

## 4.0 ARCHITECTURAL SUMMARY

The Triangle neighborhood's character is defined by the cohesiveness and integrity of its early twentieth century building stock. Characteristic of a "streetcar suburb," blocks within the neighborhood are largely rectangular in shape and contain parcels of differing-size. Residential lots are typically narrow (30-ft wide) and deep (100-ft). Residential streets in the Triangle neighborhood have unified streetscapes with houses of the same general age, form, size, materials, and setback. Streets widths range from 50-ft wide residential streets to a 100-ft wide parkway (McKinley Parkway). Large shade trees line many of the residential streets. Sidewalks are set close to the curb with an average planting strip width of 3 feet (ft). Streets in the Triangle neighborhood retain their original sandstone curbing. However, roads that were originally lined with brick pavers have been resurfaced with modern road surfacing. Intact brick pavers were noted on Folger Street, which was in the process of being resurfaced at the time of the fieldwork.

Setbacks for houses in the Triangle area typically range from 10-ft to 25-ft, leaving open lawn to the front. Many of the houses have foundation plantings and landscaping that enhance the suburban character of the neighborhood. Commercial buildings along the primary arteries of the neighborhood abut the sidewalk. A popular trend in the early twentieth century in neighborhoods throughout the City of Buffalo was the transformation of residential streets to mixed commercial and residential. Commercial cores were vital to the "streetcar" neighborhood. In the early twentieth century, storefronts or offices were built on the lawns of residential lots to accommodate expanding commercial districts. The establishment of a commercial core altered the original residential streetscapes, but this modification represents the development and prosperity of the neighborhood. The commercial fronts are generally one- or two-story rectangular blocks with a brick veneer. Examples of this trend in the Triangle neighborhood are located on South Park Avenue and Abbott Road, here the gable peaks and hipped roofs of original residences rise from behind the flat roofs of the commercial blocks.

Houses in the district were constructed in the first three decades of the twentieth century. The earlier houses were constructed as single family houses or "flats" without garages. Typically, detached garages were built later in a similar style as the house. Despite the prevalence of single family houses in the Triangle area, there are a large number of two-family houses suggestive of income generating properties.

This section provides a general summary of architectural styles and forms represented in the Triangle neighborhood. Consult the previous section (beginning with 3.2) for a detailed narrative of the architectural development and existing conditions of the neighborhood.

### 4.1 Architectural Styles and Forms: Triangle Neighborhood

American architectural practice became increasingly professionalized during the late and early twentieth centuries. Through education and travel, architects obtained a broader and deeper knowledge of historical architecture, which greatly affected their approach to design. The eclectic reinterpretation of historic styles formed the basis for the highly individualistic and inventive compositions of the period. Transitional architectures of past eras and the vernacular structures of other times and cultures were favorite sources. As before, builders and contractors modeled their efforts after the works of trained architects, producing structures that were usually less sophisticated but often still charming in spite of, or perhaps because of, slight aberrations of awkwardness in design.

### 4.1.1 Queen Anne

The Queen Anne is the earliest architectural style represented in the Triangle Neighborhood. Named for the early eighteenth-century British monarch, the Queen Anne movement began in England in the 1860s. The term is associated there with the revival and reinterpretation of several stylistic currents that prevailed in Britain from the late fifteenth through the early eighteenth centuries. Sources ranged from strictly medieval ones, such as the half-timbered structures of the Tudor era, to the mixed styles of the later periods: either the Elizabethan and Jacobean modes, in which Renaissance classicism was beginning to influence traditional Gothic design, or provincial Late Stuart and Early Georgian architecture, which incorporated holdovers from the Gothic period in buildings conceived in the Renaissance manner.

Aspects of the English Queen Anne spread to America in the 1870s. In this country, the style bears no relation to actual English Architecture of Queen Anne's reign. First to appear were the Tudoresque dwellings modeled after the early works of English architect Richard Norman Shaw; hence the term Shavian sometimes used for this variant. However, the name is most commonly used for a highly-picturesque eclectic style that freely combines elements copied or abstracted from medieval and classical sources. Not all features were derived from English precedents. French architecture became increasingly influential, as American architects who trained and traveled in France returned with sketches of old buildings, which were then published in periodicals.

