

1.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Clinton Brown Company Architecture, PC has completed the Intensive Level Historic Resources Survey of the City of Niagara Falls Phase I, under contract to the City of Niagara Falls Department of Community Development Office of Planning and Environmental Services in conjunction with the Niagara Falls Historic Preservation Commission and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (NYSOPRHP—New York State Historic Preservation Officer [SHPO]). The survey was funded with grants received from the Margaret L. Wendt Foundation and the Department of State Division of Coastal Resources. It was conducted in conformance with the City of Niagara Falls Programmatic Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) governing the City’s historic preservation review responsibilities for activities funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and executed as per 36 CFR Part 800 “Advisory Council Procedures for the Protection of Historic and Cultural Properties.” The Intensive Level Historic Resources Survey of the City of Niagara Falls Phase I fulfills the requirements of the New York State Department of State (NYS-DOS) Grant Agreement. The study applied methodology and standards that are acceptable to the NYS-DOS and the SHPO.

CBCA architectural historian Christine M. Longiaru served as the project manager. The CBCA project team included sub-consultant Dr. Francis R. Kowsky, Buffalo State College Distinguished Professor. The primary researcher was sub-consultant Martin Wachadlo, an architectural historian. Pamela Pollack, a historic preservation consultant, co-authored the New York State Historic Resource Inventory Forms. Ms. Longiaru conducted the intensive level field documentation. Mr. Wachadlo provided additional photography support. Rebecca Bateson-Brown served as the assistant architectural historian. 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 highlight history on the local, regional, and national levels. A survey of the City’s historic resources is an important first step in recognizing 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 objective of the first phase of the City of Niagara Falls Historic Resources Survey is to identify and inventory buildings, historic districts, structures, objects or sites that are either eligible or potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Niagara Falls Phase I survey area includes the City of Niagara Falls neighborhood of Downtown, which is an urban commercial and residential area that includes a section of the city’s former and present industrial works along the Niagara River (Figures 1-1,1-2). The Downtown neighborhood is located in the southwestern corner of the city and encompasses the city’s central business district. The northern residential limit is Orchard Parkway and the northern commercial boundary is the intersection of Pierce Avenue, Main Street and Portage Road.¹ The Niagara River borders the survey area to the south and west.

¹ Pierce Avenue was the original northern boundary for the Phase I survey area. As a result of the initial field investigation, the northern limits of the Phase I survey area were modified from Pierce Avenue to Orchard Parkway.

CBCA conducted a reconnaissance field survey of the Niagara Falls Historic Resources Phase I survey area on December 29th and 30th, 2003.² The initial survey was carried out with the participation of Claire Ross of the NYSOPRHP. Ms. Ross joined the CBCA project team, Ms. Longiaru and Mr. Wachadlo, to select significant historic resources for the intensive level survey. The windshield survey involved the visual review of all historic resources that appeared to be more than 50 years old within the Downtown neighborhood (Phase I survey area). Ms. Ross and the CBCA project team identified approximately 650 properties in the Downtown neighborhood. Several historic districts were also identified during the windshield survey. The findings of the “windshield survey” served as the basis for the Intensive Level Survey conducted by CBCA. The Historic Resource Survey Intensive Level Survey report contains completed New York State Historic Resource Forms (or “blue forms”) for each identified property.

The objective of the first phase of the City of Niagara Falls Historic Resources Survey involved the following undertakings: reconnaissance field survey, comprehensive analysis to complete historic building survey documentation, and formulation of conclusions and recommendations.

This report begins with the project methodology (Section 2), which explains how the objectives of the intensive level survey were carried out. It is followed by an historical and architectural overview of the City of Niagara Falls with specific emphasis on the Downtown neighborhood. (Section 3). The historic narrative focuses on the neighborhood’s development and provides a summary of the existing conditions of its historic building stock. The next section is an architectural summary (Section 4), which includes a general context for architectural styles represented in the neighborhood and recommendations. Section 5 contains the annotated list of properties. The report also includes a working bibliography (Section 6). Completed New York State Historic Resource Forms for each selected property are found at the back the report (Appendix F [See accompanying volumes]).

Pierce Avenue appears to be more of a transitional block that reflects the historic building fabric of the adjacent Suspension Bridge neighborhood.

