation League of New York State, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Now nearing completion, this study will be released in 2021 and will identify and describe major themes in the physical and cultural development of the East Side.

Typically, the first step toward preservation efforts in a specific location is to conduct a cultural resource survey, which documents extant historic structures in the survey area. In this case, however, a different approach—starting with the development of a thoroughly-researched historic context statement—was important for two reasons. The first is the extent to which historic buildings on the East Side have been lost to widespread demolition resulting from racist practices and policies, and the second is that, in order to develop a more inclusive approach to preservation, it is important not to overemphasize visually significant buildings, which tend to be associated with wealth, power and whiteness. Rather, we must seek to understand how architecturally ordinary places or buildings that have seen alterations over time can also be important as sites worthy of preservation.

To this end, research was conducted by reviewing historic maps, photos, newspapers, and other documents; interviewing people with personal and academic knowledge related to the East Side; and deliberately seeking out diverse sources of information—ones that give a broader perspective than that found in traditional historical accounts by white authors, official government agency publications, and culturally dominant white newspapers. These diverse sources included Buffalo’s African American newspapers, dissertations and academic journal articles by African American and Polish-American scholars, and reports by agencies like the Urban League.

Two major themes are carried through the approximately 200 years of history covered by the report: how city planning, urban policy, and physical infrastructure affected the development of East Side neighborhoods; and the formation of distinct ethnic communities and cultures. The City’s programs, projects, and policies have varied widely in their effectiveness and benefit to the East Side, with stories of destruction (like the replacement of Humboldt Parkway with the Kensington Expressway) contrasting with those of hope and success (like the establishment of Willert Park/AD Price Courts). In addition, both Polish culture and African American culture have thrived on the East Side, creating and shaping the institutions that characterize this area. While much of the historic fabric that speaks to these cultures has been lost, the East Side context statement will be one step forward in protecting and honoring what remains.

Huzzah! On November 24th, the Common Council unanimously approved the expansion of the Michigan Sycamore Historic District to bring protection to more of the Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor. This, the third expansion of the local historic district, extends protection to 578, 582, and 588 Michigan and 63, 67, and 77 Sycamore. PBN submitted this nomination as part of our continued work to advocate for the preservation of the historic built environment of the Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor, a designated NYS Heritage Area since 2007.

BUFFALO LOCAL LANDMARKS

In addition to the expansion of the Michigan Sycamore Historic District, this fall also saw the designation of two new local landmarks in the City of Buffalo. The former Police Station #13 at 348 Austin Street was designated a local landmark in October. Designed by Fredrick C.H. Mohr and completed in 1895, the former Black Rock police station is the second oldest surviving police station in the city. Also in October, the Concordia Cemetery and Farmhouse was designated a local landmark. Located at 438 Walden Avenue, Concordia Cemetery was formed in 1859 and is one of the oldest extant cemeteries in Western New York. Congrats to our newest landmarks!

NIAGARA FALLS LOCAL LANDMARKS

Niagara Falls is on its way to having a new National Register Historic District. On December 3, 2020, the New York State Historic Preservation Office recommended to the National Park Service that the district be added to the National Register of Historic Places. This district encompasses over 50 buildings in a variety of architectural styles, from the 1855 First Congregational Church to the 1973 Earl W. Brydges library. The designation of this historic district was part of the continued work of Blue Cardinal Capital and their consultant, Preservation Studios, as they work to redevelop nearly two dozen properties along Main Street.

CITY OF BUFFALO PRESERVATION ORDINANCE

Those who recall the unfortunate demolition of 184 West Utica Street days before it was set to achieve landmark status will breathe a sigh of relief to learn that Councilmembers Mitch Nowakowski and David Rivera have introduced legislation to amend the Preservation Ordinance to institute a demolition moratorium that would ensure that once the Preservation Board approves a landmark application and sends it to the Common Council...
for final consideration, that no demolition permits can be issues until such time as the Common Council acts on the application. This amendment has already gone through the Council’s Legislation Committee, and we fully expect that by the time you are reading this that it will have been passed by the full Common Council and signed into law.

Do you have preservation news to share? Maybe you need extra support with an advocacy issue or just want to brag about a win? Reach out to Christiana at climniatis@pbnsaves.org to learn how PBN can assist you or raise awareness of your work. 🔸

As 2020 ended, we closed out our current Grant Street support work. In coming weeks, we will wrap up our final recommendations report, and we recently began implementation of the AARP and Love Your Block-funded placekeeping projects.