These varied sources all come together in Queen Anne building. The influence of medieval England and France is reflected in asymmetrical massing; use of overhangs and jetties; tall chimneys with pilasters, corbelled tops, or other patterned brickwork; and richly patterned and textured wall surfaces. Where financial resources permitted, exterior surfaces were covered with several materials; stone, brick, slate, terra cotta, stucco, half-timber, clapboard, and shingle. Stucco might be molded or studded with stones or broken glass to emulate the parquetry found on old English dwellings. Patterned shingles, very common even on inexpensive houses, imitated in wood the sheathing of slates or tiles found on some medieval structures. High hip roofs and cylindrical or polygonal towers or turrets with conical roofs emulate forms derived from the chateaus, manors, and farmhouses of northwestern and central France. Classical applied ornament is usually derived from American Colonial and Federal sources: broken-scroll pediments; Palladian, elliptical, and circular (bull's-eye) windows; and garland-and-swag decoration. The inclusion of projecting and recessed porches and balconies, often decked with spindles and turned posts, is one of the less derivative, more inventive features of the American Queen Anne Style. A large number of houses in Buffalo's West Side dwellings incorporate such elements.

The pure Queen Anne is relatively rare, while the Modern Colonial, Colonial Revival, and hybrid Queen Anne/Modern Colonial and Queen Anne/Colonial Revival styles are plentiful. Further, the influence of the Queen Anne persisted in vernacular building practice, as contractors continued to build projecting bays and towers on residences until the First World War and to use patterned shingle work on dwellings into the 1920s.

The naissance of the Triangle Neighborhood corresponds to the latter part the Queen Anne style's popularity. The style dominates the residential building stock of the last decade of the nineteenth century and early part of the first decade of the twentieth century. The City of Buffalo offers a wide range of Queen Anne residences from modest to high style. Also common are hybrid examples of the style with elements of the Colonial Revival or Craftsman. The best

represented sub-type of the Queen Anne in the Triangle area is the 2.5-story, front gabled residence with modest stylistic features that were adapted by local builders. Also of note within the Triangle area are a few extant, though highly modified and in poor condition, examples of Queen Anne commercial buildings on South Park Avenue.

#### **4.1.2 Colonial Revival and Dutch Colonial**

Growing interest in classical design and greater regard for more “correct” composition encouraged the development of the Colonial Revival style. Colonial Revival houses typically have massing and detail derived from Colonial and Federal prototypes, but the size and scale of Colonial Revival house are larger than those of the original models. Most Colonial Revival buildings have contained rectilinear massing, broken perhaps by bay windows; symmetrical facades with central entrances; front porches with columns and classical balustrades; relatively uniform roofs, sometimes elaborated on the façade by a cross gable or a row of dormers; and window shutters. Palladian windows, corner pilasters, and garland-and-swag trim are common decorative elements.

Of the many forms of the Colonial Revival style, the Dutch cottage variant is among the most distinctive. Adapted from eighteenth century farmhouses erected by Dutch settlers, Dutch Colonial Revival houses are typically a tall one-and-one-half story building with a large flank-gambrel roof containing the second floor and attic. The lower roof slopes at both front and rear are broken by large full-width shed dormers on the second story level; the dormers usually dominate the roof, and the gambrel form is sometimes evident only on the end walls.

The defining characteristic of the style is a gambrel roof, which was introduced to America by the Dutch in the Mid-Atlantic colonies. The double-pitch of the gambrel roof created more space in the upper story, while allowing for the rapid run-off of rainfall, common to the eastern seaboard. Traditional Colonial Revival forms are uncommon in the Triangle neighborhood. Speculative builders applied Colonial Revival stylistic details to their rectangular or Four-Square boxes.

