

4.0 CITY OF NIAGARA FALLS, NEW YORK: ARCHITECTURAL OVERVIEW¹

This section provides a general context for architectural styles represented in the neighborhood, a detailed narrative of the architectural development, and existing conditions of the neighborhood. Frank R. Kowsky authored the Architectural Overview (Sections 4.1-4.6). The results and recommendations are presented in the last section (Section 4.7)

4.1 City of Niagara Falls: Before 1800

4.1.1 *French and English Colonization*

The modern city of Niagara Falls, New York, occupies land that entered European consciousness in the 1530s with the arrival in the New World of French explorer Jacques Cartier. While Cartier, who discovered the St. Lawrence River and founded the city of Montreal, heard reports about the Falls, but never saw them. In 1608, another French explorer, Samuel de Champlain, published a description of the Cataract, although he himself had apparently not seen it either. Both Champlain and Cartier had based their written accounts of the Falls on the word of Native Americans they had encountered on their travels.

French missionaries were the first Europeans to see the Falls and to have contact with the Iroquois, the native peoples who, since the 1650s, controlled the Niagara area. In 1678, Father Louis Hennepin, a Belgian Franciscan in the entourage of Sieur de la Salle, the explorer of the Great Lakes, gave the oldest surviving European written and visual account of the Falls. During the following year, LaSalle himself visited the area and became the first European recorded to have walked the portage trail that Indians used to skirt the Falls. The trail became the main access route to Western New York and the Great Lakes region in early colonial times, for it was the only break in the natural watercourse extending from the mouth of the St. Lawrence to the Upper Great Lakes region. Following generally the route of present Portage Road, the trail ran from a landing on the shore above the Falls to a landing on the lower river near the present town of Lewiston.

To secure their hold on the trail and to confirm trade relations with the Iroquois, La Salle ordered built in 1678 a trading post at the mouth of the Niagara River overlooking Lake Ontario. This site was strategic to French interests both in the local area and in the interior of the North American continent. By the time of the death of Louis XIV in 1715, the far-flung outpost of empire—then called Fort Denonville—had become an important French military installation. The fort was one of a chain of French defenses that stretched from Montreal to Detroit and down the Mississippi to St. Louis and New Orleans. Under Louis XV, a large stone fortress was erected in 1725-1726. Other than the small chapel inside, the French Castle, as the building is known today, bears no evidence of the ornamental classicism that architectural historians associate with the Rococo style in eighteenth-century France. Rather, the fort, which the French planned to serve as a trading post as well as military outpost, more closely resembles the vernacular domestic architecture of the rural French countryside. Known today as Fort Niagara, the property, which British and American owners expanded and modified in later years, is listed as a National Historic Landmark and is maintained by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation as one of its premier Historic Sites.

¹ This overview is based on the extensive research into the history of Niagara Falls' architecture undertaken by Martin Wachadlo.

Fort Niagara is the only remaining significant architectural evidence of French domination of the Niagara frontier. French influence here came to an end in the mid eighteenth century when the British emerged victorious from the Seven Years War (also known as the French and Indian War), 1756 -1763. Fort Niagara fell to the English in 1759. At the end of the war, the Iroquois ceded the so-called Mile Strip, a mile-wide band of land bordering the eastern bank of the Niagara River above the Falls, to the British in reparation for the killing of many English citizens at the infamous Devil's Hole Massacre the year before.

It was during the British occupation of the area that the first permanent European settlers arrived on the Niagara Frontier. The earliest name recorded is that of John Steadman. With two brothers, he received permission from the Iroquois to take up residence near the Falls in the early 1760s. Steadman's position on the frontier was one of great importance, for the British appointed him superintendent of the seven-mile portage trail. At this time, the British erected Fort Schlosser at the southern end of the portage to replace an earlier French outpost that had stood there. Steadman's presence is recalled by Steadman's Bluff, the name given to the cliff on Goat Island (Stedman had cleared a meadow on the island for his goats) that overlooks the American Falls. There are no architectural remains of significance from this earliest period of European settlement of the land within the survey borders.

4.2 City of Niagara Falls: 1800-1850

4.2.1 Augustus Porter's Village of Manchester and the Beginnings of Tourism, Industry, and International Commerce

After the Revolution, British troops continued to occupy Fort Niagara and the Mile Strip until 1796 when, as part of the Jay Treaty, the monarchy finally ceded the area to the new republic. Settlement of the region was delayed, however, by litigation between New York and Massachusetts, both of whom claimed rights to present Western New York. The states settled their dispute by 1805 when New York voted to approve the sale of all land in the area not owned by the Holland Land Company, the Dutch investment corporation that had taken title to most of the region in 1798. The sale included the Mile Strip.

From the auction, Augustus Porter and his brother Peter acquired most of the Mile Strip. They were the first people to invest heavily in the survey area. Forming a partnership with Benjamin Barton and Joseph Annin, the Porter brothers soon acquired a long-term lease on the portage trail. They benefited from the toll collections on the road from 1805 to 1826, during which time the portage trail became an important section of a slow but secure inland transportation route linking the East with the interior of the continent.

In addition to their management of the portage trail, the Porter brothers established several businesses at Niagara Falls. Among their undertakings were a sawmill, a blacksmith shop, a gristmill, and a tannery. Unfortunately, the violent events of the War of 1812 put an end for a time to the Porters' nascent endeavors. In 1813, British troops put the village of Manchester--the name the forward-looking Porters had given to the hamlet--to the torch, destroying all of the buildings there. Undaunted by adversity, by 1816, they had reestablished their gristmill and sawmill operations. In the 1840s, the brothers consolidated their holdings in numerous mills along the river above the Falls, forming, with George Washington Holley, a distant relative, the firm of Porter Brothers. Other entrepreneurs also returned and re-opened businesses in new quarters after the war. At this time, Augustus Porter purchased from the state Goat Island, a

small land mass in the middle of the Niagara River rapids at the brink of the Falls. His intention was to preserve the thick primeval forest and unique flora on the island from commercial and industrial development. His decision laid the groundwork for the future local tourist industry.

4.2.2 The Greek Revival

Tourists from the East began to arrive at Niagara almost as soon as DeWitt Clinton dedicated the Erie Canal in 1825 with Buffalo as its western terminus. The early canal boat tourists finished the 14 miles from Buffalo to the Falls on steam-powered ferryboats. Beginning in the 1840s, railroads made the journey faster and cheaper for the ever-increasing number of leisure travelers. “Thousands of visitors, from every part of the U.S. and from almost every country in the world, annually visit this, one of nature’s greatest wonders,” observed a writer in 1860. Indeed, tourism had become, for the moment, the dominant source of income for the village’s three thousand residents. “Nearly all of the business of the community is connected with this periodical visitation and consists of hotel keeping, livery business, and matters of kindred kind,” reported the same source.² Foremost among the new hoteliers was Parkhurst Whitney, who together with his son, Solon, owned and managed the Cataract House and the Eagle Tavern (both of which have been demolished). These were the village’s most prominent hotels and, over the years, received many famous guests, including General Lafayette, Nathaniel Webster, and Abraham Lincoln. In 1849-1851, Solon Whitney built the beautiful Greek Revival stone house that yet stands at 335 Buffalo Avenue (Figure 4-1). He had been planning to erect the dwelling since the 1830s. Distinguished by two-story Ionic portico, the Whitney house is the finest example of the Greek Revival style in the Buffalo-Niagara area.³ The residence (now home of the local University Club) also began the rise of Buffalo Avenue, a wide street that runs along the top of the bluff overlooking the rapids, as the town’s most prestigious address. (This land had been part of the Mile Strip.)



Figure 4-1. In 1849-1851, Solon Whitney built this Greek Revival stone house at 335 Buffalo Avenue. National Register Listed (I) / Niagara Falls Landmark

² J. H. French, *Historical and Statistical Gazetteer of New York State* (Syracuse: R. P. Smith, 1860), 455.

³ The Whitney house is listed on the National Register of Historic Places

4.2.3 The Romanesque Revival

The rise of village life in the first half of the nineteenth century also brought with it the establishment of religious organizations. The first church founded in the town was the First Presbyterian Church. The congregation organized itself in 1824. In the same year that Solon Whitney began building his elegant Greek Revival home on Buffalo Avenue, the congregation erected the Romanesque style church that stands at 311 Rainbow Boulevard. With a central tower, large round arch windows, and symmetrical composition, the church, which was later expanded, is closely related in appearance to buildings of the early phase of the Gothic Revival. Fortunately, it escaped demolition during the period of urban renewal that destroyed so many of the historic buildings in Niagara Falls.

4.3 City of Niagara Falls: 1850-1900

4.3.1 Harnessing the Energy of the Falls

Seeing the portage trail cast into insignificance by the canal as a link in Western migration, the Porters increased their efforts to build up Manchester as a center of manufacturing. The key to development of this aspect of the place lay in harnessing the abundant waterpower that the river and Falls possessed. The French had pioneered harnessing the river waters when, in 1745, they had erected a sawmill on the shore opposite Goat Island. The Porters, who had restored the French mill in 1806, as early as 1847, tried to entice Eastern capital to invest in the construction of a hydraulic canal that could power the machinery of factories built along it, much as Rochester city leaders had done at the Falls of the Genesee. In 1852, the Niagara Falls Hydraulic Company, an outgrowth of the Porters' original scheme, began digging a shallow, 70-foot-wide canal from a point about a half mile above the Falls to a large basin on the edge of the gorge, a quarter of a mile down river from the Falls. There, water falling 200 feet to the river below would turn waterwheels or turbines on its way to the bottom and run machinery in buildings erected along the High Bank, as the cliff top came to be called. The path of the canal ran diagonally through the village. Unfortunately, the project proved too ambitious, and its original sponsors abandoned the work when money ran out in 1854. Shortly thereafter, however, the Niagara Falls Power Company revived the endeavor. Under the leadership of Horace H. Day, the new company succeeded in advancing construction. In 1857, water from the canal's intake (known as Port Day) on the upper Niagara River flowed for the first time through the canal to the basin and over the gorge wall into the lower river. Yet, Day was not able to make canal profitable for his company—by 1875 only one flourmill stood on the High Bank. In 1877, Jacob Schoellkopf and a group of investors acquired for the canal system for \$77,000, including forty-five acres of land at the High Bank. Under Schoellkopf leadership, the system turned a profit, and by the end of the century, the riparian cliff became lined with factories that were powered by a warren of tunnels that discharged their tailrace water down the face of the gorge.

The 1850s also saw the beginnings of Niagara Falls as an admittance point for goods and passengers coming from Canada. In 1848, engineer Charles Ellet, Jr., erected one of America's early suspension bridges across the Niagara Gorge, about two miles down river from the Falls. On the American side, this innovative structure, which carried only carriage traffic, gave birth to the small community known as Suspension Bridge. In 1855, Washington Roebling replaced the first light structure with a new suspension bridge that supported railroad traffic. Suspension Bridge now superseded Lewiston, several miles downriver, as the official port of

entry from Canada. To process the trade flowing across the border, the federal government erected in 1863 the three-story Customs House that stands beside the present railroad and automobile bridge on Whirlpool Street.⁴

4.3.2 The Gothic Cottage Style

One of the early customs officials was George Washington Holley, a partner in the firm of Porter Brothers and a man who enjoyed a state and national political career. In 1855, during his tenure in the state Assembly, Holley purchased from Peter Porter a wooded tract of land overlooking the Niagara River, just above the Falls. Here, at 525 Riverside Drive, he built a stone house in the fashionable Gothic Revival cottage style and created elaborately landscaped grounds that included carriage drives and artificial ponds (Figure 4-2). The house, known today as the Lovelace house after a later owner, is the best-preserved local example of the style of mid-nineteenth-century domestic architecture associated with the writings of Andrew Jackson Downing.⁵ (Another building in this style, the Dexter R. Jerauld house at 24 Buffalo Avenue, is contemporary with the Holley house but has received later additions and modifications that have largely obscured the original structure. The frame residence at 615 Elmwood Avenue, which also has decorative verge boards on the gables, is a later manifestation of the style.) In works such as his widely read and often reprinted *Cottage Residences* (1842) and *The Architecture of Country Houses* (1850), Downing extolled the aesthetic and functional virtues of the Gothic style, which he found especially appropriate for locations having picturesque scenery. The asymmetrical composition, steep proportions, sheltering porch, rough native stone exterior, and decorative features such as the verge boards under the eaves, faithfully reflect Downing's ideas. One can easily imagine Holley, who wrote a book about the Falls, standing on his veranda and surveying the beautiful river scenery, which he likened to "an excellent mistress [to whom] the faithful lover may return . . . with ever new delight, ever growing affection."⁶

4.3.3 The Gothic Revival

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the Gothic Revival was a powerful force in American architecture. Many Catholic and Episcopal congregations especially adopted it for their buildings, believing that its association with the High Middle Ages made it the quintessential Christian style. In 1851, the St. Mary's of the Cataract on Fourth Street erected the first chapel for Catholic worship in Niagara Falls. By 1865, after two building campaigns that greatly enlarged the first building, the church, which actually has round-arched openings of the Romanesque style, had evolved into the present structure. Recalling the example of French Gothic cathedrals, and perhaps the more recent example of Patrick Keeley's St. Joseph Cathedral in Buffalo, the gray stone church is adorned with two façade towers. Set forward from the nave of the church, these nearly freestanding towers with corner stepped buttresses are similar but unmatched. Their short and tall spires form a striking feature of the city skyline. Nearby, St. Peter's Episcopal Church (Figure 4-3), another early congregation in the city, commissioned New York City architect Henry Dudley to design their new church in 1873. Dudley, who had immigrated to America from Exeter, Devonshire, where he had been a promoter of advanced ideas in church design and the restoration of venerable churches, was thoroughly familiar with the demands of Anglican ecclesiastical architecture. In his design for St.

⁴ This building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

⁵ The house is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the Holley-Rankine house. Unfortunately, the landscaped grounds no longer exist.

⁶ George Washington Holley, *Niagara, Its History and Geology, Incidents and Poetry* (Toronto: Hunter, Rose & Co., 1872), ix.



Figure 4-2. 525 Riverside Drive, George Washington Holley built this stone house in the fashionable Gothic Revival cottage style and created elaborately landscaped grounds that included carriage drives and artificial ponds. National Register Listed (I) / Niagara Falls Landmark.



Figure 4-3. St. Peter's Episcopal Church at 228 Second Street [122 Rainbow Boulevard - SHPO], Henry Dudley, architect; 1873. National Register Eligible (I) / Niagara Falls Landmark.

Peter's, he emulated the Late Medieval English parish churches, the building type that High Church parishes thought appropriate for modern worship.

