

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name BANK OF EAST AURORA

other names/site number The Bank Hotel of East Aurora

name of related multiple property listing N/A

2. Location

street & number 649 Main Street [] not for publication

city or town East Aurora [] vicinity

state New York code NY county Erie code 029 zip code 14052

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements as set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide locally. ([] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Rex Daniel Muly
Signature of certifying official/Title

6/10/2021
Date

DSHPD
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register [] see continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register [] see continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain) _____

Signature of the Keeper

date of action

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	TOTAL

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/ financial institution

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/hotel

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURY REVIVALS

Classical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other Steel

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

Name of Property

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location
- C** a birthplace or grave
- D** a cemetery
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. **NPS #42,132**
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by historic American Building Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance:

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

Period of Significance:

1922-1936

Significant Dates:

1922,-1936

Significant Person:

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect/Builder:

Aaron Riley Merritt

Linwood Construction Company

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other repository: _____

10. Geographical DataAcreage of Property 0.41 acres**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 7	695491	4737777	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Gregory Pinto & Clinton Brown, FAIA [Edited by Jennifer Walkowski, NYSHPO]

organization Clinton Brown Company Architecture, pc date 5/6/2021

street & number 403 Main Street telephone 716-852-2020

city or town Buffalo state NY zip code 14203

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location
 A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

PhotographsRepresentative **black and white photographs** of the property.**Additional items**

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20503

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1

Bank of East Aurora
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

Summary

The Bank of East Aurora is a two-story with basement commercial building located on a roughly rectangular-shaped lot at 649 Main Street in the Village of East Aurora in Erie County, New York. East Aurora is a small village located twenty miles southeast of Buffalo. Main Street, the commercial artery of the village, is also designated as New York State Route 16, a predominately north-south state highway that connects the Pennsylvania border to the south with State Route 5 in Buffalo to the north. State Route 20A, also a major regional road, runs east-west; and State Route 78 connects Wyoming County to the southeast with Lake Ontario to the north, mostly along the route of Transit Road, one of Western New York's earliest roads.

Located in the center of the commercial area of the village, roughly mid-way between Elm Place to the west and Temple Place to the east, the bank building is surrounded by several other brick commercial buildings that date from the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. The building is sited at the north end of the lot with a uniform setback to the surrounding commercial buildings. To the rear of the building is an asphalt parking lot connected to Main Street with a driveway. The lot extends south to Millard Fillmore Place, which contains a handful of residential properties. Landscaping is restricted to a small patch of grass on the east side of the lot. The immediate surroundings of the bank building include the Blazing Star Lodge Masonic Temple to the west and a one-story brick commercial building to the east that houses an insurance agency.

The Bank of East Aurora is a two-story red brick building with cast-stone detailing. The facade (north elevation) of the building, which faces Main Street, is a rectangular block that has an A-B-A form. The symmetrical, five-bay facade features a projecting central three-bay entrance with two flanking units that are one-bay each. The primary entrance is a single glass and metal door with a horizontal transom and sidelights on a projecting vestibule. The sheltered area also contains two flanking six-over-six single-hung windows with cast-stone sills and keystones. The windows and entrance align with three non-original globe pendant lights, each suspended from individual vaulted ceilings presumably made of plaster or wood.

The Bank of East Aurora is an example of the Classical Revival style of architecture and has maintained a high degree of integrity on its exterior with limited alterations over its nearly 100 years. The interior is in the process of being restored and repurposed as an event space and hotel while maintaining its significant defining features and the majority of its general layout based on original drawings. Despite the removal of secondary rooms, key spaces such as the main hall, second story overlook, vaults, and board room have remained in place. Character-defining features, including the fenestration, staircases, flooring, and fireplace and plaster detailing have either remained intact or have been replicated in kind.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 2

Bank of East Aurora
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

Exterior Description

The Bank of East Aurora building is rectangular in plan, measuring approximately 56 feet wide along Main Street and 70 feet deep; it is two stories tall and has a flat roof. The building encompasses roughly 5,600 square feet. The symmetrical facade features a projecting center bay that is a triple-arched porch to a recessed entrance and two flanking bays, together designed and detailed to appear to be one double-height story in elevation. The red brick and cast-stone trimmed facade rests on a concrete base, has four six-over-six double-hung windows at the first story, two cast-stone inset panels at the second story, and is topped by a cast-stone cornice on which rests a parapet of brick, cast-stone panels, and a balustrade.

The primary entrance to the building is accessed from a set of steps with two risers. The door is slightly recessed and framed by Doric-style pilasters consisting of a base, shaft, and capital. Between the pilasters are three tall, brick, arched openings with modest keystones. These support the cornice, above which is a central cast-stone balustrade. All this detail is original and has been painted. The entablature's frieze contains the building's contemporary sign, raised block lettering that spells "The Bank" painted gold. The uppermost portion is a classical balustrade separated into three segments that align with the arches beneath them. All these features are in good condition.

The two flanking bays of the facade are symmetrical in design, containing a cornice, architrave, and base paneling that connects the central entablature with the first three bays of the side elevations. A window identical to those found on the central portion is surmounted by a rectangular cast-stone block carved with a decorative cartouche. At the uppermost section above the cornice is an inset rectangular panel surrounded by cast-stone trim, capped by concrete coping.

The east and west (side) elevations are each five bays. The first three continue the design from the facade. The facade's cornice and architrave wrap around the building and extend for three bays. Prominent arched multi-paned monumental aluminum-clad wood windows distinguish these side elevations. These windows were modeled after the original windows. The two bays towards the rear of the property have a simple metal coping that continues to the rear elevation. Window wells for the basement are poured concrete.

A projecting full-story block is situated midway on the east elevation. It contains two additional entrances facing south and west, respectively. The north-facing entrance is an aluminum door that provides universal access to the building via a concrete ramp with a contemporary metal guard rail. An additional paneled wood utility door on the east side of the block provides access to the basement. It is adjacent to a wood window with a wire mesh exterior protective screen.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 3

Bank of East Aurora
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

The south (rear) elevation is the simplest elevation, with no major decorative elements. It is defined by three windows on the first story that were filled with glass block at an unknown date. Above this are six double-hung windows on the second story. To the east of the windows is a full-story brick chimney. This elevation is capped with metal coping.

Interior Description

The interior of the bank consists of a basement, first floor, and second floor. The first floor is divided into a double-height banking hall area with an entry vestibule and a one-story rear portion to the south. Here, a staircase leads to a small landing and then to the second story, which has a boardroom, an open room overlooking the banking hall, and a secondary vault. The basement is accessed by two first-floor staircases located in the front and rear of the building. A third staircase exists in the basement that leads to the exterior, but it is currently inaccessible.

First Floor

From the front porch, the main entrance door opens into a vestibule leading to the main banking hall. The vestibule is rectangular in form and has painted drywall with black rubber flooring. The vestibule door opens into the main banking hall, a double-height space that is rectangular in plan. All interior furniture that indicated the original banking function, such as counters and teller stations, has been removed, and the banking hall is now a large empty room. The flooring is a combination of original hardwood and terra-cotta-colored tile that is present at the location of the original teller cage line. The walls have decorative wainscoting on all sides and simple crown molding above. At the center of the plaster ceiling is a rectangular paneled laylight that is coffered. This is surrounded by four contemporary chandeliers suspended from the ceiling.

The banking hall's north wall features two symmetrical sets of six-over-six, double-hung windows that flank the central entrance. The northwest corner contains an L-shaped stair that provides access to the basement. The side walls each contain three large multi-light double-hung wooden windows with arches above. A doorway in the southeast corner connects to a small corridor, allowing access to the building's side entrance and two former utility rooms that are being converted to a universally accessible guestroom and washroom. On the hall's south wall, a large opening allows access to former back office space where the HSBC Bank, the last occupant, had placed cubicles. To the left, a single door frame accesses the building's staircase to the former mezzanine area and the second story. On the right is the former bank's primary vault, which survives, with its original steel door. The vault, which originally housed over 600 safety deposit boxes, has tile flooring and a contemporary light fixture. Its western wall has been furnished with a mirrored door that accesses a portion of the former vault space that is being repurposed as a small commercial kitchen.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

Section 7 Page 4

The one-story rear portion of the first floor, which is approximately a third of the area of the main hall, continues the main hall floor with the same hardwood flooring and finishes. The ceiling has drop plaster cross beams that are supported by a central square steel post. At the southeastern corner of the space is the staircase that leads to the second floor. The metal pan and concrete staircase is a switchback stair with rubber treads in the original diamond pattern. The rectangular balusters and newel posts of the stair's railing are wrought iron that has been painted. This is topped with wooden handrails.

Second Floor

A small washroom is located on the landing between the first and second floors. It is clad with conventional subway tile and is in the process of being updated with modern fixtures. Originally, this landing also led to the mezzanine overlooking the main hall. The second floor now consists of three rooms, the central of which has three wood casement windows, reconstructed from original drawings, with turned iron and wood guardrails. These were installed into the original window openings and are decorated with the same trim and detailing as the first story. A square post is located in the middle of this area floor, identical to the one on the first story. The southern and western walls contain six-over-six aluminum-clad double-hung wood windows.

The southeast corner of the second floor is the bank's boardroom, which is the most decorative and intact room of the building. All original architectural elements of this space remain intact, including the hardwood floor, paneled moldings on the lower portions of the walls, and a brick fireplace with classically inspired wood mantel centered on the east wall.

The third room was historically a secondary vault. It maintains the original steel door on its east wall, and a second doorway was added. The floor of the vault is a mosaic pattern made from pennies and the space contains a contemporary light fixture.

Basement

From the first floor, access to the basement is provided by three separate staircases. The primary staircase is an L-shaped metal pan concrete stair located in the northwest corner of the main hall that granted customer access to restrooms in the basement. In the back-office portion of the first floor is an additional utilitarian concrete stairway that descends into the middle of the basement. A third set of stairs led to the exterior from the basement; it remains but is inaccessible.

The full-height basement is a renovated space that features five guestrooms dispersed equally throughout. The rooms have been renovated from former utility spaces and contain their own individual washrooms. They are finished with drywall and contain contemporary carpeting or tile flooring. All light fixtures are also new

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 5

Bank of East Aurora
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

throughout. Small four-over-four aluminum-clad, double-hung wood windows admit light and air via window wells outside on the east, west, and south facing walls. The public stair from the banking hall leads to a corridor with slate tile flooring that splits off into two directions – to the east to nonoriginal doorways leading to five contemporary unisex washrooms and to the west to a mechanical room. Directly north of the washrooms is an open central area with new hardwood flooring and original brick walls on the north facing wall. An additional mechanical room is housed in the northwest corner of the basement. The basement’s original vault and money cage have remained intact, as has the primary public corridor of iron-spot brick. The original brick walls that make up the rear corridor, mechanical room, and vault have also not been altered.

Integrity

Work has been completed to restore the exterior and primary interior spaces to their original design based on the original drawings. Under the ownership of HSBC, rectangular plastic signs were installed on the building’s facade covering the historic frieze and cartouches. Exterior shutters were also placed on the outermost windows. The current owner has removed all these recent changes, and the cast stone detailing has been painted a darker shade of gray.

Overall, the Bank of East Aurora has retained a high degree of historic integrity. Its exterior design is almost entirely intact, retaining its original design, form, and materials with limited modifications. On the interior, the building retains most of its original plan and basic spatial divisions, despite the loss of all historic banking furniture and secondary room divisions. Key spaces, such as the main banking hall, rear portion, and entire second story, have all remained intact and withstood the various phases of development in the bank’s history. It also retains many original finishes, features, and decorative motifs, including vault doors, plaster walls and ceilings, stairs, wood paneled walls, crown moldings, and round-arched windows. The second-floor board room, the most intact interior space, retains paneled wainscot on the lower portions of the walls and a brick fireplace with classically inspired wood mantel centered on the east wall. Historic character-defining features, including vault doors, plaster walls and ceilings, stairs, and interior window openings, have been maintained and provide the building its historic character.

