

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



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

1. Name of Property

historic name WESTMINSTER HOUSE CLUB HOUSE

other names/site number _____

name of related multiple property listing N/A

2. Location

street & number 419 Monroe Street (Historically 421 Monroe Street) [] not for publication

city or town Buffalo [] vicinity

state New York code NY county Erie code 029 zip code 14212

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Roger Daniel Nucky
Signature of certifying official/Title

4/9/2018
Date

PS-400
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

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

Alexis C. ...
Signature of the Keeper

5/25/18
date of action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
1		TOTAL

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

_____ N/A _____

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

_____ N/A _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

_____ SOCIAL/Club House _____

_____ RECREATION & CULTURE/Auditorium/Sports _____

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

_____ VACANT/not in use _____

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

_____ LATE 19TH & EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN/ _____

_____ Craftsman _____

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation _____ Limestone _____

walls _____ Brick _____

roof _____ Membrane _____

other _____

Narrative Description

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

Name of Property

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

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

Areas of Significance:

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance:

1909 - 1962

Significant Dates:

1909, 1962

Significant Person:

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect/Builder:

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. **NPS #36,248**
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by historic American Building Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 0.25 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>17</u>	<u>675418</u>	<u>4751021</u>	3	<u>17</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>17</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u>17</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kerry Traynor, Annie Schentag [Edited by Jennifer Walkowski, NYSHPO]

organization hta preservation specialists date 1/18/2018

street & number 422 Parker Avenue telephone 716.864.0628

city or town Buffalo state NY zip code 14216

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

Narrative Description of Property

Westminster House Club House, located at 421 Monroe Street in the city of Buffalo, Erie County, New York, was constructed in 1909 - 1910, designed by an unknown architect to house community outreach programs run by Westminster Presbyterian Church on Delaware Avenue.¹ Monroe Street runs north-south between Sycamore Street to the north and Broadway to the south; both radial streets connecting to Buffalo's central business district, approximately one-and-one-half miles to the west.² The streets running north-south in the neighborhood between the radial connections to downtown are residential. The residential neighborhood, once densely built-up, now has several vacant lots and infill housing.

The two-story, red brick building located at 421 Monroe Street is composed of two blocks, set at right angles, detailed with simple Craftsman motifs, forming an "L" shaped plan. The building, which is sited immediately adjacent to the sidewalk on Monroe Street, has a parking lot to the north and south and a grassed lawn to the east. Broad overhanging eaves with paired brackets and a precast concrete watertable between the raised basement and first floor unifies the intersecting blocks. The block facing Monroe Street, to the west, is rectangular, featuring a parapet above a flat roof. To the east of the rectangular block a parapeted gable block extends to the south. The fenestration features single and paired windows at the raised basement and first floor, and paired and tripartite units on the second floor. The main entrances into the building are located on the north and south elevations of the rectangular block. Secondary exits accessing fire escapes are located on the second floor at the south and east elevations. Additional exits are located at the first floor of the gabled block to the south, and at the basement of the east elevation. The window and door openings are outlined and accentuated by a soldier course, one brick wide, laid in stack bond in line with a header course of a slightly darker red color, also laid in stack bond. A precast sill is located at each window opening on the first and second floors. The original windows featured two-over-two and two-over-one double-hung wooden sash. Although most sash were replaced with one-over-one aluminum units in 1983, original sash remain extant at the basement and on the north and east elevations.

The organization of the interior is in response to the programmatic requirements of the Westminster House Club House and has not been significantly altered. A corridor runs east-west on the first floor, with rooms of varying sizes located on either side. To the west are kitchen facilities, office/meeting spaces and a large room with a fireplace. Though covered with carpet, hardwood floors, wood baseboards, and window and door casing remain extant. The original wood stair is located to the south where the blocks intersect. The stair connects the

¹ The legal address for the parcel identified on Erie County Tax Maps as SBL 111.42-3-50 is 419 Monroe Street. Historic maps and documents note the parcel address as 421 Monroe Street. For ease of description and reference to historic sources the address 421 Monroe Street will be used throughout this document.

² In 1804 Joseph Ellicott laid out a radial street plan for Buffalo, NY, with streets radiating out from Niagara Square toward the countryside.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 2

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

basement through the second floor, and is accessed from the corridor and the main entrance on the south elevation. It is likely that this was originally the primary entrance given the detailing at the door. On the second floor is the gymnasium and auditorium/dance hall, while in the basement are larger rooms that serviced social functions, and the remnants of bowling lanes.

Exterior

Westminster House Club House is a two-story, L-shaped red brick building, above a raised basement, consisting of two blocks with red brick laid in a running bond and finely attenuated white mortar joints. The building is sited with the rectangular block flush with the sidewalk, facing west along Monroe Street and the parapeted gable block, running north-south, located to the east. Parking lots are located to the north and south, and a grassed yard is located to the east. The parapeted gable is detailed with white stone coping at each end. A broad wood eaves with paired decorative wood brackets set on top of a corbelled masonry base is located above the second floor windows, continuous across the north, south and west elevations of the rectangular block, just below the parapet, and the east and west elevations of the gabled block.

The raised basement sits on top of a single course of quarry-faced limestone, a dressed extension of the foundation, visible at grade. Paired two-over-two double-hung wooden sash windows, with wood mullions remain extant at the basement on all elevations. A precast concrete watertable separates the basement from the first floor. The brick at the raised basement and stone have been painted except at the north elevation and the bay to the north on the east elevation. A broad wood eaves with paired decorative wood brackets set on top of a corbelled masonry base is located above the second floor windows on the east and west elevations of the gabled block and is continuous across the north, south and west elevations of the rectangular block, just below the parapet. White stone coping, in contrast to the red brick below completes the composition.

West Elevation

The west elevation of the rectangular block is flush with the sidewalk and consists of three bays with an ABA rhythm, while the west elevation of the gabled block faces a parking lot and is a single bay wide. At the intersection of the blocks is a single story entrance portico. At the first floor are paired one-over-one aluminum replacement sash units separated by a wood mullion. The window in the middle bay of the first floor of the rectangular block is a small, one-over-one double-hung wooden sash, centrally located. The window openings at the third floor of this block are infilled with decorative diaper pattern brick work and appear to have been historically blind features to accent an otherwise blank surface. At the second floor of the gabled block a rectangular transom is located above the paired one-over-one replacement sash. Except for the small window on the first floor, the masonry openings are all outlined and accentuated by the decorative masonry soldier and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 3

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

header coursing described above. A precast sill is located at each window opening on the first and second floors. The sills at the windows in the outer bay of the first floor have been painted.

An entrance portico is located at the intersection of the rectangular and gabled wings. A brick knee wall with stone cap sits on top of a course of quarry-faced limestone. On top of the cap are engaged pilasters and a square column supporting an entablature and broad eaves. The space between the column and pilasters has been infilled, enclosed likely to provide better protection from the elements, and a non-historic door has been added between where the knee wall returns to the west. A historic photo documents the historic condition of the portico. Above the porch at the first floor is a small one-over-one replacement sash window on the west elevation of the gabled block.

