



# The Allentown Neighbor

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## New UB medical school to overlook Allentown

By *Pete Carroll*

The State University at Buffalo plans to build a new \$375-million medical-school building on the east side of Main St. at Allen St. with construction to begin next year and completion in 2016.

The architectural team was to be chosen as *The Neighbor* went to press, but the design of the building will be decided in discussions with UB, the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, the city, and to a lesser degree, with the adjacent communities including Allentown.

Plans for the project were shared with the Allentown Association Board of Directors April 26 by two UB deans, Dr. Michael Cain of the School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, and Dr. Robert Shibley of the School of Architecture and Urban Planning. Plans call for the medical school to move from the South Campus to just east of Allentown on the medical campus by August 2016. The site for the project's first phase is bordered by Main, High and Washington Sts. and the Allen-Hospital light-rail station.

Ellicott St., as has been previously proposed, he said.

Concerns of Allentown Association directors raised at the meeting were: a preference expressed for a vehicular rather than a pedestrian connection on Allen St. eastward from Main St., and the scale of the proposed building.

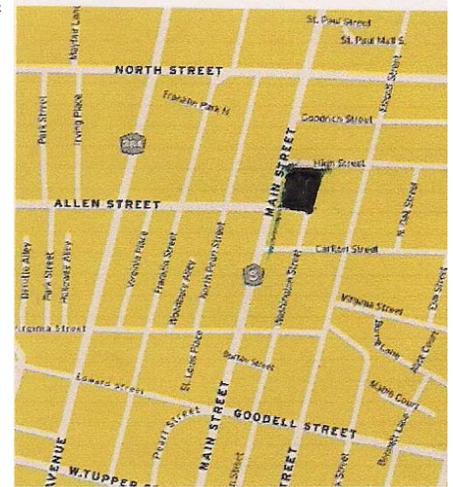
Heights of seven to 12 stories were mentioned, although Dean Cain said, "I'd like seven stories rather than nine or 12." Parking on the medical campus will be "a constraint," he said, adding, "we want the least number of cars on that campus," with alternate means of transportation encouraged.

Timothy Dun will be the Allentown Association's representative on the UB committee reviewing the plans.

"We believe this new project will support retail and business development in the surrounding communities," Dean Shibley said.

The move will bring 1,200 students, faculty members and staff to the medical campus, including 100 new faculty members. The medical school enrollment will increase with 180 students admitted each year, an increase of 40.

Of three alternatives under consideration, the preferred option is for a new structure integrated with the light rail station at Main and Allen Sts., Dean Shibley said. The planners' preference is for a pedestrian passage from Allen St. east to Ellicott St., rather than a vehicular extension of Allen St. to



**Approximate site of proposed new medical school building's first phase is marked in black.**

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# Art Show and Allen West are June 9 and 10

June 9 and 10 are the dates for the 55th annual Allentown Art Festival and the 14th annual Allen West Festival. Hours are 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Allen West, sponsored by the Allentown Association, will take place along Allen St. west of Elmwood Ave. and on Wadsworth St. The Art Show, sponsored by the Allentown Village Society, will occupy streets

east of Elmwood.

There will be about 150 vendors, some new this year.

Gretchan Grobe is again chairperson for Allen West, assisted by Melissa Dayton in charge of volunteers, and a hard-working committee.

## New building to be linked to Allen-Hospital station and Allen St.

*continued from Page 1*

“It’s really going to impact on our community in Allentown, a catalyst to get Allen St. improvements,” Ed Castine, Allentown Association president, commented.

The school’s expansion will add training in pediatric cardiology surgery and radiology, not now offered in Buffalo, Dean Cain said. The new building’s physical relationship with the Allen-Hospital transit station will be decided in discussions with the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority, he said.

The “preferred option” is for the new building to be “integrated with the NFTA station” and the Allen St. extension,” now seen as a pedestrian passageway, he

added. This option would provide for effective intermodal transportation, he said. “It’s a decision our executive team has endorsed,” as has the Medical Campus, he added. The \$7-million federal allocation for the eastward extension of Allen St. could go to other street projects, he said.

For Allentown businesses to profit maximally from the medical-school project, improvement plans for Allen St. take on additional importance, board members said.

A second phase of the project would include additional construction on High St. between Ellicott and Washington Sts., Dean Shibley said.



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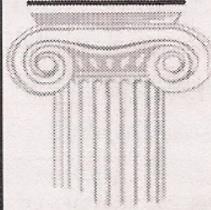
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## ***Allentown property owners can get rehab tax credits, but act now***

By *Richard Haynes*

Allentown and Buffalo's other historic districts should be booming with restoration and renovation of homes and buildings. That's because of the income-tax credits available that in effect subsidize the cost of the work.

In historic districts such as ours, homeowners can get 20 percent of eligible work reimbursed by the state. Owners of income-producing properties such as multiple dwellings and commercial structures can get 20 percent from the state and an additional 20 percent from the federal government.