4.3.4 *The Bracketed Cottage*

In his writings, Downing had also extolled the virtues of picturesque design that was not necessarily tied to any historical style. In more modest houses, those he referred to as cottages (Downing reserved the term villa for larger freestanding dwellings), one should aim, he said, “rather at producing beauty by means of form and proportion, than by ornament.” “Tasteful simplicity,” he asserted, “not fanciful complexity, is the true character for cottages.” In designs for small houses that Downing published in *The Architecture of Country Houses* (1850), the “picturesque character is partly owing,” he said, “to the bold shadows thrown by the projecting roof, and partly to rafter brackets.”⁷ What counted for Downing was that houses look sheltering and inviting. One could achieve this effect especially by having the roof projected beyond the walls of the building and supported on decorative brackets. (Some referred to such houses as “Bracketed Cottages.”) The house at 113 Sixth Street of c. 1850 is a good example of the type. The home that Lavinia Porter built c. 1855 at 162 Buffalo Avenue likewise reflects ideas of Downing and other mid-nineteenth-century writers on domestic architecture such as Calvert Vaux and Henry Cleveland. The brick cottage at 124 Third Street built in the 1860s and the Donohue House of c. 1880 at 154 Buffalo Avenue (Figure 4-4) indicate how long into the nineteenth century these ideas remained popular. The former building has a porch, another feature that Downing and others promoted as a desirable addition to the American house. Together with bay windows, the porch enhanced the residents’ sense of connectedness with the out-of-doors, an aspect of the American home that would reach its fullest expression in the houses of Frank Lloyd Wright.



Figure 4-4. Donohue House at 154 Buffalo Avenue (c. 1880)

⁷ Andrew Jackson Downing, *The Architecture of Country Houses* (New York: Wiley, 1850), 71; 73.

4.4 City of Niagara Falls: 1875-1900

4.4.1 *The Beginning of Hydroelectric Power Generation and the Campaign to Save Niagara*

Jacob Schoellkopf's acquisition of the Hydraulic Canal in 1877 was a momentous event for the future of the city of Niagara Falls because he would soon see the potential for river water as a force to turn electric generating turbines. This development would open the way to an entirely new energy era. By 1881, Schoellkopf was generating hydroelectric power for local consumption. A few years later, the local community had its first electric lights. In 1895, Schoellkopf widened the Hydraulic Canal to 100 feet and deepened it to an average of 10 feet. His enterprise, which went under the name of the Niagara Falls Hydraulic Power & Manufacturing Company (the name would change several times in later years), was the world's first and most important development of hydroelectric power generation. By the early twentieth century the plant, which was located at the bottom of the High Bank and which remained in use until the mid-1950s, contained some of the largest turbines yet constructed. In 1896, another hydroelectric company, the Niagara Falls Power Company, successfully transmitted electricity from the Adams Power Plant at the Falls some twenty miles to the city of Buffalo. The construction of the company's facility on Buffalo Avenue and the digging of the company's extraordinary power tunnel 90 feet below the city of Niagara Falls to an outlet at the base of the gorge were overseen by William B. Rankine, who purchased the former home of George Holley. Nikola Testa who had perfected generators running on alternating current had solved the problem of generating electricity over long distances. The new energy age that was about to begin was celebrated in 1901 at the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo, the first World's Fair to be fully illuminated by electricity created by hydroelectric generation. The future was indeed bright for the Cataract City.

4.4.2 *The Beginning of the Architectural Profession*

Increasing wealth and an expanding city also attracted for the first time a number of architects who set up practice in Niagara Falls. A number of men who would give physical form to the city began their careers here in the 1890s. A few had arrived in the 1870s. Among the earlier group was George W. Wright (1830-1908) who began to practice architecture in Niagara Falls in 1878. Wright was from Bury St. Edmunds, England, and had lived in Canada before coming to Niagara Falls in 1859. For many years the only architect in the city, Wright also took an active role in civic affairs. He was both the last president of the village and the first mayor of the city when it was incorporated in 1892. George Wright's son, George E. Wright (1854-1914) followed in his footsteps and became an architect in the Cataract City as did grandson Chester W. Wright (1889-1980). The latter studied architecture at the University of Michigan and in 1913 formed a practice with a former classmate, Ernest Kremers (1889-1972). Together, Wright & Kremers designed many buildings in the city in the first part of the twentieth century. In the 1920s, they shifted their business to construction and real estate. They were contractors for many of the city's most important buildings.

Simon Larke (c. 1866-1939) began his career in the construction trades in Toronto before he settled in Niagara Falls in 1893. Larke was a partner in the firm of George W. Wright & Co. from 1893 to c. 1902, when he opened his own practice. In the 1920s, as a member of Associated Architects, he teamed up with Charles F. Obenhack (c. 1886-1964), the first academically trained architect in Niagara Falls. (Obenhack received his degree from Syracuse University's School of Architecture) to design the Neo-Classical Niagara Falls High School on Pine Avenue,

a building now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Simon's son Russell G. Larke (1895-1996) joined his father's firm in the 1920s and later took over the office following his father's death. Russell continued to practice until the 1980s.

Other Canadian immigrants were James R. White (c. 1869-1949), who trained as an architect in Toronto before moving to Niagara Falls in 1895, Chester R. Phelps (1872-1965), a native of St. Catharines who worked for architects in Hamilton, Detroit, and Buffalo before setting up shop in Niagara Falls in 1895, and Norton H. Kirkpatrick (1889-1934), who received his degree at Cornell University after which he studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. . For fifty years, White enjoyed a successful practice and designed a number of buildings in the project area. The house he planned in 1900 for Mrs. Andrew Murray (and which was acquired shortly after completion by Dr. William H. Hodge) at 324 Buffalo Avenue (Figure 4-5) is one of the outstanding examples of Queen Anne style domestic architecture in the city. Chester R. Phelps designed many buildings in Niagara Falls and throughout Western New York, especially Lockport where he received notable commissions. His most important surviving building in the project area is the Neo-Classical Niagara Falls Gazette building on Niagara Street of 1914. Norton H. Kirkpatrick opened his Niagara Falls office in 1915. In 1920, he teamed up with Will Alban Cannon (1891-1965), a Niagara Falls native who, in 1916, had earned a degree in architecture from the University of Pennsylvania. The firm quickly assumed the leadership of the local architectural profession, garnering such important commissions as City Hall and the Carborundum administration building on Buffalo Avenue. After Kirkpatrick's death, Cannon formed another partnership that, in 1968, became the Cannon Partnership. Three years later, the firm moved its headquarters to Grand Island. Known today as Cannon Design, it receives commissions from clients around the world and maintains branch offices in several countries.



Figure 4-5. 324 Buffalo Avenue
(James R. White, architect: 1900)

4.4.3 Richardsonian Influence in Niagara Falls

The most important building to remain from the early days of hydroelectric power generation is the Niagara Power Company's Transformer Station of 1895 on the grounds of the former Edward Dean Adams Power Plant (Figure 4-6).⁸ When it opened, the plant was the first hydroelectric, alternating current generating station that transmitted electricity long distances. At the time, the now derelict structure, which stood along side of an inlet canal that brought water from the river to the site, presented to the world an up-to-date face. The design bears the imprint of the legacy of the great nineteenth-century American architect, Henry Hobson Richardson. The buildings of the plant—Power House No. 1 (1895) and Power House No. 2 (1904) that contained the turbines were demolished in the 1960s⁹—came from the drawing board of the foremost architectural firm of the day, McKim, Mead and White of New York. Charles McKim and Stanford White had apprenticed with Richardson. In their design for the power plant buildings (which were discussed as early as 1892), they paid tribute to style of their mentor, who had died in 1886. Perhaps they thought that the rough stone walls, round arches, and heavy proportions of Richardson's unique style perfectly expressed the element work of producing electricity from river water that the plant performed. In the words of Edward Dean Adams, the man who had been instrumental in the development of the power plant, the buildings "were designed to give an air of dignity as well as stability to the place. Strength is also embodied in the structures to withstand the elements without and to control the forces within."¹⁰ The other Richardsonian building in the city is Isaac Perry's brick and stone New York State Armory of 1895 (Figure 4-7).¹¹ As the State Architect, Perry, who completed the Capitol at Albany after Richardson's death, designed many Medieval style armory buildings throughout the state.



Figure 4-6. Niagara Power Company's Transformer Station, 1501 Buffalo Avenue (McKim, Mead and White James R. White, architects: 1895)
NHL / Niagara Falls Landmark

⁸ This building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

⁹ The entrance arch to Power House No. 1 is preserved on Goat Island.

¹⁰ Edward Dean Adams quoted in Daniel M. Dumych, *Niagara Falls*, vol II of the *Images of America* series (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 1998), 62.

¹¹ This building is listed on the National register of Historic Places.



Figure 4-7. Niagara Falls Armory at 901 Main Street (Isaac G. Perry, architect; 1895)
National Register Listed (I) / Niagara Falls Landmark.

4.4.4 *The Shingle Style*

As Niagara Falls grew in population during the last quarter of the nineteenth century (when it was incorporated as a city in 1892, it had 10,000 residents), the city witnessed its first real housing boom. A large number of dwellings in a variety of architectural styles went up along its many residential streets. A number of buildings survive in Niagara Falls from this eventful era in the city's history. The home that Peter Porter erected for himself c. 1880 at 6 Fourth Street, though in a conservative Neo-Classical architectural style for its date—it looked back to mid-nineteenth century precedents—is a reminder of the first family of serious entrepreneurs who promoted the fortunes of the place. Two of the largest residences of the period stand next to each other at 343 and 357 Portage Road. The latter was the home of Thomas Welch, who, as the first superintendent of the Niagara Reservation, has been called “the Father of the Niagara Reservation.” Both of these Shingle Style dwellings are impressive for their scale and the blending of stone and wooden shingling. Together they represent the best local examples of the Shingle Style, a form of domestic architecture made popular in the 1880s by Richardson and McKim, Mead and White. The house at 341 Portage Road (Figure 4-8) likewise recalls Richardson's architecture in the use of large boulders for the ground floor. Now the quarters of the Echo Society, the house had been the home of a member of the Welch family.



Figure 4-8. Echo Club/Welch House at 341 Portage Road (ca.1900)

4.4.5 The Queen Anne Style

The most popular style for larger middle class dwellings in the last quarter of the nineteenth century was the Queen Anne style. The style was so-called because it adopted the free mixture of materials and the combination of Classical and Gothic proportions and elements that had characterized English architecture during the reign of Queen Anne in the late seventeenth century. Especially because of the increased availability of books and magazines with house plans during this period, the Queen Anne spread widely across America. Niagara Falls, which was close to supplies of timber, stone, brick, terra cotta, and stained glass--materials Queen Anne designers delighted in mixing in their buildings--still retains many fine homes in this style. Two of the finest examples stand next to one another at 616 and 622 Pine Avenue (Figure 4-9). Dating from the 1890s, these large brick dwellings were erected as speculative housing by James Davy who himself chose to inhabit a fine Queen Anne dwelling. Designed by local architect Henry W. Beardsley, the Davy house, at 742 Main Street, possesses a side tower, a feature that had entered the realm of American domestic architecture with the Gothic Revival. It now became a popular element for Queen Anne architects to include in their designs asymmetrical designs. This hallmark feature can be seen on a number of other representative examples of the style, notably 815 Elmwood Avenue (c.1895), 439, 443, 449, and 451 Memorial Parkway (all of these date c. 1900), 677 Chilton Avenue (c. 1899), and the house that Beardsley designed in 1892 for his own residence at 728 Park Place. Other local examples show how designers could employ more Classical elements in their designs but arrange them in asymmetrical, picturesque compositions. A good example is the house that James R. White designed in 1900 for Mrs. Andrew Murray (later the residence of Dr. William Hodge) on Buffalo Avenue. The large frame dwelling has a Palladian window in the front gable and paired Tuscan columns supporting the porch. Nevertheless, White carefully integrated these elements into a picturesque composition that includes projecting bay windows, steeply pitched roofs with tall

gables, and tall chimneystacks. Other good examples of this type of Queen Anne design survive at 1224 Niagara Street (c. 1905), 440 Seventh Street (c. 1910), and 690, 696, 699, and 702 Chilton Avenue.



Figure 4-9. 622 Pine Avenue (1893)

4.4.6 *Workers' Cottages*

The homes of families of lesser means from this period are also well represented on the streets of Niagara Falls. Small, one and two story frame dwellings, often referred to as worker's cottages, were usually erected on speculation and possess only limited amounts of architectural embellishment. A good representative of this simple, direct form of vernacular domestic architecture is the single story house at 412 Sixth Street (c. 1880; Figure 4-10). The brick house at 254 Fifteenth Street (c. 1880) is a good example of the two-story cottage type, as are frame houses at 532 Fifth Street (1885), 628 Fourth Street (c. 1885), and 742 Eighth Street (c. 1890). These modest dwellings, aside from their architectural interest, represent the democratization of home ownership that had begun before the Civil War and gained considerable momentum in the 1880s and 1890s as developers, using standardized plans rather than architects found profit in addressing the housing aspirations of the growing urban working class.



Figure 4-10. 412 Sixth Street (c. 1880)

4.4.7 The Niagara Reservation

At the same time that Niagara Falls was becoming a major producer of electricity, the nation and the world took note of the threat of destruction that rapidly growing industrial development was about to take on the magnificent natural scenery at Niagara. The decade of the 1880s also saw the successful conclusion of what was virtually a worldwide campaign to preserve the Falls and the immediate area around them from industrial and commercial encroachment. The fight was led by Frederick Law Olmsted, America's foremost landscape architect, who had become concerned about the preservation of the Falls in the early 1870s, when he and his partner, Calvert Vaux, designed a park and parkway system for Buffalo. Enlisting the support of the press, politicians, artists, scholars, and ordinary people, Olmsted marshaled an international effort to save Niagara and make all of its scenic attractions accessible to all, free of charge. These efforts yielded success in 1883 when the State of New York agreed to purchase Goat Island from the Porter family as well as to acquire Prospect Park (at Prospect Point) and the shoreline of the river along the rapids. Simultaneously, the Dominion of Canada took title to the Canadian side of the cataract. In 1885, the Niagara Reservation officially opened to the public.¹² Two years after that, Olmsted and Vaux presented their plan for laying out a series of roadways, pathways, and viewing benches that were designed to both preserve the scenery around the Falls and make it accessible to thousands of visitors. The architects also called for the demolition of commercial buildings along the shoreline above the Falls and the restoration of the riverside as a natural area. The park commissioners approved Olmsted and Vaux's plan and hired Thomas Welch as their chief executive officer to oversee construction. The original commissioners accomplished much before 1895, by which time over 150 buildings had been removed, but many of Olmsted and Vaux's innovative ideas were never fully implemented. One need only compare the present-day condition of the park with the advice voiced by America's two greatest landscape architects to see how later generations have ignored much of what they

¹² The Niagara Reservation is a National Historic Landmark.

had said. “What is mainly important,” urged Olmsted and Vaux, “is that the one purpose for which the State invited the Reservation to be visited—namely, the enjoyment of certain passages of natural scenery of a distinctive character—shall plainly control all the arrangements it makes.” Their chief concern was to preserve the natural integrity of Goat Island, which had been little changed since the days of Father Hennepin. Even if a donor were to offer a magnificent piece of statuary for the island, they cautioned the commissioners, it should be refused to as firmly as they would an offer “to stock the Island with poison ivy or whit wolves or bears.”¹³ Yet even though the Reservation fell short of the exalted vision that Olmsted and Vaux had for it, the park at Niagara would henceforth to be a major international tourist destination for thousands of visitors annually.