South Elevation

The south elevation faces a parking lot that also served as an outdoor basketball court. The rectangular block is four bays wide with an ABBC rhythm, while the parapeted gable end is three bays wide. At the bay to the west on the first floor of the rectangular block is a single, one-over-one replacement aluminum sash window, while paired one-over-one sash windows are located in the middle bays. At the bay to the east a single window is located between the first and second floors, indicating the location of a stair landing within the building. Tripartite windows are located at the three bays to the west on the second floor; there is no fenestration at the bay to the east. The windows in the triplet are each one-over-one replacement sash units. Beneath each window triplet is a stone sill; however, the windows are not as tall as those located elsewhere on the second floor. In order to maintain a uniform composition, the area below each window triplet and sill is infilled with brick, set back approximately two-inches from the plane of the wall and a second stone sill is located at the same height as those on the east and south elevations. A door accessing a fire escape was added below the center window at the bay to the east. The stone sills were cut and masonry removed to accommodate the door. The brick used to tooth in the masonry opening is a slightly lighter red color. At the gabled end one-over-one replacement aluminum sash windows are located on the first floor and paired one-over-one replacement sash windows with rectangular transoms are on the second floor. An ocular window is centrally located in the upper portion of the gable. To the west of center is a chimney, which projects slightly beyond the plane of the wall and is detailed with precast shoulders in line with the heads of the first floor windows. The chimney extends beyond the parapeted gable and is terminated by a simple corbel and cap. A hollow metal door is located at the bay to the west on the first floor, exiting onto a fire-escape. The masonry opening at the door is outlined with the soldier and header brickwork visible at the window openings; however, the brick header course changes at the lower level of the opening indicating that a door at this location is not an original condition, as supported by a historic photo.³

³ At the door opening on the east elevation accessing a fire escape the header course is the darker red similar to the detail at other fenestration.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 4

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

North Elevation

The north elevation faces a parking lot and is similar in organization to the south elevation. The rectangular block is four bays wide with an ABCD rhythm, while the gable end is three bays wide. The first floor consists of single and paired one-over-one aluminum sash replacement windows. To the west of the intersecting blocks is a hollow metal entrance door accessed by cast concrete stairs running parallel to the elevation, in front of a basement window that has been infilled. The masonry opening at the door has been altered and brick infill is located above the door and at the perimeter to the west. It is highly probable that this is not an original entrance. At the bay to the east of the entrance and at the bay to the east of the gabled block are two smaller one-over-one replacement sash windows.

The second floor of the north elevation is similar to the south elevation. Tripartite windows occupy the first three bays to the east of the rectangular block. The windows, each of which sits on top of a precast sill, do not fill the entire masonry opening and, as a result, the lower portion of the opening is infilled with brick, set back approximately two-inches from the plane of the wall. A precast sill is located beneath the brick infill. A single one-over-one double-hung wooden sash window is located at the bay to the east. Small wooden sash windows are also located on the second floor of the gable end. At the bay to the west a two-light lower wood sash remains extant; however, the upper sash is missing. To the east is a two-over-one double-hung wooden sash window. An ocular window with wood tracery set back within the masonry opening is centrally located in the upper portion of the parapeted gable. The masonry openings at the paired windows are delineated with the soldier and header detail described above, whereas the masonry opening at the smaller windows do not feature this detail. A portion of the broad eaves is missing to the east of the intersecting blocks. It is likely that there were no brackets at this location given the lack of the masonry corbel that supports the brackets elsewhere.

East Elevation

The east elevation is five bays wide with an AAABC rhythm. The broad overhanging eaves, with paired wooden brackets supported on brick corbels is continuous across the elevation. The three bays to the south are similar with paired windows occupying each bay at the basement, first and second floors. The windows at the first floor are one-over-one replacement sash units, separated by a wood mullion. The paired windows at the third floor are similar to those on the second; however, they feature a rectangular transom. At the second bay from the north, stairs access a basement entrance. The door and window at the entrance have been covered with board. Paired windows, similar to those at the bays to the south are located on the second floor. At the third floor a door and a two-over-two double-hung wooden sash window, headed by a four-light transom are located in the masonry opening. A door at this location is original since the soldier and header coarse detailing featured at the masonry openings continues to the door threshold. The door exits to a fire escape.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 5

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

The bay to the north has a single two-over-two double-hung wooden sash window at the basement, a one-over-one replacement sash window at the first floor and no windows on the third floor. The masonry openings in each bay on the first and second floors have precast sills and feature the header and soldier coarse detailing typical on each elevation of the building. The sills have not been painted; however, the precast watertable has. The brick at the basement has been painted, except for the bay to the north.

Interior

The interior of the Westminster House Club House is organized in response to the functional and social needs of the club house. On the first floor a corridor runs east-west with rooms of varying sizes located on either side. Larger rooms, including a kitchen, office/meeting spaces and a large room with a fireplace are located to the west. The original wood stair connects the basement through the second floor and is accessed from the corridor and the main entrance on the south elevation. On the second floor is the gymnasium and auditorium/dance hall; while in the basement are large rooms and the remnants of bowling lanes. The interior retains a high level of integrity with original hardwood floors, wood baseboards and wood trim at the windows and doors.

Entrances & Circulation

There are two entrances into the Westminster House Club House, one to the south and one to the north. The entrance to the south is accessed through a portico, now enclosed. The enclosed portico features a brick knee wall with a quarry-faced limestone cap. The brick has been painted on the exterior of the portico but not on the interior. The entrance into the building features non-historic paired hollow metal doors with original sidelights. The opening is framed with the header and soldier course typical of the masonry openings at the fenestration. The doors lead to a small vestibule and wood stairs accessing the basement, where recreation facilities such as billiards and bowling alleys were located. A green terrazzo threshold separates the floor in the portico from the hardwood floors located in the vestibule at the base of the stairs.

The wood stair retains a high level of integrity, moving from the main entrance through the second floor. Though simply detailed with square baluster rails, minimally detailed newel posts and simple curved handrail, the stair provides the pivotal point in plan and volume, connecting the education and outreach functions of the club house with the social program including a dance hall/auditorium and gymnasium. The stair retains a high level of integrity, as do the functional spaces it connects.

The second entrance into the building is located at the north elevation. The non-historic brick infill on the exterior and non-historic detailing of the walls and baseboard on the interior suggest that either this is not an original entrance, or it has been altered. The hollow metal door leads to a corridor with a single step up to

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 6

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

navigate the change from the entrance to the first floor level. A non-historic carpet and baseboard cover any historic fabric.