We have so far delivered, among many other items requested by Grant Street business owners and homeowners, 48 strings of holiday lights, 12 snow shovels, and 10 flags to Grant Street. We also coordinated the refurbishing of 12 trash canisters and this spring we will complete the work with the installation of five new additional trash receptacles.

We hope these small additions help brighten the Grant Street community and make an easier environment for walking as stakeholders read through the project reports and decide on strategies for community development in coming years. 🔸

**NEED TO REHAB BUT DON'T WANT THE PAPERWORK?**

**HISTORIC TAX CREDIT PREPARATION**

PBN is now offering Homeowner Tax Credit application preparation services. Our trained staff can work with you through the entire process, including: determining eligibility, reviewing work to assess compliance with The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards, and preparing Parts 1, 2, and 3 of the State application.

For more information contact Christiana Limniatis / Director of Preservation Services climniatis@pbnsaves.org

**12 TRASH CANISTERS CLATTERING**

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**Stephanie Adams excitedly holding Christmas Lights in front of her law office.**

**The Westside Business and Taxpayer Association installing one of the new trash canisters.**
Hamlin Park Historic District, Buffalo
Hamlin Park was developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and contains an excellent collection of residential properties from this era. The neighborhood is an example of the success of the federal Model Cities program, which offered rehabilitation loans to homeowners as an alternative to conventional urban renewal efforts.

Sweeney Estate Historic District, North Tonawanda
Sometimes referred to as the “Lumber Baron” neighborhood, this historic district is an intact residential area that was developed between 1849 and 1930, first for the wealthy and later for the working class. It thus features a range of architectural styles, from Queen Anne and Italianate to American Foursquare and Craftsman.

Park Place Historic District, Niagara Falls
The Park Place Historic District, developed between 1885 and 1928, is a rare intact residential neighborhood in the City of Niagara Falls. It includes examples of Craftsman, Colonial Revival, Italianate, and Queen Anne houses, as well as the former home of industrialist and inventor James G. Marshall.

Broadway Historic District, Lancaster
After its start as a residential corridor, Broadway/U.S. Route 20 saw an increase in commercial development after the rise of the automobile. The historic district features a variety of building typologies and styles, from the 1832 Lancaster Presbyterian Church to E.B. Green’s c. 1935 Brost Building, a car dealership.
Jamestown Downtown Historic District, Jamestown

This historic district represents the evolution of Jamestown from a small village into a city with a bustling downtown. Due to the technological, economic, and social changes caused by 19th-century industrialization, the downtown grew into a commercial center whose architectural styles include Renaissance Revival, Classical Revival, and Art Deco.

TOUR INFORMATION

Preservation Buffalo Niagara will offer a variety of ways to enjoy this experience. First, order a Preservation Passport for $25 (PBN members)/$30 (PBN nonmembers). This comprehensive booklet will provide you with the complete list of the over 50 local National Register districts and is an excellent way to keep track of your progress in your quest to visit all of them! Individual Travelogues for each year’s spotlight National Register districts can also be ordered for $20 (PBN members)/$25 (PBN nonmembers). These in-depth keepsake Travelogues will give you comprehensive information on that particular National Register district, including its significance and don’t-miss highlights, and will allow you to take yourself on a fun filled self-guided tour at your own convenience! Each year, new districts will be spotlighted, and new Travelogues will be produced! Don’t miss your opportunity to start your complete collection! Subscriptions to receive all five self-guided tours can be purchased for $75 (PBN members)/$100 (PBN nonmembers). Or participants can really invest in their historic district journeys by purchasing the Preservation Passport 2021 Starter Kit for $125 (PBN members)/$150 (PBN nonmembers), which includes a PBN tote, a subscription to receive all five 2021 self-guided tour travelogues, a passport book and passport stickers to record each tour taken.

Interested in advertising in the travelogues, need more information or want to purchase your tickets for PBN’s Preservation Passport right now? Contact Tia Brown at tbrown@pbnsaves.org, visit www.preservationbuffaloniagara.org or call 716-852-3300.