Olmsted and Vaux’s 1887 plan for the Reservation would result in a number of changes being made to the village itself (Figure 4-11). The riverfront, roughly from the beginning of the Hydraulic Canal and Quay Street at Port Day to Falls Street now became Reservation land, and together with former River Street that ran along the shore, was removed from development. A number of small industrial buildings on Willow Island went down, and the entire length of the shoreline imitated nature’s habits. A winding carriage drive known as the Riverway, together with flanking footpaths, ran through the center of this narrow strip of land. On Olmsted and Vaux’s 1887 plan, the sinuous Riverway and its thickly re-planted borders presented a strong contrast to the straight streets of the village. Olmsted and Vaux’s plan also called for the destruction of several village streets. In order to enhance the Prospect Point area, Olmsted and Vaux proposed to enlarge Prospect Park, the private park that already existed there and which the state had acquired as part of the Reservation. A roughly triangular piece of developed village land on the upriver side of former Prospect Park bounded by former Rapids Street on the west, Canal Street on the north, Cascade Street on the south, and Bridge Street on the east disappeared from the face of the village map. Likewise, Grove Street (the former inland border of Prospect Park) and the platted lots between it and Canal Street (today used for to a parking lot) became Reservation property and were landscaped in a seemingly natural manner. (Canal Street now became the inland border of the Reservation in this area.)

Nevertheless, the park designers did not wish the Reservation to be very isolated from the village, which they must have foreseen growing into a city whose citizens would come to regard the reservation as an urban park. In order to integrate the new Riverway and the Reservation with the village street plan, Olmsted and Vaux provided direct access the grounds from the ends of Fourth Street, Mill Street, Main Street, Bridge Street (which led to the bridge to Bath Island from which a second bridge gave access to Goat Island), Canal Street, and Niagara Street. For out-of-town visitors, Olmsted and Vaux regarded the main approach to the Reservation to be along Falls Street, which ran from the New York Central railroad station at Second Street to the border of the Reservation at Canal Street. (The Lehigh Valley and Erie railroads also served Niagara Falls.) Here visitors were welcomed onto the grounds of the state lands free of charge (formerly visitors had had to pay to enter Prospect Park) within a spacious polygonal plaza. From the railroad station, Olmsted and Vaux envisioned Falls Street bordered by rows of trees and pedestrian sidewalks. (Historic photographs reveal that the broad street, which was lined with commercial buildings catering mostly to the tourist trade, remained treeless.) Olmsted and Vaux’s plan assured easy access for both local residents and visitors arriving by rail to the

¹³ Fredrick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, *General Plan for the Improvement of the Niagara Reservation* (New York: 1887), 37, quoted in Charles E. Beveridge, “Planning the Niagara Reservation,” in Francis R. Kowsky and Charles E. Beveridge, *The Distinctive Charms of Niagara Scenery* Frederick Law Olmsted and the Niagara Reservation (Niagara Falls: Buscaglia-Castellani Art Gallery of Niagara University, 1985, 21.

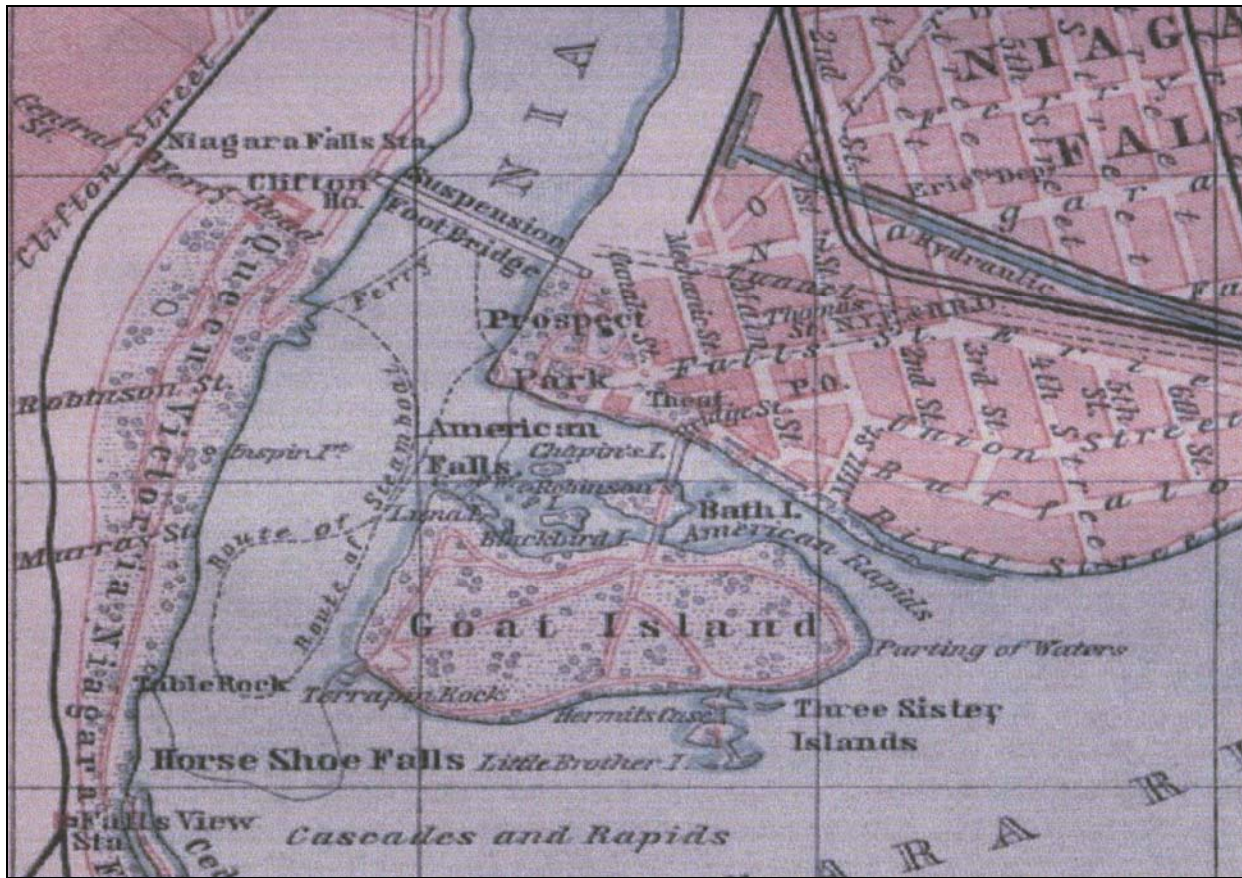


Figure 4-11. An 1894 map detail of New York State Reservation showing Prospect Park, Goat Island, Island and Three Sister Islands. Note circulation routes and landscaping.

Reservation's pleasing walks and drives and spectacular river scenery. They also envisioned that the Reservation would be free of commercial enterprises and provided for only a single facility serving light refreshments at the entrance to the Reservation. Visitors would be expected to patronize city businesses for services and entertainment, which, Olmsted and Vaux believed, would only distract visitors from the essential experience of enjoying a leisurely walk through some of America's most beautiful natural scenery. Olmsted and Vaux had laid out a plan that in addition to creating a park-like setting for viewing the rapids and the Falls carefully integrated the Reservation with the street plan and economic life of the existing village.

4.5 City of Niagara Falls: 1900-1950

4.5.1 *Corporate Enterprise and Urbanization*

The first quarter of the twentieth century was the time when Niagara Falls transformed itself from a village to a city. The catalyst for this change was hydroelectric power generation. In 1896, electricity generated at the Falls had been sent successfully twenty miles away to Buffalo. Five years later, the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo had alerted the nation and the world to the bright future that lay ahead for Niagara and Western New York due to the new energy source. Called the City of Light, the great exposition, the first world's fair of the twentieth century, was illuminated at night by thousands of light bulbs powered by electricity from the Falls. The two big power plants at the Falls, that owned by Jacob Schoellkopf at the end of the Hydraulic Canal, and the plant run by the Niagara Falls Power Company on Buffalo Avenue generated more electricity than was being produced anywhere else on the planet. Truly, a bright future lay ahead for the Cataract City. The progress of the place is mirrored in its architecture from this period.

With the growth and development of industry made possible by electricity, Niagara Falls began to see for the first time in its history a heavy influx of foreign workers. Their presence transformed the fledging city into a multi-ethnic community that included enclaves of Poles, Italians, Armenians, and Lebanese. Many Afro-Americans, often from southern states, also came to the city in search of work. Most of the foreign nationals lived in enclaves east of Eleventh Street, the present Memorial Parkway, outside of the project area. Locals regarded Tenth and Falls Streets as the "Times Square" of the East Side (this location is within the project area), while Eleventh Street itself enjoyed a dubious reputation as a street of prostitution.

Some architectural evidence remains in the project area of the city's ethnic history. The buildings of Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church served the Polish community that lived along streets to the east of the church. In the past, many residents of "Polonia" owned small businesses along Niagara Street, Portage Road, and East Falls Street. Of the many social organizations that served the Polish community, the ECHO Society, which is presently housed in a former residence at 357 Portage Road, still exists. Organized in 1922, its members continue to sponsor cultural and athletic events.

The Italian community in Niagara Falls traces its origins to the mid 1880s, when Italian masons and stonecutters who had worked on the New Croton Dam in the Hudson Valley came to town to construct the Adams Power Plant. St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church became the major religious and social center of the Italian-American community. Many Italian-American families sent their children to Niagara Falls High School, which was the city's "melting pot" for the Americanization of many diverse immigrant groups.

Following the pattern established elsewhere in America, churches in Niagara Falls became the focus of ethnic communities. While Poles (who actually came either as Russian, German, or Austria citizens) worshiped at Holy Trinity and Italians at St. Joseph's and St. Mary of the Cataract, others found their way into American society through the doors of neighboring religious institutions. Several of these within the project area serve the descendents of the first families who established them in the early twentieth century. The Armenian-American community maintains two churches within the project area: St. Sarkis Armenian Apostolic Church, erected in 1952 at 300 Ninth Street, and St. Hagop Armenian Apostolic Church, erected in 1951 at 322 Ninth Street. Our Lady of Lebanon Roman Catholic Church (1925) at 1120 Niagara Street serves mainly Lebanese-American parishioners. The many Jewish immigrants

who came to the city erected two synagogues within the project area. Temple Beth Israel at 404 Cedar Avenue, which went up in 1911, continues its life as a religious building in the care of a Seventh Day Adventist congregation. Temple Beth El, erected in 1914 at 720 Ashland Avenue, still functions as a synagogue.

The Afro-American community of present-day Niagara Falls has deep roots in the area. Before the Civil War, the village was an important point of exit to Canada for many escaped slaves traveling the Underground Railroad. In the early twentieth century, a small number of Afro-Americans began once again to make their way to the city from the South. They came seeking employment mainly in the hotels and restaurants that served the lively tourist trade. The 1920 census records 509 Afro-Americans in Niagara Falls; today, it is the dominant group within the project area. St. John's African Methodist Church, erected in 1920 at 155 Thirteenth Street as St. John's African Methodist Episcopal Church, might be considered the mother church of the African-American community in the city.

4.5.2 *Ecole des Beaux-Arts Neo-Classicism*

Foremost among the buildings from this time are those in the Neo-Classical style and identified with the Ecole de Beaux-Arts, the Parisian architectural school where many Americans of the day went to study architecture. Imbued with the principles of monumental Classicism—students learned as much about Roman and Renaissance buildings as they did about principals of construction and the properties of materials—returning architects sought to dignify life in our fledgling cities with columned and vaulted edifices. Indeed, it was in housing the functions of modern urban life were designers like McKim, Mead & White, Carrère and Hastings, and Richard Morris Hunt. The style received an enormous boost in the professional and public imagination with the staging at Chicago of the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893. The Chicago exposition created a fictive metropolis of Neo-Classical buildings, fountains, and statuary that was so compelling that it aroused a desire to make real American cities look more and more like the world of the fair. The resulting "City Beautiful Movement" lasted through the 1930s when the Great Depression ended the optimism and prosperity that had sustained it.

Niagara Falls is home to four architecturally distinguished examples of City Beautiful Movement civic architecture. Earliest among them is the Niagara Falls Public Library.¹⁴ Erected in 1902 with a grant from the Andrew Carnegie Foundation secured by the combined efforts of Thomas Welch, members of the Porter family, and William B. Rankine, the building went up to plans by E. E. Jorlmon who had recently arrived in Niagara Falls from Minnesota. The Roman brick and limestone building with Ionic columns framing the entrance displays all of the characteristics of the style: symmetrical composition, a sense of grand scale, masonry materials, and Classical ornament and details. Even more imposing is the United States Post Office that James Knox Taylor, Supervising Architect of the Treasury in Washington, designed for the city in 1904 (Figure 4-12).¹⁵ Built of white Vermont marble and featuring a centerpiece of two-story engaged Ionic columns, the building is the finest example of Ecole des Beaux-Arts Classicism in the city. Nearby on Main Street, City Hall went up in 1924 to designs by Norton Kirkpatrick and Will A. Cannon, the most important local architectural firm at the time. Kirkpatrick, the senior partner and the man in charge of the City Hall project, deftly displayed the training he had received at the Ecole des Beaux-Art in Paris.¹⁶ Finally, the former Niagara Falls High School on Pine Avenue, erected after the former building burned, is a good example of Neo-Classical design

¹⁴ This building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

¹⁵ This building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

¹⁶ This building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

applied to the standardized requirements of large public education building.¹⁷ Designed in 1923 by local architects Simon Larke and C. R. Obenhack (for Associated Architects) and closed as a school in 2000, the building has been adapted for use as an arts center. Thus, all four of these quintessentially urban buildings from better days in the city's history still serve civic functions.



Figure 4-12. United States Post Office at 615 Main Street (James Knox Taylor, architect; 1904)
National Register Listed (I) / Niagara Falls Landmark

Niagara Falls also possesses a number of commercial, religious, and institutional buildings erected in the Neo-Classical style. The former Bank of Niagara at 225 Old Falls Street preserves a ground floor designed by New York City architects Carrère & Hastings, one of the nation's leading firms of the day. In 1930, local architect Chester Phelps added the three upper floors in a manner that was fully compatible with the appearance of the existing ground floor. Simons, Britain & English's Niagara County Savings Bank of 1919 at 418 Third Street, with a triumphal arch façade, is a distinguished example of the style that was often employed for financial institutions. Kirkpatrick & Cannon's First Unitarian Church of 1921 at 639 Main Street, with its double story Tuscan columns and walls of eccentrically laid broken stones, and Simon Larke's Temple Beth El synagogue of 1914 at 720 Ashland Avenue, are good examples of Neo-Classical religious buildings. Kirkpatrick & Cannon placed a Tuscan portico similar to that of the Unitarian Church at the entrance of their St. Mary's Nurses Residence of 1927 at 542 Sixth Street, a model of simple Neo-Classical institutional building.

