

## **1.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

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Clinton Brown Company Architecture, pc has completed the Historic Resources Survey of the Black Rock Planning Neighborhood, under contract to the City of Buffalo and was funded by Preserve New York, a grant program of the Preservation League of New York State and the New York State Council on the Arts. Mayor Byron W. Brown and Councilmember Joe Golombek were critical in obtaining additional funding from the The Baird Foundation, the John R. Oishei Foundation, the City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning and the Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency.

The Historic Resources Survey project manager was Alma O'Connell-Brown, CBCA Project Manager. The primary researcher and author of this report was Jennifer Walkowski, CBCA Architectural Historian. Ms. Brown and Meagan Baco, CBCA Historic Preservation Project Assistant, completed the field documentation in April of 2010. Clinton E. Brown, RA, AIA, NCARB, provided services as Heritage Architect. The CBCA project team members meet or exceed 36 CFR Part 61 "Professional Qualification Standards" of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

Historic buildings, landscapes, structures, and other features are distinct components of communities that reflect history on the local, regional, and national levels. A survey of the City's historic resources located within the Black Rock Planning Neighborhood is an important first step in identifying, recognizing and protecting the significance of these properties and keeping them a vital part of the community's built environment. Placing a resource in a larger context provides a sense of place. The information gained from documenting historic resources forms the foundation for integrating historic preservation into planning, community development, and economic revitalization efforts.

The Black Rock neighborhood is a mixed-use residential, commercial and industrial area located at the north-western portion of the City of Buffalo in Erie County, New York (fig 1.1). The survey area is located in what historically had been a portion of the Mile Strip Reservation known as the Parish tract and the Bird Farm in 1802. The village of Black Rock fought a spirited battle with the neighboring village of Buffalo to become the terminus for the Erie Canal in 1817, although Black Rock would eventually lose the fight. While the village of Black Rock would remain a separate legal entity until it was eventually annexed into the growing village of Buffalo in 1853, the community retained much of its political and cultural independence. The creation of the Belt Line freight and commuter rail line in 1883 which circled Buffalo promoted new industrial and residential growth throughout the city including Black Rock. With the growth of industry in the area, a substantial wave of Polish and German settlement occurred in the Black Rock community;

The objective of this survey of the Black Rock neighborhood is to complete a Reconnaissance Level survey of 514 properties located within the Black Rock Planning Neighborhood as established by the City of Buffalo in 2006 in order to locate and identify significant individual properties and potential districts. The survey boundaries include all streets within the boundaries defined as the Black Rock Planning Neighborhood (fig 1.1). This area was partially covered by the document *Phase IA Cultural Resources Investigation for the Proposed Ambassador Niagara Signature Bridge, City of Buffalo, Erie County, New York* (2006).<sup>1</sup> In this document, 184 properties and 7 structures were recorded in an Annotated List of Properties. Only properties previously identified on this list were reviewed and updated for this report. An additional 322 properties located within the boundaries of the Black Rock Planning Neighborhood but outside of the boundaries of the 2006 Ambassador Bridge report were reviewed for this new investigation. These newly reviewed areas were located primarily to the east between Bridgeman Street and Elmwood Avenue, with other smaller areas to the north, south and west (fig 1.2).

It is important to note that the 2006 Ambassador Bridge survey project was completed with a different goal and different methodology than the present Historic Resources Survey work. This previous survey focused on the impact of a proposed bridge on a targeted project area, rather than providing a record of the neighborhood's significant architectural and historical assets and those which could be rehabilitated or reused to serve the community. The terms of CBCA's contract for the current survey work limited the report team to review only those properties previously identified in this 2006 report, yet while conducting field work several significant residential, commercial and industrial assets were notably absent. Buildings such as the unique industrial building at 215 Chandler Street, an excellent example of a workers' cottage with Queen Anne details at 112 Hertel Avenue, and the former Linde plant at 169 Chandler Street (an early 1900s industrial building) are just a few notable structures which CBCA was unable to review due to the limitations of the present scope of work. Linde, which would later become associated with Union Carbide and is now known as Praxair, is significant as the largest industrial gases company in North and South America and one of the largest worldwide.

Also per the terms of the contract with the City of Buffalo, Clinton Brown Company Architecture was required to draw heavily from the historical and architectural history sections of the 2006 Ambassador Bridge survey project for the survey and also the MPDF. New information has been added as needed, and the information has been formatted as necessary. Sections utilized in this report are directly quoted from this 2006 project, with proper citations as needed. The information in these quoted sections has not been verified for accuracy.