#### **4.1.3 Two-Family Houses**

Two-family houses generally conform to a smaller range of basic shapes and plans than do single-family structures. This house form represents 30 percent of Buffalo’s residential housing (Kowsky et. al 1981: 241). There are two categories of multiple-family housing common in Buffalo: 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 may vary. The earliest form has principal entrances and halls placed next to each other at the facade’s center. Stylistic treatments of double houses span the same range of historically inspired architectural styles used for single-family residences. Two-decker residences are most common in Buffalo. The form evolved from the standard side-hall-plan dwelling, expanded and adapted to accommodate identical plan units stacked on two floors. The two-decker form is well represented in the Triangle neighborhood

#### **4.1.4 Craftsman/Bungalow**

The Craftsman style was the most popular design for small residential buildings built throughout the country in the first three decades of the twentieth century. The bungalow was a new form of

dwelling that was first used in the 1890s for rustic vacation or resort cottages, it was initially adapted for suburban residential purposes in California. Influenced by the English Arts and Crafts Movement and Oriental and Indian architecture, the style was popularized by the work of two brothers, Charles S. and Henry M. Greene. The Greene's began practicing architecture in Pasadena, California in 1893, and in the ensuing two decades designed a number of large, elaborate prototypes of the style. Their innovative designs received a significant amount of publicity in national magazines such as *Western Architect*, *The Architect*, *House Beautiful*, *Good Housekeeping*, and *Ladies' Home Journal*. By the turn of the century, the design had been adapted to smaller houses, commonly referred to as bungalows. It was this scaled down version of the Craftsman style that became a ubiquitous has in residential neighborhoods during the early twentieth century.

The Craftsman bungalow is typically a one- or one-and-one-half-story building with a low-pitched gable (or hipped-roof) set end to the street. The eaves are wide and open, exhibiting structural components such as rafter ends, beams, and brackets. The porch is often the most dominant architectural feature of the Bungalow. They are generally either full or partial width, with the roof supported by tapered square columns that either extend to ground level or sit on brick piers. Shingle, stone, and stucco, sometimes used in combination, were the most common materials. Windows are usually double-hung sash with vertical lights in the upper sash. Another stylistic variation for the bungalow is the use of stock colonial elements. As a modest, convenient, and economical building type, the bungalow became popular with housing contractors and house buyers of limited means.

#### **4.1.5 Early Twentieth Century Commercial 1900-1930**

In the early 1900s a new commercial style developed as a reaction to the ornate Victorian architectural styles of the late nineteenth century. The new style became popular because of its adaptability to a variety of building types, especially the new one-story, flat roofed commercial building, which appeared in the City of Buffalo in the early 1900s. The character of the Early Twentieth Century Commercial buildings is determined by the use of patterned masonry wall surfaces, shaped parapets at the roofline that were often uninterrupted by a project cornice and large rectangular windows arranged in groups. The "Chicago window," a three-part window with a wide, fixed central light flanked by two narrower double-hung sashes, is a common feature. Identifying features of this style include a plain, flat appearance that is relieved by the use of panels of brick laid in patterns and sparingly used inset accents of tile, concrete, limestone or terra cotta.

During the early twentieth century, isolated commercial clusters emerged in the Triangle neighborhood. The commercial blocks are important components in the historic development pattern of the Triangle area because they interrupt the homogeneity of the residential neighborhood. Commercial buildings in the Triangle area are small sized, one-part commercial blocks displaying stylistic detailing of the surrounding residential neighborhood. The one-part block is a one-story, free-standing building that was a popular commercial design in small cities and towns during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It was adapted from the lower part of the more numerous two-part commercial block during the Victorian period. The one-part block is a simple rectangular building often with an ornate facade. It is most often utilized for retail or office space. A subtype of the one-part commercial block in the neighborhood is the enframed window wall with glazed area for display and a simple surround. Contemporaneous commercial buildings with the trolley line display popular period revival style materials with textured tapestry brick facades and sections of Mediterranean pantile roofing.

#### 4.1.6 Neoclassical Revival

Inspired by the architecture of ancient Greek and Roman temples, the Neoclassical Revival style is a bold, monumental style that relies on classical design elements. Common architectural details include columns, pilasters, pediments and cornices. Neoclassical Revival buildings are usually constructed of masonry with smooth limestone serving as the preferred material, though terracotta and brick were also widely used. This style was most commonly applied to municipal, institutional and commercial buildings.