A number of well-to-do residents built their homes in the Neo-Classical style that in Eastern cities had become emblematic of wealth and good taste. Local examples are the James J. Mahoney house of 1904 at 521 Buffalo Avenue and Harris Lymberg house, designed by Detroit architect Isadore M. Lewis in 1920 for a lot at 610 Buffalo Avenue.

4.5.3 Colonial Revival Style

¹⁷ This building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The City Beautiful Movement also stimulated interest in America's Classical heritage of eighteenth-century Colonial or Georgian architecture. The so-called Colonial Revival was underway in the 1890s and continued to be popular through the first half of the twentieth century. Further impetus to the spread of the Colonial Revival came in the 1920s when the Rockefeller Foundation began the reconstruction of the Georgian buildings of colonial Williamsburg, Virginia. Builders of houses found the red brick buildings with white sash windows of the Georgian style especially appealing, and the streets of Niagara Falls have many houses built from 1900 to 1950 in this manner. Especially notable examples are Lansing, Bley & Lyman's Smith house of 1919 at 327 Buffalo Avenue, William A. Kidd's Frederick Coe house of 1916 at 331 Buffalo Avenue (both of these were important Buffalo architectural firms), Simon Larke's Greig house of 1922 at 705 Chilton Avenue (Figure 4-13), the Sherry house (1925) at 765 Park Place, and the Batts house of 1922 at 741 Fourth Street. Examples that are more modest resemble the types of houses that one could purchase from companies such as Sears and Roebuck and Aladdin Homes and assemble on the owner's lot. Dwellings at 1303 Fort Avenue (c. 1930), 1314 Fort Avenue, 735 Fourth Street (c. 1916), 757 Fourth (c. 1920), 760 Fourth Street (1918), and 518 Ninth Street (c. 1930) fall into this category. Kirkpatrick & Cannon's Ripple building of 1921 at 717 Main is a good representative Colonial Revival small office building; the same firm's Carborundum administration building on Buffalo Avenue of three years later and the Jefferson Apartments of 1925 demonstrate how architects adapted the style to large modern structures.

Indicative of the enduring popularity of the Colonial Revival as well as to the wide variety of commercial structures that architect's cast in this mold is the gas station that went up in 1940 at 610 Main Street. Capped with a wooden cupola and ornamented with end chimneystacks, the building suggests a diminutive roadside Mount Vernon. Esenwein and Johnson's Hotel Niagara of 1923 and the Colonial Apartments at 1212 Niagara Street of c. 1905 demonstrate how the Colonial Revival style was adapted to large and small multiple dwellings.



Figure 4-13.
Simon Larke's Greig
House of 1922 at 705
Chilton Avenue

4.5.4 American Four Square Houses

In the realm of domestic architecture, the American Four Square house is often seen as having derived from the hipped-roofed, symmetrical plan, and compact, cubic shape of eighteenth-century Georgian houses. Popular with middle class families because they were comfortable to live in and unpretentious in appearance, these types of dwellings—that were often acquired from catalogues—are common throughout Western New York. Especially well preserved examples in the project area are at 465, 467, and 476 Portage Road (all dating from c. 1920), 469 Fifth Street (c. 1925), and 653 Chilton Avenue (1919).

4.5.5 Craftsman Houses

Unlike the proponents of monumental Neo-Classicism, whose ideals were urban and cosmopolitan, advocates of the Craftsman style extolled the virtues of the simple life lived in homes of informal design built of undisguised natural materials. Confined almost exclusively to domestic architecture, the Craftsman movement grew out of the late-nineteenth-century British Arts and Crafts movement identified with William Morris. In the United States, Syracuse furniture maker Gustaf Stickley became the most prominent spokesperson for the anti-industrial values that Morris had preached. Moreover, in nearby East Aurora, Elbert Hubbard had started the Roycroft workshops on the model that Morris had set. Through the medium of periodicals and books, the leaders of the American Arts and Crafts movement spread their message to a wide audience. A number of well-designed Craftsman-inspired homes went up in Niagara Falls after the turn of the century. Classic Craftsman bungalows stand at 620 Chilton Avenue (c. 1904; Figure 4-14), 408 Elmwood Avenue (c. 1920), 929 Ferry Avenue (c. 1920), and 470 Portage Road (c. 1920). Larger instances of the style are the Pringle house of 1912 at 741 Park Place, the McIntyre house of 1920 at 650 Chilton Avenue, and the residence of c. 1916 at 704 Fourth Street (designed by local architects Wright & Kremers).



Figure 4-14. 620 Chilton Avenue (c. 1904)

4.5.6 Other Revival Styles

Other revival styles that were popular during the first half of the twentieth century are also represented along the streets of Niagara Falls. Two splendid Spanish Colonial Revival structures by Kirkpatrick & Cannon stand at 302 Ferry Avenue[503 Third Street-SHPO], built in 1923 and 223 Ferry Avenue[469 Third Street-SHPO], erected in 1924. The finest example in town of this style, the popularity of which in Western New York may have been stimulated by the Pan American Exhibition, is the E. A. Kinsey Auto Company building at 1300 Main Street that Kirkpatrick & Cannon designed in 1929. The Red Coach Inn at 10 Buffalo Avenue best represents the Tudor Revival (Figure 4-15). Designed by Buffalo architect Harold J. Cook in 1923 and featuring the steep gables and half timbering that are the hallmark of the style, it was said to have been modeled after the Old Bell Inn in Finedon, England. (Together with the Hotel Niagara nearby, it represents the city's earlier hotel era.) The residence at 703 Ashland Avenue of c. 1920 well represents a style that was especially popular for domestic architecture, as does the house of c. 1925 at 748 Fourth Street and Wright & Kremers' Fisher house of 1916 at 2 Hillcrest Street. The Stratford Arms Apartments at 565 Seventh Street, designed in 1927 by Simon and Russell G. Larke, is a good example of a larger Tudor style building.

For ecclesiastical architecture, the Gothic style remained popular from the previous century with many denominations. The first quarter of the twentieth century was a golden age of church building for the city of Niagara Falls. Many of these went up in the Gothic style. The First Baptist Church of 1900 at 554 Main Street by William H. Barnes and James R. White is especially interesting for the way the building develops from its irregular lot and defines an important intersection. The architects nicely exploited the freedom of arrangement that the Gothic style offered them. For the significant Polish community that had settled in Niagara Falls to work at the many thriving factories, Schmill & Gould of Buffalo designed Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church in 1905 at 1417 Falls Street[1419-SHPO]. The needle-like tower of the church seems to defy the destruction and deterioration of the surrounding neighborhood that it once served. In 1906, Polish-American architect Wladyslaw H. Zawadzki of Buffalo erected the adjacent rectory, followed in 1913 by the schoolhouse next door. For both of these structures, Zawadzki specified the same local limestone that Schmill & Gould had used for the church. Architecturally, the finest church of the period in the city is St. Paul's United Methodist Church and Parish House at 723 Seventh Street (Figure 4-16). Designed in 1921 by Philadelphia architect Charles W. Bolton, it reflects the influence of the so-called "Boston Gothic" churches of Ralph Adams Cram. Like Cram, Bolton, who had a national reputation as a church architect, based his design on fifteenth-century English parish churches in the Perpendicular style.

4.5.7 Duplexes and Two-Family Flats

Less obvious derivatives of history were duplexes of side-by-side double houses for two families that served the needs of the growing working class population of the city. Although not unique to Niagara Falls, buildings of this type occur on many residential streets of the city. Well-preserved examples are at 639 and 643 Elmwood Avenue (both erected c. 1900), 447 and 451 Fifth Street (c. 1895 and c. 1920, respectively), and 724 Park Place (c. 1900). "Doubles," or upper and lower flats also continued to be constructed well into the twentieth century. Representative examples survive at 244 and 338 Fourteenth Street (both dating from c. 1920) and 542 Portage Road (1925).



Figure 4-15. 10 Buffalo Avenue (Harold J. Cook, architect: 1923)



Figure 4-16. St. Paul's United Episcopal Church and Parish House at 723 Seventh Street (Charles W. Bolton, architect: 1921)

4.5.8 Art Deco and the International Style

During the decade of the 1920s, international architects sought to create a new architecture that owed less of a debt to the past than the revival styles discussed above. The two most vital modernist movements were the Art Deco and International styles. Art Deco, also known as the Art Moderne style, espoused the free use of decorative motifs drawn from many sources; International style architects deleted ornament from their buildings and espoused a new machine age esthetic that leaned heavily on modern materials and industrial processes. Both of these movements had an impact on American architecture before the Great Depression of the 1930s cut short development. After World War II, when building revived, the International Style came into its own, especially as the architecture for business. Art Deco did not survive the 1950s.



Figure 4-17.
United Office Building
at 220 Rainbow
Boulevard North
(Esenwein & Johnson,
architects: 1928).
National Register
Eligible(I) / Niagara
Falls Landmark.

In Niagara Falls, both of these modernist trends are represented. The largest historic building in the city, the United Office Building of 1928 at 220 Rainbow Boulevard North (Figure 4-17, 4-18), is a splendid example of the Art Deco style by the prominent Buffalo architectural firm of Esenwein & Johnson. The only remaining skyscraper office tower in the city, the steel frame building rises to twenty stories. Imitating in its upper stories the setbacks of New York City tall buildings—where building codes required that the top floors be stepped back to allow sunlight to reach the street level—and cladding the sleek-lined exterior in brick that gets progressively lighter in tone as the building rises, Esenwein & Johnson emphasized the height of the structure. While heeding Louis Sullivan’s dictum “form follows function” and expressing the structural grid and repetitive nature of the interior spaces in their exterior design, the architects indulged the taste for ornament that was the hallmark of the Art Deco style. Terra cotta panels at the top of the building and ornamental details at ground level are based on Mayan architecture, a decorative tradition from which Art Deco skyscraper designers less often drew inspiration. Another noteworthy Art Deco structure in the city is the former Johnny Ryan Bottling Plant of c. 1950 at 822 Niagara Street. The clean lines of glazed brick exterior and the tall central entrance bay filled with glass and framed by setback piers proclaimed the firm’s intention to present a progressive business image. Other examples are the one-story commercial building of c. 1950 at 820 Cedar Avenue and the Board of Education Administration Annex of 1937 at 606 Sixth Street.

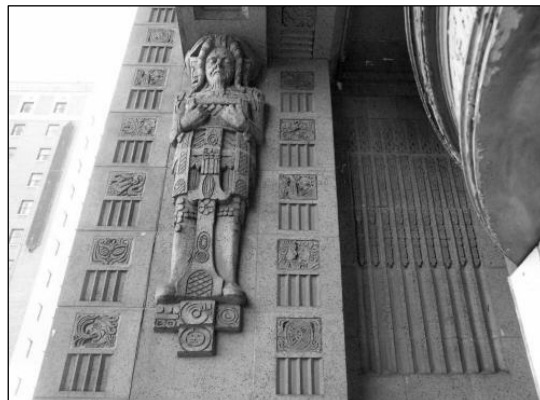


Figure 4-18.
Entrance
detail, United
Office Building

To the pioneers of modern design like LeCourbusier and Mies Van de Rohe, as well as to their American followers like Philip Johnson, both the ornamentalism of the Art Deco style and the historicism of the various revival styles were antithetical to the notion of modernity. They sought an architecture that would be expressive of its time and turned to the visual language of industry and the machine. To be sure, Niagara Falls was far from the cutting edge of architectural theory and practice in the 1920s and 1930s, but it did have designers who were willing, on a small scale, to venture onto new ground. In 1939, Russell G. Larke designed a small office and apartment building at 751 Seventh Street that is possibly the first full expression of modernism in the city. Just after World War II, the Johnson Building Company erected another small office building at 760 Main Street that reflected the no-nonsense architecture of the International Style. Simple lines, unornamented surfaces and especially the horizontal band of “ribbon windows” of the second floor and the flat roof speak the design vocabulary that was inspired by industrial buildings. The same may be said for the single-story office building that the E. F. Treadwell Construction Company erected in 1948 at 1220 Main Street. In 1950, Dr. Frederick Lowe built one of the rare examples of modernist domestic architecture in the city at 711 Fourth Street.

4.5.9 Industrial Architecture

Although many of the industries for which residents of the project area once worked have now disappeared, historic industrial structures exist as reminders of the thriving economy that developed at the dawn of Age of Electricity. Notable among these existing landmarks are the Shredded Wheat/NABISCO concrete grain elevator and factory of 1912 (Figure 19; the original Shredded Wheat factory nearby on Buffalo Avenue was demolished in the 1950s) and the International Acheson Graphite Company’s reinforced concrete daylight factory building of 1914-1920 (designed by the firm’s engineer, Clarence Tryon). Edward B. Acheson, who also had invented the abrasive carborundum and established the Carborundum Company in the city in 1894, founded the Acheson Company in 1898. The Acheson Graphite Company, which was one of the city’s major employers, manufactured electrical products and lubricants in several large now-demolished factories that the company built across the street. The only maker of graphite in the United States, the company had located in Niagara Falls because it required large amounts of electricity to manufacture its product. The existing building was used to make Gredag, a graphite and grease lubricant. The structure, the last of a complex of company manufactories, now stands abandoned at 1920 Buffalo Avenue.



Figure 4-19. Shredded Wheat/NABISCO concrete grain elevator and factory of 1912 at 816 Buffalo Avenue.
National Register Eligible (I)

4.6 City of Niagara Falls: 1950-2000

4.6.1 *Declining Fortunes and the Search for New Priorities*

The prosperity that returned to America in the decades following the Great Depression and World War II, largely alluded the city of Niagara Falls. “The anticipation of a glorious New Niagara in ‘Electrical America,’” writes Niagara Falls historian William Irwin, “raised promises and expectations to unrealistic levels. Indeed, the ideal of unbridled technological utopianism, so central to the New Niagara, proved impossible to sustain in the twentieth century.”¹⁸ Signs that presaged the period of industrial decline began to appear in the 1950s. Already in 1949, Alcoa Aluminum ceased operations at its mammoth plant on the High Bank. Three years later, all of the company’s buildings were demolished. During the period from 1953 to 1963 when the New York State Niagara Power Authority was constructing its new hydroelectric facility, the city lost a third of its factory jobs. Symptomatic of the decline was the suspension of rail passenger service, once the main artery of tourism, to the city in 1961. A more serious blow to the well being of local industry was the collapse of the gorge wall in 1956 above the Schoellkopf power plant (then run by Niagara Mohawk Power). The resulting destruction of turbines and generating facilities at the bottom of the gorge left local factories without inexpensive power. Many businesses chose to relocate, adding considerable momentum to an already declining economy. Closings and downsizing continued into the 1980s and 1990s. In 1982, Nitec Paper Corporation declared bankruptcy, costing the city 700 jobs; between 1983 and 1987, Carborundum Corporation laid off or transferred nearly 1000 workers; and in 1987 Union Carbide terminated 650 positions. Eventually Shredded Wheat, International Acehson, Francis Hook and Eye, and Fastener Company—all pioneer industries from the pioneer days of the city’s industrial growth—closed their doors. Adding to the city’s woes was the discovery of large amounts of toxic chemicals in the soil of the residential neighborhood that had been built over the former Love Canal in the LaSalle district of the city (outside of the project area). In 1978, President Carter declared the Love Canal neighborhood a federal state of emergency. His action inaugurated what became one of the nation’s most notorious environmental crises.