First Floor

The entrances from the north and south lead to a corridor that runs east/west along the first floor. To the north and south of the double-loaded corridor are rooms of various sizes that accommodated offices and meeting spaces. The doors entering each room have a transom that has been infilled and relatively simple casing. Some original wood stile and rail doors remain extant. Some of the doors feature lights and panels, whereas others are solid, lacking any lights. At the head of the transom is decorative crown mold. Similar molding is located where the plaster walls and ceiling meet. In addition to door openings, smaller window openings are located along the corridor, featuring an apron and stool, and casing similar to the detailing at the door openings. One of the openings occurs where the corridor wall has a slight curvature. This window has a broad stool and deep apron. The windows in the upper portion of the walls allow natural light and ventilation into the corridor. Those in the lower portion of the wall likely facilitated the various outreach programs of the Westminster House, including library and bank functions. Wood chair rail and baseboards are continuous in the corridor, unifying the composition.

The rooms on the first floor range in size in response to their historic function. To the east, the rooms are larger and supported community gathering/classroom space and a kitchen. These spaces retain a high level of integrity. The community space, currently named the "James W. Pitts Room," is located at the southeast corner and features a brick fireplace with simple wood mantel supported by paired wood brackets at either end. Below each window is a radiator enclosed by a metal grill and the window stool. Between each radiator the window stool continues as a shelf with wood cabinets below. The wood trim at the windows and baseboard is simple, as is the chair rail that is continuous around the perimeter of the room.

Paired paneled wood doors at the southwest corner of the community space lead to a pair of smaller rooms to the west. Built-in wood shelves detailed with crown molding are located in the room to the south. The chair rail visible in the community room continues in this room. A door to the north leads to the second smaller room, which features beaded wainscot below a chair rail. The window openings visible in the corridor are detailed with simple wood trim at the casing, stool and apron, and simple crown mold at the head.

The other major space to the east is the kitchen. The kitchen space is utilitarian; however, it does retain a small pantry with built-in drawers and cabinets. The lower portions of the walls in the kitchen are covered with paneling, while the upper portions are plaster. Crown molding marks the transition from the walls to the ceiling.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 7

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

The rooms to the west, on either side of the corridor, also retain a high level of integrity, specifically those at the southwest corner that likely functioned as reading rooms, as suggested by the built-in bookshelf. It appears as though a large room along the north wall has been subdivided into a number of smaller rooms, off a corridor created within the space. The non-historic trim at the doors and baseboard of these smaller rooms suggest that this is an alteration to the space. A large built-in cabinet remains extant, running the length of the space across from the smaller rooms. Original hardwood floor remains extant.

Second Floor

The second floor spaces are functional and retain a high level of integrity. To the east is a large open space, with curved plaster ceiling and hardwood floors that historically functioned as a dance hall, complete with a stage to accommodate a band. The floor has been striped to delineate various sport courts, indicating the multiple functions the space accommodated. At a number of locations the plaster at the ceiling is failing; a result of water damage. A simple crown molding continues around the space. Below the crown molding, the plaster wall transitions to historic wood veneer panel. Below the panel is a wood wainscot at the height of the window sills. Although the original windows have been replaced along the east, west and south walls, the wood sills, mullions and casing remain extant. A door at the east wall accesses a fire escape.

The stage remains intact with simple classical detailing at the proscenium. Square pilasters, with inset panels and simple Doric inspired capitals support a full entablature with denticulated cornice below a segmental arched pediment. The segmental arch follows the curvature of the ceiling. The wood floor and paneled stage apron curve toward the main space. On either side of the stage is a small room. To the west is a small bathroom, while to the east is a storage space. An original two-over-one wood sash remains extant in the space to the east, while a two-light lower sash remains in the space to the east. A floor has been inserted in both spaces with the wood ceiling joists visible. The upper level provides additional storage space and is accessed in each space by a simple wood stair. The floors throughout are hardwood, with a simple stock baseboard. The walls are plaster.

To the east of the dance hall/auditorium space is a gymnasium. When constructed the gymnasium did not anticipate functions requiring volume such as basketball and volleyball. The space, with a relatively low ceiling was likely designed to accommodate athletics, such as rope climbing and wrestling. The floors of the gymnasium are hardwood and the walls and ceiling are covered with beaded hardwood. The windows are located higher on the wall than they are in the "dance hall," and the sash are set within the wood frame opening and lack wood casing, stools and apron, likely in response to the "athletic" function of the space.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 8

Westminster House Club House

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

Basement

The basement functioned as an important social space for the Westminster House Club House. As illustrated by the sign at the head of wood stairs leading to the basement from the main entrance the basement housed “Soft Drinks & Candy Billiard Room Bowling Alleys Downstairs.” The ceiling and walls in the main corridor of the basement are covered with historic beaded wood board, similar to the bead board in the gymnasium. In other locations the walls are covered with a historic wood veneer panel above a wood wainscot. Simple square columns clad in wood, echoing the detail at the wainscot, support wood encased beams. The columns and baseboard sit on top of a concrete floor. The functional organization of the basement supported a men’s locker room, scout room, game room, billiard room and bowling alley. Some of the functions are called out in directional signage printed on the wood veneer panels. While the historic functions of the spaces have long since passed, they remain evident, visible above dropped ceilings, as bowling alleys that retain lanes and ball returns, and windows with their historic wood stools, aprons and casing.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 1

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Westminster House Club House, located at 421 Monroe Street in Buffalo, Erie County, NY, is significant as one of the few remaining buildings affiliated with the Settlement House Movement located in the city. As such, the building provides a substantial contribution to the history of social work and institutional architecture during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although the organization known as Westminster House was established in other existing houses and buildings at this location beginning in 1894, the nominated building was the first and only building constructed specifically for the institution to serve as a club house for social and recreational activities. The building, designed by an unknown architect around 1909, served as the club house for the Westminster House organization. Established by the Westminster Presbyterian Church congregation, located in Buffalo's wealthy Delaware Avenue Historic District (NR listed), Westminster House operated as a settlement house on Buffalo's East Side, an area dominated by immigrant communities. Associated with the international Settlement House Movement, Westminster House conducted extensive community outreach within the surrounding neighborhood, as well as offering educational and recreational programming at the club house on Monroe Street. The institution aimed to integrate the surrounding German immigrant community of the neighborhood with the house's middle-class social workers by providing residential opportunities for full-time workers at Westminster House, as well as encouraging nearby residents to visit the house through a combination of outreach, classes, and special events. Westminster House was one of the first organizations associated with the Settlement House Movement established in Buffalo, and the building is perhaps the only settlement house of this kind remaining extant in the city today. The building is a good representative example of this type of social work facility and the values it embodied, meeting the requirements of Criterion A in the area of Social History.