Think about that. Your house needs \$20,000 worth of roofing, porch repair and painting? It may cost you only \$16,000. Your Allen Street building needs \$100,000 worth of rehab? The work may cost only about \$60,000.

Nearly anything a homeowner needs to fix or restore is covered: floors, windows, doors, stairs, kitchen cabinets, chimneys, roofs, plumbing, heating and air conditioning, lighting and electrical.

Of course, the work has to be in compliance with historic district standards; it has to be preapproved by the State Historic Preservation Office -- and here's the catch -- a lot of paperwork has to be filled out that most people seem to find daunting. It involves detailing the scope of the work; taking before-and-after pictures, and submitting more paperwork if the job encounters obstacles that require a mid-way change in plans.

There are several area architectural firms that can plan an eligible project and execute the paperwork. If a job is going to be extensive, that's undoubtedly the best way to go, even though professional fees

will reduce the net savings.

The Allentown Association had smaller, simpler jobs in mind when we applied early this year to the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo for a \$25,000 grant to publicize the historic tax credits to Allentown property owners and to pay someone to assist members with the paperwork. Unfortunately, we did not get the grant.

### **Historic Property Workshop Series**

The Allentown Association, along with community partners, is hosting a series of free workshops for property owners in historic districts. Everyone is welcome.

**Using the Historic Homeowner Tax Credit.** June 5, 6-7:30 p.m., at the Theodore Roosevelt Historic Site, presented by Andrea Rebeck, Preservation Buffalo Niagara. This "nuts and bolts" workshop will present all aspects of the state and federal tax credits for improvements to historic homes.

**Solar Power for City Homes,** June 19, 6-7:30 p.m. Location to be announced, presented by Rory Root, Solar Liberty, and Josh Wilson, Allentown Association board member. Purchase and installation of photovoltaic panels for homeowners, with emphasis on issues specific to historic districts. Will include site visit to an Allentown solar home.

Additional workshops will be held in September. See [www.allentown.org](http://www.allentown.org) and check events, or the next issue of *The Neighbor*

For registration, questions, or to receive information updates, please email **Josh Wilson** at **AllentownAssociation@gmail.com**.

at the end of 2014. That's just three construction seasons for exterior work. At last month's "One Allentown" ceremony marking the extension of the national historic district boundaries, State Sen. Mark Grisanti and Assemblyman Sean Ryan said they thought the credits would be extended and that they would work to see that they are. Still, there are no certainties in politics, especially in a state needing revenue.

For more information, go to: [www.nysparks.com/shpo](http://www.nysparks.com/shpo) and click on "Tax Credit Programs."

Publicizing the credits to property owners is nevertheless important, because many are not aware of the money-saving opportunities available despite several stories in this newsletter and in *The Buffalo News*. The Association plans to seek funding at least for a mailing.

We probably won't get money to hire paperwork help, but officials from the State Historic Preservation Office and the architect at Preservation Buffalo Niagara have offered to lead workshops on completing the necessary forms. Those sessions would be scheduled after the mailing.

For anyone thinking of home improvement, time may be of the essence. Under current law, the state historic tax credits disappear



### Mark Twain's carriage house now visible on construction site

Demolition of a building at the northwest corner of Delaware Ave. and Virginia St. has provided a rare view of the carriage house of the home of Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain) and his bride Elvira from 1870 to 1871. The carriage house, built in the 1860s, was spared when the main house was destroyed by fire in 1963. The carriage house is to be retained, but hidden by new construction of a medical building and three town houses. Scott Croce, owner and developer of the property, did not return messages from *The Allentown Neighbor* for comment.



### VETTE block sale is July 14; community garden open for Garden Walk

By *Carroll Ann Simon*

The members of the VETTE Block Club are looking forward to a vibrant summer filled with activities and events positioned to bring its residents and business owners together around social and fundraising occasions aimed at improving the quality of life within its parameters, the area enclosed by Virginia, Edward, Trinity, Tupper and Elmwood. A secondary goal is to bring increased attention to the beauty and rich history of this jewel tucked between Allentown proper and Downtown Buffalo.

The VETTE's second annual Block Sale is scheduled for Saturday, July 14 from 9 a.m until 5: p.m. One

man's trash is surely another man's treasure with items being offered for sale from books to furniture to household items and restaurant supplies from Betty's. Sellers are encouraged to donate a portion of their sales to the VETTE to support beautification, safety and other quality of life projects.

Several residents within the VETTE parameters are participating in this year's Garden Walk on July 28 and 29. The highly acclaimed Trinity Tupper Community Garden will be showcased and is designated as an official Garden Walk rest area. VETTE volunteers will be on hand to welcome visitors with free cold beverages, seating and protection from sun or rain, and to talk with them about the garden.