Together with a waning of tourism dollars, industrial decline inevitably affected the commercial life of the city. The central business district, centered around Falls Street and Main Street, saw many businesses close their doors and urban blight set in. Hoping to reverse the decline, the city undertook in the 1960s an extensive urban renewal plan that would radically alter the physical appearance of the city and cause the destruction of many historic buildings. City fathers pinned their hopes on tourism, seeking to transform Niagara Falls from a Rust Belt relic into a thoroughly up-to-date looking place that would attract convention goers. Promoters predicted that the city to come would be “a visual jewel,” as demolition and the creation of shovel ready sites continued apace. The demolition process that leveled all buildings in the area bounded by Niagara Street on the north, the Erie Railroad on the east, and the Niagara reservation and Niagara River on the west and south affected much of the project area. Today, other than from historic photographs, one can gain an idea of the former streetscapes of this area from the group of three-story historic buildings that survive on the north side of the 300 block of Niagara Street. These include the Niagara Gazette building, designed in the Neo-Classical style by Chester Phelps in 1914, and the vernacular commercial buildings at 316-326 dating from 1895-1908.

¹⁸ William Irwin, *The New Niagara: Tourism, Technology, and the Landscape of Niagara Falls, 1776-1917*. (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 226.

Architecturally, the city gained several International Style buildings by noted modern architects because of its ambitious urban renewal plans. The centerpiece of the program was Phillip Johnson and John Burgee's concrete and glass Niagara Falls Convention Center of 1972 (the present Seneca Niagara Casino). Nearby, at 345 Third Street, the Carborundum Corporation erected a building by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill that the company used for its headquarters and a museum of ceramics. A cube of dark metal and tinted plate glass, the dark gray structure seems to hover above the street on piers, a design feature that had become one of the distinguishing elements of the International Style since the days of LeCorbusier's Villa Savoy and Unité d'Habitation. In 1976, Caesar Pelli's metal and glass atrium known as the Wintergarden went up in the middle of Falls Street, which planners, following the fashion of the day, converted to a pedestrian mall. The Wintergarden was the centerpiece of the Rainbow Center (c. 1976), a new shopping mall by Gruen Associates. The same firm erected at Falls and Third Streets a new Hilton Hotel (c. 1976; the present Comfort Inn). Completing the collection of new structures in town was the tinted glass Hooker Chemical Company building. The area's own widely known architectural firm, Cannon Design, whose predecessors had been responsible for so many of the city's historic buildings, designed it.

In addition to demolishing many older buildings, urban renewal plans altered many city streets and changed the city's relation to the Niagara Reservation. Beginning in 1958, the city began filling in the Hydraulic Canal, which with the disappearance of the power plant in the Niagara Gorge and the loss of factories along the High Bank above the canal, no longer served any practical purpose. With it went all evidence of Quay Street, which had flanked the 100-foot-wide canal. "A person starting out from Falls and Third Streets 50 years ago," writes Niagara Falls historian Hamilton B. Mizer, could not travel more than six blocks within the city before crossing a bridge. There were no less than nine bridges spanning the mile-long Hydraulic Canal from its start at Port Day (now the Moses Parkway interchange at Quay Street) to the Canal Basin at Main near Second."¹⁹ All the remains above ground today of this once important feature of the city is a railing of the Second Street Bridge that carried traffic and pedestrians (three of the bridges were rail crossings) over the canal and a portion of the north wall of the canal in a vacant lot west of the railing. The railroad tracks leading to the station at Falls and Second Street were also removed and a sunken plaza created on the site. Falls Street itself had all of its buildings obliterated. It reemerged as a pedestrian walk from the Convention Center to the Wintergarden and beyond that to a pedestrian entrance to the Reservation. (Ironically, in its reincarnation, depopulated Falls Street received rows of trees as Olmsted and Vaux had suggested.) Since out of town visitors to the Falls now arrived by automobile, there was little need perceived for preserving the pedestrian link between city and park. The city became further isolated from the Reservation when, under the administration of Robert Moses, Olmsted and Vaux's Riverway was replaced by a high speed, multilane highway known as the Robert Moses State Parkway. It ran the length of the shoreline within the Reservation and continued along the top of the gorge to Lewiston. The engineers of the parkway also greatly limited access to the new roadway within the Reservation from the city; urban streets that formerly met the Riverway now terminated in dead ends before they entered the Reservation. A new bridge to Goat Island was constructed at Third Street, precisely the point where Olmsted had cautioned against placing a bridge because it would damage the view one had from Prospect Point and the original Bath Island Bridge of the magnificent rapids.

In 1967, as the urban renewal plan for the demolition of existing buildings in Niagara Falls was about to be implemented, Marthe Lane Stumpo, a writer for the *Niagara Falls Gazette* observed

¹⁹ Hamilton B. Mizer, *A City is Born, Niagara Falls, New York, A City Matures: A Selected Topical History of the City's Formative Years* (Niagara Falls: Niagara County Historical Society, 1991), 15.

that “a look upward while walking in downtown streets would uncover, above the unsightly signs, unattractive window displays and store fronts in disrepair—a treasury of Victorian buildings, of graceful moldings, elaborate bay windows, ‘gingerbready’ decorations, cupolas, pillars and intricate stone work.” Pointing out that other areas of the country were beginning to appreciate and restore their historic buildings, she concluded by reflecting that for Niagara Falls it “would be terribly sad to discover, after the wrecking ball had made rubble of our Victorian buildings, that they were a priceless asset to the community.”²⁰

Francis R. Kowsky

November 21, 2004
Buffalo, NY

²⁰ Marthe Lane Stumpo, “The Character of Niagara Falls,” *Niagara Falls Gazette*, February 12, 1967, 3.

4.7 Results and Recommendations

The Intensive Level Historic Resources Survey of the Niagara Falls Downtown neighborhood documented 654 buildings, structures, objects and landscape features. (See Section 5 for an annotated list of all surveyed properties). This final number takes into account 58 previously inventoried buildings (Appendix D). Outbuildings were not included in this final count unless they were considered to be significant resources on their own. Of the 654 buildings surveyed, NYS Historic Resource Forms were completed for 596 properties (Appendix F). The survey identified 61 architects, architectural firms, builders and/or engineers associated with buildings in the Downtown neighborhood, which equates to less than ten percent of all documented buildings.

The majority of buildings in the Downtown neighborhood are residences. Only seven percent of the buildings recorded were commercial (45 buildings), or at one time served a commercial function. The Downtown neighborhood contains the city's central business district. Presently, other commercial areas in the neighborhood are located on the city's primary arteries such as Main Street, Niagara Street, Pine Avenue and Portage Road. Historically, Falls Street served as one of the neighborhood's most thriving commercial districts.

The study included 16 religious buildings and/or complexes. The major church complexes have a total of nine ancillary buildings such as rectories, convents, schools, and outbuildings. The downtown neighborhood also, as originally constructed, included one armory, three civic buildings, one government building, four educational buildings, three telephone exchange buildings, three manufacturing factories, three industrial complexes, three institutional buildings, two cemeteries, two small parks, one public works building, and one transportation remnant.

Over the last two decades, the Niagara Falls Downtown neighborhood has suffered population and household decline, as well as a substantial loss of urban fabric. These impacts to the neighborhood are evident in the existing conditions of its commercial and residential building stock. The current survey noted a large number of buildings in the neighborhood are vacant, deteriorated, and/or in ruin. Sections of residential blocks have been demolished, which has dramatically affected the neighborhood's residential streetscape. Demolition of multiple houses on residential streets has either isolated individual residences, or left behind small, intermittent clusters of houses. The resulting empty lots are in many cases overgrown or used as dumping areas for refuse. Additionally, the community's once vibrant commercial core has significantly dwindled leaving unoccupied storefronts behind. Many of the small businesses such as corner taverns and stores, which supported residential areas of the neighborhood, have closed. Despite its gradual decline, the Niagara Falls Downtown neighborhood still retains much of its rich architectural and historical legacy.

The residential area of the Niagara Falls Downtown neighborhood is largely defined by large detached, frame or brick, two-family houses dating from the two decades bordering the turn of the twentieth century. Residential lots are typically narrow (30-ft wide) and deep (90-ft). Setbacks for houses in the neighborhood generally range from 10-ft to 25-ft, leaving open lawn to the front. Many of the streets retain their sandstone curbing and shade trees. Residential blocks along north-south streets in the downtown area, from Third Street to Ninth Street, are divided by narrow alleys. Typically, outbuildings front the alleys.

Two-family houses represent a large percentage of the residential housing in the Niagara Falls Downtown neighborhood. This building type generally conforms to a smaller range of basic shapes and plans than do single-family buildings. There are two categories of multiple-family

housing common in Niagara Falls: the double house and the two-decker. Each category is characterized by the special organization of the dwelling units within it. Multiple-unit dwellings reflect the same stylistic influences and progressions seen in and generally first utilized for single family houses. Typically, the double house comprises two mirror-image plans, multiple-floor units placed side by side. However, through plans and massing they may vary. The earliest form has principal entrances and halls placed next to each other at the facade's center. Stylistic treatments of two-family houses span the same range of historically inspired architectural styles used for single-family residences. The form evolved from the standard side-hall-plan dwelling, and was expanded and adapted to accommodate identical plan units stacked on two floors. The two-decker form is well represented in the Niagara Falls Downtown neighborhood.

The survey identified a prevalent sub-type of the two-family house that was constructed in the early twentieth century in Niagara Falls. This recognizable sub-type is a two-and-one-half story, brick, front-gabled block. In massing and details this sub-type displays elements of the Queen Anne style. However, what distinguishes this sub-type is the center projecting vestibule, which is either accessed on the side elevations through a separate entry porch in the side bay of the facade, or there is a center bay and the entrances are set in the side bays of the facade. The vestibule or bay is always punctuated by a pair of window openings, typically fixed, on the facade elevation. Window openings on the side elevations occur when the entrance doors are located in the side bays of the facade.

Another common sub-type of the two-family house in Niagara Falls is the two-and-one-half story, front-gabled, brick building with two-tiered porch, and double entrance doors either coupled in a side bay or a separate entrance in each side bay. Typically, this sub-type incorporates elements of the Craftsman or Queen Anne styles. The current one-block long section of Fifteenth Street still offers a good representative streetscape, though now compromised with pockets of vacant lots and multiple-family housing. These large two-and-one-half story, front-gabled, brick buildings were constructed in ca. 1910 for families of Polish immigrant workers.

The survey also identified in the Downtown neighborhood concentrations of "Kit houses" or "Sears" houses. Sears, Roebuck and Company and other mail-order catalogs offered designs that reflected popular American architectural styles of the first four decades of the twentieth century. From 1908 to 1940 Sears offered approximately 450 ready-to-assemble designs ranging from mansions to bungalows. Other national companies active in the mail-order business included Hodgson Company, Aladdin Homes and Montgomery Ward. Sears houses were ordered by mail and delivered by train. These mail-order houses became popular because they filled a need for sturdy, inexpensive, modern homes during a period of rapid suburbanization in America. Examples of "Kit houses" in the survey area are located on Chilton Avenue, Orchard Parkway and Portage Road.

The following list identifies historic resources in the Niagara Falls neighborhood surveyed that possess a high architectural and/or historical significance.

4.7.1 Individual Properties: Residential

The majority of buildings in the Downtown neighborhood are residences. These are notable as significant representative examples of the range of types.

113 Sixth Street, circa 1850, is significant as one of the oldest surviving frame dwellings in Niagara Falls. Stylistically it is a transitional house between the Greek Revival and the Italianate. The north wing may be original; it was here by 1857.

412 Sixth Street, circa 1880, is significant as an excellent example of a largely-intact, one-story worker's cottage with Eastlake scroll-cut elements that include delicate verge boards in the gable peak and window hoods.

443 Fifth Street, constructed in 1921 to a design by J. S. Nixon for Frank Meyers, is significant as a good representative example of an architect-designed, two-story, brick, Craftsman residence with a hipped roof.

445 Portage Road, circa 1902 and 1938, is significant as a good representative example of a two-and-one-half story Queen Anne/ Neoclassical hybrid with a hipped and cross-gabled roof. This large brick house was likely built for Thomas M. Calladine. The two-story front veranda supported by colossal Corinthian columns was apparently added in 1938.

900 Ferry Avenue, circa 1900, is significant as a good representative example of a two-and-one-half story, brick, Queen Anne with a hipped and cross-gabled roof and a corner turret.

1228 Ferry Avenue, built in 1934 for Mrs. Harry B. Wright, is significant as an excellent example of a largely-intact, two-story, brick, 1930's Regency style residence.

724 Park Place, circa 1900, is significant as a contributing building to the Fourth Street-Park Place Historic District. It is a very substantial side-by-side double house, occupied in 1907 by Edwin J. Cole and Fred W. Winslow.

705 Chilton Avenue, a brick veneer, Colonial Revival house constructed in 1922 to the design of architect Simon Larke for Walter Greig, is significant as a contributing building to the Chilton Avenue / Orchard Parkway Historic District. Mr. Greig worked for the American Book Sales Co.

620 Chilton Avenue, circa 1904 and occupied by Herbert F. Tilley in 1905, is significant as a contributing building to the Chilton Avenue / Orchard Parkway Historic District. It is an excellent example of a one-and-one-half story, Craftsman bungalow with a side gabled roof.

714 Buffalo Avenue, 1901, is significant as a contributing building to the Buffalo Avenue Historic District (local level). It is an English Tudor Revival with a side gable roof and a large front facing gable that was built for lawyer Augustus Thibadeau.

4.7.2 Individual Properties: Commercial and Industrial

Only seven percent of the buildings recorded were commercial (45 buildings), or at one time served a commercial function. The Downtown neighborhood contains the city's central business district. Several buildings are notable:

1300 Main Street, constructed in 1929 to the design of prominent Niagara Falls architects Kirkpatrick and Cannon, is significant as a good representative example of Spanish Colonial Revival commercial building. It was built for E. A. Kinsey Auto Company. The façade is embellished with ornate, colorful terra cotta details.