After undergoing two phases of remodeling after the period of significance, once in 1957 and again in 1994, some original elements were modified or replaced by the various bank owners. Since its most recent purchase in 2018, work has been done to restore a number of the interior features. Alterations that were made after the period of significance have been removed or modified to replicate its appearance from 1922. The following chart describes the current conditions of the Bank of East Aurora, listing the historic and non-historic elements in each of its main spaces as well as the changes that occurred outside of the period of significance.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

Section 7 Page 6

	Original Construction	1957 Alterations	1994 Alterations	2020 Construction
Exterior	Brick Masonry Walls Cast Stone Detailing Basement Window Wells Flat Roof	Front Entrance/ Vestibule Alterations, Side Entrance Door Drive-Thru Window Installed on Rear (1959)	Handicap Ramp Installed on Side	Replacement Windows "The Bank" Signage Exterior Metal Egress stair from 2 nd floor
Basement	Stairs – Layout, Material Concrete Floor, Masonry Walls, Vault Door & Money Cage	N/A	N/A	Drywall Partitions, Drywall Ceilings, Doors and Trim, Guestrooms – Layout, Fixtures & Finishes Washrooms – Layout, Fixtures & Finishes
Main Banking Hall	Hardwood & Tile Flooring, Plaster Walls, Plaster Ceiling, Door & Window Surrounds, Base & Crown Molding, Wainscot Paneling, Vault Door, Laylight Framing & Trim	Office Furniture Replaced, Front Entrance/ Vestibule Alterations, 2 nd Floor Balcony Removed, Removal of teller cages	Suspended acoustical tile ceiling & flush fluorescent lighting Replacement of furniture partitions, counters, and flooring	Laylight Glazing Light Fixtures
1st Floor Rear Portion	Stairs – Layout, Material, and Balustrade, Hardwood Flooring, Plaster Walls, Plaster Ceiling, Wall Base Trim Door & Door Trim, Window Trim	N/A	Replacement of furniture partitions, counters, and flooring	Light Fixtures, HVAC Ductwork, Washroom – Layout, Fixtures & Finishes, Commercial Kitchen - Layout, Fixtures & Finishes
2nd Floor Mezzanine	Stairs – Layout, Material, and Balustrade, Hardwood Flooring, Plaster Walls, Plaster Ceiling, Wall Base Trim Door & Door Trim, Window Trim, Vault Room & Vault Door, Interior Window Openings	N/A	Replacement of furniture partitions, and flooring	Washroom Fixture & Finishes, Vault Room Flooring, Interior Window Sash, Light Fixtures Egress door
2nd Floor Board Room	Hardwood Flooring, Plaster Walls, Plaster Ceiling, Door & Door Trim, Paneled Wainscot, Fireplace & Surround	N/A	Replacement of furniture partitions, and flooring	Light Fixtures

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 1

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

Statement of Significance:

The Bank of East Aurora building is significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a representative intact example of an early twentieth century Classical Revival style bank building. Built in 1922, the building was designed by Aaron Riley Merritt, a Buffalo architect responsible for many commercial and residential buildings in East Aurora. The bank is typical of many small, local banks constructed in the first half of the twentieth century in its use of Classical Revival design, which helped to establish trust in the public banking system, especially after the Great Depression. This was strategically implemented both to attract customers and to demonstrate the integrity of the banking institution and recently established Federal Reserve.¹ Compared to the design of the bank's previous buildings, the facade of the building drew on associations of solidity and permanence, often attributed to Classical architecture, to convey the impression of a fortified, secured building and a safe place for people's money. Character defining features on the bank's facade, such as the entablature, pilasters, cornice, and architrave, help reinforce this idea. Overall, the building has retained a high degree of integrity over the nearly hundred years of its history, despite numerous ownership phases. The exterior retains a high level of design integrity, while the interior has maintained many original finishes and the primary elements of its original layout. Its construction and building materials also reflect fireproof architectural trends from the period.

The building is also significant under Criterion A in the area of Commerce as an example of a small independent bank that supported the economic growth and prosperity of East Aurora for over a century. While this building, the bank's final location, dates to 1922, the bank's history dates to 1882 when the Bank of East Aurora was established as the earliest financial institution for East Aurora. In an era before large-scale bank consolidation and multi-branch banks, small independent banks, such as the Bank of East Aurora, were established in local villages and towns across the country to further local economic prosperity and growth. The Bank of East Aurora served the community as an independent bank from its establishment in 1882 until 1936, and its presence in the village facilitated the commercial development of East Aurora's Main Street. The period of significance starts with the bank's construction in 1922 and ends in 1936 when it became a member bank of the Marine Midland Corporation and expanded its financial services to serve customers beyond the Village of East Aurora.

Historic Overview of East Aurora

The first records of settlement in present-day East Aurora date to the presence of the Seneca Nation of Native Americans, one of six tribes that lived in western New York. With the arrival of European settlers, the Native Americans were gradually displaced from their land through a series of purchases and agreements made on their

¹ Landmarks Preservation Commission, Jamaica Savings Bank, Elmhurst Branch, Designation List 365, June 28, 2005.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 2

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

behalf. An agreement made in 1784 between the Six Nations and the United States granted the government the right to all land to the west of a defined boundary line between Lake Erie and Ontario.² In 1802 the area was surveyed by Joseph Ellicott and Jabez Warren of the Holland Land Company, which had also contracted with them to establish a road for future settlement to occur. The following year, Warren opened Big Tree Road, a path extending west towards Lake Erie. He purchased over 1,400 acres of land in and around the future East Aurora for \$2 an acre. The original forest was cleared by the settlers for dwellings and farming. By 1811, the newly titled village of Aurora had experienced a continuous growth of settler population and its first commercial businesses were established. The first store opened when two residents attempted to sell goods obtained from Buffalo from their log dwelling. Known as the Adams & Haskell firm, this initiative was thwarted by the lack of formal currency and minimal trading activity, likely by barter, forced the business to disband shortly after starting.

Settlers continued to arrive and develop several farms and commercial enterprises. They coalesced around two hamlets that became known as the Upper and Lower Villages of Aurora, although they operated in close relation to one another. The first successful commercial enterprise was achieved by Robert Persons in 1815 when he opened Aurora's first mercantile store. It is worth noting that Persons's descendant Henry would go on to be president of the Bank of East Aurora in 1882. The growing village's economy afforded the development of small businesses in the ensuing decades, and civic leaders made efforts to connect Aurora's economy with outside towns and villages. In 1853, an attempt was made to establish a railroad from Buffalo to Aurora that would extend to Pittsburgh. However, this connection was not achieved until the Buffalo and Washington Railroad Company was formed and created a rail line in 1867.³ This connection allowed for travel and the shipment of goods to occur at a faster pace, broadening access to distant markets, especially for agricultural commodities that were the mainstay of the local economy.

Once travel between Buffalo and the village was made more efficient, Aurora's agricultural economy was able to diversify. Early farmers were able to make a livelihood by operating "mixed" farms that raised a combination of wheat and livestock that could be sold outside of the township. This agricultural success led to the creation of an environment that allowed for merchants to establish themselves. As the area continued to grow and early industries were developed, farmers simultaneously transitioned towards the production of cheese and other dairy products. By 1860, Aurora had developed a number of independently owned cheese factories. As in other Western New York communities, with the advent of railroad transport came the opportunity to grow food to feed cattle who produced milk that could be made into cheese, adding economic value at each step of the production chain and adding economic reach across a wider population base regionally. In 1879 factory owner Harvey Richardson and his partner, Wellington Beebe, took the next logical step of consolidating this industry by establishing the "Cloverfield Combination" of cheese factories. With this innovation, dairy factories

² Lyman Morris Smith, *Historical High Lights of East Aurora and Vicinity 1940* (Athenaeum: Holland, NY)

³ Aurora Historical Society, Inc. *150 Years in Aurora: A History of the Township* (n.p.: Niagara Frontier Publishing Co. Inc, 1968).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 3

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

throughout Erie County were able to ship cheese products to a building erected by Richardson in East Aurora. There they would process and ship the products using the rail system. Within four years of business, Richardson, Beebe, & Co. oversaw fourteen individual factories in seven towns throughout the Niagara Frontier region.⁴

In 1873, the developing Lower Village had expanded its corporation to include the Upper Village and agreed to combine the two into a unified government. The aptly renamed village of East Aurora's next development was to become a destination for wealthier residents from Buffalo to establish rural residences before the turn of the century, when Buffalo was one of the nation's industrial boomtowns. One of the reasons for this shift was the establishment of the Roycroft Campus (NR listed) by Elbert Hubbard in 1897. Inspired by the European Arts and Crafts Movement, Hubbard grew his campus into fourteen individual buildings to house and employ visiting crafters and artists. At its height, over 500 craftspeople were employed on the campus, bringing East Aurora a heightened economic and cultural prominence.⁵ A description of the village from this time summarizes the growth that it experienced in this period. In 1898, East Aurora was characterized as "an attractive, thrifty village with every local advantage. It seems unnecessary to enumerate the various business and other establishments because of their number and diversified character."⁶

Elbert Hubbard became East Aurora's most famous resident. As a worldwide celebrity by today's standards, Hubbard became wealthy. There is no evidence that he was associated with the Bank of East Aurora as a founder or customer, but his example helps illustrate the banking landscape of the era. According to East Aurora historian Robert Goller, Hubbard and people of his wealth were, in effect, their own banks and did not need the services and security of the financial institutions that were emerging at the time to serve most people.⁷

By the start of the twentieth century, East Aurora's population had grown to 2,300 residents, creating an opportunity for more commercial businesses to establish themselves.⁸ It was in this context that Bank of East Aurora was able to expand to a new location and serve the local community.

Banking Industry in the Niagara Frontier

Formal financial institutions as they are known today were unknown in the early decades of the nineteenth century on the Niagara Frontier. Financial transactions at the time were frequently conducted with personal

⁴ Henry Perry Smith, *History of the City of Buffalo and Erie County: With Illus. and Biographical Sketches of Some of Its Prominent Men and Pioneers*, Volume 1 (Buffalo: D. Mason & Company, 1884).

⁵ Roycroft Campus, *Campus History*, 2014.

⁶ Edgar Emerson, *Our County and its people. A descriptive work on Erie County, New York* (n.p.: Boston History Company, 1898), 305.

⁷ Robert Goller, Interview, March 11, 2020.

⁸ [Census of Population and Housing.](#) Census.gov. Archived from the original on April 26, 2015.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

Section 8 Page 4

notes based on the value of one's property or based on the borrower's credit or by barter. The exchange of currency was done only by a select few wealthy individuals and businessmen with accounts based in major cities such as Buffalo. One of the key figures in this system was Benjamin Rathbun, a prominent business owner and land developer who shaped Buffalo's economy in the 1830s. Quickly establishing himself as a business owner and land developer, he acquired a fortune by engaging in real estate, merchandising, and the construction and creation of various commercial businesses. At the height of his influence, he employed a third of Buffalo's population and was in control of Buffalo's earliest banks. His successful empire ended dramatically when he was convicted of forging signatures on transaction notes in 1836.⁹

The fallout caused by Rathbun's failure directly contributed to the financial crisis of 1837, which had a profound economic impact both locally and nationally. In Buffalo, all those who were connected to Rathbun's enterprises were suddenly faced with a drastic change. In the words of memoirist Julia Snow, "It was a city of dreams and had a rude awakening. None escaped, some were crushed, all injured, all suffered."¹⁰ Developing areas in the Niagara Frontier, such as Aurora, were also faced with challenges. Residents contended with a shortage of money and the ability to make payments on their property.¹¹ Historic descriptions of Aurora's economy at this time reveal that:

Nearly every man was a farmer and nearly every farmer had run in debt for the principal part of the purchase money of his land, and although the price was low – ranging from two to five dollars per acre – it had been found very hard to pay it. But there was constant immigration into the town, and those who could not pay frequently sold at a handsome profit to those who could.