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If you are interested in knowing more about The VETTE or in becoming involved, please contact Carroll Ann Simon at [carrollann55@gmail.com](mailto:carrollann55@gmail.com) by phone at 886-1949 or visit our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/](http://www.facebook.com/)

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## Plymouth Ave. ceremony marks Allentown Historic District expansion

By Christopher N. Brown

Mayor Byron Brown, State Senator Mark Grisanti, Assemblyman Sean Ryan, and Fillmore District Councilman David Fronczyk joined representatives of the Allentown Association, the Preservation League of New York State, and the State Historic Preservation Office to mark the National Register of Historic Places Allentown Historic District boundary expansion as approved by the Keeper of the National Register in Washington, D.C. About 50 individuals also attended the April 12 dedication, known as the One Allentown initiative.

"The new Allentown boundaries contain approximately 1,300 structures, including about 320 newly added to the National Register. The Allentown Historic District is the largest National Register historic district in the City of Buffalo," said Daniel McEneny of the State Historic Preservation Office, who guided the Allentown nomination through the National Register of Historic Places listing process. The vast majority of the newly-listed National Register structures are located on Delaware Ave. and other streets between Delaware and Main St.

The Allentown National Register Historic District dedication ceremony took place at 18 Plymouth Ave., the home of Thomas Huzinec and Carlos Villarroel. An 1892 Queen Anne-style manse and carriage house constructed on the estate of the former Sidway mansion, the home was newly added to the Allentown National Register District. When they purchased their home in 2010, it had been vacant for a decade, vandalized, and some of its interior architectural features stolen. Tom Huzinec and Carlos Villarroel's dream to live in and restore the manse to its 1890s heyday was assisted through their utilization of the state Historic Homeownership Rehabilitation Tax Credit.

"A complete transformation is in process as we return 18 Plymouth to its single family configuration: 47 windows, new exterior paint, cracked lathe and plaster replaced with drywall, all electrical, plumbing, and heating infrastructure replaced... the list goes on and on! Our estimated six-month project has been going on for over a year and there remains much to

do," Tom Huzinec said.

Elizabeth Martin, a state Preservation Office representative, presented a certificate to the Allentown Association that proclaimed Allentown's listing on the New York State and National Register of Historic Places. Mayor Brown then presented a proclamation to the Allentown Association that dedicated April 12, as "One Allentown" Day to mark the historic event.



**From left, Mayor Brown, Elizabeth Martin, Chris Brown**

Barbara O'Neill who lives on Porter Avenue across from Kleinhans Music Hall in a historic brick home designed by architect Edward Austin Kent attended the event. "I'm very happy my home is now in an historic district. I am honored to be on the National

Register," she said.

While extending State tax credits to owners of 320 new properties is an immediate benefit of the Allentown National Register Historic District boundary expansion, there are several other reasons why the initiative is important beyond the Allentown community,

Consistency in historic-district property rights, responsibilities, and standards will create an opportunity for improved communication, education, and future preservation program eligibility of Allentown's structures. The Allentown neighborhood is a regional tourism destination because of its hotels, restaurants, art galleries, cultural venues, and events such as the Allentown Art Festival. A uniform historic district will help to ensure an improved Allentown visitor experience.

One final step remains in the journey to reconcile the disparate local and National Register Allentown Historic District boundaries created over 30 years ago. Minor revisions to the local Buffalo district, approximately 40 properties, will be pursued later in 2012.

*Chris Brown, a former Allentown association president, is chairman of the One Allentown Committee.*



An Allentown Almanac

The city was scheduled to plant six or seven trees along Allen St. by the end of May, Daniel Culross, the Allentown Association, tree chairman, reports as The Neighbor went to press. A full planting in the fall is planned using trees supplied by Retree WNY and volunteer labor. A spring planting was scratched because Retree WNY has enough funds for only one planting this year, he added.

Nearly 100 Allentowners attended the Allentown Association’s annual dinner April 10 in the Hamlin-House, making it a social and fund-raising success. The dinner was organized by Gretchan Grobe, Sarah Gilewicz Byer and Andrew Eisenhardt.

Allentown artist Mike Mulley and his College Street Gallery at 244 Allen St. were featured in the April edition of the online art magazine, Global Art Laid Out. Mike Mulley was one of three artist/curators featured in the article, along with gallery owners in Manhattan and Chicago. It can be found at http://www.galomagazine.com/editorials/en-route-and-oncoming-smaller-galleries-in-the-art-world

Several volunteers took part in Allentown’s spring cleanup April 28. Anyone interested in participating in future Allentown cleanups may contact Joe Fell at: joetf1973@aol.com

June 1 First Friday offers art, music and fun

By Barbara Hart

Kick into the summer on Friday, June 1, with an evening of art, music, and good times! From 6 to 9 p.m. Greater Allentown art galleries will open their doors for evening receptions as the 12/8 Path Band provides a roving performance in the streets. Participants are also invited to join in chalk drawing along the sidewalks, and take the opportunity to stop in at one of the many shops, restaurants and taverns along the way.

