

Nomination Form

2009 Preservation Buffalo Niagara Awards

Erie, Niagara, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Genesee, Orleans, Wyoming Counties

DUE BY FEBRUARY 25, 2009 AT 5:00 P.M.

Nominated Project or Individual [Felician Sisters of St. Francis Provincial House Reconstruction](#)

Name(s) / Mailing Address(es) of Current Property Owner(s) or Nominee _____

[The Order of the Felician Sisters of St. Francis c/o 600 Doat Street, Buffalo, New York 14211](#)

[Sister Lorianne Tylczynski, CSSF - Provincial Minister](#)

Award Category ___ Restoration Rehabilitation/Adaptive Use ___ Stewardship ___ Preservation Service

___ Preservation Craft ___ New Construction ___ Neighborhood Conservation ___ Landscape Preservation

___ Education & Outreach ___ Other

If known, identify if property is *listed on local, state, or national register* [Yes, National Register](#)

Description of Achievement

Please attach a **WRITTEN DESCRIPTION** of the completed project or achievement and its contribution to the preservation of Western New York’s historic character. (no more than 1 page) . For specific projects, identify the nature of the project, the tasks required to complete it, and provide ***Begin / End Dates*** (use building permit dates, if available).

Project Contributors

List all major contributors to the achievement of the project (e.g., owners, architect, landscape architect, contractors, consultants, or other contributors). Please include contact information (address, email and/or phone).

[See Attached](#)

Supporting Documentation

Please submit two or more digital or printed photographs illustrating the project’s achievements. For restoration, rehabilitation and adaptive re-use projects include “before and after” photos, if available. If historic photos are included, please cite source. Additional pages and other documentation, such as magazine or newspaper articles may be included. ***No materials will be returned.***

Preservation Buffalo Niagara reserves the right to use the images in publications, web sites and databases.

Applicable projects may be submitted to the Buffalo Preservation Board Awards Program.

Name of Person Completing Nomination [Richard J. Stievater, AIA](#)

Signature

Address [Trautman Associates](#) Phone [716-883-4400](#)

[470 Franklin Street, Buffalo, New York 14202](#)

Relationship to project [Principal Architect](#) E-mail rstievater@trautmanassoc.com

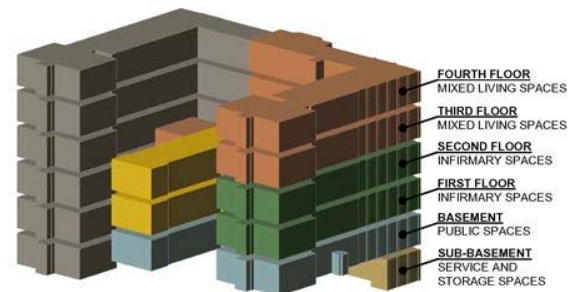
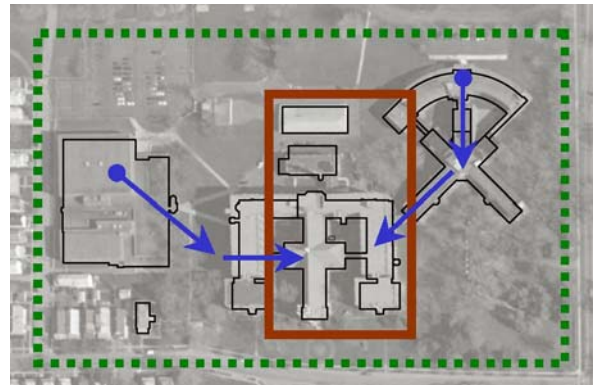
***Please return this signed and completed form with supporting documentation to
Preservation Buffalo Niagara / Market Arcade / 617 Main Street / Buffalo, New York 14203
Or to preservationbuffaloniagara@gmail.com 716-852-3300***

Written Description

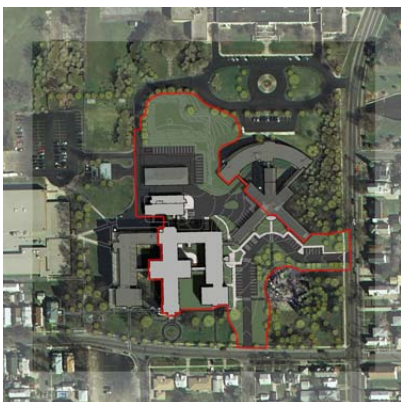
At a time that sees many of the areas important religious buildings vacant, with only a hope of re-use, the Felician Sisters of St. Francis are embracing a challenge and creating an opportunity that will enliven their selfless legacy. The Sisters made the decision not to leave their aging property on the Buffalo/Cheektowaga border, but to reinvigorate their historic building and reaffirm their presence as a neighborhood anchor.

Nearly one hundred years ago, the Felician Sisters of St. Francis began their mission of grace and servitude. In 1927, the construction of the Provincial House began. That building, and the Sisters it housed quickly became proud members of a bustling community. As the neighborhood heads down the road toward disinvestment, the Felician's have begun a process that is hoped to reimagine a brighter future.