The settlement grew dramatically with this immigration to include twenty to thirty sawmills, several grist mills, an oil mill, carding machines and fulling mills, and two tanneries. Erie County's first railroad was incorporated here. As a result of this growth...

for several years strong hopes of its construction were entertained.

These and other hopes were crushed by the great financial crisis of 1836 and 1837, which was probably felt more severely in Aurora than in most other country towns. It was a very dull town for many years afterward.¹²

It took nearly fifty years to recover. It was only after small villages and towns became more financially stable that business leaders began to form their own banking institutions when there was money to be saved, more

⁹ "Far-Sighted Builder-Promoter Creates Vast Financial Empire," *The Rathbun-Rathbone-Rathburn Family Historian*, Volume 2, Number 1, January 1982.

¹⁰ *Publications of the Buffalo Historical Society*, Volume XVII, edited by Frank H. Severance, Buffalo, NY, 1913, 132.

¹¹ Aurora Historical Society, Inc. *150 Years in Aurora: A History of the Township* (n.p: Niagara Frontier Publishing Co. Inc, 1968).

¹² Smith, *History of Erie County*, 524-541.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 5

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

than what one wanted to keep at home, and when loaning it could produce interest income. In the case of Aurora, this change occurred as a result of the village's connection to the developing rail system and the establishment of the Roycroft Campus in the 1880s that grew wealth. The development of commercial businesses that ensued created an opportunity for the Bank of East Aurora to establish itself as the first permanent bank in the village in 1882. It served as the sole bank in East Aurora until the establishment of the First National Bank of East Aurora in 1911, nearly a generation later.

Each bank began as an independent business that was locally owned and operated out of one building. Anchors of their communities, independent banks had a firm knowledge about their markets and served as a trusted place for local businesses to deposit their money.¹³ While large cities were able to afford the establishment of numerous banks to accommodate larger populations and a broader array of services, smaller towns and villages had one or two banks to handle all their transactions, and most operated from a single building to which a customer traveled to do business. On the Niagara Frontier, the first branch bank opened when George Rand of Buffalo, after having served as president of the Columbia National Bank of Buffalo, established a branch of the Marine Midland Bank in the Cold Spring section of the city around 1900. As the use and usefulness of banks grew in the 1920s, these individual businesses were permitted by state laws to merge under a unified financial institution. Known as branch banking, this allowed for one bank to provide financial services with the support of a larger financial institution.¹⁴ Among the first to take advantage of this new business method, with its incorporation in September of 1929, the newly named Marine Trust was organized with the purpose "of acquiring a controlling interest in the stock of various banks and trust companies in the State of New York."¹⁵ Eventually this included the Bank of East Aurora.

The 1920s saw the establishment of several independently owned banks in suburban and rural communities. Economic growth that was spurred by increased spending at a national level created an opportunity for independent banks to expand their operations and open in new communities. In this period, banks opened throughout the Buffalo-Niagara region and were able to operate independently, among them the Bank of Niagara in Niagara Falls. With the onset of the Great Depression, however, Western New York banks were among those in the nation forced to temporarily cease their operations due to a shortage of capital. Following World War II, a number of these banks returned to prominence by offering new financial services to their customers. America's financial stability and increases in consumer wealth and spending created the opportunity for banks to offer loans and debit cards in the 1950s and 1960s.¹⁶

¹³ "What is an Independent Bank?" bankrate.com.

¹⁴ "Branch Banking vs. Unit Banking," diffen.com.

¹⁵ U.S. Government Printing Office, "Branch, Chain, and Group Banking" *US Congress House Committee on Banking and Currency*, 1930.

¹⁶ Melisande Mual, *The evolution of the bank account- Part II: A New Hope, Voice of the Industry*, November 15, 2017.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 6

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

At the height of its operation, the rebranded Marine Midland Corporation was the third-largest bank holding company in the United States and the twelfth largest banking system. In 1955, the corporation had reached an agreement with the Jamaica National Bank in Queens, New York, to acquire its stock, signifying its expansion beyond the Western New York region.¹⁷ It continued to acquire other banks throughout the 1970s, reaching worldwide. This greater reach exposed it to greater risks, and it got into financial trouble in South America. In 1976 it sold itself to the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC), a venerable international institution that grew from the British Empire's heyday after its founding in British Hong Kong in 1865. HSBC's presence in Western New York gradually overshadowed that of Marine Midland and in 1987 the latter was formally subsumed into the international banking company. The last remaining evidence of Marine Midland's presence was removed in 1999 when the HSBC logo was introduced on all branches under HSBC's control.¹⁸

History of the Bank of East Aurora

The Bank of East Aurora, Aurora's first financial institution, was opened in 1882 by East Aurora native and businessman Henry Z. Persons. After serving as postmaster, Persons opened a general store that he ran with his family. He then branched out and established a formal banking operation that was physically connected to the store. Located at 710 Main Street (extant), the bank became the main business of Persons, who passed on ownership of the general store to his son. The bank's presence gave East Aurora businesses the option of placing their money in a permanent, trustworthy institution for the first time. Among the original depositors were many local businesses that shaped the village's development. A list of original depositors reveals that businessman and future bank president Henry Richardson used the Bank of East Aurora to hold funds for his growing cheese manufacturing business.¹⁹ Stephen Clark acted as the initial president of the bank until 1885. He resided in Buffalo and traveled to East Aurora to maintain the bank periodically, perhaps while visiting his summer home there. In the words of Persons, Clark "never took a very active part in the management of the bank."²⁰

After nine years at his first location, Persons sought to grow the bank at a larger facility. He commissioned the prominent Buffalo-based architects Robert and Louise Bethune to design a new two-story Richardson Romanesque-style building that was erected next door at 706 Main Street in 1890 (also extant). It was at this location that the bank experienced commercial success as the village developed. In addition to receiving over \$1,800,000 in deposits, the bank's capitalization, a representation of its net worth, reached \$150,000.²¹

¹⁷ *Lockport Union Sun Journal*, "Midland Seeks Jamaica National," April 20, 1955.

¹⁸ Susan Eck, *The Marine by Any Other Name & Address: Part 2, Western New York History*, 2017.

¹⁹ *The Bank of East Aurora 50th Anniversary Dinner*, 1932.

²⁰ Court of Appeals, "Jacob Paramerter v. John J Fitzpatrick Case and Exceptions" (n.p.: J.W. Tuttle & Co. Printers, 1891).

²¹ *East Aurora Advertiser*, "New Bank Building Opened to the Public Last Monday."

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 7

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

By the 1920s, the bank maintained growth in capital as banking became a more standard feature in suburban and rural communities throughout Western New York. The passing of the Federal Reserve Act in 1913 helped to increase trust in the banking system and created a higher demand for community-based banks in developing communities across the country. In 1922, the bank increased its capital twice in the month of July for a total of \$265,000.²² That same year, construction began for the nominated building at 649 Main Street. The decision to relocate the bank a second time corresponded to the period when the banking industry founded a number of new banks in the region. The building was built to the design of Aaron Riley Merritt of Buffalo, an architect with local ties to the village as a descendent of some of its pioneering settlers. Construction was overseen by the Linwood Construction Company, a Buffalo-based organization that was contracted for several projects by the Marine Trust Company. Its president, George P. Lechner, worked on a number of other banking projects and served as a director of Interbank Investors, an organization that oversaw the operations of the State Bank of Kenmore and the Bank of Attica, among others.²³ The bank's construction also utilized the services of local businesses: Irving G. Meinecke for the building's heating & ventilating system; Andrews Household Shop for window shades; George H. Vankeuren for plumbing & hardware, Frederick Truscott & Son Co, for electrical work; interior furnishings were by John T. Coit, who operated a business at 760 East Main Street; and lighting fixtures were by the Robertson-Cataract Electric Company of Buffalo.²⁴ The latter business had its headquarters (built in 1915–1916) at 100 S. Elmwood Avenue, off Niagara Square (National Register listed).

The Bank of East Aurora was designed by Merritt with several features that made it noteworthy at the time of its construction. Advertisements from the period promoted its safety by describing its state-of-the-art vaults and equipment. The main vault, located prominently in the building's main banking space, contained a 7-ton, 10-inch-thick steel door that "is so delicately balanced that the pull of a small rubber band will swing it." Additional amenities included a basement storage space for valuables and a designated women's retiring room and restroom. Tellers were also able to communicate with bookkeepers and other departments via "electric devices."²⁵ The construction was fireproof and burglary-proof due to its durable non-combustible building materials, important at the time when much of the village downtown was of wood construction. The new Bank of East Aurora opened to the public on February 19, 1923. It became a centerpiece of East Aurora's developing Main Street, described as "one of the most modern and completely equipped banks for communities of this size in this end of the state."²⁶ Board members at the opening of the new building were Henry Persons, chair; his

²² New York State Banking Department, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of the Banking Department of the State of New York, Part 1*, 1923.

²³ *Buffalo Courier Express*, September 4, 1929.

²⁴ *East Aurora Advertiser*, February 22, 1923.

²⁵ *East Aurora Advertiser*, "New Bank Building Opened to the Public Last Monday."

²⁶ *East Aurora Advertiser*, "Banking Institution Has Fiftieth Birthday Today."

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 8

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

son, Richard Persons, president; Arthur Mitchell, vice-president; Niles Barnum, cashier; and Earl Marks, assistant cashier.²⁷

In 1936, directors of the Bank of East Aurora approved a merger plan with the Marine Trust Company of Western New York. In addition to East Aurora, the corporation acquired eleven other banks in surrounding towns and villages. Among these were the State Trust Company of North Tonawanda, the Lackawanna National Bank, and the Bank of Snyder.²⁸ The merger allowed the East Aurora branch to connect with other small branch banks in the region and to expand its lending capabilities for customers. Operating under the title of the Marine Trust Company's East Aurora Office, the bank was able to retain its ties to the local community while operating within a larger regional capacity.

After the Period of Significance (1936-Present)

After becoming a branch of the Marine Trust Company, the bank was remodeled by an unknown architect in 1957. Keeping the same layout, the architect replaced the building's original fixtures and furnishings throughout to create a more contemporary image. As with many other banks in this era, high teller cages were replaced by low countertops and the traditional design elements that were installed to project a sense of financial security were eliminated in favor of open and welcoming features that sought to draw customers into a financial partnership. These changes included alterations to the vestibule configuration, removal of the second-floor balcony, removal of the built office furniture along the perimeter, and the replacement of the original teller cages with walnut counters.²⁹ Historic photographs of the bank's main hall (Image 12) reveal original window surrounds, light fixtures, and furniture that were also likely replaced. In 1959, a drive-in window was installed in the rear of the building to allow customers to access the bank from their motor vehicles.³⁰ A separate drive-through building was later built behind the bank in the expanded parking lot to replace the original drive-in window.

By the 1960s, the Marine Trust Company had acquired eleven more banks throughout New York State, extending as far east as Queens, New York. Rebranded as the Marine Midland Trust Company of Western New York, the company had grown to become the dominant banking organization in the state. As a result of this expansion, its member banks were able to further extend their lending capabilities and compete with other intrastate banking corporations. The Bank of East Aurora was among those branches of Marine Midland that witnessed a steady increase in business in the postwar era by offering loans and other financial services to a

²⁷ "New Bank Building Opening to the Public Last Monday," *East Aurora Advertiser*, February 22, 1923.

²⁸ U.S. Government Printing Office, "Branch, Chain, and Group Banking," *US Congress House Committee on Banking and Currency*, 1930.

