



# Dodge Street

## Artspace Buffalo

### Parcel Inventory

Address	Type	Condition	Comments	Recommendations
15 Dodge	Double	Fair/Good		
16-36 Dodge	VACANT	Poor	City of Buffalo, seven consecutive lots	residential infill
17 Dodge	Double	Fair/Good		
21 Dodge	VACANT	Good	privately owned	
38 Dodge	Double	Fair/Good		
40 Dodge	Single	Good		
73 Dodge	Double	Poor/Fair	architectural character	
75 Dodge	VACANT	Fair	lawn for 77 Dodge	
77 Dodge	Double	Fair	collapsing porch, generally good cond	
80 Dodge	Double	Excellent	great garden, maintains 78 Dodge	
81 Dodge	VACANT	Fair	privately owned	privately initiated housing
82 Dodge	Single	Excellent	great garden	
85 Dodge	VACANT	Fair	City of Buffalo	residential infill
87 Dodge	Single	Fair		
88 Dodge	VACANT	Poor/Fair	City of Buffalo	residential infill
89/91 Dodge	VACANT	Poor/Fair	City of Buffalo	residential infill, alley to Southampton
90 Dodge	Single	Fair	appears under renovation	
94/98 Dodge	VACANT	Fair	Community Action Organization	confer with CAO
97 Dodge	Single	Poor	palatial house, vital to preserve/reuse!	code enforcement/rehab
101 Dodge	Single	Good		
102/104 Dodge	VACANT	Fair	City of Buffalo	residential infill
103/105 Dodge	VACANT	Good	off-street parking spots	
106 Dodge	Double	Fair	character woodwork, columns	
107 Dodge	Single	Fair	cottage style, intricate, desirable rehab	
109 Dodge	VACANT	Poor/Fair	City of Buffalo	
110 Dodge	VACANT	Good	City of Buffalo, maintained by 112 Dodge	
112 Dodge	Single	Good		
113 Dodge	VACANT	Poor/Fair	City of Buffalo	
118 Dodge	Single	Good	ABANDONED though recently renovated	
119 Dodge	VACANT	Poor/Fair	privately owned	
120 Dodge	VACANT	Fair	City of Buffalo	residential infill
121 Dodge	VACANT	Poor/Fair	privately owned	

## Dodge Street

### Observations, Conditions, Opportunities

Dodge Street is distressed yet it is hardly unsalvageable. It seems to have been abandoned to the Fates by a city more than willing let a block go in lieu of the likelihood of any sudden turn-around. In some areas, sidewalks are virtually nonexistent, forming a jagged moonscape totally inaccessible to the elderly and the handicapped, thoroughly unenjoyable to even the most able-bodied pedestrian. People prefer to walk in the streets in the absence of any usable pedestrian space. Hundreds of feet can be measured without a single tree noted. Two cobrahead streetlamps provide the only evening light between Ellicott and Michigan.

Dodge Street's location and even its name make it important historically. Dodge Street was the northern border of the farm owned by Alvin Leonard Dodge, who lived in the city long enough to witness the burning of Village of Buffalo (from which his childhood home was spared) to its development into a world-renowned commercial center. Spanning several hundred acres between the presentday streets of Dodge, Best, Main and Jefferson, the Dodge Farm was sold in the 1880s to the City of Buffalo, which at the time was undergoing a serious housing shortage.

Alvin Leonard Dodge's life was a fascinating drama that included a narrow family escape from British terrorism, a schooling under the stewardship of Millard Fillmore at the little school at Cold Springs, a quiet and prosperous life in a large woodframe house at presentday Main and Dodge, and the rise of a city that almost instantaneously transformed his farm into a beating heart of a rapidly expanding metropolis. That Dodge Street is resembling more and more the fields of Alvin Leonard



*Mount Cavalry CME Church anchors one end of Dodge Street at Ellicott.*

Dodge's farm should be no comfort to those whose interest in Midtown's history make the street worth saving and remembering. Its significance in the spectrum of city history compels a sentiment that the best way to elevate the street's importance is to repopulate it, not cede it to renaturalization.

Notably, what seems to be a fatal absence of public support has not resulted in commensurate abandonment by residents, at least not totally. Many owners of the mostly double houses keep on keeping on, undiscouraged by a sheer breadth of vacant, weed-strewn lots and a public realm in disarray. Houses like 80 Dodge, in excellent states of upkeep, stand in odd juxtaposition to a diamond-in-the-rough like 107 Dodge, a quaint cottage with elements of detailed craftsmanship. In all, however, there are 26 vacant lots along the single block between Ellicott and Michigan. Most houses left over are still in relatively good shape, but are seriously disadvantaged by the break-up of the surrounding streetscape, houses too scattered and the street too depopulated to form a coherent sense of place and community. Perhaps this is why, despite a recent renovation, even the well-maintained 118 Dodge is now boarded up.

Dodge Street is inherently worth a serious investment of time, energy and public investment. It is no less proximate to the LRRT line, buses and consumer conveniences than the best streets of Midtown. With a large swath of its former streetscape destroyed, however, Dodge Street is inadequately advantaged by its existing built environment, though it does contain opportunities for reuse and restoration.



*The house at 97 Dodge is quite substantial, and also quite abandoned. Imagine the impact its renovation will have on such a troubled block.*

## Recommendations, Strategies, Suggested Improvements

### Commit to complete overhaul of the public's experience of the sidewalk

From new sidewalks to trees to street lamps, nothing more would uplift the prospects of the street than a coordinated improvement program for the pedestrian right-of-way. With few sidewalks in good repair, only two streetlamps, and the need for over 42 new trees, there is certainly no want of areas in which to begin. Therefore the City should advocate for a night-to-day planning approach to Dodge Street by:

- Redoing sidewalks
- Planting a row of new and diverse trees
- Installing attractive street lighting in a very short span of time (this will make it seem as though the street is undergoing a dramatic turn-around)

### Renovate 97 Dodge

The palatial home at 97 Dodge is one of Midtown's greatest houses. A single-family home of some 4000+ square feet, it is an abandoned and deteriorating vestige of a once prominent residential street. The house is as inspiring in its possibilities as it is disheartening in its potential fate, as demolition appears to be the solution-by-default in the absence of an immediate restoration effort. Demolition will seal the fate of the block as a lost cause, its renovation, by contrast, a symbol of its hope for renewal. To provide strong evidence of the possibility of Dodge's revival, a renovation solution must be found immediately for the home that will:

- Remove gang graffiti
- Secure it from the elements



*The site of the proposed Alvin's Alley already contains a "desire path" between Southampton and Dodge, indicating its frequent use as a pedestrian passageway.*

- Bring the structure up to building code
- Find a responsible owner to occupy the home

Create new mid-block alley between Dodge and Southampton

A new brick alley over an existing desire path leading from Southampton to Dodge would break up an otherwise long and monotonous block. At no more than 15 feet in width, the new alley could become, like Virginia Place in Allentown, a charming formalized passageway. It could have an inviting and characteristic name, such as Alvin's Alley, inspired by Alvin Leonard Dodge. The preponderance of vacant parcels on both streets provides an opportunity to:

- Cut through the block pattern (on the border between the City-owned lots of 89 and 91 Dodge) and form new corners on which to focus development or passive greenspace
- Create a new brick alley that could frame development of smaller "cottage style" units on shallow lots, facing toward the alley which would act as a new residential street