The July 6 First Friday will be quiet this year, as many local artists and galleries are participating in the second annual juried Echo Art Fair at the Larkin Center (www.echoartfair.com). First Fridays enthusiasts

should still be able to find a good time in Allentown, as the arts and music is always alive in our neighborhood.

The theme for the Aug. 3 First Friday is “Celebrate Art Under the Radar,” as galleries showcase artists and performers involved in the Infringement Festival. Join us Friday, Aug. 3, for a unique sampling of current directions in art and music.

The galleries’ First Friday program has received a \$5,000 grant from the State Council on the Arts., and is supported in part by the Allentown Association.

First Fridays events are free and open to the public. For more information on any of these programs, please visit www.firstfridaysallentown.com.

New businesses: pastry shop, fabric store, fashion boutique

Justina Adams will be opening a sweet new business in a favorite Allen St. retail space where the former Sweet Tooth resided. The Buffalo Cakery will offer custom cakes and other dessert treats at the corner of Allen St. and Elmwood Ave.. Justina Adams is moving back to Buffalo from North Carolina where she honed her skills in the custom cake business. She hopes to be in business this summer if all goes well with the city licensing.

Sandy Hertel, who you might know from Elmwood Village Fabrics, will be a new Allentown neighbor with a new store at 543 Franklin St. She is very excited to welcome us all into her new space in Allentown. Her business is specialized in reasonably-

priced fabric as well as a great selection of buttons, ribbons, embroidery floss, cording, thread, needles, scissors, and even a small selection of sewing machines. She hopes to be in business later this summer.

Walk This Way, a women’s clothing boutique at 168 Elmwood Ave., has been opened by Kenchata Carter and Carmelita Burgos. Open Tuesday through Saturday from 12:30 to 8 p.m. Phone (716) 227-0277, email walkthiswaybflo@gmail.com. Twitter @Walkthiswaybflo Facebook, m Walk This Way Boutique.

Plans for a restaurant specializing in panini

Please turn to page 8

wiches have received a go-ahead from the Common



## *Get paid to conceal your gas meter*

By *Caitlin Crowell*

How would you like free money to make your house look even more lovely?

The Allentown Association would like to remind people that as residents in a historic district, they may be eligible for a beautification grant.

. Thanks to an agreement between the Allentown Association and National Fuel, if the fuel company installs a gas meter on the facade of your house, or is clearly visible from the front of your house, you may receive a reimbursement for landscaping work done to camouflage the meter. Certain conditions apply (you must, for example, leave a small clearance, and allow

for airflow around the meter), but reimbursement can be for either building a concealment structure, such as a lattice work, or for a planting arrangement.

The grants are for up to \$200 for a single family house, or up to \$500 for a multi-unit dwelling, and are open to anyone living in a historic district throughout the city who has been given a house-front gas meter. Several households throughout Allentown have already received these grants; feel free to inquire with us about ideas, regulations, and reasons to do this.

For links to both the guidelines and an application for funds, please go to [www.allentown.org](http://www.allentown.org).

*Caitlin Crowell is Allentown Association secretary and its gas-meter chairperson.*

## Canvassers to discuss green options

The flowers are blooming, the birds are singing and Allentown is vibrant with activity. Getting out and about in Allentown in the warm weather is a joy—whether walking, biking, using a power wheelchair, taking NFTA-Metro transit, or hopping in a Buffalo Car Share car.

This summer, you will see new faces in the neighborhood, as GO Buffalo Canvassers talk with residents about transportation choices and some ways to preserve and enhance the quality of life in Allentown. When a GO Buffalo staff person comes to your door, we hope you will share your experiences and thoughts about your transportation choices with him or her.

The GO Buffalo Canvas is a partnership of GO Bike Buffalo (also known as Green Options Buffalo), Buffalo Car Share, and the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus.

Its goal is to support the use of sustainable transportation for the wellbeing of the communities surrounding the BNMC. Are you passionate about using sustainable transportation and helping your neighbors do the same? Consider becoming a GO Buffalo Champion on your block! For more information, contact Holly Hutchinson, Street team leader, Green Options Buffalo, (716)-566-2314, [STL@greenoptionsbuffalo.org](mailto:STL@greenoptionsbuffalo.org), [www.gobuffalo.org](http://www.gobuffalo.org)

## *The Allentown Neighbor*

Editor, Pete Carroll, email [pconjoura@gmail.com](mailto:pconjoura@gmail.com)

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## New businesses, continued from page 6

sandwiches have received a go-ahead from the Common Council. David Forness got a special-use permit to turn a former clothing store at 197 Allen St. into an eatery. The plans were endorsed by the city Planning

Board. He told the board his establishment will be about 1,200 square feet and have some outdoor seating.