² The purpose of the reconnaissance field survey was to identify historic resources for the intensive level survey. A formal reconnaissance level report was not submitted.

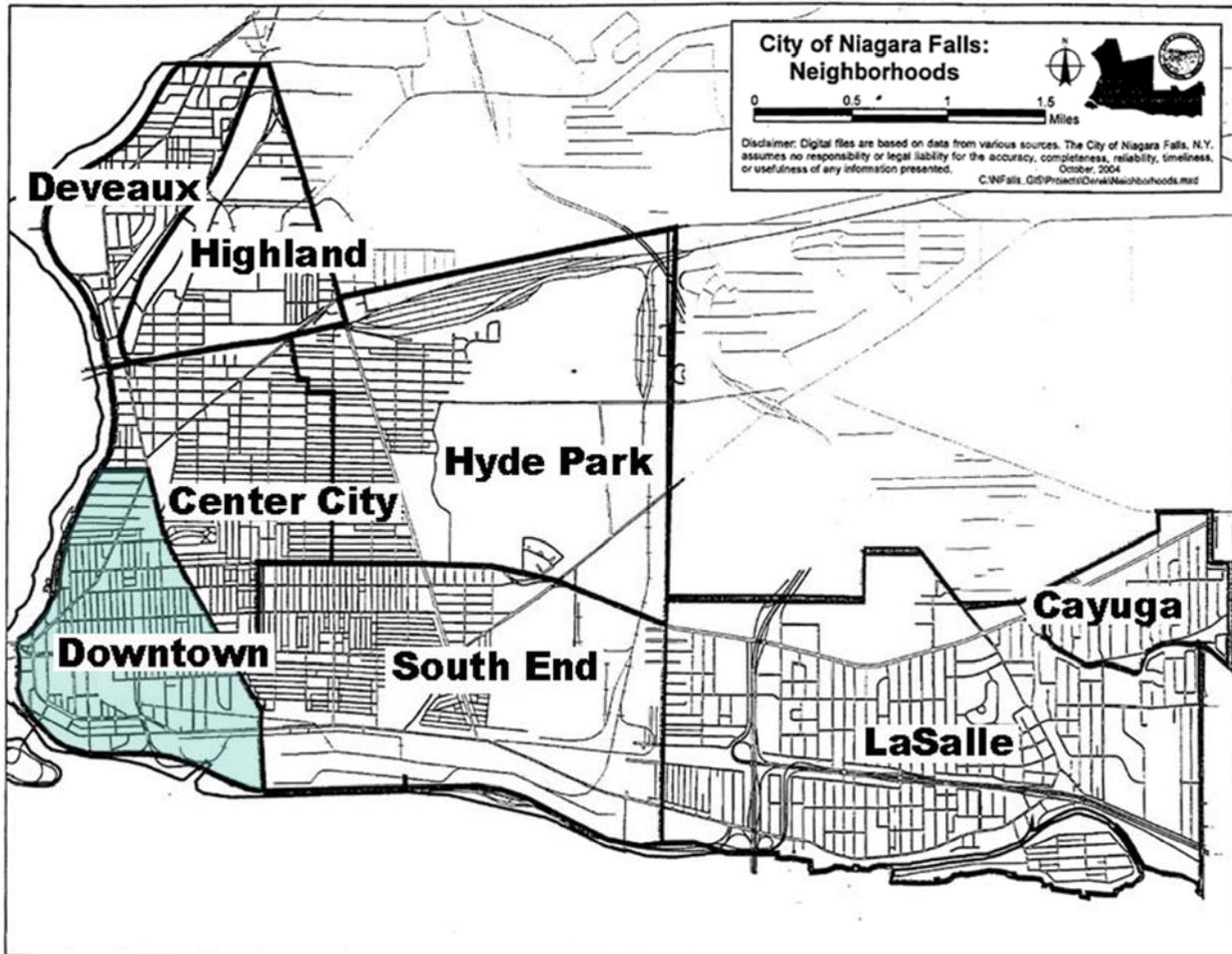


Figure 1-1. Downtown neighborhood, Niagara Falls Phase I Survey Area, City of Niagara Falls, New York. (City of Niagara Falls Office of Planning and Environmental Services, 2004)