The nominated building was constructed around 1909, designed specifically to provide facilities for the organization's expanded programs, classes, and recreational opportunities. The purpose-built spaces reflect the relationship between the architecture and the organization it contained. Evidence of the institution's mission can be seen in the numerous large rooms designed to provide shared spaces for workers and neighborhood residents to gather together. A large gymnasium, kindergarten classroom, dance hall, and library were some of the most distinctive spaces within the building, exemplifying Westminster House's programmatic initiative to provide both educational and recreational outreach to community members. The club house at 421 Monroe Street formed the nucleus of the organization's programmatic activities, where most of the classes and events occurred. Housing for residents was primarily located in three other preexisting one and two-story wood framed buildings adjacent to Monroe Street on Adams Street that have now all been demolished. The club house building was thus one of four institutional buildings that composed the Westminster House organization; however, it was the only building commissioned by the organization. Today, it is the only remaining building affiliated with the historic Westminster House organization, and was the only one specifically designed to accommodate its institutional aims, methods and programs. The building's interior plan, large communal

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 2

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

spaces, and simplified exterior with Craftsman details represents an unusual contribution to the architectural history of institutional design in Buffalo. The Westminster House Club House retains a high level of integrity and is a good representative example of an early Craftsman style institutional facility, meeting the requirements of Criterion C in the area of Architecture.

While the institution was located on the property stretching between Monroe Street, Adams Street, Sycamore Street and Broadway Street beginning in 1894, the period of significance begins with the construction of the present building in 1909 and ends when both the institution and the surrounding community it served experienced substantial changes in 1962. This era encompasses all notable architectural changes to the building and represents the time when the services provided by the Westminster House exemplified the principles and methods affiliated with the Settlement Movement. After 1962, Westminster House underwent a significant change in leadership when it merged with the umbrella organization of United Way. By this time, the neighborhood surrounding Westminster House had also fully transformed from a predominantly German population to a predominantly Black one. This simultaneous change in institutional leadership, organizational affiliation and neighborhood demographics marks the end of the period of significance. Programming and services had substantially changed from their original form by that time, and all essential changes to the building occurred prior to that date.

The Settlement House Movement, 1886-1894⁴

Established in 1894, the Westminster House was founded at a time when the Settlement House Movement became increasingly influential in many major American cities. Originating in England during the 1880s, the Settlement House Movement arose in response to the problem of overcrowded cities and tenements. As many cities began to attract large numbers of immigrants who relocated to industrial cities for new job opportunities, the urban working class were often forced to live in overcrowded, unsanitary tenements and underserved neighborhoods. Attempting to integrate these working class populations with middle class citizens amidst rapidly growing cities, the Settlement House Movement advocated for the urban poor by establishing 'settlement houses' in underserved neighborhoods. These settlement houses typically emerged in the form of community centers that housed a small number of residents and provided recreational facilities, educational programs, and occupational training for the residents as well as the broader neighborhood community. By establishing a settlement house in a poor neighborhood, the Settlement House Movement aimed to integrate the poor with middle-class social workers in an interdependent community, rather than segregating class-based communities from one another in different parts of the city and outlying suburbs. The programs offered at settlement houses typically functioned on a philosophy of 'scientific philanthropy,' which aligned itself not with charity in the form of direct relief, but instead aimed to provide resources, education and skills to those in need

⁴ The Settlement House Movement is also called the Settlement Movement. The terms are used interchangeably in most texts, but this document will refer to the movement as the Settlement House Movement for the sake of consistency.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 3

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

so that they could break out of the cycle of poverty themselves. Conversely, it was also hoped that providing middle-class social workers with exposure to the urban poor while they lived together in a settlement house would provide them with insight into the conditions of the poor and leave them better able to help them.

Toynbee Hall, located in the East End of London, provided the earliest example of a settlement house, inspiring the Settlement House Movement that swept the United States soon after its founding. Established in 1884 by Samuel and Henrietta Barnett, Toynbee Hall provided housing for a small number of residents, as well as kindergarten services, men's and women's clubs, recreational facilities and several educational classes, lectures and events. This settlement house was not affiliated with any religious organization, and its programmatic offerings, facilities, social aims and philanthropic methods set the standard for many settlement houses to come.

Just two years later, the Settlement House Movement emerged in America. Heralding many of the principles established in London at Toynbee Hall, settlement houses began to appear in major American cities beginning in 1886. According to Settlement House Movement pioneer Robert Woods, the years 1886-1891 "constituted the introductory stage of American settlement enterprise."⁵ Six settlement houses were established during these formative years by activists "who were moved by a separate and distinct original impulse coming out of tendencies in American life, and also by the example of Toynbee Hall."⁶ Located mostly in Chicago, New York, and Boston, the first American settlement houses emerged in response to the problem of overcrowded tenements in immigrant neighborhoods brought on by the substantial industrial presence in these cities.

Hull House was one of the earliest, largest and most successful settlement houses in the United States, and it was directly influenced by the Toynbee House. Founded in 1889 by Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr, just a year after Addams visited Toynbee Hall in London, Hull House provided education and recreational facilities for European immigrant women and children in Chicago's Near West Side. Hull House was not a religious organization, and Addams herself defined the purpose of a settlement house as "Simply to give life, and to give it more abundantly... to insist on the universality of the best."⁷ Many other American settlement houses emerged at this time, inspired by the same principles. University Settlement in New York (founded 1886), Andover House in Boston (founded 1892), and Whittier House in Jersey City (founded 1893) were among the earliest and largest to establish programs, residences and services to communities in need. The Westminster House organization was founded around the same time as these settlement houses in larger cities and began providing services in 1894.

While each settlement house in the country addressed needs that were specific to the unique demographics of their individual neighborhood context, the organizations were linked together nationwide within the context of

⁵ Robert Archey Woods, *The Settlement Horizon* (Newark, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1922), 49.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁷ "Chicago Settlements," *New Outlook* 52 (New York: Outlook Publishing, 1895), 12.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

Section 8 Page 4

the Settlement House Movement. From their very inception, different settlement houses in disparate cities found ways to communicate, inspire and cooperate with one another in order to address their mutual concern of overcrowding nationwide. By establishing trade publications such as *The Commons*, leaders of the movement ensured that these new houses “were not only individual settlements but united by a settlement spirit.”⁸ Through journal articles, letters and visits, “experienced leaders arose prepared to assist with advice and instruction” for new houses as they emerged. The leadership at Westminster House was involved in this broader community, where the head caseworker, Emily Holmes, made a distinctive effort to study and collaborate with Jane Addams. Shortly after Westminster House was founded in 1894, Holmes held an “afternoon tea for Miss Jane Addams of Hull House, Chicago, who was also an honored guest of Westminster House for a short time.”⁹ Two years later, Holmes made “a month’s visit at Hull House, in search of inspiration and hints for her own good work” at the Westminster House, continuing the camaraderie between these two institutions.¹⁰ Visits like these confirm the mutual concerns and efforts of Westminster House and Hull House, linked together in the shared purposes and aims of the Settlement House Movement.