## *Calendar of Events*

**Allendale Theater**, 203 Allen St. Theatre of Youth presents “Charlotte’s Web,” by Joseph Robinette, adapted from the classic by E.B. White, June 2 at 2 and 5:30 p.m. and June 3 at 2 p.m. through June 3, recommended for all ages. For information and tickets, call 884-4400, see [www.theatreofyouth.org](http://www.theatreofyouth.org).

**Allentown Association**, 14 Allen St. AllenWest festival, June 9, 10; homeowners’ workshops, see page 2, Board of Directors meets July 10, Aug. 7, 7 p.m.. For information call 881-1024 or see [www.allentown.org](http://www.allentown.org).

**Art Dialogue Gallery**, 1 Linwood Ave., Tuesday to Friday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Works by William C. Maggio, opening reception June 1, 7:30 to 9 p.m., through July 6; Trilogies XIII, works by Drew Eaton, Anita Johnson and Lawrence Kinney, July 13 to Aug. 17; 21st annual regional artists exhibition, Aug. 24 to Sept. 28. For information, call 885-2251.

**Betty’s restaurant**, 370 Virginia St. at College St. “Family Quirks,” by Barb Ernst, through July 22.

**Buffalo Big Print gallery**, 78 Allen St. Monday through Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. For information call 884-1777.

**College Street Gallery**, 244 Allen St., Wednesday to Friday, 5 to 8 p.m. Saturday by appointment. Works by 20 artists in co-op. For information call 868-8183.

**El Museo**, 91 Allen St. Tuesday through Saturday, noon to 5 p.m. For information call 578-3782.

**First Friday Gallery Tours**, Allentown galleries will have extended evening hours, some with new exhibits and receptions, June 1, July 6, Aug. 3. See Page 6 and [www.firstfridaysallentown.org](http://www.firstfridaysallentown.org).

**Indigo gallery**, 74 Allen St., Tuesday to Friday, noon to 5, Saturday, noon to 3. “Intimate Gaze,” paintings by Nava Gidanian-Kagan, June 1-30. Summer in the City, large group exhibition, July 6 - Aug. 5. For information, call 984-9572.

**Infringement Festival**, July 26-Aug. 5, see [Buffaloinfringementfestival.org](http://Buffaloinfringementfestival.org).

**Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum**, 220 North St. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily except Mondays, “Radioactivity,” through Aug. 31. For information call 885-1986.

**Kleinhans Community Association**, bimonthly meeting June 13, D’Youville College Center, room 201.; Aug. 7, picnic, see [kleienhansca.org](http://kleienhansca.org).

**Kleinhans Music Hall**, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, classics series, Mahler’s Third, with Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus, June 2, 8 p.m., June 3, 2:30 p.m. JoAnn Falletta International Guitar Competition, June 6, 7 and 9, 7:30 p.m. For tickets, call 885-5000 or see [bpo.org](http://bpo.org).

**Quaker Bonnet Eatery**, 175 Allen St., Watercolors by Mary Flynn, June; photography by Kelly Schultz, July; charcoals and pastels by Kathy Ward Lovejoy, August.

**Nina Freudenheim Gallery**, Hotel Lenox, 140 North St. Tuesday through Friday 10 to 5, Saturday by appointment. Collages by Cletus Johnson, June 2 to July 18; Reopening in September. For information call 882-5777.

**Rust Belt Books**, 202 Allen St. “Ramona and Juliet” by Brazen Faced Varlets, June 1 and 2, 8 p.m. “Waiting for Godot” by Buffalo Performing Arts students, June 21, 22 and 23, 8 p.m. 8 Tangential poetry reading, open slots, June 28, 6 p.m. Buffalo Infringement Festival, July 26-Aug. 5. For information call 885-9535.

**Studio Hart**, 65 Allen St. Tuesday through Saturday, 11 to 3. June 1 - July 28 “Circles,” works by Monica Angle, Josef Bajus, Viktoria Ciostek, AJ Fries, Cynnii Gaasch, Amy Hartman, Adele Henderson, Ani Hoover, Gerald Mead, Maggie Parks, and Kate Parzych., June 1-July 28. New work by Thomas Holt.; Aug. 3-28. For information call 536-8337.

**Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site (Wilcox Mansion)**, 641 Delaware Ave. Hours, Monday to Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. Twilight tour of Mansions, June 21, 5-9 p.m. \$25 to \$35, advance reservation required. Teddy Bear Picnic at Botanical Gardens, Aug. 1, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m., \$5. Walking tours of Allentown, Mondays from June 2 to Sept. 10, 10 a.m.; Main and North Pearl Sts., June 17, July 22, Aug. 19, 1 p.m., \$10, no reservations required. For further information, call 884-0095 or see [www.trsite.org](http://www.trsite.org).