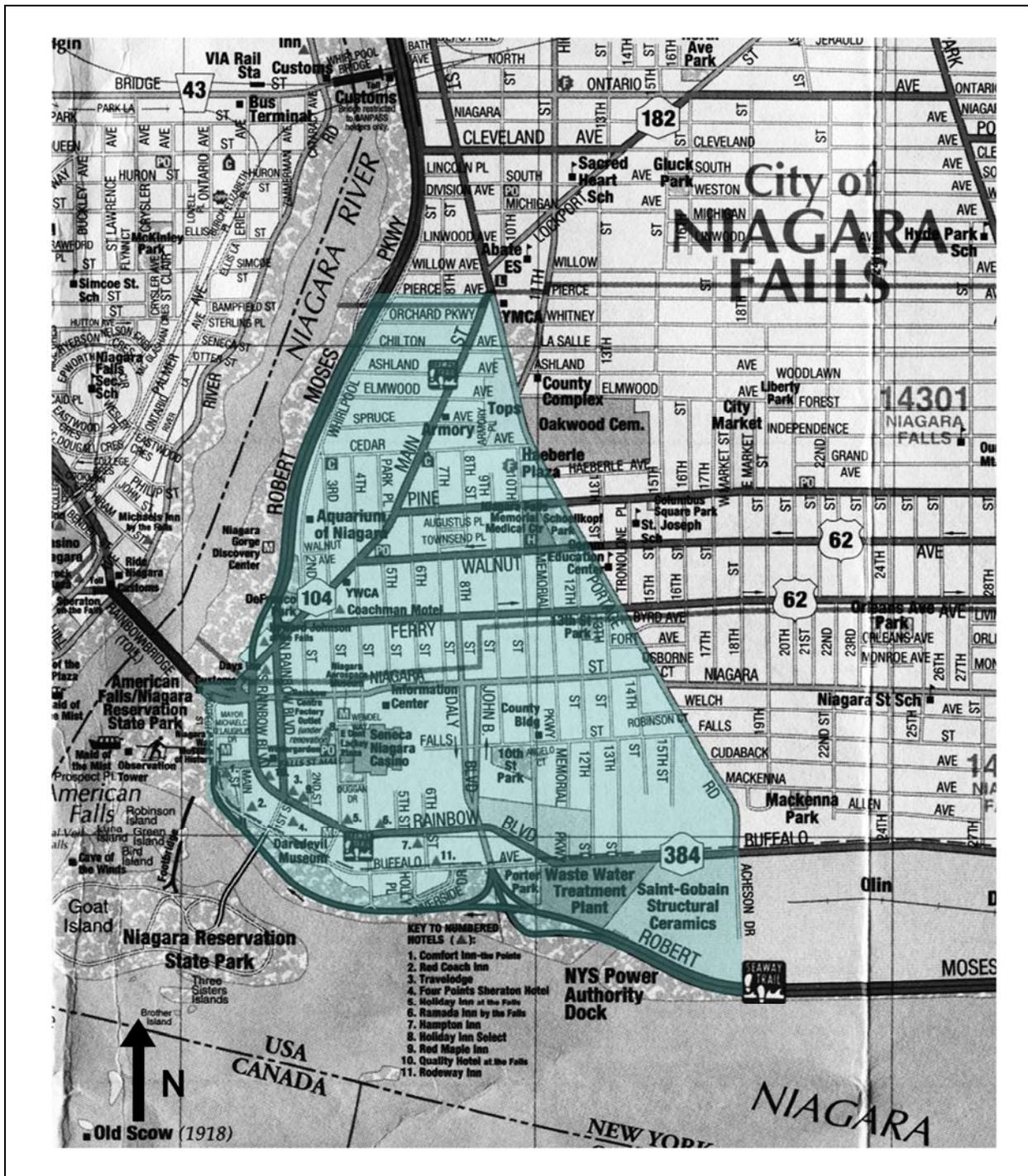


Figure 1-2. Approximate boundaries of the Niagara Falls Phase I survey area shaded in green. (From *New York State Western Region* [Rochester, NY: Map Works, Inc., 2003])