225 Old Falls Road, is significant as the last building remaining on Old Falls Street, the city's former business center. Built as a one-story building for the Bank of Niagara, it is also significant for being designed (1922-1923) by the nationally-prominent, New York City-based architects, Carrere & Hastings. Niagara Falls-based architect Clarence Phelps designed the three additional stories and remodeled the interior for the Power City Trust Co. in 1930-1931.

10 Buffalo Avenue, constructed in 1923 to the design of Buffalo architect Harold J. Cook, the Red Coach Inn is an excellent example of an English Tudor Revival commercial building. It was modeled after the Old Bell Inn in Finedon, England, and built by the Realty Company of William Schoelkopf and Charles Peabody as a hotel and apartment building. All rooms were converted into apartments around 1980.

610 Main Street, built in 1940 by Niagara Falls-based builders Wright & Kremers, is significant as a good representative example of a late residential-type gas station building designed in the Colonial Revival style. It was built as an auto service station for Marion S. Butler and Melen Shepard.

574 Portage Road, built in 1913-1915 to the design of architects McKenzie, Voorhees, and Gmelin, is significant as a good representative example of an architect-designed, early twentieth century telephone building that was constructed to accommodate the latest in telephone switchboard technology. The architectural firm based much of their successful practice on the design of new telephone buildings on the East Coast and exists today as Haines Lundberg Waehler of New York City.

4.7.3 Individual Properties: Religious

The study included 16 religious buildings and/or complexes. The major church complexes have a total of nine ancillary buildings such as rectories, convents, schools, and outbuildings. Several are notable:

St. Paul's United Methodist Church, 723 Seventh Street. The Church, Chapel and Parish House (1921-1923) are significant as an excellent example of English Gothic Revival architecture. The church began in the area in 1815, with the local church organized in 1823. The congregation occupied a stone building on First Street, across from the First Presbyterian Church for many years. Plans for the new church were originally prepared by church member Simon Larke, but the Bishop of Buffalo refused any funding unless the building was designed by an architect specializing in church design. Consequently, the Charles W. Bolton & Son firm of Philadelphia was chosen. This firm helped create 500 church designs throughout the country.

St. Sarkis Armenian Apostolic Church, 300 Ninth Street. This church is significant as a good example of a mid-twentieth century Romanesque Revival-inspired church. It was built in 1952 as the St. Sarkis Armenian Apostolic Church. Both Armenian churches on the street were threatened with demolition in 1990 for a shopping mall, but the congregation remains.

Temple Beth El, 720 Ashland Avenue. This building is significant as a good representative example of early twentieth century synagogue architecture. Design by Niagara Falls-based architect Simon Larke, it was built as a synagogue for Temple Beth El, which began in the 1860s (incorporated 1904). The recessed Ionic columns at the entrance reflect the similar treatment of the library across the street. In 1926 the building received an addition at the rear. The original congregation still worships here.

First Church of Christ Scientist, 650 Park Place. This building is significant as an excellent example of an English Gothic Revival church building constructed in the early twentieth century. The congregation was founded in 1907 and still occupies the building. This is one of the most prominent buildings designed by architect Carlos C. Lacy, who suffered a heart attack and died just outside of the church in 1946. The church was gutted by fire in 1973, and reconstruction of the interior was completed in 1975.

4.7.4 Individual Properties: Civic and Institutional

The downtown neighborhood also, as originally constructed, included one armory, three civic buildings, one government building, four educational buildings, three telephone exchange buildings, three manufacturing factories, three industrial complexes, three institutional buildings, two cemeteries, two small parks, one public works building, and one transportation remnant. One notable building still operates at the heart of the City:

Surgical Building, Memorial Hospital, 621 Tenth Street. Designed by prominent Buffalo-based architects Green & Wicks in 1907-1908, this building is significant as a good representative example of a two-story, institutional building with raised basement designed in the Colonial Revival style. Founded by local women in response to the rapidly-growing population of the City, the first building of Memorial Hospital opened was opened in 1897. This oldest remaining section was built as the surgical building, and still retains its original windows and form, but the central entrance porch has been removed. The next-oldest section of the complex still extant dates to 1927-1928 and was designed by the prominent Niagara Falls based architects, Kirkpatrick & Cannon.

Table 4.1 Identified architects, architectural firms and builders in the Downtown neighborhood.					
Architect / Builder	Date	Street Name	Street #	Ext	Property Name
Abert Elia	1926 / 1931	Eighth St.	611		
Albert Elia & Co., builder	1928	Tenth St.	358		Rocco Spendio House
Allen Smith Co., builder	1929	Orchard Pkwy.	655		Hall House
Angelo Soluri & Son, builder	1926	Thirteenth St.	446		Antonio Colucci House
Anthony Elia, builder	1925-1928	Niagara St.	1120		Our Lady of Lebanon
Arthur Elia, builder	1951-1952	Niagara St.	1120		Our Lady of Lebanon School
Associated Achitects	1923-1924	Pine Ave.	1201		Niagara Falls High School/NACC
Associated Architects	1922-1923	Portage Rd.	561		Niagara Falls South Junior High School
Carlos C. Lacy	1927	Park Pl.	650		Seventh Day Advent Church
Carlos C. Lacy	1926	Third St.	527		
Carrere & Hastings / Chester R. Phelps	1922-1923 / 1930-1931	Old Falls Rd.	225		Bank of Niagara
Charles W. Moyer & Son, builder	1928	Fourth St.	717		James W. Canavan House
Charles E. Mott	1917	Park Pl.	640		Dr. Alva L. Chaplin House
Charles F. Obenhack	1912	Ferry Ave.	1220		George H. Anthony House
Charles F. Obenhack	1917	Fourth St.	722		John F. Mahoney House
Charles F. Obenhack	1916	Park Pl.	745		John W. Brophy House
Charles F. Obenhack	1921	Rainbow Blvd.	411		Lewis A. Boore House
Charles F. Obenhack	1915	Sixth St.	208		Christopher Schwartz House
Charles F. Obenhack	1927-1928	Walnut Ave.	607		Niagara Falls Board of Education
Charles F. Obenhack, Wright & Kremers	1912-1923	Sixth St.	543	551	Peter Lammerts' Building
Charles W. Bolton & Son (Philadelphia)	1921-1923	Seventh St.	723		St. Paul's United Methodist Church
Charles W. Moyer, builder	1905	Cedar Ave.	717		
Chester R. Phelps	1909	Buffalo Ave.	333		E.B. Whitney House
Chester R. Phelps	1912	Chilton Ave.	628		Everett Ramsdell House
Chester R. Phelps	1912	Chilton Ave.	706		Bingenheimer House
Chester R. Phelps	1912	Chilton Ave.	826		
Chester R. Phelps	1918	Fourth St.	760		Eldred E. Nicklis House

Table 4.1 Identified architects, architectural firms and builders in the Downtown neighborhood.					
Architect / Builder	Date	Street Name	Street #	Ext	Property Name
Chester R. Phelps	1914-1915	Niagara St.	310		Niagara Falls Gazette Building
Chester R. Phelps	1916	Park Pl.	751		George W. Chormann House
Chester R. Phelps	1914	Portage Rd.	504		John C. Jenny House
Chester R. Phelps	1909	Rainbow Blvd.	649		Hennepin Apartments
Chester R. Phelps	1925	Third St.	460		Knack Apartments
Chester R. Phelps	1925	Third St.	466		Yates Apartments
Clarence A. Tryon, engineer	1914 / 1920	Buffalo Ave.	1920		Acheson Graphite Co. Buildings
E.F. Treadwell Construction Co., builders	1948	Main St.	1220		
Edgar E. Joralemon	1902-1904	Main St.	1022		Carnegie Building / NF Public Library
Esenwein & Johnson	1923-1925	Rainbow Blvd. N.	201		The Niagara
Esenwein & Johnson	1928-1929	Rainbow Blvd. N.	220		United Office Building
Esenwein & Johnson	1912	Riverside Dr.	600		Alfred W. Gray House
Featherly & Cannon	1916	Fourth St.	735		Frank A. Cannon House
Featherly & Cannon	1918	Fourth St.	736		Dr. Howard A. Smith House
Featherly & Cannon	1917	Tenth St.	211		
Featherly & Cannon	1916	Twelfth St.	416		Bert R. Blackmarr House
Gallinger & Wilson, builder	1931	Portage Rd.	448		Orland Marki House
General Building Co., builder	1926	Portage Rd.	403		John Rutkowski Building
George W. Wright	1882-1883	Second St.	228		St. Peter's Episcopal Church Rectory
George W. Wright & Co.	1897	Elmwood Ave.	608		
Green & Wicks	1907-1908	Tenth St.	621		Surgical Building, Memorial Hospital
Harold J. Cook	1923	Buffalo Ave.	10		Red Coach Inn
Harry Lyall, builder	1930	Ninth St.	518		Elizabeth Murphy House
Henry Dudley	1873-1880	Second St.	228		St. Peter's Episcopal Church
Henry W. Beardsley	1892	Main St.	742		Davy Home
Henry W. Beardsley	1892	Park Pl.	728		Henry W. Beardsley House
Isaac G. Perry	1895	Main St.	901		Armory
Isadore M. Lewis	1920-1921	Buffalo Ave.	610		Harris Lymberg House

Table 4.1 Identified architects, architectural firms and builders in the Downtown neighborhood.					
Architect / Builder	Date	Street Name	Street #	Ext	Property Name
J.S. Nixon	1921	Fifth St.	443		
James Cook, builder	1928	Orchard Pkwy.	619		Maggs House
James Knox Taylor	1906-1908	Main St.	615		U.S. Post Office
James R. White	1900	Buffalo Ave.	531		Mrs. I.P. Church House
James R. White	1908	Buffalo Ave.	720		
James R. White	1900	Buffalo Ave.	324		Dr. W. H. Hodge House
James R. White	1911	Cedar Ave.	404		Seventh Day Advent Church
James R. White	1919	Fourth St.	725		George B. Clark House
James R. White	1912	Fourth St.	731		Ross R. Coddington House
James Robertson & Son, builder	1928	Orchard Pkwy.	683		Elmer A. Bowen House
James Robertson & Son, builder	1938	Orchard Pkwy.	702		Dr. Garland E. Lewis House
James Robertson & Son, builder	1931	Thirteenth St.	451		James Robertson House
James Robertson & Son, builder	1926	Thirteenth St.	453		Moses D. Feigensohn House
Johnson & Clark, builder	1921	Ninth St.	502		
Johnson Building Co., builder	1946	Main St.	760		
Kirkpatrick & Cannon	1924 / 1936	Buffalo Ave.	1625		Carborundum Building
Kirkpatrick & Cannon	1926	Eighth St.	704		The Eleanor
Kirkpatrick & Cannon	1926	Main St.	530		The Sagamore Apartments
Kirkpatrick & Cannon	1921-1922	Main St.	639		First Unitarian Church
Kirkpatrick & Cannon	1921	Main St.	717		John W. Ripple House
Kirkpatrick & Cannon	1923-1924	Main St.	745		Niagara Falls City Hall
Kirkpatrick & Cannon	1929	Main St.	1300		
Kirkpatrick & Cannon	1922	Orchard Pkwy.	668		Harry Hackenheimer House
Kirkpatrick & Cannon	1925-1926	Rainbow Blvd.	250		The Jefferson Apartments
Kirkpatrick & Cannon	1927-1928	Sixth St.	542		St. Mary's Nurses/ Vincentian Residence
Kirkpatrick & Cannon	1924	Ferry Ave.	223		
Kirkpatrick & Cannon	1923	Ferry Ave.	302		
Lansing, Bley & Lyman	1919	Buffalo Ave.	327		W. Acheson Smith House

Table 4.1 Identified architects, architectural firms and builders in the Downtown neighborhood.					
Architect / Builder	Date	Street Name	Street #	Ext	Property Name
McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin	1913-1915	Portage Rd.	574		NY Telephone Co. Exchange Bldg
McKim, Mead & White	1893-1895	Buffalo Ave.	1501		Adams Power Station #3
Norton Kirkpatrick	1920	Buffalo Ave.	353		Reginald F. Meek House
Philip Johnson and John Burgee	1971-1974	Fourth St.	305		Convention Center / Casino
Russell G. Larke	1939	Seventh St.	751		
Schmill & Gould	1905-1907	Falls St.	1417		Holy Trinity R.C. Church
Simon & Russell G. Larke	1927	Seventh St.	565		Stratford Arms Apartments
Simon Larke	1914-1915	Ashland Ave.	720		Temple Beth El
Simon Larke	1913	Chilton Ave.	653		William A. Dewitt House
Simon Larke	1917	Chilton Ave.	673		Peter Thuecht House
Simon Larke	1922	Chilton Ave.	705		Walter Greig House
Simon Larke	1910	Elmwood Ave.	609		
Simon Larke	1917	Fourth St.	714		R. Max Eaton House
Simon Larke	1915	Main St.	719		
Simon Larke	1922	Orchard Pkwy.	659		Wilson & Cudebec House
Simon Larke	1923	Orchard Pkwy.	664		Denton A. Fuller House
Simon Larke	1913	Park Pl.	740		James G. Marshall House
Simon Larke	1924	Pine Ave.	625		
Simon Larke and Kirkpatrick & Cannon	1923-1924	Portage Rd.	1329		YMCA
Simons, Brittain & English	1919-1920	Third St.	418		Niagara County Savings Bank
Sinclair & Mackay, builder	1937	Portage Rd.	430		Mrs. Helen Butynski House
Sinclair & Mackay, builder	1926	Thirteenth St.	442		Carlos Falcone House
Sinclair & Mackay, builder	1926	Thirteenth St.	459		J. Falcone House
Virtuoso Building Co., builder	1949	Portage Rd.	401		Dr. J.H. Kwapis Office
W. H. Barnes and J.R. White	1900-1901	Main St.	554		1st Baptist Church
W.S. Johnson Building Co., builder	1931	Orchard Pkwy.	615		Bradley Norton House
W.S. Johnson Building Co., builder	1950	Orchard Pkwy.	678		

Table 4.1 Identified architects, architectural firms and builders in the Downtown neighborhood.					
Architect / Builder	Date	Street Name	Street #	Ext	Property Name
W.S. Johnson Building Co., builder	1929	Seventh St.	555		Stratford Arms Apartments
W.S. Johnson Building Co., builder	1936	Spruce Ave.	743		W. S. Johnson House
Walter McCulloh, engineer	1912-1916	Rainbow Blvd.	816		Shredded Wheat/Nabisco Grain Elevator
White & LaChance	1924-1925	Third St.	451		Morre Building
William A. Kidd	1916	Buffalo Ave.	331		Frederick J. Coe House
William F. Ginther	1912-1914	Sixth St.	521		St. Mary's Manor
William H. Cookman, builder	1902	Riverside Dr.	606		William H. Cookman House
Wladyslaw H. Zawadzki	1906-1907	Falls St.	1417		Holy Trinity R.C Rectory
Wladyslaw H. Zawadzki	1913	Falls St.	1417		Holy Trinity R.C School
Wladyslaw H. Zawadzki	1909-1910	Falls St.	1417		Holy Trinity R.C Convent
Wood & Bradney	1912 / 1950s	Buffalo Ave.	900		Moore Business Forms, Inc
Wright & Kremers	1914	Buffalo Ave.	615		
Wright & Kremers	1914	Buffalo Ave.	617		
Wright & Kremers	1915	Chilton Ave.	671		Mrs. Fredericka C. Tattersall House
Wright & Kremers	1916	Fourth St.	704		
Wright & Kremers	1921	Fourth St.	730		William M. Harrington House
Wright & Kremers	1916	Hillcrest St.	1		Mrs. Rose House
Wright & Kremers	1916	Hillcrest St.	2		Frank J. Fisher House
Wright & Kremers	1940	Main St.	610		
Wright & Kremers	1915-1916	Pine Ave.	324		Henry P. Lammerts House
Wright & Kremers	1913	Riverside Dr.	602		Simon Hirsch House

4.7.5 Historic Districts: National Register of Historic Places

Chilton Avenue – Orchard Parkway Historic District

Chilton Avenue – Orchard Parkway Historic District is comprised of 85 residential properties. This includes 69 contributing elements and 16 non-contributing elements. The district boundaries are: to the south, the southern edge of parcels located on the south side of Chilton Avenue; to the north, the northern edge of parcels located on the north side of Orchard Parkway; to the west, the east side of Whirlpool Street; and the eastern edge of properties at the eastern end of the district that abut lots fronting Main Street (Figures 4-20). The district is located in the northwest corner of the Downtown neighborhood.