²⁹ *East Aurora Advertiser*, "Niles Barnum Tells About Early Banking Business," August 10, 1972.

³⁰ *East Aurora Advertiser*, "Marine Trust EA Office to Install Drive-in Window," August 6, 1959.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 9

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

wider market. Coupled with its modified interior and drive-thru capabilities, the bank was able to sustain itself as a permanent feature of East Aurora's commercial Main Street. In 1962 ownership of the bank was transferred to the Marine Midland Company, formalizing its association with the consolidation and expansion of the banking industry beyond Western New York.

The next phase of the bank's history occurred in 1987, when Marine Midland became a subsidiary of the international Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation. As part of the agreement, all branches under Marine's control would become HSBC branches. Operating under the name Marine Midland Bank National Association, the East Aurora bank became one of several branches to succumb in 1989.

In 1994 a remodeling by Western New York architects CannonDesign further altered the bank's interior appearance, especially in furniture, fixtures, and equipment. These included the replacement of furniture, partitions, counters, and flooring with more contemporary finishes on both the first and second stories. Additional changes included the installation of a suspended acoustical tile ceiling with flush fluorescent lighting in the main banking hall space and a handicapped accessible ramp on the building's side entrance. Despite these changes, the character defining features and overall form remained intact, which allowed for these more recent modifications to be reversed in the current restoration.

The property remained in the hands of HSBC until the corporation sold its branches in 2011 as part of a global restructuring plan.³¹ In 2012 the bank then fell under the ownership of the locally based First Niagara Bank National Association, one of Western New York's largest banks, responsible for employing thousands of workers. During this period, the bank's interior underwent minor alterations to represent its new owner, while retaining its character-defining features. Following KeyBank's acquisition of First Niagara in 2016, many small-town branches were consolidated and closed, including the East Aurora branch. The decision to close the bank fits into the larger trend of banking corporations "investing in technology on the presumption that it will be an increasingly powerful force in the industry."³² Recently it has been purchased by a new owner who has adapted the space for events while restoring the building based on its original drawings and character as a bank, making the Bank of East Aurora a central feature of the village once again.³³

Architecture and Design

As built, the Bank of East Aurora fit into the larger national architectural movement known as the Classical Revival. Public buildings such as banks, government buildings, post offices, and museums that were built in the early decades of the twentieth century were designed by architects to reinforce a strong civic presence that

³¹ Susan Eck, *The Marine by Any Other Name & Address: Part 2*.

³² Dan Miner, "M&T Bank creates tech startup amidst focus on innovation," *Buffalo Business First*, March 4, 2020.

³³ Jane Kwiatkowski, "Call it a BB&B: East Aurora bank becomes bed and breakfast," *Buffalo News*, February 14, 2020.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 10

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

harkened back to Roman and Greek architecture for its influences. Following the Chicago World's Fair in 1893, small towns and villages began to utilize classical designs to add prestige to small Main Streets. Character defining features on the bank's facade, such as the entablature, pilasters, cornice, and architrave help reinforce this idea. The bank's formal design helped to spark Main Street's commercial growth and character as it is seen today. Before the construction of the bank at 659 Main Street, Main Street was the location for several wood-frame residences. The ensuing decades saw the development of Main Street's brick commercial storefronts that define the area currently. The only other notable example of Classical Revival architecture in the village is the Masonic Temple building adjacent to the bank, which was built in 1906.

In addition to enhancing the design of suburban communities, the use of Classical Revival architecture helped to establish trust in the public banking system. Banks built in the early decades of the twentieth century were characterized by prioritizing security with the use of classical motifs and protected stone facades. This was strategically implemented both to attract customers and demonstrate the integrity of the banking institution and recently established Federal Reserve.³⁴ Compared to the design of its previous buildings, the facade of the 1922 building immediately gives the impression of a fortified, guarded building. The primary entrance is recessed within a set of full-height arches and is only accessible by a set of steps. It is also worth noting that the building was designed to have entirely fireproof architecture. Constructed entirely of brick, concrete, and steel, the Bank of East Aurora was the only building on Main Street to have this trait at the time of its construction. Other buildings identified on Sanborn maps are revealed to be of brick construction, such as the Bethunes' bank, but not fireproof. This feature was likely included to ensure the valuable contents of the bank were protected as well as for the safety of the downtown.

The idea of security also carried over to the bank's interior design. Focusing on the experience of its customers, Merritt originally designed the Bank of East Aurora to have a distinct separation between its public and private spaces. Upon entering the space, patrons were immediately greeted with the presence of the teller cages and desks used for their transactions. The bank's vault and safety deposit boxes were prominently located in a space that was highly visible and easily accessible to customers if they were permitted through the caged teller line. Conversely, the two additional vaults, used for customer's valuable possessions and bank files, were placed in areas inaccessible to the public, the basement, and the mezzanine. Private offices and file rooms were closed off, meant only to be accessible to employees. This is evident from the placement of the main staircase to the second floor to the rear of the first story.³⁵ Similarly, the vault's placement was chosen to be easily viewable from all angles, including the second story mezzanine's windows. These elements have all remained intact despite changes to the overall floorplan and the removal of ancillary rooms on the first story. The combination of these elements was implemented to ensure customers that their transactions were secure and their valuables were under a high degree of protection.

³⁴ Landmarks Preservation Commission, Jamaica Savings Bank, Elmhurst Branch, Designation List 365, June 28, 2005.

³⁵ *East Aurora Advertiser*, "New Bank Building Opened to the Public Last Monday," n.d.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 11

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

The Persons family

During its years of operation, ownership of the Bank of East Aurora was passed through three generations of the Persons family. The first president was Henry Z. Persons (1819-1901). Before becoming involved with the bank, he owned and operated H. Z. Persons & Co. at 710 Main Street in 1845. The business was founded in 1815 by his father, Robert, who arrived in 1815, aged 21. He purchased and completed an unfinished building at what is now the corner of Main and Olean Streets. There he opened the first permanent general store in Aurora. H. Z. Persons continued to work in the mercantile business until 1882, when he took on the role of vice-president of the newly founded Bank of East Aurora. During this period, Stephen Clark served as president. While Clark “never took a very active part in the management of the bank,” Persons recounted that “I was there every day looking after it.”³⁶ Following Clark’s departure and a brief tenure by Henry Richardson, Henry Persons became the third president of the bank. He also served as a supervisor of the Town of Aurora in 1869 and 1870. During this period, Henry’s son, Henry Hamilton Persons (1851-1925), was also involved with the bank. He began working as a cashier when it was founded and took on an active role after his father died in 1901. Continuing the legacy of his father and grandfather, Richard Persons (1877-1966) was in charge of the bank during its merger with the Marine Midland Corporation. In addition to this role, he served as an officer of the Marine Trust Company, chairman of the Park Commission of Erie County, and the first historian for the Town of Aurora.³⁷

Harvey W. Richardson

One of the bank’s founding directors and early presidents was also one of East Aurora’s most prominent and wealthy businessmen. Harvey Richardson began his career in the dairy industry owning and operating a cheese factory in the village. As cheese manufacturing became the primary means for farmers and merchants to earn money, Richardson developed a company that would unite the region’s individual factories under one organization. He established the “Cloverfield” combination factories in 1874, making East Aurora the epicenter for dairy manufacturing in the Niagara region. One of the factors that facilitated this achievement was a connection to the Bank of East Aurora. In addition to using the bank to deposit his money, Richardson served as one of the original stockholders when it was founded. Richardson was also associated with a number of other institutions around the village. Among them were the Free Spiritualist Temple, the East Aurora Land and Improvement Company, and the East Aurora Electric Light Company.³⁸

Summary

³⁶Court of Appeals, “Jacob Paramerter v. John J Fitzpatrick Case and Exceptions.”

³⁷ Aurora Historical Society, Inc., *150 Years in Aurora*.

³⁸ Robert Lowell Goller, *Legendary Locals of East Aurora* (n.p.: Arcadia Publishing, 2014).

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 12

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

The former Bank of East Aurora is a representative example of a twentieth-century financial institution. During its 134 years of operation, the bank maintained itself as a culturally and architecturally significant part of East Aurora's history. Its history is connected to the early growth and subsequent larger shifts in regional banking that occurred throughout the twentieth century, including the transitions from independent operation to a Marine Midland Corporation branch, to an HSBC subsidiary, and to a First Niagara Bank branch. Today, the Bank of East Aurora building is in the process of being restored to highlight its historically significant features and to remain an important part of civic life in East Aurora, NY.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

Section 9 Page 1

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

Section 9 Page 2

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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 9 Page 3

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

“What is an Independent Bank?” bankrate.com. <https://www.bankrate.com/glossary/i/independent-bank>

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 10 Page 1

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries are indicated with a heavy line on the attached boundary maps with scale.

Boundary Justification

The boundary reflects the current legal parcel associated with the property, which is the same as the historic boundary during the period of significance.

(Note: Aerial maps show a secondary building at the south of the nominated boundary, however, this building is not present.)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 2