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Get to Know an Architectural Style: CRAFTSMAN

Originating in southern California, Craftsman style was the dominant influence on residential architecture throughout the country from about 1905 through the 1920s. The inspiration for the style came from Pasadena-based brothers and architects Charles Sumner Greene and Henry Mather Greene, who practiced together from 1893 to 1914. Around 1903 they started designing small-scale homes with low-pitched roofs, exposed roof rafters, and wide porches supported by square columns. Nicknamed California bungalows, their designs quickly went turn-of-the-century viral, with example residences and inspired plans heavily featured in mainstream magazines like The Architect, Ladies’ Home Journal and House Beautiful, as well as in trade pattern books.

By 1910, the low-profile and structurally simple Craftsman style became the ideal suburban home, with hundreds of what have been called “bungalow suburbs” popping up all over the country. With the development of the contemporary Prairie style, we see a large prevalence of these “bungalow suburbs” in the Midwest, with Chicago alone boasting over a dozen National Register historic districts that feature Craftsman style bungalows.

On the topic of bungalows... while the term has become synonymous with the Craftsman style, it is not wholly tied to it. Just like cottage or cabin, the word bungalow simply means a small house comprised of one or one-and-one-half stories. Most historians believe the term bungalow has its roots in the Indian province of Bengal, where the word “bangla” refers to a common one-story dwelling with a thatched roof and open porch.

While there is artistic overlap between the Craftsman style and the Arts & Crafts movement, it is important to understand that they are not one and the same. The Arts & Crafts movement was an aesthetic and idealistic reaction to the Industrial Revolution, calling for a return to high aesthetics and everyday craftsmanship. Beginning in England in the late 19th century, the leader of this movement was undoubtably designer William Morris. Morris, a confirmed socialist, posited that the “tyranny of the machine” could be stopped if artists, designers, and architects returned to the values of fine art in the production of commercial design.

While we see the Arts & Crafts movement’s impact on American interior design, by the likes of Gustav Stickley, Henry Wilson and (hometown boy) Elbert Hubbard, examples of true Arts & Crafts style architecture are few and far between in the United States, with Hubbard’s Roycroft Campus being the most notable regional example. It’s actually more...
appropriate, when looking at domestic examples, to associate the Arts & Crafts movement with the architectural designs of H.H. Richardson, Louis Sullivan, and Frank Lloyd Wright than to blanketly apply it to all Craftsman style homes of the early 1900s.

Victorian-era Queen Anne style may be the go-to architecture for pop culture’s scariest settings, but Craftsman style is the signature of family sitcoms and movies. Angela Chase and her family on My So-Called Life lived in a picturesque two-story Craftsman style home, as did the Witherspoons on Our House (RIP Wilford Brimley). In the 2005 movie Zathura the family’s Craftsman is torn apart and even sent to space by a mysterious board game found in the basement. Oh, and don’t forget about Roseanne and Carol Burnett’s Mama’s Family, where the jokes are busting out from the exposed rafters. For a more mature Craftsman cinematic experience you can check out Inception, Old School or Back to the Future.

Examples of Craftsman houses can be found across Western New York, in both urban and suburban settings. Buffalo’s Central Park and North Buffalo neighborhoods and Niagara Falls’ Lasalle neighborhood have high concentrations of Craftsman houses, as they were developed right at the peak of the style’s popularity.

Do you have a great Craftsman in your community? Share it to social media with the hashtag #PBNcraftsman.

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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.
EAST SIDE COMMERCIAL BUILDING STABILIZATION PROGRAM

As part of the East Side Avenues Initiative (a partnership of Empire State Development and the University of Buffalo Regional Institute), PBN is administering a dedicated funding source that will support near-term stabilization of at-risk historic buildings on the East Side, with preference given to those buildings along commercial corridors (especially in the target investment areas of the East Side Corridor Economic Development Fund). The Fund will support smaller, seal-up efforts such as roof patching, mothballing precautions, etc., or correcting obstacles that are preventing active use and business activity, with the aim of helping to prevent crisis-level failures in the future—or, even worse, additional emergency demolitions of the existing urban fabric along commercial corridors. This program will ensure that buildings with code violations or structural deficiencies where there is not a currently viable project are not torn down as a short-sighted “solution”. Instead, such buildings will be kept viable through the Fund, so that when there are market opportunities, the properties will be intact and available for re-use. More information on the program and applications is available on our website.