The reconstruction of the Felician Sister Provincial House, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was undertaken with a care and thoughtfulness that only a loving property owner can offer. In essence, the re-design work focused on providing new and livable spaces for an aging population of Sisters. It was centered around the idea that the shrinking population living on the campus should be relocated out of inefficient spaces across several campus buildings and moved back into the historic Provincial House, close to the central Chapel that all of the Sisters regard as their 'home'. The new spaces created within the building provide for administrative/office/public meeting functions on the lowest floor, two floors of infirmary type living spaces for the most fragile Sisters, and two floors of apartment type living quarters that are inhabited by the more ambulatory Sisters.



The design was predicated on the idea that the building exterior was to be restored to its original construction splendor. Unsightly glass block windows were removed and replaced with new energy efficient window units designed to mimic the originals. New mechanical systems were woven throughout the inside of the building so as not to disturb the original building's facades. A new entry pavilion required by the owner was thoughtfully sited and designed so as to least distract from the original building's design features. A new entrance and parking is provided along a loop type road that carefully weaves through the historic grounds. Many environmentally conscious design initiatives, including geo-thermal heating and cooling, were incorporated. New interior spaces were carved around existing stairhalls and corridor configurations. Bedrooms that originally measured 6'x9' were re-tasked to become apartment type residences which a pair of Sisters share. The "sister's suite module" is also designed to allow for future conversion into senior apartments with minimal disturbance. Key original interior elements such as ornamental doorways and statuary niches were left in place. Those keys served as a basis so that new interiors could be crafted so as to re-create the character of the original materials.



The decision to make a significant investment in an area that could easily have been forsaken is one that deserves attention and applause. This undertaking has become a labor of love for all involved. Sensing the dedication and devotion exhibited by the Sisters, the design team and the builders embraced their goals. The community is responding and a lifetime of contributions are now being recognized.

Nature of the Project and Tasks Required

The nature of this historic reconstruction project is based on a simple premise – to re-create spaces within an historic building that will allow an aging population to live comfortably and better serve a community in need. Simple and faithful exterior improvements have been made, while private interior spaces have been reconfigured to not only house the Felician Sisters, but also future building occupants that will follow them.

Facility Needs and Existing Conditions Assessment : August 2005 thru October 2005

This task involved the inspection of all spaces occupied by the Sisters across the five buildings on the Villa Maria campus. This inspection documented both the use and condition of every space with an eye towards needed repairs and living space inefficiency. A clear building program, or list of needs was assembled and became the basis for the reconstruction effort.

Campus Masterplanning Efforts : November 2005 thru January 2006

These efforts focused on wide scope building use, ownership, and occupancy decisions. The Sisters and the design team worked closely to identify campus buildings that the Sisters would continue to occupy and those that would be available for redevelopment. Ultimately it was decided that reconstruction of space for the Sisters would focus on the historic Provincial House and that the owner/designer team would continue efforts to secure occupants for the remaining campus buildings.

National Historic Register Nomination Efforts : February 2006 thru May 2006

Early in the process, the Sisters committed to extra efforts that would help ensure the longevity of their presence in the neighborhood. Toward those ends, the owner decided to nominate their Provincial House and its immediate grounds for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. The exhaustive nomination process proved successful, and now the Sisters are proud to be living in a historic landmark knowing that the building is better situated to serve future generations.

Site Plan Review and Approval Process with Town of Cheektowaga : June 2006 thru October 2006

The owner and design team worked closely with the Town of Cheektowaga in order to secure support and approval for efforts to re-establish the Villa Maria campus as a neighborhood landmark and societal anchor. Moving with the Town's full support, the Sisters and the design team were able to present a plan which involved not only the reconstruction of the historic Provincial House, but also several redevelopment opportunities for other under-utilized campus buildings.

Planning and Design of Provincial House Reconstruction : November 2006 thru March 2007

Creating a plan that would meet the needs of an aging population of devoted Sisters within the confines of an existing building proved quite a challenge. Through thoughtful design moves and creative problem solving, the architect's design team was able to envision new living and working spaces for the Sisters which kept in place many original features and recreated the historic character that embodied the original building's exterior grandeur and interior simplicity.

Construction of Provincial House Reconstruction : April 2007 thru December 2008

Starting with the careful salvage and protection of historic building elements, and ending with final touch up painting, an army of builders and craftsmen worked diligently to fulfill the Sisters dream. The commitment to excellence and attention to detail exhibited by the entire contractor team was exactly the formula required to execute this complex and precise construction effort. Every builder was proud of their efforts and each were rewarded with thankful smiles as the Sisters moved into their newly renovated spaces.

Planning Associated With Other Campus Redevelopments : November 2006 and continuing

Since the start, this project's players have teamed together and worked tirelessly to promote and advertise redevelopment opportunities made available by the Sisters investment. Many potential uses have been reviewed, several development scenarios have been promoted, and much design work has been completed. The Sisters and their partners are continuing to evaluate several opportunities that will enhance their campus and the community that they serve.