These two blocks have an excellent collection of highly Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, and Craftsman residences that were constructed for some of the city's successful corporate businessmen of the time (Figures 4.21 – 4.24). Orchard Parkway stands out for its collection of early twentieth century "Kit" and "Sears" houses. A landscaped island and a canopy of mature shade trees enhance the residential streetscape of Orchard Parkway.

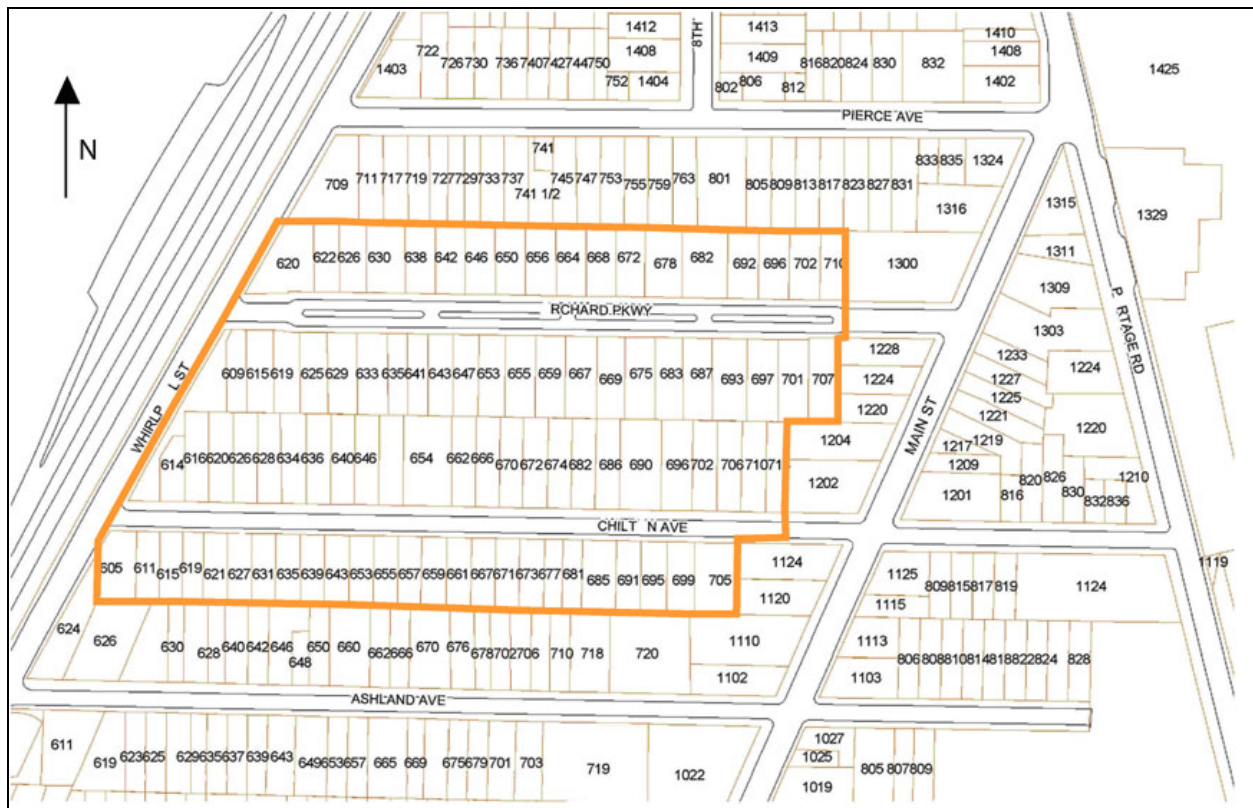


Figure 4-20. Chilton Avenue – Orchard Parkway Historic District boundaries highlighted in orange.



Figure 4-21. South side of Chilton Avenue, near Whirlpool Street.
Chilton Avenue – Orchard Parkway Historic District



Figure 4-22. South side of Chilton Avenue, east of Main Street.
Chilton Avenue – Orchard Parkway Historic District



Figure 4-23. South side of Chilton Avenue, east of Main Street.
Chilton Avenue – Orchard Parkway Historic District

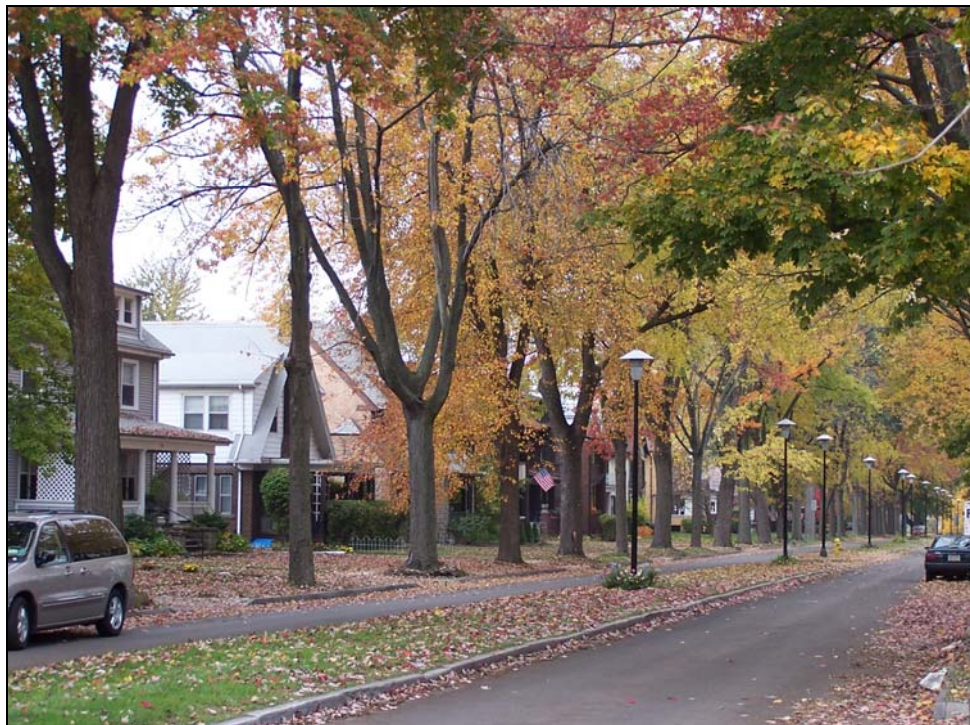


Figure 4-24. South side of Orchard Parkway, east of Main Street.
Chilton Avenue – Orchard Parkway Historic District

Table 4.2 Chilton Avenue – Orchard Parkway Historic District: Property List					
Street #	Ext	Street Name	Property Name	Comments	Chilton Ave-Orchard Pkwy HD
605		Chilton Ave.			Contributing
611		Chilton Ave.			Contributing
615		Chilton Ave.			Contributing
619		Chilton Ave.			Contributing
620		Chilton Ave.			Contributing
621		Chilton Ave.			Contributing
626		Chilton Ave.			Contributing
627		Chilton Ave.	W. J. Breckon House		Contributing
628		Chilton Ave.	Everett Ramsdell House	Address on house #630	Contributing
631		Chilton Ave.			Contributing
634		Chilton Ave.			Contributing
635		Chilton Ave.			Contributing
636		Chilton Ave.			Contributing
639		Chilton Ave.	Linda Roy House		Non-contributing
640		Chilton Ave.			Non-contributing
643		Chilton Ave.	George M. Herbst House		Contributing
646		Chilton Ave.			Non-Contributing
650		Chilton Ave.	Robert D. McIntyre House	Not on city map	Contributing
653		Chilton Ave.	William A. Devitt House	NRE(I) USN 06340.000449	Contributing
654		Chilton Ave.			Contributing
655		Chilton Ave.	John S. Watson House	Not NR Elig. USN 06340.000446	Non-contributing
659		Chilton Ave.			Contributing
661		Chilton Ave.			Contributing
662		Chilton Ave.			Contributing
666		Chilton Ave.			Contributing
667		Chilton Ave.			Contributing
670		Chilton Ave.	John D. Dewitt House		Contributing
671		Chilton Ave.	Mrs. Fredericka C. Tattersall House		Contributing
672		Chilton Ave.	Dr. Frederick C. Havens House		Non-contributing
673		Chilton Ave.	Peter Thurecht House		Contributing
674		Chilton Ave.			Non-contributing
677		Chilton Ave.			Contributing

Table 4.2 Chilton Avenue – Orchard Parkway Historic District: Property List					
Street #	Ext	Street Name	Property Name	Comments	Chilton Ave-Orchard Pkwy HD
681		Chilton Ave.			Non-contributing
682		Chilton Ave.			Non-contributing
685		Chilton Ave.			Non-contributing
686		Chilton Ave.			Contributing
690		Chilton Ave.			Contributing
691		Chilton Ave.			Contributing
695		Chilton Ave.	Max M. Oppenheim House		Contributing
696		Chilton Ave.			Contributing
699		Chilton Ave.			Contributing
702		Chilton Ave.	Thomas B. Lovell House		Contributing
705		Chilton Ave.	Walter Greig House		Contributing
706		Chilton Ave.	Bingenheimer House	Not NR Elig. USN 06340.000467	Contributing
609		Orchard Pkwy.	Henry Wasnide House		Contributing
615		Orchard Pkwy.	Bradley Norton House		Contributing
619		Orchard Pkwy.	Maggs House		Contributing
620		Orchard Pkwy.	Herman Hein House		Contributing
622		Orchard Pkwy.			Contributing
625		Orchard Pkwy.	John A. Curry House		Contributing
626		Orchard Pkwy.			Contributing
629		Orchard Pkwy.	Richard Roudebush House		Non-contributing
630		Orchard Pkwy.			Non-contributing
633		Orchard Pkwy.	Stephen R. Stilp House		Contributing
635		Orchard Pkwy.	John J. Rohleder House		Non-contributing
638		Orchard Pkwy.			Non-contributing
641		Orchard Pkwy.	Tracy G. Levee House		Contributing
642		Orchard Pkwy.	Dr. Oliver Walker House		Contributing
643		Orchard Pkwy.	Hugo Lauroesch House		Contributing

Table 4.2 Chilton Avenue – Orchard Parkway Historic District: Property List					
Street #	Ext	Street Name	Property Name	Comments	Chilton Ave-Orchard Pkwy HD
646		Orchard Pkwy.		Epiphany Episcopal Church residence	Non-contributing
647		Orchard Pkwy.	Fred W. Frommert House		Contributing
650		Orchard Pkwy.	Peter V. Keller House		Contributing
653		Orchard Pkwy.	Max Teller House		Contributing
655		Orchard Pkwy.	Hall House		Contributing
656		Orchard Pkwy.	Donald Woodward House		Contributing
659		Orchard Pkwy.	Wilson & Cudebec House		Contributing
664		Orchard Pkwy.	Denton A. Fuller House		Contributing
667		Orchard Pkwy.	Anna D. Meyers House		Contributing
668		Orchard Pkwy.	Harry Hackenheimer House		Contributing
669		Orchard Pkwy.	George W. Carnachan House		Contributing
672		Orchard Pkwy.	John H. Keller House		Contributing
675		Orchard Pkwy.	Robert L. Lavan House		Contributing
678		Orchard Pkwy.	Mrs. Mortimer J. Brown House		Contributing
682		Orchard Pkwy.	Alexis W. Bearce House		Contributing
683		Orchard Pkwy.	Elmer A. Bowen House		Contributing
687		Orchard Pkwy.	Mrs. Barbara Welch House		Contributing
692		Orchard Pkwy.	Alpheus R. Bearce House		Contributing
693		Orchard Pkwy.	Henry A. Keller House		Non-contributing
696		Orchard Pkwy.			Contributing
697		Orchard Pkwy.	Lawrence M. Snyder House		Non-contributing
701		Orchard Pkwy.	R. Clarence Mason House		Contributing
702		Orchard Pkwy.	Dr. Garland E. Lewis House		Contributing

Table 4.2 Chilton Avenue – Orchard Parkway Historic District: Property List					
Street #	Ext	Street Name	Property Name	Comments	Chilton Ave-Orchard Pkwy HD
707		Orchard Pkwy.	Joseph Kobas House		Contributing
710		Orchard Pkwy.	Mrs. Catherine F. Giles House		Contributing

Fourth Street- Park Place Historic District

Fourth Street- Park Place Historic District contains 45 elements. This includes 44 residential properties and one element, a section of stone wall (Table 4.3). The district has 42 contributing elements and three non-contributing elements, including a stone wall section along the east side of Park Place at Pine Avenue. The Fourth Street – Park Place Historic District is located in the western central edge of the City of Niagara Falls (the northwest corner of the current Phase I survey area). The district boundaries are roughly Pine Avenue to the south, Cedar Avenue to the north, the west side of Fourth Street and the east side of Park Place. (Figure 4-25). The district is located in the northwestern part of the Downtown neighborhood.

The district has two of the most intact early twentieth century residential streets in the city, Fourth Street and Park Place (Figures 4-26 and 4-27). Located between Pine and Cedar Avenues, these two blocks have an excellent collection of Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, and Craftsman residences that were constructed for some of the city's most successful corporate executives and businessmen of the time. Several of these residences were architect-designed. The district has one National Register Listed building, the James G. Marshall House at 740 Park Place.