In many instances, women conducted the majority of the institutional leadership roles and daily tasks for settlement houses. One of the revolutionary characteristics of the Settlement Movement, as the name reflects, was that “many of the most important leadership roles were filled by women, in an era when women were still excluded from leadership roles in business and government.”¹¹ Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, approximately half of the major US Settlement houses were led and staffed by women.¹² Although funding often was funneled down through the administration of men, women often managed these institutions, organizing not only daily tasks but also programmatic directions and educational development. Female figures like Jane Addams, Florence Kelly and Lillian Wald established national recognition through the Settlement Movement, which not only made an impact on the communities they served but also enabled women to professionally participate in public realms outside the domestic sphere. As Marta Albert asserts, this kind of female involvement in institutional administration “challenged the norms of the public sphere by politicizing the work assumed to fall within the private ‘women’s’ realm.”¹³ Much like similar organizations in Chicago, this was the norm in Buffalo, where all three of the city’s settlement houses, including Westminster House, were under the direction of women.

⁸ Woods, 52.

⁹ Emily S. Holmes, *Annual Report of the Westminster House, 1896* (Buffalo, NY: Westminster House, 1896), 59.

¹⁰ Graham Taylor, *The Commons* (Chicago: Feb 1898), 11.

¹¹ Harvard University, “Settlement House Movement,” *Immigration to the United States*, Accessed via web 10 November 2016. <http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/immigration/settlement.html>.

¹² Mina Carson, “Settlement House Movement,” *The Reader's Companion to US Women's History* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1999), 53.

¹³ Marta Albert, “Not Quite a ‘Quiet Revolution’: Jewish Women Reformers in Buffalo, NY, 1890-1914” *Shofar* 9.4 (summer 1991) 69.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County , New York
County and State

Section 8 Page 5

The Settlement House Movement in Buffalo

By the 1890s, 40 percent of settlement houses in America were located in the leading industrial cities, primarily Chicago, New York, and Boston, but many smaller cities had at least one settlement house.¹⁴ Buffalo was a heavily industrialized city by this time, and it had three settlement houses by 1900. Even before the Settlement House Movement officially took hold in America, Buffalo's philanthropists worked to alleviate poverty and poor living conditions in the 1870s. In 1877, the noted philanthropist Maria Love founded the Charitable Organization Society (COS) with the help of benefactor Ansley Wilcox. The aims of the society were to "encourage other charitable organizations in Buffalo to cooperate with one another, to investigate requests for aid, and to help individuals in need find employment."¹⁵ Although the COS was established nearly twenty years prior to the first settlement houses in Buffalo, it exemplified many of the principles that the Settlement House Movement would identify as essential and later served as an umbrella intuition for coordinating resources and ideas for settlement houses in Buffalo. As scholar Clowes states, "Based on the London model, the Buffalo group introduced programs of education and training, called 'provident schemes' that enabled the poor to help themselves."¹⁶ In this sense, the COS established philanthropic principles that were soon echoed by the women-directed settlement houses that emerged in the 1890s.

Zion House was the first settlement house established in Buffalo, founded in 1891 by the Sisterhood of the Temple Beth Zion.¹⁷ Located at 456 Jefferson Street (demolished), Zion House provided education, job opportunities and recreational facilities to the surrounding neighborhood, primarily populated with Eastern European immigrants. In 1894, two other settlement houses were established: Welcome Hall and Westminster House. Welcome Hall, located at 404 Seneca Street (demolished) was founded by the First Presbyterian Church of Buffalo "for religious, charitable, social and educational work in a neglected neighborhood," which was adjacent to the canal area of downtown and composed primarily of dock workers and transient populations. Led by head residents Miss Remington and Miss Louise Montgomery, Welcome Hall provided vocational classes, kindergarten, and summer outings for neighborhood residents in need. *The Commons* praised Welcome Hall in 1897, stating that it has provided services to "one of the neediest neighborhoods to be found in an American city."¹⁸ These two settlement houses, along with Westminster House, were established within a few years of each other in the early 1890s, acknowledging the need for community engagement and educational services in different parts of the city, united by a common philanthropic aims and methods. By 1913, there were over 400

¹⁴ "Settlement House Movement"

¹⁵ Alexander Clowes, *The Doc and the Duchess: The Life and Legacy of George H A Clowes* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2016), 40.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Albert, 66.

¹⁸ Graham Taylor, *The Commons* 9 (1897), 47.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

Section 8 Page 6

settlement houses in 32 states.¹⁹ Buffalo's settlement houses were established during the earliest period of this movement's history, paving the way for many others in subsequent decades.

Westminster House Origins and Neighborhood Context, 1894-1896

Westminster House was established at 421 Monroe Street and 424 Adams Street on September 17, 1894, in order to conduct "neighborhood improvement, using settlement methods."²⁰ The settlement house was founded by members of the Westminster Presbyterian Church, located at 724 Delaware Ave (extant), under consultation with the Charity Organization Society (COS). Recognizing the privileged location and status of Westminster Church, the Rev. Dr. Samuel Van Vranken Holmes sought to establish a settlement house in a different community, one that was more in need than the wealthy Delaware Avenue district where it was located. At the time, Dr. Holmes reflected, "A gulf of two miles of avenue separates us from those most needing to be reached."²¹ Seeking a place to conduct "relief work in a district of the city" away from the congregation district, the church was advised by the COS to locate between Sycamore and Broadway Streets on Buffalo's East Side, which they identified as in "much distress that year."²²

Many of the initial efforts to establish the Westminster House were made by Dr. Holmes, who became pastor of the Westminster Church in the previous year and "had been seeking the opportunity for an opening of social settlement work."²³ Dr. Holmes worked alongside the support of the Westminster Club, which was the men's society affiliated with the Westminster Church, in order to fund the settlement house. The Westminster Club set up a foundation in order to contribute \$3,000-\$4,000 annually to the Westminster House organization, and these funds were distributed in order to look after its general needs.²⁴ With these funds and aid from the COS and Westminster Church congregation, Westminster House was established in 1894 in order to promote "a sense of Christian fellowship from the West Side man of wealth to the East Side man of poverty."²⁵

Notably, each of Buffalo's first three settlement houses, including the Westminster House, was affiliated with a religious institution. While the Settlement House Movement did not associate itself with any particular religion, it was not uncommon for a settlement house to be initiated through a church or temple, as these institutions were often already seeking areas where they could aid with social needs. Nationwide, religious organizations were responsible for establishing some settlements, including the Roman Catholic Church, the YWCA, and the

¹⁹ H. Husock, "Bringing Back the Settlement House," *Public Welfare* 51.4 (1993), 12.

²⁰ *Bibliography of College, Social, University and Church Settlements* (Chicago: Blakely Press, 1905), 67.

²¹ Holmes, *Annual Report...* 1896, 57.