THE ELIZA QUIRK HOUSE

As you know by now, PBN has also taken direct action this year to steward our own historic building. Thanks to a donation from prolific local preservation developer Rocco Termini, we have acquired 72 Sycamore Street, the former home and business of Eliza Quirk. A notorious courtesan, Ms. Quirk built her home on Sycamore Street in 1848, after the “recess” (fancy old term for saloon) that she had been running in the Canal district burned down in a fire. The building was operated continuously as a boarding house (and sometimes brothel) from its construction until 2017, when the then-owner proposed demolishing the building in response to losing her rooming house license. After a bruising preservation battle in which PBN successfully fought to have the building landmarked, Mr. Termini purchased it and donated it to PBN. We have spent the last year developing plans and starting fundraising for our adaptive reuse project, which will involve converting the 170-year-old rooming house into six units of affordable housing, office space for Heart of the City Neighborhoods, and a Preservation Resource Center where PBN will hold our events and workshops. We will spend this year fundraising and completing our permits and approvals process and hope to see construction started before the end of the year. Watch for special members-only updates and ways to support this very special project.

HISTORIC HOMEOWNER REVOLVING LOAN FUND

It is important to PBN to ensure that our local historic districts remain diverse, and that no one feels shut out of homeownership due to the expense of owning and maintaining a historic home. While the Preservation Board does routinely allow hardship exemptions to ensure that homeownership does not place an undue burden on low-income homeowners, we know that part of what creates and retains high levels of value for homeowners in historic district is the use of high-quality materials and repairs, and we feel that it is important that even low-income homeowners be supported in following preservation best practices. This program is designed to assist those homeowners. More information can be found on our website, and make sure that you are signed up for our weekly e-blats so that you know when the spring application period starts! 🌟
2020 took many things from us, but among the biggest blows was the loss of two of our community’s staunchest and most supportive preservationists. Both of these men were unfailingly generous with their time and knowledge, providing valuable mentoring, and both had a warmth and humor evident in even the most trying times. We were lucky to share this place with them and will do our best to live up to the examples they set. Their memories will forever be blessings to their families and their communities.

**MR. GEORGE K. ARTHUR** is perhaps best known for his role as President of the Buffalo Common Council in the 1980s, but his passion for community service extended well beyond that role. Born in 1933, Mr. Arthur spent part of his childhood in the historic Willert Park Courts, and much of his activism was dedicated to preserving and improving the important places on Buffalo’s East Side. From Willert Park to the Nash House, his activism was critical to saving and interpreting many of Buffalo’s most important and most undervalued historic sites. Most recently, Mr. Arthur was serving on the Community Advisory Committee for PBN’s East Side Context Statement, a groundbreaking preservation project dedicated to ensuring greater equity in the protection of Buffalo’s historic fabric. But Mr. Arthur’s passion for history and preservation extended across the entire city, and he lent his support to a variety of preservation projects. In fact, our current 1850 Project is based in part on work funded and supported by Mr. Arthur when he was on the Common Council. We are so lucky for the day he walked into our office with a large envelope, saying: see what you can do with this! With that encouragement, we have been able to document dozens of pre–Civil War era buildings and are working on putting proper protections in place.

**MR. ROBERT J. KRESSE** always understood the importance of place and community, and how landmarks fit into that equation. His tireless work to preserve St. Mary of Sorrows on Genesee Street, not just as a building, but as a space of light and hope in its battered neighborhood, was only the most visible example of the ways in which he helped us all invest in the places that matter in order to build the strongest possible community. His public service was nearly inexhaustible, with the boards he served on and the projects he supported far too numerous to list here, but we will always claim him as a preservationist of the highest order. Most recently, we worked with Mr. Kresse to bring attention and solutions to the plight of the Vaux Barn, a modest building designed by Olmsted’s partner Calvert Vaux that was originally located in MLK Park but was moved in subsequent years to a property on Genesee Street. It was one of Mr. Kresse’s goals that the building be moved back to the park, and while we cannot guarantee that that will happen, we are working hard to secure and stabilize the building to give at least hope to the idea that it could once again take its proud place in our civic life.
For over a year, PBN has worked toward updating Buffalo City Hall: Americanesque Masterpiece. First produced in 1993, it has been updated and edited by Preservation Buffalo Niagara to include new information, additional citations, recent photos and artwork.

To order your copy of Buffalo City Hall: Americanesque Masterpiece and to get information about our virtual book launch, visit preservationbuffaloniagara.org.