Bank of East Aurora

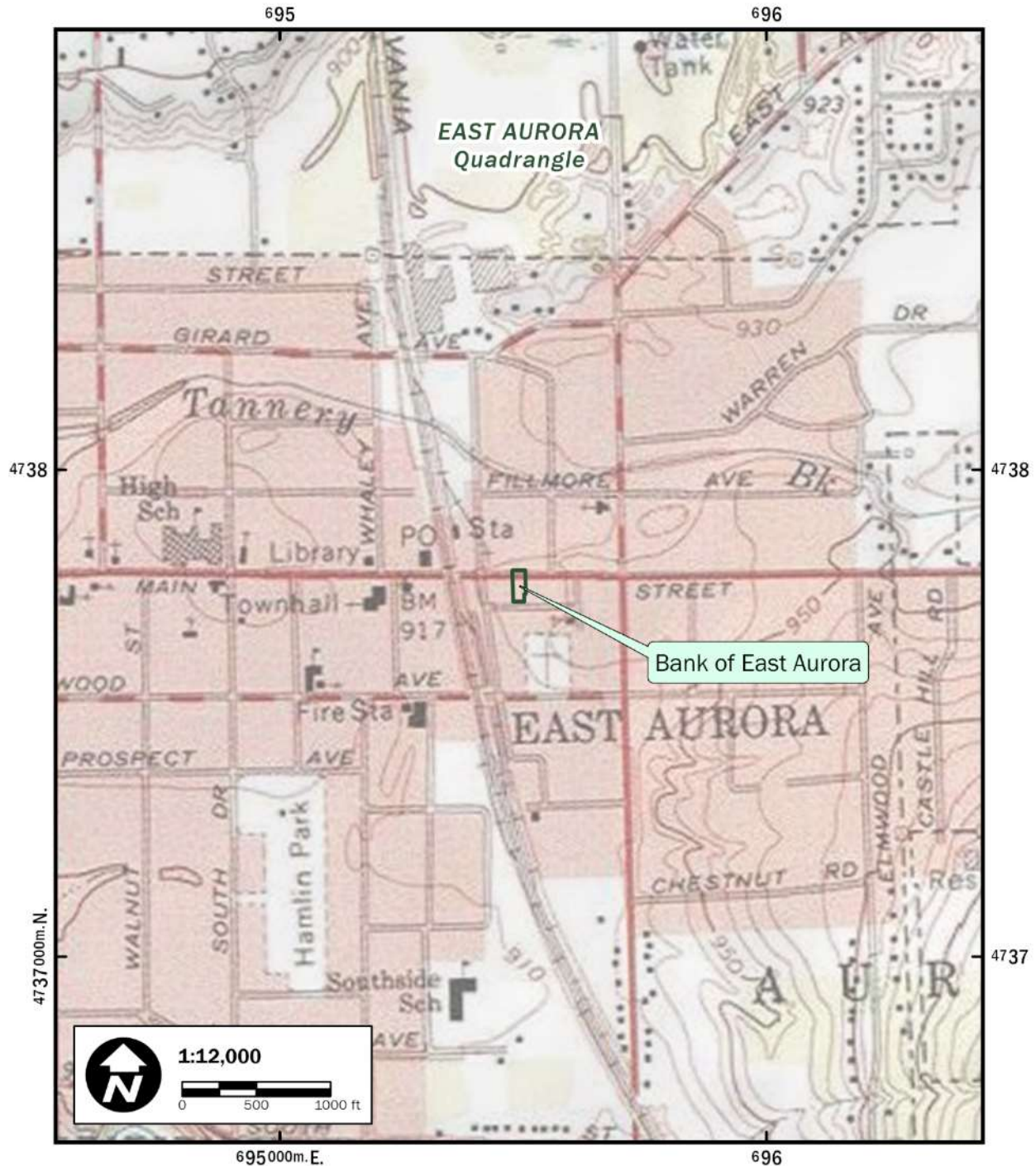
Name of Property

Erie County, New York


County and State

Bank of East Aurora
Village of East Aurora, Erie County, New York

649 Main Street
East Aurora, NY 14052



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter

 Bank of East Aurora



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 3

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

Bank of East Aurora
Village of East Aurora, Erie County, New York

649 Main Street
East Aurora, NY 14052



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 4

Bank of East Aurora

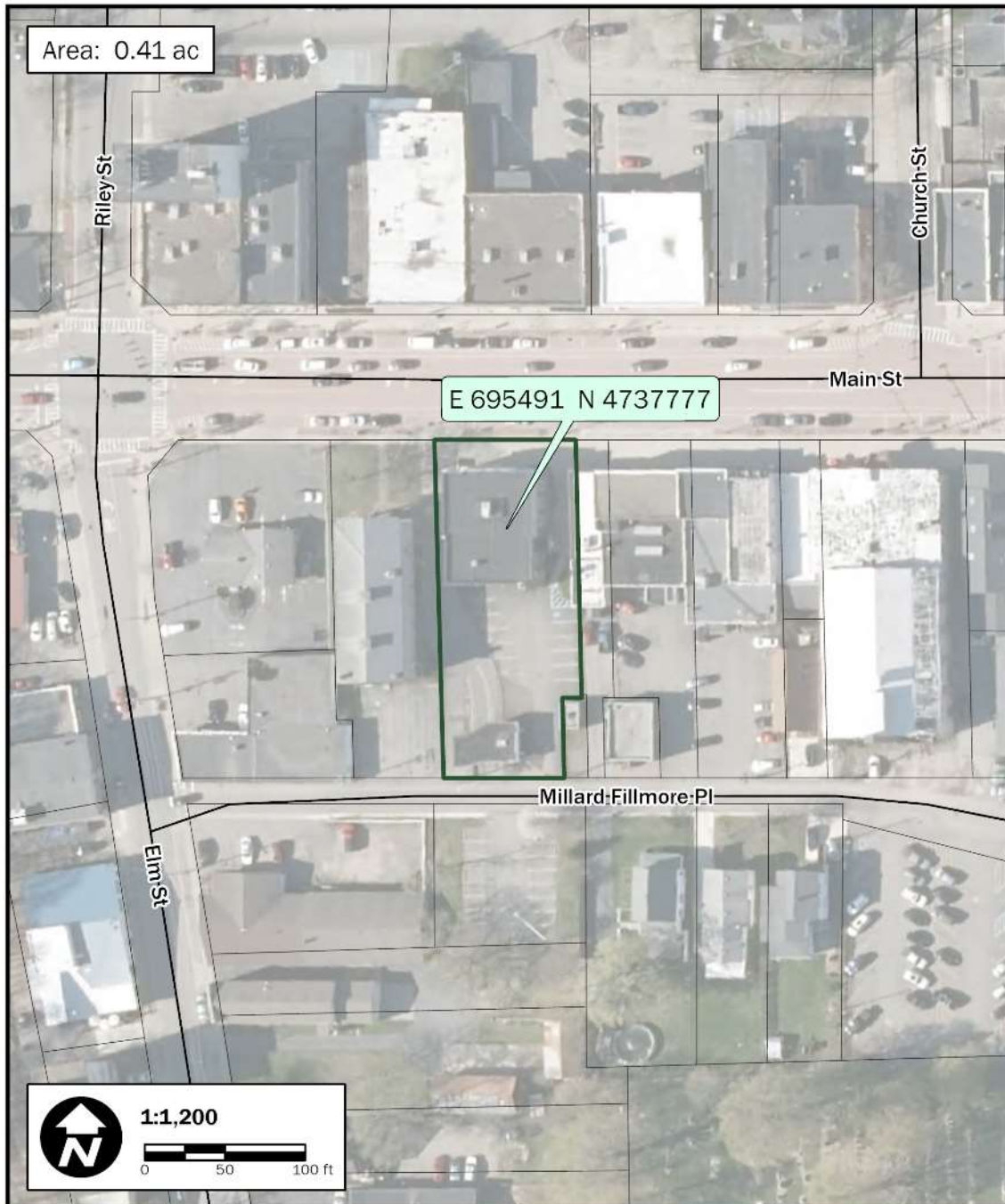
Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

Bank of East Aurora
Village of East Aurora, Erie County, New York

649 Main Street
East Aurora, NY 14052



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 1

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

Photo Log:

Name of Property: Bank of East Aurora
City of Vicinity: East Aurora
County: Erie
State: New York
Name of Photographer: Jill Nowicki, Todd Stine
Date of Photograph: March 2021
Location of Original Digital Files: CBCA, 403 Main Street, Suite 506, Buffalo, NY 14203
Number of Photographs: 11

0001: Façade and east (side) elevation

0002: Façade and west (side) elevation

0003: Façade, detail of front entrance

0004: Rear (south) elevation

0005: Interior, former bank lobby, looking southwest

0006: Interior, former bank lobby, looking northwest

0007: Interior, former bank lobby, looking southeast

0008: Interior, former bank offices, looking west

0009: Interior, former board room, looking southeast

0010: Interior, basement, looking northwest

0011: Interior, basement, looking west at bank vault

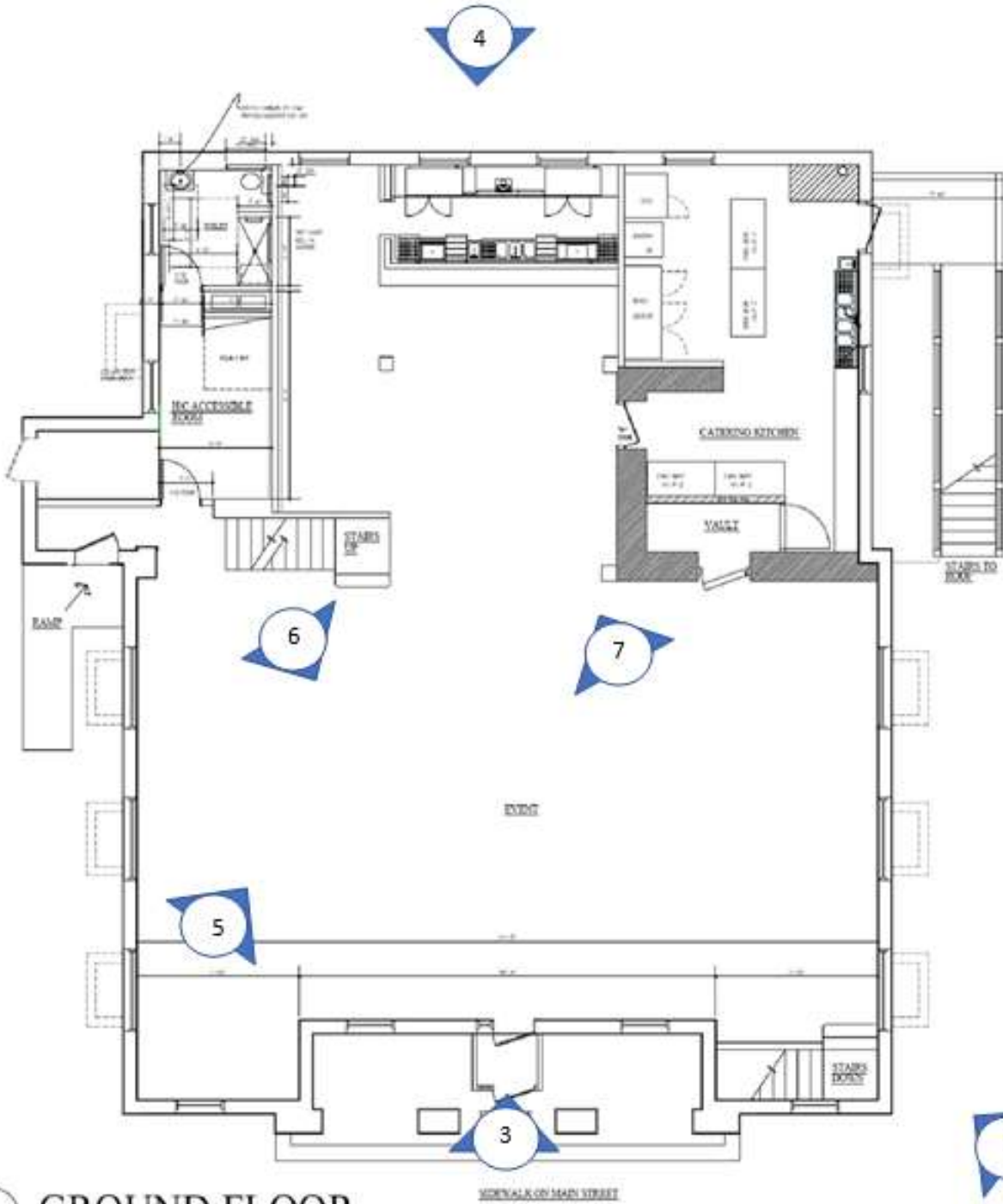
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 2