²² Joseph Nelson Larned, *A History of Buffalo: Delineating the Evolution of the City, Volume 2* (Buffalo: Empire State Company, 1911), 102.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Annual Report of the Westminster Club* (Buffalo, NY: Westminster Club, 1898), 3.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

Section 8 Page 7

Women's Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church South.”²⁶ At the Westminster House, religious beliefs seem to have been deeply intertwined with its philanthropic aims, but its methods and programs were more aligned with the nondenominational Settlement House Movement ideals than with Presbyterianism. While Westminster House leaders did make an effort to “ascertain the religious tendencies of those visited and to urge regular attendance upon the church of their choice,” they did not perform any church functions within the house.²⁷ Biblical stories, mixed with secular ones, were read during children’s hour and kindergarten classes, but no religious affiliation was required in order to participate. Head worker Emily Holmes described the twofold identity of the organization in 1896, stating “The spirit of Westminster House, although decidedly undenominational, is unmistakably Christian, and the people know it and feel it.”²⁸ Initiated and funded by the Westminster Presbyterian Church, yet operating as an almost entirely separate entity, Westminster House did not attempt to hide its religious affiliations, nor did it enforce them. Summarizing this stance in 1897, Holmes reflected, “We aim to be liberal without being lawless, to be religious without proselytizing, and to be Christian without teaching any particular creed.”²⁹

Motivations for this kind of social work were manifold, but it is essential to note that this occurred in a broader historical context where intensive charity efforts were increasingly common amongst the upper and middle classes. The late nineteenth century was characterized by multiple reform movements in America, of which the Settlement House Movement was only one. Attempts to remedy perceived societal ills were initiated by middle and upper class citizens at this time, many of them women, through institutions affiliated with social reform causes such as the Temperance Movement, which sought to abolish alcoholism and the negative social effects it was believed to instigate. Within the context of the same era of social reform efforts, the Settlement House Movement focused not on alcohol, but on alleviating urban poverty, particularly among the immigrant populations in industrial cities.

Reformers often distinguished between the ‘undeserving poor’ and the ‘deserving poor,’ as typically white, middle or upper class social reformers tended to value aiding the ‘deserving poor,’ which they viewed as better able to receive aid in beneficial ways. Reform movements tended to “use the notion of choice to distinguish between those who were ‘really’ poor and those whose poverty was described as merely the result of bad choices.”³⁰ This “hierarchy of deservingness was pervasive throughout the social welfare system,” where American-born citizens struggling with alcoholism or unemployment were sometimes characterized as ‘lazy,’ or ‘too good to work,’ and therefore undeserving of substantial aid.³¹ For reformers associated with the

²⁶ “Settlement House Movement”

²⁷ Holmes, *Annual Report...1896*, 59

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Emily S. Holmes, *Annual Report of the Westminster House, 1897* (Buffalo, NY: Westminster House, 1897), 8.

³⁰ Elaine Chase and Grace Bantebya-Kyomuhendo, *Poverty and Shame: Global Experiences* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 277.

³¹ Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County , New York
County and State

Section 8 Page 8

Settlement House Movement, “immigrant families were the ‘deserving poor,’ who were thought to be most likely to feel the shaming effects of the situation, due to loss of status and systematic discrimination.”³² Seen as an unwilling victim who simply needed to learn American customs, some reformers believed, “The immigrant, by contrast, coming as a rule from a peasant environment, was expected to be acted on by government, but not to be a political agent himself.”³³ Examining some of the more self-serving motivations behind the Settlement House Movement approach, historian Richard Hofstadter stated, “reformers and Americanizers tried to prod the immigrant toward the study of American way...making [themselves] a sympathetic observer of immigrant life and in a measure a participant in it.”³⁴ While each settlement house focused on a particular immigrant community, ethnic biases were embedded within these efforts in inexplicit but still tangible ways. Even within the ‘hierarchy of deservingness,’ some immigrant populations were seen as more deserving of aid than others. The ethnic prejudices of reformers were applied to charity efforts through the careful selection of communities in need. German immigrants were often viewed as more sophisticated than Polish or Irish immigrants, partly because they were believed to “assimilate more quickly into the dominant Anglo-American culture than other immigrant groups.”³⁵ The ability of German immigrant communities to assimilate was a direct factor in their position at the top of this implied hierarchy of those deserving aid.

Westminster House leaders carefully selected the site on Monroe Street, where they believed their work would have the most distinctive impact on the ‘deserving poor.’ The surrounding blocks were populated mainly by German immigrants, typically first or second-generation families who made their way to Buffalo for the city’s numerous job opportunities during the industrial boom. The site for Westminster House was specifically selected for its proximity to this German population, and the 1896 Annual Report states, “The matter was thoroughly canvassed, several needy districts of the city examined, and a site within a German district was finally selected.”³⁶ Unlike many settlement houses across the nation, which served multiple ethnicities simultaneously, Westminster House could tailor its programs towards a relatively homogenous population. By focusing its efforts on the German population, Westminster House was well positioned to serve the surrounding community in specific, individualized ways. As one article of *The Commons* reflected in 1897, “Westminster House reports itself unique in having to deal with but one nationality- the German. No Irish, Jewish or Italian problem complicates matters or illustrates the magnificent process of assimilation going on in the great cities.”³⁷ Westminster House offered a German Class, for instance, where house residents and neighborhood residents would gather to read and speak in German. This created a mutually beneficial effect, wherein Westminster House staff could learn German from the neighborhood, in order to better serve them in the future. The class was established by Westminster House staff, who wrote “Living in the German quarter, the residents feel the

³² Ibid.

³³ Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing, 2011), 182.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ruth Engs, *The Progressive Era’s Health Reform Movement: A Historical Dictionary* (Greenwood Publishing, 2003), 142.

³⁶ Holmes, *Annual Report...1896*, 57.

³⁷ Graham Taylor, *The Commons* (June 1897), 5.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

Section 8 Page 9

necessity of an acquaintance with their neighbor's language."³⁸ Demographic studies of the neighborhood further confirm the overwhelmingly German population at this time. Conducted by Westminster House staff and reproduced in the organization's 1899 annual report, a chart detailing the number of saloons, lunchrooms, and public agencies in the neighborhood reveals an overwhelmingly majority of German residents and businesses (Figure 4). Furthermore, the existence of this chart indicates the dedication of staff to the neighborhood, taking careful surveys of preexisting conditions and identifying gaps in community services that they could then provide at Westminster House.

Not only was the Westminster House able to focus its efforts on one specific population, but that population also appears to have been relatively stable, with little demographic change occurring in the neighborhood until about 1925. An article in *The Commons* envied this demographic stability, stating, "There is less floating population, and results of the work can be followed for a satisfactory period."³⁹ Head worker Emily Holmes recognized the benefits of this neighborhood context, stating "It is this permanency that makes some phases of the work hopeful: it is this also which prevents startling changes."⁴⁰ For the first thirty years of Westminster House's operations, the neighborhood remained predominantly German, enabling the institution to develop educational, recreational and occupational programs that were custom-designed for this specific community.