## Early architecture and the development of Allentown

### From the 1860s to the 1920s

*This history of Allentown was written by Francis Kowsky and Martin Wachadlo and submitted to the State Office of Historic Preservation to document the Allentown Association's application for a boundary expansion of the Allentown Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places so that it is contiguous with the City of Buffalo's Allentown Historic District. Frank Kowsky is a State University of New York distinguished professor emeritus who taught art history at Buffalo State College. He recently completed a book on the creation of Buffalo's Olmsted parks to be published later this year by the Library of American Landscape History and the University of Massachusetts Press. Martin Wachadlo is an architecture historian.*

*This is the second installment, to be followed by third in the next issue of the The Allentown Neighbor.*

Most of the district's first land owners were of New England origin; however, Louis Stephen Le Couteux de Chaumont (1756-1839) was a French immigrant to America who was associated with Robert Morris during the Revolution. In 1804, he came to Buffalo, where he served as an agent of the Holland Land Company and increased his wealth with various business ventures. In 1829, he gave land at the corner of Main and Edward Streets for the first Catholic church in the region. The initial structure, known as Church of the Lamb of God, went up in 1832 and was made of logs cut from nearby forests. It was replaced a few years later by a new brick structure which was destroyed by fire on March 25th, 1885. The fire started in the Music Hall, a revered local landmark theater, located across Main Street, and quickly spread to the church. On August 25th, 1889, on the Feast of Saint Louis, the present Late Gothic Revival structure, designed by Schickel and Ditmars of New York, opened. St. Louis parish, despite its French origins, was at the time predominantly a German congregation. (East of Main Street, the city was mostly German-American.) The architects, well known ecclesiastical designers, modeled the building and its distinctive openwork spire on Germanic medieval models. One of the grandest Gothic Revival structures in Western New York, St. Louis is regarded today as the Mother Church of the Diocese of Buffalo.

These eager, well-educated entrepreneurs were commit-

ed both to accumulating personal wealth and to advancing the general progress and welfare of the frontier city they had adopted as home. One of the earliest grand civic projects was the attempt to establish an institution of higher education in the city. Judge Walden and his friend the Reverend Asa T. Hopkins were the prime movers behind the creation of the University of Western New York. The new institution was to stand on nine acres of ground that Walden had agreed to donate in the vicinity of Delaware Avenue and North Street, the elevated locale where Timothy Dwight had admired the view of the lake. Once the state legislature had authorized the university charter, Walden and Hopkins contacted Alexander Jackson Davis, a prominent New York City architect, to prepare plans for the university buildings. Davis, who is most famous for his Doric temple Sub Treasury building (1842) on Wall Street at the head of Broad Street in New York's financial district, had designed Greek Revival and Gothic Revival style buildings for New York University and other schools. Unfortunately, Hopkins and Walden's scheme came to nothing, the victim of the economic depression of 1837. The name College Street in the historic district, nonetheless, preserves the memory of their efforts. It was the first time that local citizens sought out national architectural talent for buildings in the city. As Buffalo evolved into a great metropolis, architects of Davis's caliber and reputation would be invited here to design important buildings.

Another project of the period that affected the growth and development of the Allentown neighborhood was the creation in 1838 of the U. S. Army's Poinsett Barracks on several acres of land on Delaware Avenue between North and Allen Streets. After the British had burned the Caroline on the Niagara River, President Martin Van Buren authorized the creation of the military facility. He and others feared that once again there might be hostilities with British Canada. Increased American military presence at Buffalo would presumably stabilize the border region and prevent war. War was, indeed, averted, and after 1845, the garrison was withdrawn to fight a war on the nation's southern border with Mexico. What had been the chief surgeon's house was sold to Joseph Masten, a local judge and one-time mayor of the city, for a private residence. Erecting a Tuscan columned portico on what had been the building's rear, Masten reoriented the house so that it faced Delaware Avenue. From a later



owner, Judge Ansley Wilcox, the building became known as the Wilcox house (the present Theodore Roosevelt National Historic Site). Although the portico may have been added to the house as late as the 1860s, The Wilcox house is the sole example of the monumental Greek Revival domestic architecture in the historic district.