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State



GROUND FLOOR

NOT TO SCALE



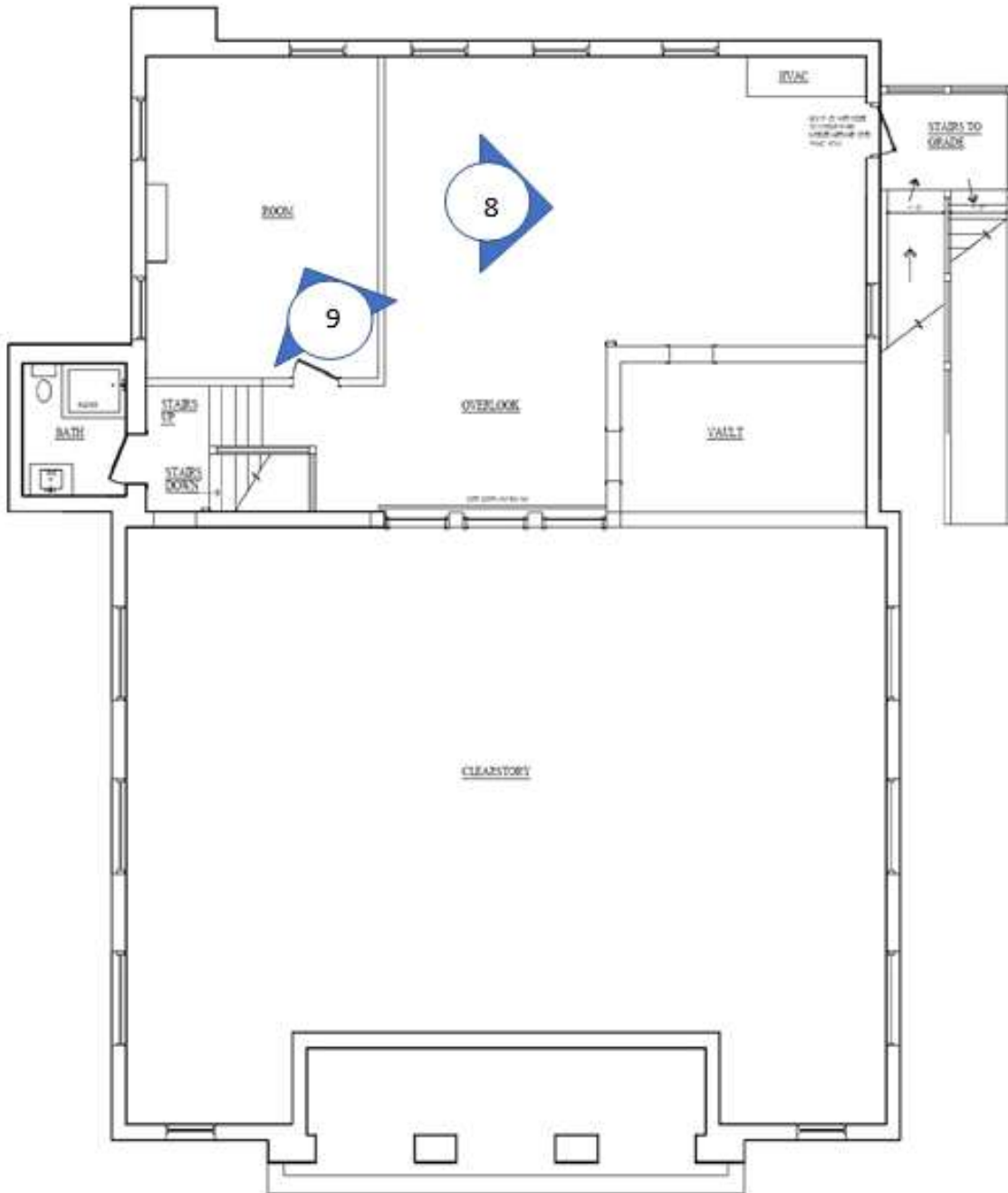
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 3

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State



 **UPPER FLOOR**
1999

NOT TO SCALE

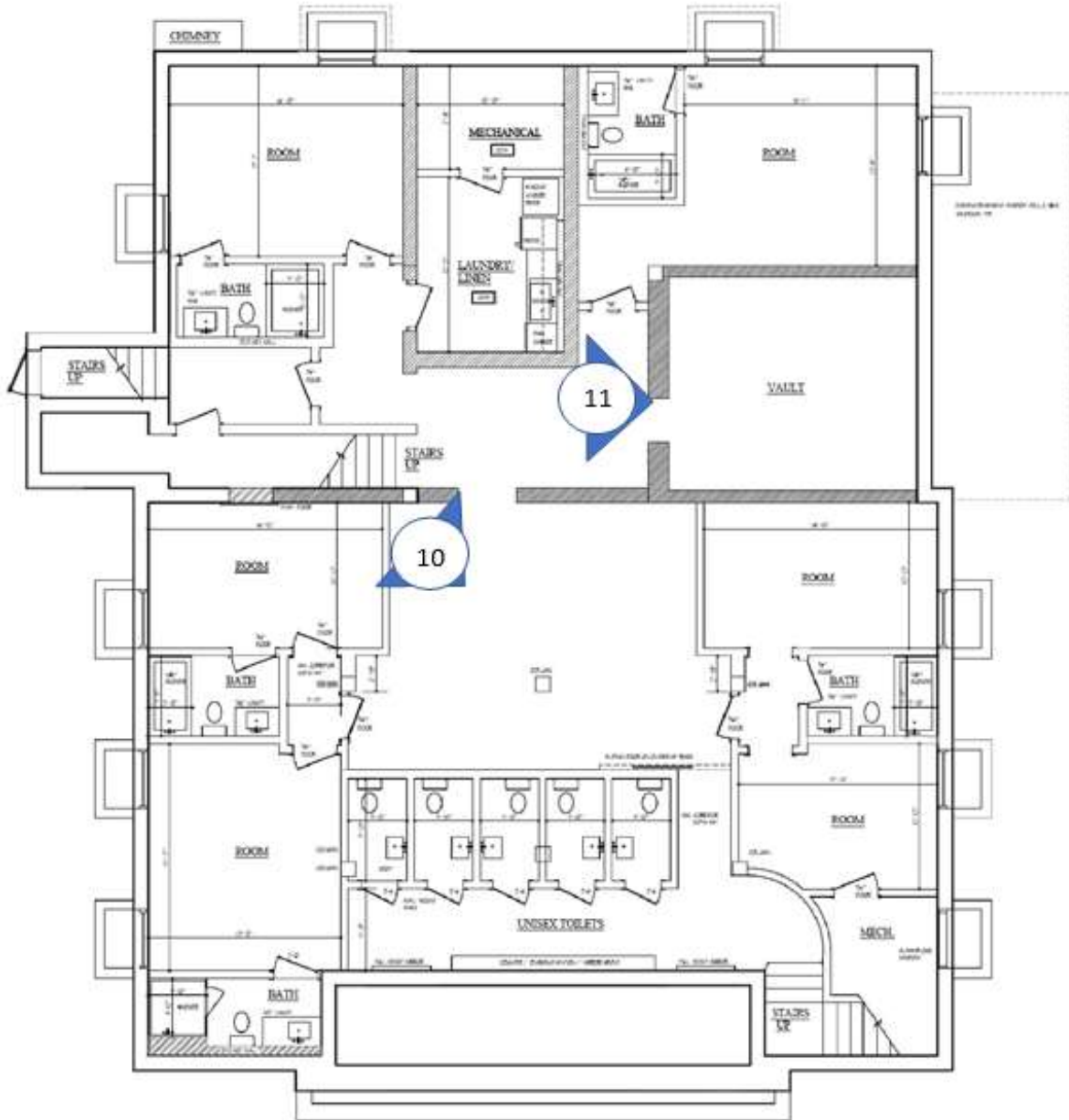
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

Section 11 Page 4



 **BASEMENT**
NOT TO SCALE

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 5

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

Additional Information

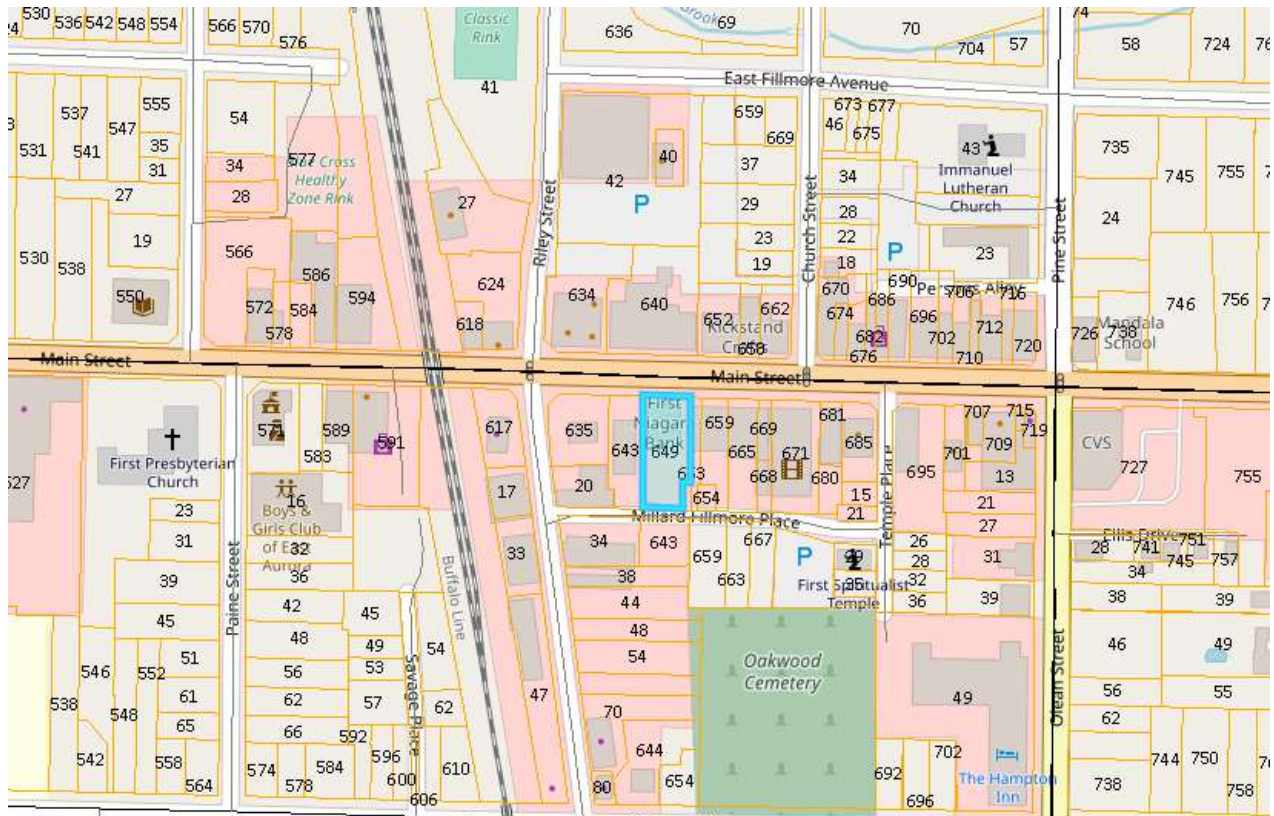


Image 1: Current Aerial View of the Bank of East Aurora
(Image Courtesy of Erie County GIS)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 6