Aligning itself with the values of the Settlement House Movement, the Westminster House property provided not only community programming, but also residential quarters for a small number of staff and visitors. Emily S. Holmes, the 'head worker' and thus effectively director of Westminster House, lived first at the frame building at 424 Adams Street and then at the club house for several years. City directories list her address at 421 Monroe Street or 424 Adams Street (the property was identified through both addresses consistently) through at least 1914. Aside from Holmes, it is difficult to ascertain exactly how many staff lived at the property full time, or simply commuted from their own homes to work there each day. Reports indicate "The House staff includes regularly a headworker and assistants, a district nurse, a kindergartner, and several volunteer workers."⁴¹ While it is unlikely that the volunteers or assistants would have lived at Westminster House, the city directories indicate that kindergartners, including Miss Georgia Jewett, Miss Mary Jones and Miss Mary James, lived at the home, as did Anna Evans, who was the institution's nurse. Holmes announced the departure of two staff, Miss Brownell, the kindergartner, and Dr. Bruce, who "after two and a half years residence at Westminster House [working in unknown department] left for Hudson NY to accept the superintendence of the State House of Refuge for Women."⁴² Overall, the frame building provided "rooms for seven resident workers and every room has been occupied wither by residents or visitors."⁴³ Although the

³⁸ Holmes, *Annual Report...1896*, 79.

³⁹ Taylor, *The Commons* (June 1897), 5.

⁴⁰ Holmes, *Annual Report of the Westminster House, 1899* (Buffalo, NY: Westminster House, 1899), 5.

⁴¹ Larned, 102

⁴² *New Outlook*, 12.

⁴³ Holmes, *Annual Report...1896*, 58

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 10

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

number of visitors occupying these rooms from year to year likely varied, it seems likely that at least four full time staff members, Miss Holmes, the kindergartner and another supervisory member, would have resided at Westminster House for the duration of their employment.

Westminster House also provided housing accommodations for other residents, typically designed to incorporate middle class citizens committed to the Settlement House Movement. Reports list thirteen residents at Westminster House in 1900, where nine of them had already lived there for over a year and three had lived there for nearly three years.⁴⁴ Additionally, eleven visitors lived at the house for shorter periods of time, ranging from one to four weeks. Often, these shorter visits were made by students, such as “Mr. Tchorigian, a student in Auburn Theological Seminary, who was pursuing some important sociological studies and gathering data on the saloons and social clubs of East Buffalo.”⁴⁵ The number of long-term residents seems to have remained relatively consistent over time, as seen in 1905, when eight residents (three men and five women) were living at Westminster House, each for an average length of four and a half years.

Residents paid room and board to live at Westminster House, although the prices were relatively inexpensive. Potential residents were required to apply to Miss Holmes in order to gain permission, as space was limited and the quality of residents was essential to maintaining a safe and productive community center. During the application process, Holmes described, “Preference is given to applicants for permanent residence, since those who live a longer time among the people can do better work than a casual caller.”⁴⁶ Once accepted, residents paid five dollars a week or one dollar a day in board, and twenty-five cents a meal.⁴⁷ Additionally, residents were required to be “home one evening a week, in addition to their regular class and club work, so neighbors are made to feel that they are then especially welcome.”⁴⁸ Due to the organization’s affiliation with the Settlement Movement, maintaining residency at Westminster House would have been essential for staff members and actively engaged visitors, in order to encourage the comingling of middle class citizens within a working class neighborhood.

The Westminster House Club House, 1909-1962

The Westminster House Club House building at 421 Monroe Street formed the nucleus of the larger property owned by Westminster House, but it was not built until approximately sixteen years after the institution was founded. When the organization was first established in 1894, the original property included three frame cottages facing Adams Street, and two frame buildings on the parcel located at 421 Monroe Street. In 1896 a

⁴⁴ Holmes, *Annual Report...1899*, 9

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Holmes, *Annual Report...1896*, 58

⁴⁷ Ibid. Prices consistent in 1905 *Annual Report* as well.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 59.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

Section 8 Page 11

two-story brick addition, which would function as an assembly space, was added to the frame building facing Monroe Street. Initially, the organization, “began with the lease of a small cottage on Monroe Street,” but it continued to grow “until property had been acquired extending through to Adams Street, including two lots on Adams [Street] and a separate building on Monroe [Street] for a men’s club.”⁴⁹ Before the building at 421 Monroe Street was constructed in 1909 - 1910, the Westminster House used the other buildings as follows: “one is used for the residence of the workers; one directly in the rear of this is devoted to the janitor and his family, the upper part being fitted up for temporary lodgings; the third cottage is where the various clubs for men and women, boys and girls meet, as well as the kindergarten and the library.”⁵⁰

The club house was constructed in 1909, as more space was needed to accommodate the development of new programs and services offered by Westminster House as the institution grew. Holmes reported, “Before six months had passed, it became evident that the two story frame building in which the work was begun was far too small to meet the demands of the situation. Plans were therefore made looking to increased accommodations.” A city permit for a brick assembly space was filed in August 1896; however, Holmes indicated that the plans for the building began nearly a year earlier. She wrote, “In October 1895, the settlement resumed its work with the occupancy of four cottages- one entirely new, and the other three thoroughly renovated and equipped.”⁵¹ This ‘entirely new’ addition, visible on the 1899 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map* and the two-story frame building on the 421 Monroe Street parcel soon became too small to accommodate the outreach program of Westminster House. Around 1909 the existing buildings on the property were relocated and a new building erected, the only building that was constructed specifically for the Westminster House organization, designed to provide a number of different communal spaces devoted to the organization’s programs such as the library, reading room, classrooms and meeting space, kindergarten, gymnasium, dance hall, bowling alley and pool room.⁵²

The new two-story brick club house building was designed in an L-shaped plan, with simple Craftsman detailing presenting its primary elevation to Monroe Street under a flat roof intersecting with a gabled roof at the back of the building with another elevation facing south towards Broadway Street. Paired and tripartite windows, between wooden mullions, with stone sills, let in plenty of light for the daytime and evening activities that took place on both floors. Paired wooden brackets located under an overhanging roofline provided ornamental details on an otherwise simple exterior, befitting a modest institution.

⁴⁹ Larned, 102

⁵⁰ *New Outlook*, 12.

⁵¹ Holmes, *Annual Report...1896*, 58.

⁵² Robert Archey Woods and Albert Joseph Kennedy, *Handbook of Settlements*, (New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation, 1911), 175. The publication notes the amenities in the new construction. The City of Buffalo Common Council Proceedings for 1909 indicate that Peter G. Roth petitioned to move the frame dwellings on 421 Monroe Street to the lot at 306 Spring Street.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County , New York
County and State

Section 8 Page 12

Functioning primarily as a community center, the building was designed to accommodate a variety of group activities, and the majority of the spaces inside are large enough to function as shared spaces. Many of these rooms were minimally detailed with hardwood floors, simple casing at the windows and doors, wood-framed doorways and wooden baseboards. The wood stair is also simply detailed with square newel post and baluster rails. The dance hall on the second floor features hardwood floors, a segmentally arched ceiling and stage with simple proscenium opening. Likely in response to changing needs in the neighborhood, the dance hall also functions as a gymnasium, with basketball hoops and court markings introduced into the space. The gymnasium retains hardwood floors and beaded wood walls and ceilings. The dropped fluorescent lights in the space suggest that it did not function as a space that could accommodate athletics such as basketball or volleyball. The billiard room and bowling alleys were located in the basement. Remnants of the alleys and ball return remain extant. Ornamental details and community spaces such as these would have lent the institutional building a residential quality, encouraging community members to feel welcome in the space as if in a house.