South Park High School (1914) is the best example of a Neoclassical Revival building in the Triangle neighborhood. Designed by Green & Wicks, the school is a massive four-story building with a I-type plan (wing added in 1936). Design elements include a main entry with a classical stone entablature, a pair of two-story Doric columns and bronze spandrels with highly stylized Roman grillwork motif. Classical style copper cresting accents the roofline. Other examples of the style in the Triangle area include the South Park Theater.

#### 4.1.7 Sears and “Kit” 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 (Stevenson and Jandl 1986:19). 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.

In the Buffalo area, the biggest local supplier of ready-cut homes was Ray H. Bennett Lumber Co., Inc of North Tonawanda. In *Bennett's Small House Catalog 1920* the company boasted about their designs as being more attractive and impressive than average homes. The catalog offered more than fifty designs of houses that were previously constructed. Bennett Homes emphasized economy of construction through standardization of materials. Bennett's solution for excessive costs of home-building was the replacement the traditional hand method of manufacturing with labor-saving machines. The company had a huge modern mill in the heart of the lumber market with lumber-docks on one side and main-trunk railroads access on the other side. Builders during this period commonly purchased designs with the intent of re-using them. This practice is evident in the Triangle neighborhood. Several blocks contain rows of houses with same or similar designs.

### 4.2 Results and Recommendations

The intensive level historic resources survey of the Triangle neighborhood included the documentation of 104 buildings. This final number takes account of two previously inventoried buildings on Southside Parkway (South Park High School and Hook & Ladder No. 10 [Engine #30]) and one outbuilding (1933A South Park Avenue). Designed by Green & Wicks, the Neoclassical-style South Park High School at 126 Southside Parkway is an excellent example of early twentieth-century urban school architecture. The school has served as a prominent landmark in the neighborhood. Hook & Ladder No. 10 was designed by Howard L. Beck and is one of three extant buildings of similar design. It was converted into apartments in the 1980s. Updated photographs of each previously inventoried property are presented in Appendix B.

Of the 104 buildings surveyed, NYS Historic Resource Forms were completed for 101 properties (Appendix C). The majority of surveyed buildings were freestanding single- and two-family "kit" houses." Two-thirds of the 91 residences documented were originally constructed as single-family dwellings. As discussed earlier in Section 3 of this report, neither individual nor speculative builders in the Triangle neighborhood employed architects to design their houses. Rather, like most developers in such "zones of emergence," they used plans that could be purchased cheaply from various house plan companies. Some (especially individual owners) may also have built popular mail-order or "kit houses," complete house units designed to be assembled on the buyer's site.

The study included four church complexes, all of which were architect designed. St. Jude's Episcopal Church (124 Macamley Street) and South Park Baptist Church (187 Southside Parkway) are individual buildings that are residential in scale, while St. Agatha's Roman Catholic Church and School at 36-46 Abbott Road is a large, three-story block located on one of the principal arteries of South Buffalo. The largest house of worship in the Triangle neighborhood is Holy Family Roman Catholic Church located at the northwest corner of South Park Avenue and Tiff Street. Built to serve the many Irish-American and German-American Catholics who had moved into the area, the imposing twin-towered Romanesque style stone edifice followed designs by Buffalo's Lansing & Beierl. It was constructed (together with the picturesque rectory) between 1905 and 1908. The Holy Family complex also includes a school (892 Tiff Street) that was designed by Max G. Beierl.

Another school building represented in the Triangle neighborhood includes Public School 28 at 1445 South Park Avenue. The oldest section of the school was designed by Ernest Crimi in 1927. The nineteenth century sections of the school were demolished for two modern additions in the 1960s.

The study recorded five early twentieth century commercial buildings. One of which is the former South Buffalo Market at 95 Bailey Avenue, now the John F. Jones Service Center, a Transportation Facility for the City of Buffalo Board of Education. Two of the commercial properties buildings (83-87 Abbott Road and 1968 South Park Avenue) documented are one-story, multiple-storefront, free-standing buildings. The remaining two commercial buildings were the common mixed-use commercial/office and residential.