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

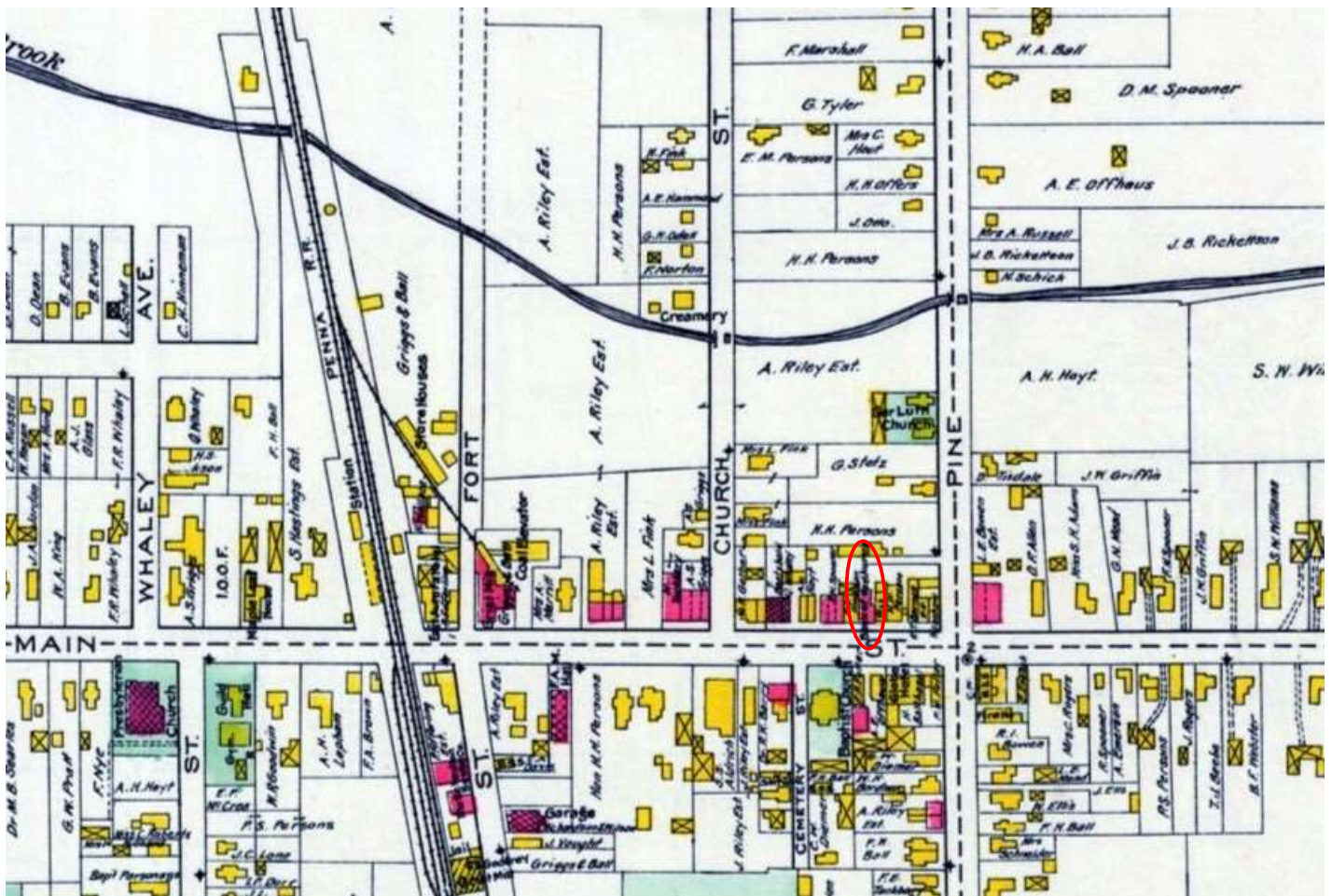


Image 2: The Bank of East Aurora (Outlined in red) on the 1909 Erie County Atlas, at its second location at 706 Main Street
(Image Courtesy of Historicmapworks.com)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 7

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

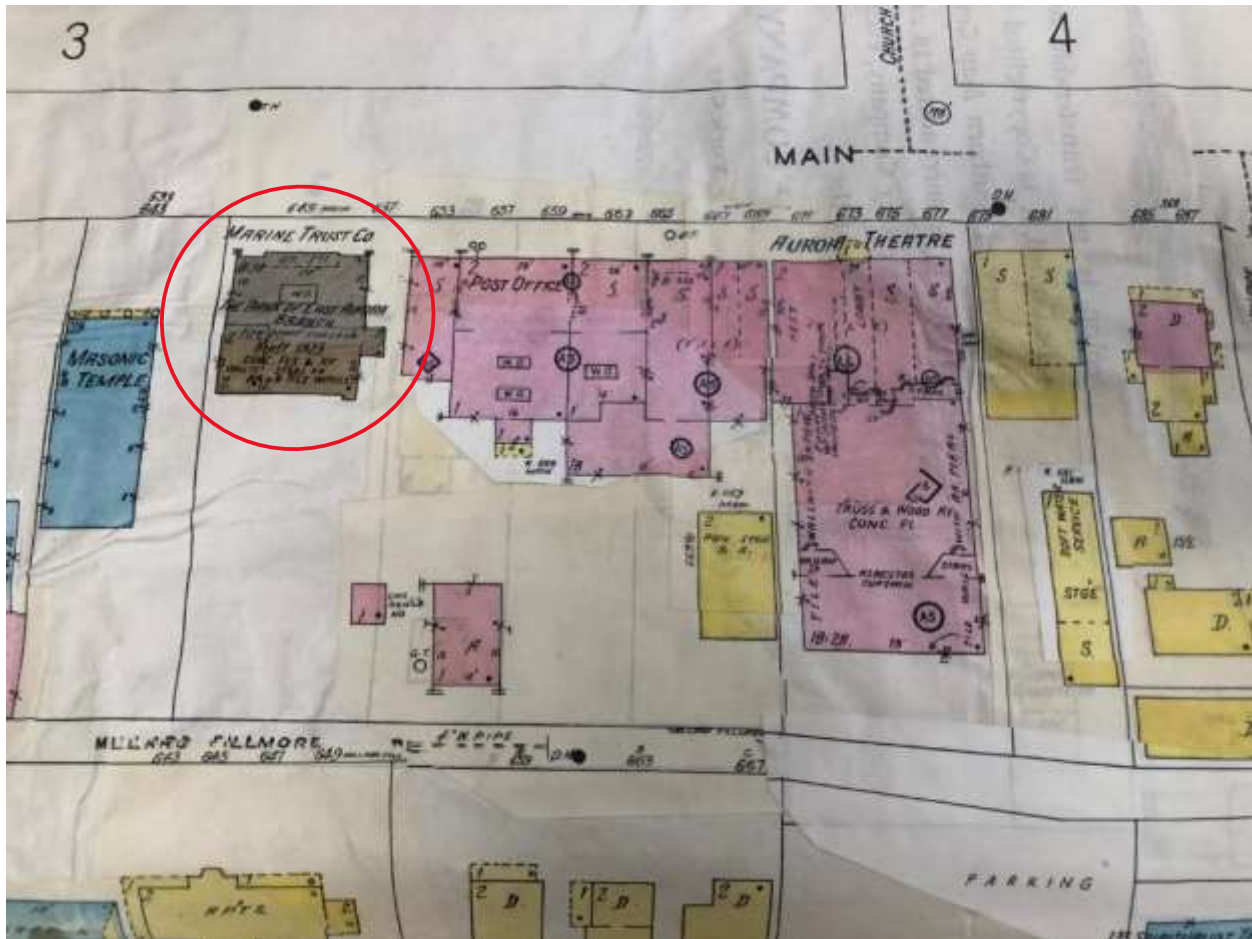


Image 3: The Bank of East Aurora (Outlined in red) on the 1927 Sanborn Map, the dark color represents a building with fireproof construction
(Image Courtesy of East Aurora Historian's Office)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 8

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State



Image 4: The original location of the Bank of East Aurora at 710 Main Street
(Image Courtesy of East Aurora Historian's Office)



Image 5: The second location of the Bank of East Aurora at 706 Main Street
(Image Courtesy of East Aurora Historian's Office)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 9

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

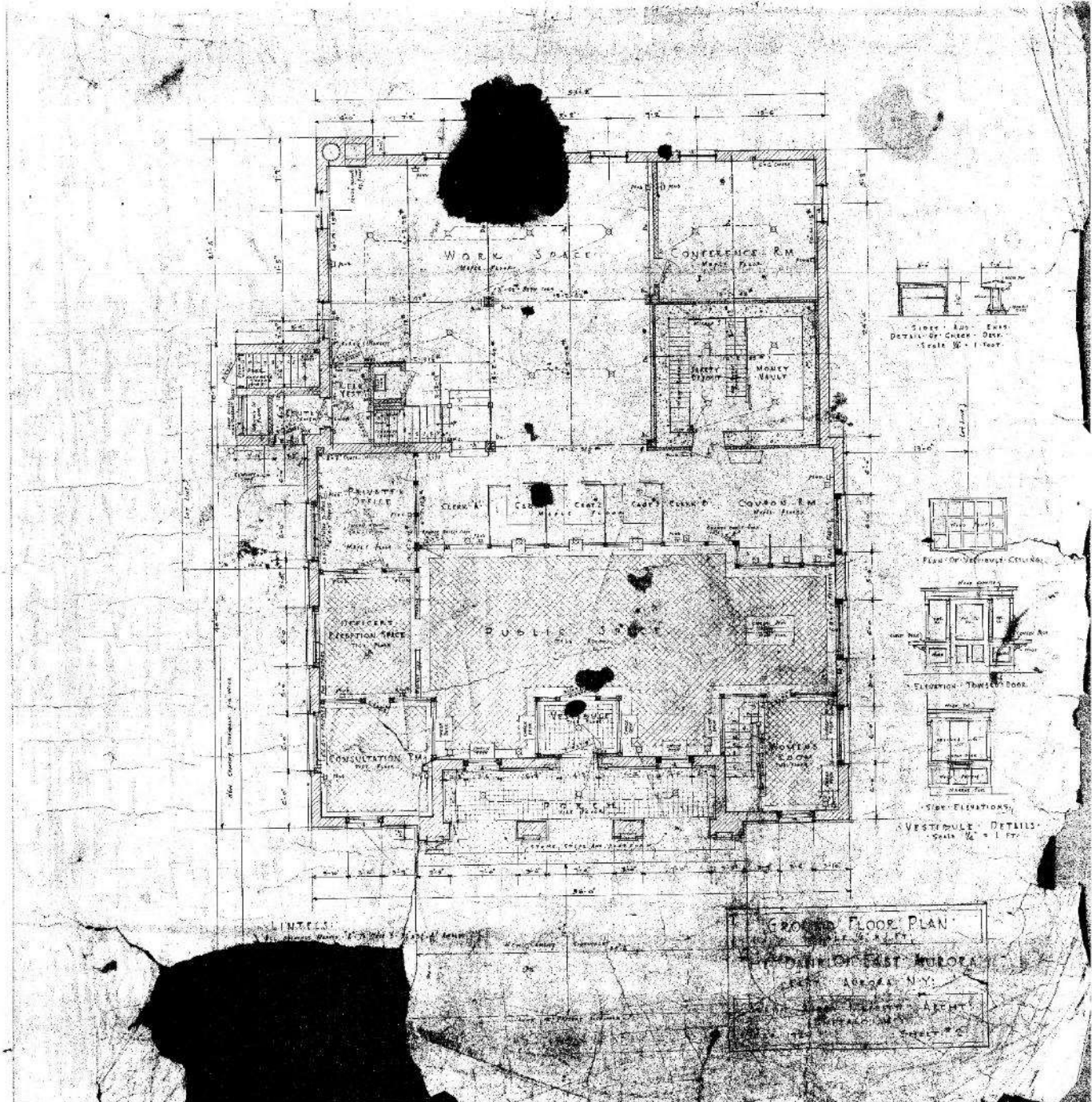


Image 6: Original Ground Floor Plan by Aaron Riley Merritt
(Image Courtesy of Todd Stein)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 10