Project Contributors

Owner's Project Manager

Sister Jeremy Midura, CSSF
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Architect

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attn: Richard J. Stievater, AIA
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Construction Project Manager

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attn: William R. Gannon, Project Director

Historic Design Consultant

Preservation Consultation and Design
The Niagara Arts and Cultural Center
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716-282-1800
attn: Thomas Yots

Photographs

Blessing of the Cornerstone circa 1929



image provided courtesy of the Felician Sister's Archive

Original Construction



image provided courtesy of the Felician Sister's Archive

Photographs

Pre-Construction – Partial View of South Elevation



note non-original glass block windows which were removed

Pre-Construction – Partial View of East Elevation



note original 'porches' which were incorporated as part of interior renovation

Pre-Construction – View along typical corridor



note wood trims and monastistic detailing

Photographs

Under Construction – Winter 2008



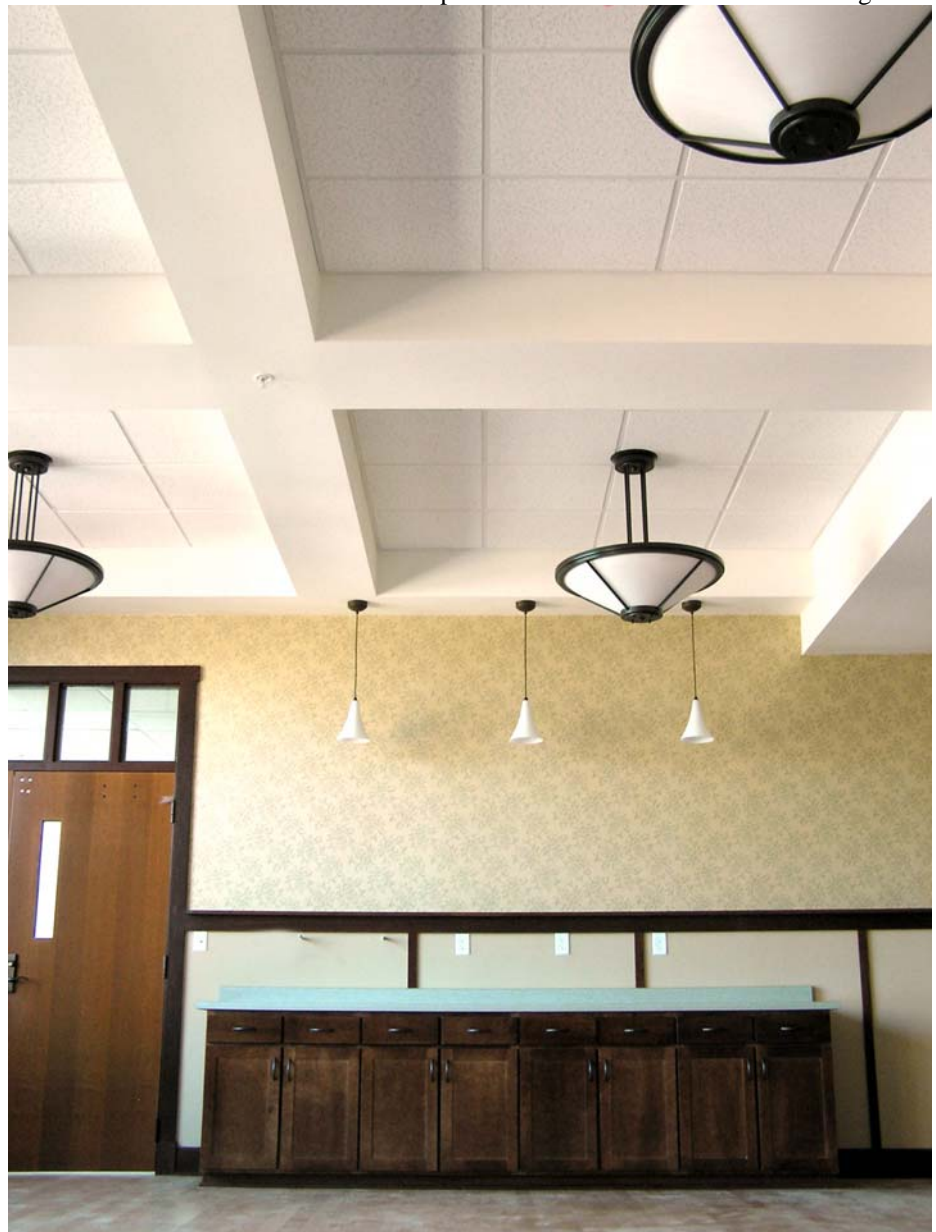
note window replacement complete – new units designed to match original configuration

Construction Complete –Partial View of East Elevation



note Main Entrance addition and new windows at original porches

Construction Complete – Interior View of 3rd Floor Dining Area



Construction Complete – Interior View of Typical Corridor



Additional photography is available upon request.