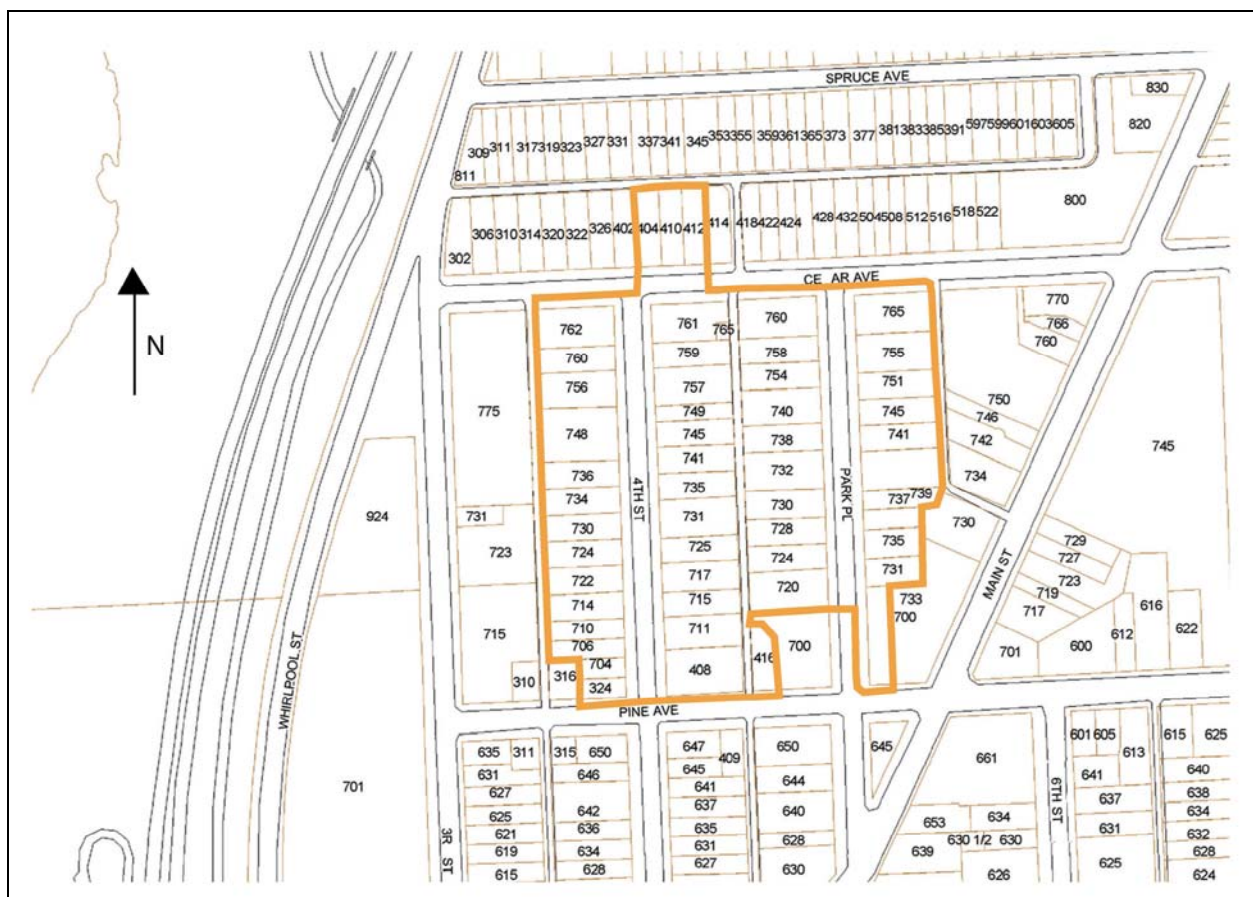


Figure 4-25. Fourth Street- Park Place Historic District boundaries highlighted in orange.



Figure 4-26. West side of Park Place.
Fourth Street- Park Place Historic District



Figure 4-27. East side of Fourth Street. Fourth Street- Park Place
Historic District

Table 4.3 Fourth Street – Park Place Historic District: Property List					
Street #	Ext	Street Name	Property Name	Comments	Fourth St-Park PI HD
404		Cedar Ave.	Temple Beth Israel / Seventh Day Advent	synagogue	Contributing
410		Cedar Ave.			Contributing
412		Cedar Ave.	Frank J. Koelle House		Contributing
704		Fourth St.			Contributing
706		Fourth St.			Non-contributing
710		Fourth St.			Non-contributing
711		Fourth St.	Dr. Frederick R. Lowe House		Contributing
714		Fourth St.	R. Max Eaton House		Contributing
715		Fourth St.	Frank C. Bingenheimer House		Contributing
717		Fourth St.	James W. Canavan House		Contributing
722		Fourth St.	John F. Mahoney House		Non-Contributing
724		Fourth St.			Contributing
725		Fourth St.	George B. Clark House		Contributing
730		Fourth St.	William M. Harrington House		Contributing
731		Fourth St.	Ross R. Coddington House		Contributing
734		Fourth St.	Dr. John P. Jones House		Contributing
735		Fourth St.	Frank A. Cannon House		Contributing
736		Fourth St.	Dr. Howard A. Smith House		Contributing
741		Fourth St.	Arthur A. Batts House		Contributing
745		Fourth St.			Contributing
748		Fourth St.		USN 06340.000520	Contributing
756		Fourth St.			Contributing
757		Fourth St.			Contributing
759		Fourth St.	Edward M. Noonan House		Contributing
760		Fourth St.	Eldred E. Nicklis House		Contributing

Table 4.3 Fourth Street – Park Place Historic District: Property List					
Street #	Ext	Street Name	Property Name	Comments	Fourth St-Park Pl HD
761		Fourth St.		Temple Beth Israel residence	Contributing
762	762A	Fourth St.			Contributing
700		Main St.	Stone Wall	East side of Park Pl @ Pine Avenue	Contributing
720		Park Pl.			Contributing
724		Park Pl.			Contributing
728		Park Pl.	Henry W. Beardsley House		Contributing
730		Park Pl.			Contributing
732		Park Pl.			Contributing
738		Park Pl.	Ernest R. Blew House		Contributing
740		Park Pl.	James G. Marshall House		Contributing
741		Park Pl.	William A. Pringle House		Contributing
745		Park Pl.	John W. Brophy House		Contributing
751		Park Pl.	George W. Chormann House		Contributing
754		Park Pl.	Edward P. Inslee House		Contributing
755		Park Pl.	William H. Williamson House		Contributing
758		Park Pl.	A. Goodman House		Contributing
760		Park Pl.	Wallace C. Johnson House		Contributing
765		Park Pl.	James E. Sherry House		Contributing
324		Pine Ave.	Henry P. Lammerts House		Contributing
416		Pine Ave.			Contributing

Riverside Drive Historic District

Riverside Drive Historic District is comprised of eight residential properties. This includes six contributing properties and two non-contributing properties (Table 4.4). The boundaries of the district are north side of Riverside Drive, the northern edges of properties fronting Riverside Drive, Holly Place to west, and the eastern edge of the parcel at 632 Riverside Drive (Figure 4-28). The district is located in the southern section of the Downtown neighborhood. The district has a National Register Listed property, the Holley-Rankine House, a stone Gothic Revival cottage. Houses within the district were constructed in the early twentieth century. One of the most prestigious architectural firms in Buffalo Esenwein & Johnson designed the Alfred W. Gray House (1912) at 600 Riverside Drive.

Located at an angle facing the upper rapids of the Niagara River, the Riverside Drive Historic District is the most uniquely sited block in the City of Niagara Falls. As originally laid out, Riverside Drive paralleled the river's shoreline and residences were restricted to the north side of the street, leaving uninterrupted views of the river. However, the original Riverside was impacted by the construction of the Robert Moses Parkway. Fill from the Niagara Power Plant project was dumped along the river's edge to accommodate the new parkway, thus altering the original setting of the district (Figures 4-29 and 4-30). A large green space occupies the area between the Riverside Drive and the parkway.



Figure 4-28. Riverside Drive Historic District boundaries highlighted in orange.



Figure 4-29. Riverside Drive Historic District, facing northeast.



Figure 4-30. Riverside Drive Historic District, facing west.

Table 4.4 Riverside Drive Historic District: Property List					
Street #	Ext	Street Name	Property Name	Comments	Riverside Dr HD
525		Riverside Dr.	Holley-Rankine / Lovelace House	National Register Listed (I) / Niagara Falls Landmark USN 06340.000023	Contributing
527		Riverside Dr.			Non-contributing
600		Riverside Dr.	Alfred W. Gray House		Contributing
602		Riverside Dr.	Simon Hirsch House		Contributing
604		Riverside Dr.	George W. Rae House		Non-contributing
606		Riverside Dr.	William H. Cookman House		Contributing
610		Riverside Dr.			Contributing
632		Riverside Dr.			Contributing

4.7.6 Historic District: Local Level

Buffalo Avenue Historic District

The Buffalo Avenue Historic District is eligible as a historic district at the local level. The district includes 38 elements, 32 contributing residential properties and 5 non-contributing residential properties. The district also includes the site of the former “Home of Shredded Wheat” factory. The boundaries of the district are: to the north, the northern lot limits of parcels on the north side of Buffalo Avenue; to the south, the southern edge of parcels on the south side of Buffalo Avenue; Quay Street to the east; and the western edge of the parcel at 154 Buffalo Avenue (Figure 4-31). The district is located in the southern portion of the Downtown neighborhood. A large green space borders the east end of the district to the south.

The Buffalo Avenue Historic District is not National Register eligible because it has been compromised by demolition and modern intrusions. As a result, this section of Buffalo Avenue has a discontinuous streetscape with large gaps of vacant land. Additionally, Buffalo Avenue no longer retains its dense canopy of shade trees. The one feature that ties the lower end of the district with the upper half is the site of the former “Home of Shredded Wheat” factory that once stood on the north side of Buffalo Avenue between Fourth and Sixth streets. After Nabisco consolidated in the mid-1950s, the original Shredded Wheat Factory buildings on Buffalo Avenue were demolished; the office section of the plant was National Register listed and stood until 1976.

The Buffalo Avenue Historic district is a residential neighborhood that generally dates from the mid-1800s to the 1930s (Figure 4-39). The majority of homes in the district were constructed in the early twentieth century for executives associated with the city’s industrial boom years. Large-scale single family homes were constructed in the first two decades of the twentieth century on Buffalo Avenue. The district has a range of residential architectural styles that include: Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, Craftsman, Neo-Classical, Colonial Revival and Tudor Revival. The district has one National Register Listed Property, the Whitney Mansion at 335 Buffalo Avenue ([1837], 1849-1851), a stone Greek Revival building.¹ It also includes two Niagara Falls Local Landmarks, both examples of the Italianate style, the Lavinia Porter Manse (ca. 1855) at 162 Buffalo Avenue and the Tatler House at 6 Fourth Street.

¹ The Whitney Mansion is also a Niagara Falls Local Landmark.



Figure 4-31. Buffalo Avenue District boundaries highlighted in orange.



Figure 4-32. North side of Buffalo Avenue, west of Quay Street.
Buffalo Avenue Historic District (Local Level)



Figure 4-33. North side of Buffalo Avenue, west of Quay Street from Riverside Drive.
Buffalo Avenue Historic District (Local Level)



Figure 4-34. South side of Buffalo Avenue from Holly Place.
Buffalo Avenue Historic District (Local Level)



Figure 4-35. South side of Buffalo Avenue, looking west from Fourth Street. Buffalo Avenue Historic District (Local Level)



Figure 4-36. South side of Buffalo Avenue, west of Fourth Street, facing southeast. Buffalo Avenue Historic District (Local Level)



Figure 4-37. Entrance gate to former Mrs. Elizabeth J. Townsend residence at 305 Buffalo Avenue.
Buffalo Avenue Historic District (Local Level)



Figure 4-38. North side of Buffalo Avenue, west of Second Street.
Buffalo Avenue Historic District (Local Level)



Figure 4-39. A representative early twentieth century (ca. 1905 to 1920) photograph of Buffalo Avenue, exact location unknown.

Table 4.5 Buffalo Avenue Historic District (LOCAL level): Property List					
Street #	Ext	Street Name	Property Name	Comments	Buffalo Ave HD LOCAL level
154		Buffalo Ave.	Donohue House	USN 06340.000036	Contributing
162		Buffalo Ave.	Hanover House/Lavinia Porter Manse	USN 06340.000037 Niagara Falls Landmark	Contributing
305		Buffalo Ave.	Miss Gladys Pettebone House		Contributing
324		Buffalo Ave.	Dr. W. H. Hodge House		Contributing
327		Buffalo Ave.	W. Acheson Smith House		Contributing
331		Buffalo Ave.	Frederick J. Coe House		Contributing
333		Buffalo Ave.	E.B. Whitney House	Original barn/stables for #335	Contributing
335		Buffalo Ave.	Whitney Mansion	USN 03640.000005 NRL (I) / Niagara Falls Landmark	Contributing
337		Buffalo Ave.	J. Frederick Neff House / Chapel Inn		Contributing
345		Buffalo Ave.	Rudolph V. Rose House		Contributing
353		Buffalo Ave.	Reginald F. Meek House		Contributing
521		Buffalo Ave.	James F. Mahoney House		Contributing
525		Buffalo Ave.	Daniel W. Schwartz House		Contributing
531		Buffalo Ave.	Mrs. I.P. Church House		Contributing
608		Buffalo Ave.			Contributing
610		Buffalo Ave.	Harris Lymberg House		Contributing
615		Buffalo Ave.			Contributing
617		Buffalo Ave.			Contributing
619		Buffalo Ave.	Edgar Arison House		Contributing
621		Buffalo Ave.			Contributing
622		Buffalo Ave.			Contributing
623		Buffalo Ave.			Contributing
624		Buffalo Ave.			Contributing
625		Buffalo Ave.			Contributing
706		Buffalo Ave.			Non-Contributing

Table 4.5 Buffalo Avenue Historic District (LOCAL level): Property List					
Street #	Ext	Street Name	Property Name	Comments	Buffalo Ave HD LOCAL level
714		Buffalo Ave.	Augustus Thibaudeau House		Contributing
714	A	Buffalo Ave.		2 houses on this lot	Contributing
720		Buffalo Ave.			Contributing
722		Buffalo Ave.			Contributing
724		Buffalo Ave.			Non-contributing
726		Buffalo Ave.			Contributing
728		Buffalo Ave.			Non-contributing
730		Buffalo Ave.			Non-contributing
734		Buffalo Ave.		Not on city map	Non-contributing
6		Fourth St.	Tatler House	Niagara Falls Landmark	Contributing
1		Hillcrest St.	Mrs. Rose House	Access from Buffalo Avenue	Contributing
2		Hillcrest St.	Frank J. Fisher House		Contributing