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

**Crystal Street** holds a large number of intact single-family "kit" houses modeled on the bungalow style. Constructed by local developers, these homes typically are one-and-a-half stories, have gabled roofs, often with a side dormer, and are covered with shingles or clapboard, sometimes in combination. Craftsman style details can be present, especially in the form of brackets beneath the eaves of the front gable. With the narrow end of the house facing the street, they invariably have a porch across the front.

**3 Heussy Street** is an excellent example of a well-preserved "kit" house that is nearly identical to the gambrel-roofed "Dutch" Colonial design that Tonawanda, NY-based Bennett Homes sold as a kit-house in its 1927 catalogue; surely the builder (William H. Fitzpatrick & Sons, the initial developers of Heussy Street) purchased the structure from this local house company.

**35 Heussy Street** is an excellent example of a well-preserved, two-story Craftsman bungalow constructed by William H. Fitzpatrick & Sons, the initial developers of Heussy Street. This “kit” house intact historic building fabric and Craftsman detail.

**102 Macamley Street** is one of several brick and frame homes in the Triangle neighborhood with architectural pretensions. A few double houses in the area depart from the general of clapboard or shingle siding. When John Jepson erected this house in 1911, he chose to clad the wooden frame with red brick and to add white stone trim elements. Quoins boldly define corners and frame windows in an earnest bid to give a stand-out-from-the-crowd, monumental appearance to the standard gable fronted, two-story house type. Jepson erected a similar house the same year at 11 Remoleno Street. Also sporting stone quoins is the double house at 144 Macamley, which is one of the few solid brick houses in the neighborhood. These buildings represent a vernacularized version of a standard type.

**St. Jude’s Church Episcopal Church at 124 Macamley Street** is an excellent example of a stone church in an updated version of the Early English Gothic parish church style. This congregation was the earliest religious group to erect a church in the neighborhood (1896). The congregation grew in size and in 1922 parishioners undertook to erect a new church on the site of the original chapel. After working with one architect, the congregation turned to the well-known Buffalo firm of North & Shelgren. (Robert North was the architect to the Episcopal dioceses of Western New York.).

**Holy Family Roman Catholic Church Complex** at the northwest corner of South Park Avenue and Tiff Street is historically significant for its association with Irish-American and German-American Catholics who had moved into the area. The largest house of worship in the Triangle neighborhood, Holy Family Church is architecturally significant as a notable example of a twin-towered Romanesque style stone edifice followed designs by Buffalo’s Lansing & Beierl.

**South Park Baptist Church at 187 Southside Parkway** was designed by North, Shelgren & Swift designed in 1925. The red brick Georgian Revival building reflects the renewed interest that traditional architects were taking at the time in America’s colonial architecture due to the well-publicized restoration of Williamsburg, Virginia. (Indeed, the spire of the South Park Baptist Church tower recalls that of the famous Bruton Parish Church in Williamsburg.) And surely by intent, the architects arranged their grouping of church, tower, and parish hall to effectively terminate the eastward vista down Koester Street, which ends in front of the church.

**South Park Theatre at 1770 South Park Avenue** is the grandest commercial building in the Triangle neighborhood. Designed in 1919 by Henry L. Spann, the steel-frame building with red brick walls and terra cotta detailing was once the principle locale for vaudeville and motion picture entertainment for residents of the neighborhood. Now owned by the American Legion Post 64, it retains a significant amount of its exterior terra cotta Classical ornament as well as the original proscenium arch and other interior features. Occupying a major neighborhood intersection, it yet manages, despite alterations, to convey a festive appearance. Well cared for by the present owners, the theater survives as a poignant reminder of the days when the Triangle neighborhood began its life as a vibrant streetcar suburb.

**83-87 Abbott Road** is a well-preserved representative example of an early twentieth century commercial building. With a stringcourse defining the floor levels, a projecting cornice, and stone keystones in the flat-arched second story windows, the structures displays the modest pretensions to Classical styling common the many such buildings of the period.

**Selection criteria and guidelines** were developed to guide the selection of those properties that were inventoried. The criteria were based on the historic themes and property types established in the historic and existing conditions overviews, and on the National Register Historic Places Criteria for Evaluation. The National Register Criteria are stated as follows:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association and

- A. that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction or that represent a significant distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.