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

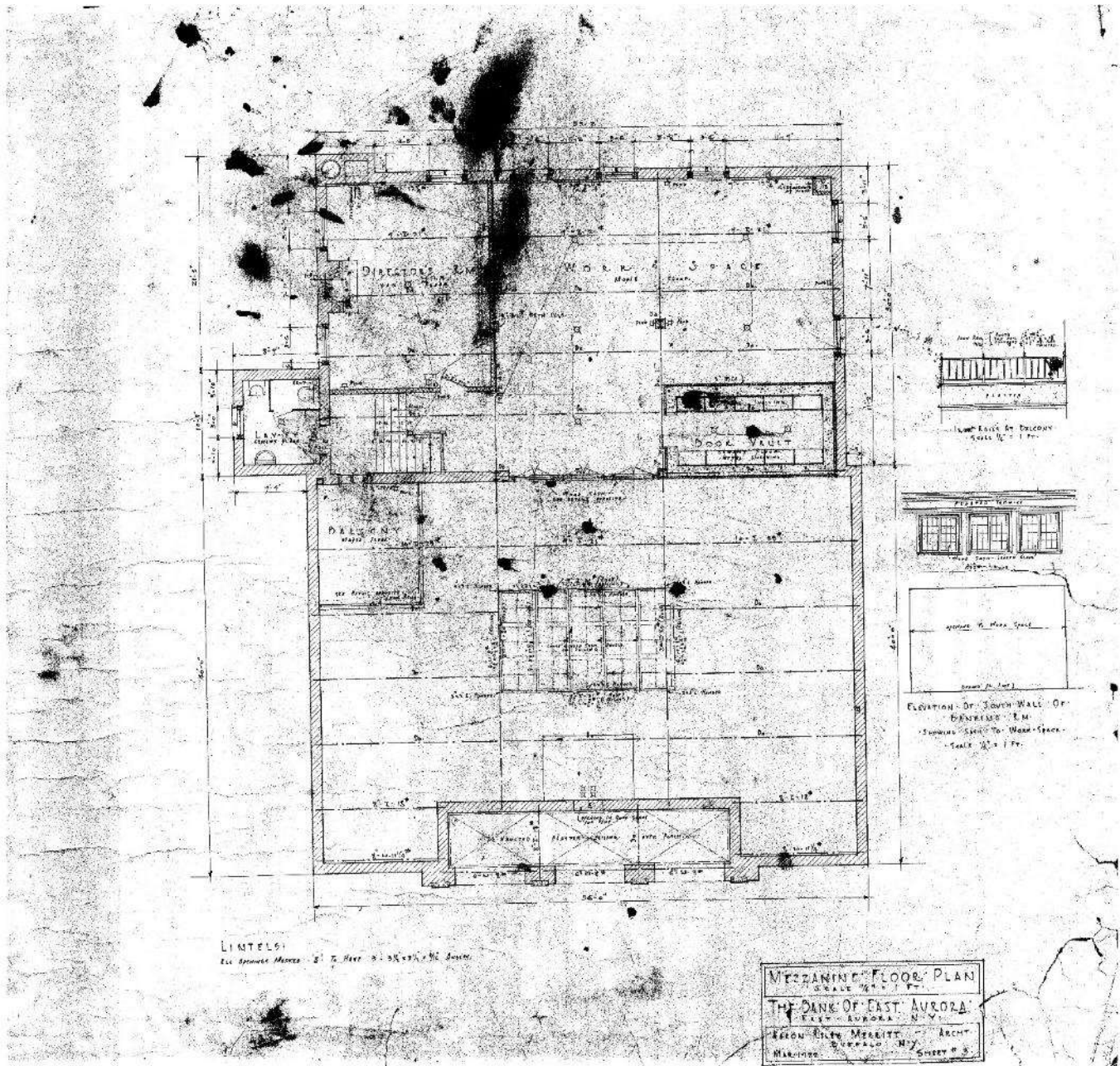


Image 7: Original Mezzanine Floor Plan by Aaron Riley Merritt
(Image Courtesy of Todd Stein)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 11

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

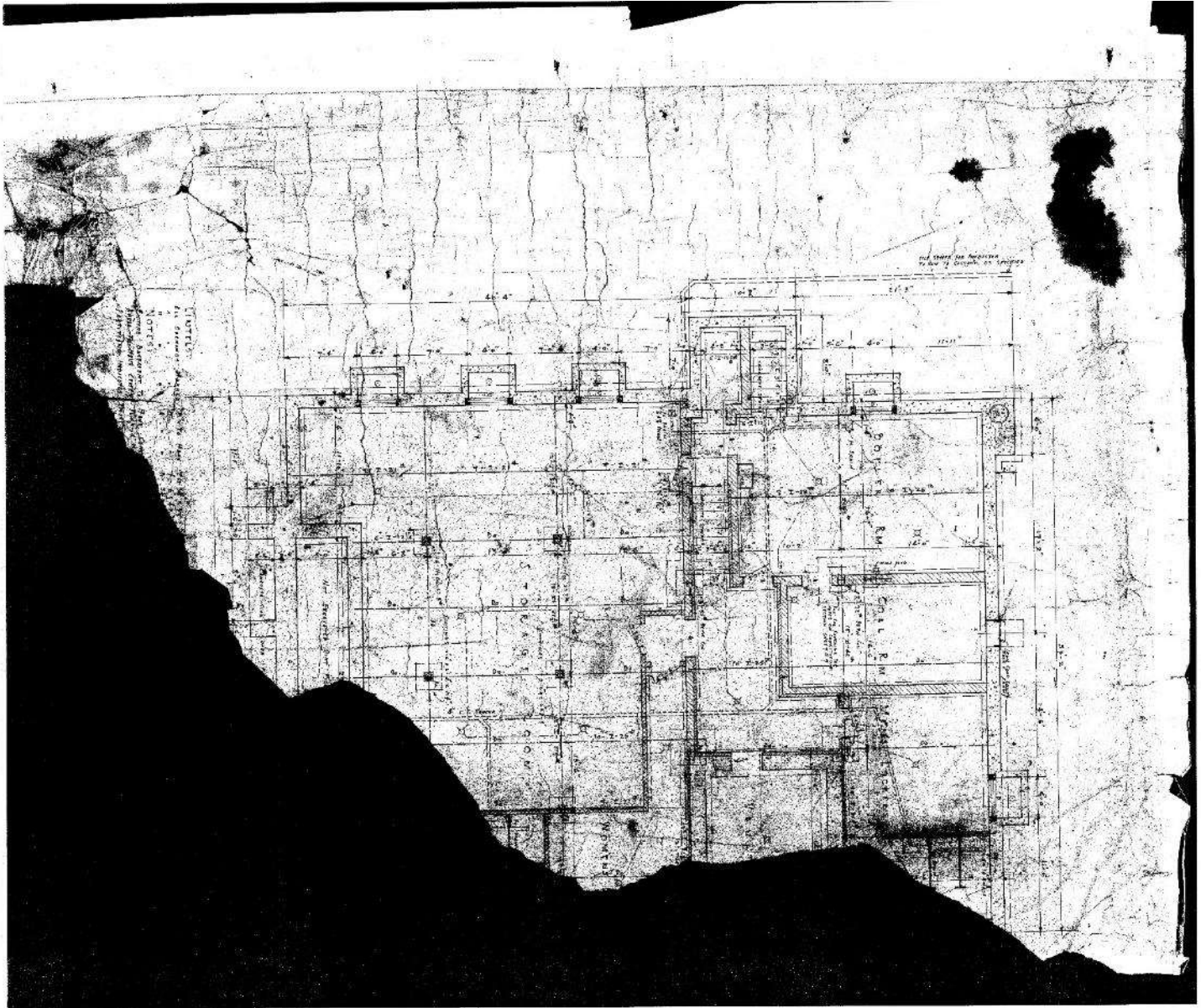


Image 8: Original Basement Floor Plan by Aaron Riley Merritt
(Image Courtesy of Todd Stein)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 12

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State



Image 9: Sketch of the Bank of East Aurora at 649 Main Street
(Image Courtesy of *East Aurora Advertiser*)



Image 10: Photograph of Michael Harlow (left) and Bank president Richard Persons (right) ca. 1925
(Image Courtesy of *Aurora Revisited*)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 13

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State



Image 11: Photograph of the Bank of East Aurora ca. 1930
(Image Courtesy of *Aurora Revisited*)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 14

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

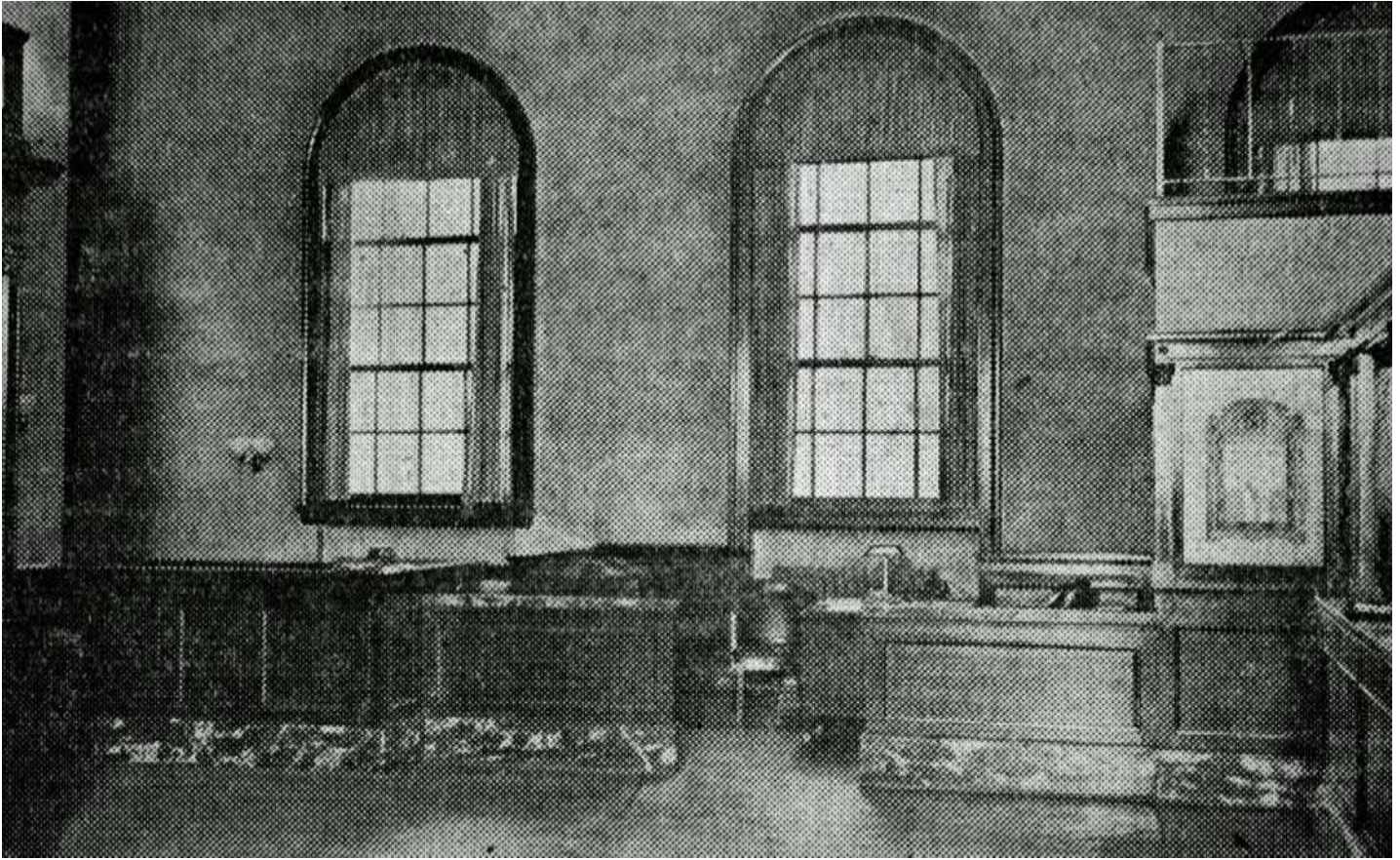


Image 12: Photograph of the Interior of the Bank of East Aurora, 1935
(Image Courtesy of East Aurora Historian's Office)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 15

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State



Image 13: Photograph of Aaron Riley Merritt
(Image Courtesy of *East Aurora Advertiser*)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 16

Bank of East Aurora

Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State



Image 14: Photograph of the Bank of East Aurora at 649 Main Street, ca. 1940
(Image Courtesy of East Aurora Historian's Office)



Image 15: Photograph of the Bank of East Aurora building as M&T Bank
(Image Courtesy of Howard Hanna Real Estate Listing)

From: [Karen Lee](#)
To: [Walkowski, Jennifer \(PARKS\)](#)
Subject: Historic Designation of The Bank, Main Street, East Aurora, NY 14052
Date: Tuesday, June 08, 2021 3:01:23 PM

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders or unexpected emails.

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Karen Lee and I am the Village of East Aurora Planning Commission Chair. I am writing to express my support of The Bank gaining state historic designation. Mr. Stine, the owner of the property, has demonstrated great care and attention to restoring a unique and historic building on our Main Street. I sincerely hope he gains this important designation to protect this wonderful structure and reap the many fiscal benefits of such designation so that he can continue to properly maintain it. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,
Karen Lee
Village of East Aurora Planning Commission Chair



THE BANK



THE BANK

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EXIT