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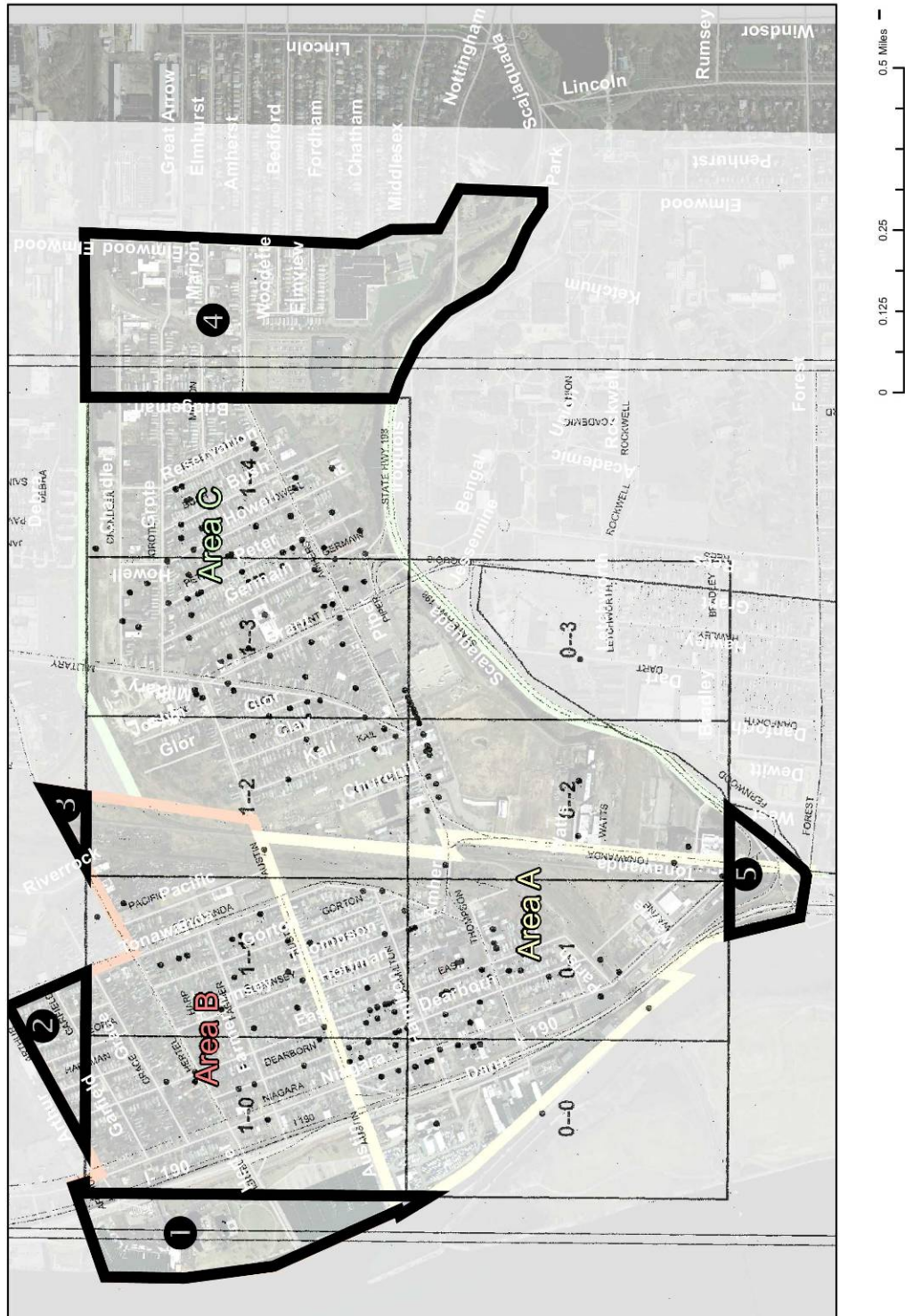
<sup>1</sup> Frank J. Schiepati, Mark A. Steinback, and Christine Longiaru. *Phase IA Cultural Resources Investigation for the Proposed Ambassador Niagara Signature Bridge*. Rep. Buffalo: Panamerican Consultants, April 2006.

Based on the findings of the previous preliminary survey work, CBCA was also contracted to complete a Multiple Properties Documentation form titled "Historic Resources of the Black Rock Planning Neighborhood." Because of the lack of a cohesive, contiguous traditional State and National Register of Historic Places historic district, the MPDF will provide a broad cover document which will enable the wide variety of eligible properties in the Black Rock and Grant-Amherst neighborhoods to pursue listing in the State and National Registers.

This report begins with the project methodology (Section 2), which explains how the objectives of the historic resources survey were carried out. The next section is an annotated list of properties (Section 3). As contracted, the historical overview of the Black Rock neighborhood was drawn heavily from the 2006 Ambassador Bridge report and is referenced in Section 4. Also included is an architectural overview of the types and styles of buildings and structures identified in the report (Section 5). Recommendations for further designation of significant properties are included in Section 6. A working bibliography is included in Section 7 and mapping is included in Section 8. As a result of the survey, a Multiple Property Documentation form for the State and National Registers of Historic Places was created, and this document is contained in Section 9. A copy of the 2006 Ambassador Bridge survey is included in the Appendix in Section 10, and Section 11 contains a photo log.







**Fig 1.2** Black Rock Historic Resource Survey Area Overlay Map  
Areas surveyed in the 2006 Ambassador Bridge survey are designated by the grid overlaid on the boundaries of the Black Rock Planning Neighborhood. Newly surveyed areas are highlighted with heavy bold outline, numbered 1-5.