**While significant projects were being proposed** and undertaken in the area, by the 1850s, many ordinary citizens had taken up residence in Allentown in modest dwellings. City directories record that on Park Street lived a carpenter, printer, blacksmith, and wheelwright. Trinity Place (then called German Street) was home to a mason, joiner, boatman, and shoemaker. On Cottage Street, the neighbors included a mason, laborer, and joiner. The neighborhood was already well on its way to assuming the mixture of classes that characterizes it today. Allentown, observed Linda R. Levine and Maria Scrivani, chroniclers of the city's early preservation movement, rested on "the foundations of an urban lower class, middle class and upper class. Layers of social and economic stratification showed in varying sizes of houses, stemming from cozy workmen's cottages at one end of the spectrum to prepossessing domiciles of the ruling establishment at the other." (6)

### ***Architecture and Landscape Architecture from the Early Settlement Period and Canal Era: 1800-1825***

Because the Allentown area was generally settled later than the area of town originally laid out by Joseph Ellicott in 1804 nearer to the Lake Erie waterfront, early buildings here tend to reflect styles of architecture popular in the late 1820s-1840s. Most of the buildings are vernacular versions of these styles and were undoubtedly inspired by examples in various so-called architectural pattern books. Those who first came to live in Buffalo tended to come from Central New York and New England. As Buffalo grew into a settled community, the architecture of the place reflected memories of the East, especially the Federal style identified with New England and the Greek Revival style popular in New York City. The Romantic Classicism of Jefferson and Latrobe exerted little influence here. In the historic district, the Federal style is best represented by the circa 1818 Coit house on Virginia Street. Reputed to be the earliest surviving dwelling in the city, it was moved to its present site from downtown, at the corner of Pearl and Swan Streets, in 1867.

**The district is far richer in examples of the Greek Revival style**, which was fostered by carpenter's pattern books. Ancient Greek design elements in these books were adapted to wood and trimmed down in scale from their original stone temple structures to fit the needs of modern domestic architecture.

These books enjoyed considerable popularity in Western New York where many early nineteenth-century houses display entrances, windows, and moldings that were inspired by examples contained in them. The house at 293 Hudson Street has a fine Greek Revival doorway that appears to have been grafted onto an earlier vernacular house, perhaps dating from the 1830s or 1840s (and possibly moved to its present location from elsewhere). The dwelling at 452 Franklin is a rare surviving example of a Greek Revival town house of the type that Alexander Jackson Davis had designed for the Potter family near Niagara Square. The Pearl Block on St. Louis Place, which began life as the Literary and Scientific Academy in 1829, is likely the oldest building in the district. In 1848, it became the Sisters of Charity Hospital. It is a large, well preserved example of the style, the type of row houses that could have been found in New York City in the 1840s and 1850s. The dwelling at 543 Franklin Street is an especially elegant version of the Greek Revival style, with giant pilasters articulating the façade beneath a hipped roof. The only porticoed Greek Revival house in the historic district is the Wilcox house. The tall Tuscan columns are technically a Latin rather than a Greek feature, but the two-story temple front aspires to the monumental effect that large houses in this style possessed.

### ***Post Civil War Era, 1860s-1920s: A Flourishing Neighborhood During Buffalo's Industrial Expansion: Urbanization Takes Command.***

Allentown continued to grow and prosper after the Civil War, and by 1872 the neighborhood was substantially developed. As the city began to spread further and further inland into the former farms and suburbs, Allentown assumed the character it still retains of an in-town residential neighborhood made up primarily of middle class single family homes on small lots. Residential development of the district received a great boost with the creation of a system of public transportation. By the mid-1880s, the city in general had miles of "street railways" that provided reliable, inexpensive service, including service along Main Street and Elmwood Avenue within the district. Like other parts of Buffalo, Allentown became a "street car suburb" and home to a growing number of middle class families whose breadwinners worked in the city's ever increasing number of factories, transportation facilities, and grain elevators. These enterprises tended to be lo-



cated in the southern part of town and on the waterfront. Gas mains, water lines, and after the mid-1890s, electricity, contributed to the rising tide of residential and commercial development in the district.

**Small neighborhood stores opened in Allentown** after the Civil War. Examples of these small localized businesses were the grocer's store at 321 Plymouth that opened in 1870; the butter and eggs business that opened at 315 Pennsylvania Street by 1884; and the pharmacy operated between 1891 and 1920 by the Barger family at 56 Plymouth Street.<sup>(7)</sup> Together with apartment houses, more and various forms of commercial buildings began to be built in the historic district in the early years of the twentieth century. Allen Street became primarily a commercial street by mid-century, and many houses along Delaware and Elmwood Avenue were either converted to commercial use or torn down to be replaced by office or retail buildings.

Main Street in the district also saw commercialization, and recent adaptive reuse projects there have begun to validate Allentown Association's assertion that this area as "a neglected stretch of commercial avenue ripe for reinvestment."<sup>(8)</sup>

**Instances of houses being converted** to commercial use are abundant in the district. In fact, this early form of adaptive reuse can be credited with preserving many historic properties. The large Queen Anne house of Dr. M. D. Mann, the physician who attended President McKinley after he had been shot while attending the Pan-American Exposition, at 37 Allen (1887, Green & Wicks, architects) was for a long time a well frequented antique shop before it was converted to apartments. The handsome Queen Anne brick house at 50 Allen that local architect C. R. Percival designed with multiple bands of molded brick in 1884 is now a small office building. Many other such conversions throughout the district have insured the continued existence much of the original housing stock, especially along Elmwood Avenue.

In many cases, older homes had shops or offices added to the front of them. When, for example, architects Bley & Lyman, who took special interest in the welfare of the avenue, built their own Neo-Classical Revival style office in 1925, they added it to the still extant Monro house of 1884. The dwelling can still be seen behind the handsome arcaded street front add-on. The same architects were likewise responsible for the front lawn addition to the 1850s house at 445 Delaware.

**Individual commercial buildings** are best represented in the historic district along Allen Street, where many still serve their original function. Many of the shops attract a

city-wide clientele as well as the traditional neighborhood shoppers. One of the most distinguished is the single story, colonnaded Spanish Baroque style building at 62 Allen, the southwest corner of Franklin, built in 1916 to the designs of Buffalo architects Colson & Hudson. The handsome little Allendale Theater at 203 Allen opened in 1913 and was known for many years for its vaudeville and community theater productions as well as silent and sound films. Before closing its doors in 1982 after a long period of decline, it was an important part of the legitimate stage scene that once thrived in Buffalo. Since 1986, the building has made a comeback as the home of the Theater of Youth. By the 1930s, the popularity of the automobile began to exert its influence on the entire city. Bley & Lyman's Colonial Revival gas station at the southeast corner of Delaware and Allen Street is perhaps the oldest such business in continuous operation in Buffalo. Yet, thanks to vigilance dating back to the earliest days of the historic preservation movement in Buffalo, the automobile age has not destroyed the neighborhood fabric of Allentown, and the commercial buildings that exist there, like the apartment houses, civilly take their place within the architectural context of the neighborhood.

**Today, Allentown continues to be a vibrant,** mixed use self-sustaining neighborhood where commerce flourishes. The catalog of businesses listed on the Allentown Association web site includes the following categories: automotive, banking, conference center, dining and nightlife, florists, liquor, lodging, antiques, apparel and accessories, furnishings, grocery and convenience stores, gifts, and services.

During this period, a number of religious congregations also built facilities in the Allentown neighborhood. Among the smaller of them is the very simple Friends Meeting house at 173 Allen Street (presently used as apartments) that was organized as a city mission in 1868 by the Orchard Park Society of Friends. The Assembly Hall of the Open Brethren at 111 Elmwood housed a congregation that eschewed all affiliation with any traditional religious creed. It had been founded in the 1870s. In 1911, they built their house of worship to plans by architect Ulysses G. Orr. Closer to the thinking of mainstream American spirituality was the First Church of Christ Scientist (present Karpeles Museum) at 220 North Street, erected in 1911 to plans by Solon S. Beman of Chicago.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Linda R. Levine and Maria Scivani, *Beautiful Buffalo: (Preserving a City)* (Buffalo: Canisius College Press, 2003), 72.

<sup>7</sup> This information is drawn from an email message dated August 2, 2011, to the consultants from Christopher N. Brown.

<sup>8</sup> Allentown Association. <http://www.allentown.org>



## Secrets tour of homes will be Sept. 15

Let's see what's changed in Allentown since 2010! Secrets took a year off in 2011, but it's back this year and we plan to make the 2012 edition the best ever. Secrets of Allentown 2012 will happen on Saturday, Sept. 15, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.. It's on a Saturday because the Buffalo Bills will be playing on every Sunday in September and early October.

For the newbies: Secrets of Allentown is a ticketed, self-guided tour of 10-12 Allentown properties, most of them private homes. Unlike other architectural

tours, Secrets takes people inside the homes, so that devotees of historic architecture can enjoy all the interior details that make Allentown structures unique. Secrets co-chairs Elizabeth Licata and Sandra Sieminski are joined by board member Jonathan White and Andrew Eisenhardt, Allentown Association executive director, in organizing this year's Secrets. Do you know of a house that would be perfect for Secrets? Contact Elizabeth Licata at [elicata@buffalospree.com](mailto:elicata@buffalospree.com).

### ALLENTOWN ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please select a membership level:

- Benefactor \$1,000
- Patron \$500
- Contributing \$250
- Sustaining \$100
- Business \$50
- Family \$40
- Individual \$35
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Please make checks payable to: Allentown Association, Inc.  
Mail to: Allentown Association, 14 Allen St., Buffalo NY 14202

#### OPTIONAL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES (Please check the committee of interest to you):

- Allen West Festival
- Beautification
- Membership/PR
- Secrets of Allentown tour of homes
- Crime Reduction
- Fundraising
- Hot Dog Stand
- Volunteer Office Staff
- Board of Directors

*The purpose of the Allentown Association, Inc. is to serve its community. It does that through efforts to beautify the neighborhood; to encourage historic preservation and property maintenance; to promote appropriate business development; to fight crime and to protect and enhance Allentown's unique urban ambiance.*



**THE ALLENTOWN ASSOCIATION, INC.**  
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