Operating on principles closely aligned with the Settlement House Movement, the club house housed many programs, classes, recreational outings and educational opportunities in order to assist the surrounding community. Almost all of these events and groups were available to anyone in the community for free or for a small membership fee, which was usually very low and only covered the cost of basic supplies. While the organization's primary focus was assisting the community, Emily Holmes made one thing very clear in her annual reports: "it is understood by the neighborhood that Westminster House is not a charitable institution."⁵³ The organization's philanthropic methods instead hinged on educational opportunities and professional advancement, wherein, "The most satisfactory way of getting a family on its feet is by securing permanent work for the wage earner."⁵⁴ Westminster House assisted with this process directly, by securing forty positions for neighborhood residents in a single year for instance.⁵⁵ Yet the majority of the assistance that Westminster House provided came in the form of neighborhood outreach, evident in the institution's regularly scheduled programs, classes and events at the club house.

Westminster House connected with the surrounding community in two major ways: by inviting neighborhood residents into the club house building on Monroe Street and by sending staff out into the neighborhood to provide assistance in their own homes. Most of the activities that occurred inside the club house were educational or recreational, typically provided in the form of clubs, classes, special events or vocational training. The building itself provided a number of spaces for neighborhood residents to gather, including a library, a bank, and a kindergarten. The library, for instance, filled a much-needed gap in the community, which was located too far from the Buffalo Central Library to be useful to the neighborhood residents. The library at the club house was soon "very largely patronized and has met an important need in the

⁵³ Ibid, 52.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County , New York
County and State

Section 8 Page 13

neighborhood.”⁵⁶ About 150 books was donated to the library at the club house by the Buffalo Public Library, and soon “more books were added as demand increased, until 250 volumes were in constant circulation... including quite a large number of German books.” Initially opened once a week for circulation, the library was used by many neighborhood residents who visited the club house, especially children. A reading and writing class was also held weekly in the library, which was “intended to assist such women in the district of the WH that have not had the time or opportunity to learn to read or write in the English language.”⁵⁷ The popularity of the library soon led to a reading room being established; open for use most days of the week.

In keeping with other settlement houses around the nation, Westminster House also established a banking program in the late 1890s. Operating at the club house beginning in 1909, the bank was open twice a week for deposits; the bank provided a place where neighborhood residents could learn to save their money in a safe place outside of their home. Unaffiliated with any professional bank, the ‘Penny Provident Bank’ at Westminster House instead functioned as a trustworthy place where residents could save funds for both themselves and the good of their own community. As Holmes reported, “The Penny Provident Bank has had a remarkably successful record, and the deposits have been as high as one hundred dollars in a single evening.”⁵⁸ This process continued for many years with success, and, as one report stated, “the bank has saved for the neighborhood, in 10 years, over \$34000.”⁵⁹ This money was not used by Westminster House directly, but rather funneled back into the community in order to aid residents when needed, often in the form of building playgrounds or creating special events for the entire community.

The club house also hosted direct forms of education for both adults and children, offering numerous clubs and a daily kindergarten. The number and variety of clubs continued to grow within the first decade of the institution’s opening, and by 1905 there were at least four female clubs, four male clubs and two mixed clubs.⁶⁰ These clubs were divided by gender in their offerings, encouraging men and women to learn skills affiliated with their traditional societal roles. Typically, “the Social Science Club and Reading Room reach the men, while the mothers’ meetings, the Housekeepers’ Club, and the laundry attract the women. For the young women there are classes in dressmaking, cooking, physical culture, a Reading Circle and Social Club.”⁶¹ Young women frequently enrolled in clubs that were designed to give them housekeeping skills, preparing them for a domestic married life as well as giving them the ability to work as a housekeeper if need be. The object of these female clubs was to “give the girls a thorough knowledge of how a house should be kept...and to make them neat and orderly in whatever they do, that they may step into the service of others with some adequate idea of

⁵⁶ Ibid., 6.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 38.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 6.

⁵⁹ *Bibliography*, 67.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ *New Outlook*, 12.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

Section 8 Page 14

what is expected of them as housemaids.”⁶² Classes in sewing, millinery, cooking and cleaning were offered to women through these clubs, in an attempt to provide them with tools that would enable them to mend their own clothes, maintain a tidy home, cook healthy, inexpensive meals, and find work doing these tasks for others. Women also engaged with each other in social clubs, often planning holiday events, securing a playground for the neighborhood, or performing a yearly choral recital.

Men typically enrolled in programs at the club house aimed to provide vocational training, exercise, or social activities. The Washington Club, for instance, consisted of fifteen “wage earning boys from 17-21 years old” who would play regular games of basketball inside the gymnasium but also engaged in learning manual labor skills together. The boys paid a small fee to join, in order to ensure they would attend and perform tasks with a sense of responsibility, but they also used donated goods in order to learn the skills of “manual training in paper, bent iron and especially in wood.” Acknowledging the application of these skills to future jobs, the program deemed these boys “manual toilers, and any teaching we may offer them is good.”⁶³ Some men were also members of the Men’s Club, which paid a \$1 fee annually, which “entitled a member to all the privileges of the club, the free use of the rooms, games, billiards and entertainments.”⁶⁴ Additionally, about 60 men would gather in the club house’s gymnasium each Monday night in order to play games of basketball or use the exercise equipment under supervision. The regular schedule of events, classes and clubs open to men and women ensured that the club house was visited often by members of the community, creating a sense of connectivity between the building and neighborhood residents on a daily basis.

Neighborhood children frequented the club house almost every day of the week, attending kindergarten classes, ‘children’s hour,’ or simply using the gymnasium. The Westminster House kindergarten program provided a supervised, instructive place for children to go each day. Located inside the club house and led by Miss Georgia Jewett for several years, the kindergarten functioned as a place where “the children have come into closer touch with each other and some very beautiful friendships have thus been formed.”⁶⁵ An average of fifty students were enrolled in the kindergarten each year within the first decade of opening, and most children attended for one or two years at a time, until they were old enough to join public schooling or join some of the Westminster House clubs. Through “carefully selected games, stories and occupations,” the kindergarten teachers and assistants aimed “to develop the children’s physical strength and skillfulness, their perceptive and reflective faculties, and at the same time to give them an opportunity for spiritual growth.”⁶⁶ Additionally, the kindergarten had its own ‘bank,’ much like the Penny Provident Bank available for adults, where “each morning a penny song has been sung while the children deposited their pennies in the bank.”⁶⁷ By the end of a single

⁶² Holmes, *Annual Report...1899*, 62.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 28

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 25

⁶⁵ Holmes, *Annual Report...1896*, 10

⁶⁶ Holmes, *Annual Report...1899*, 10

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 11

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

Section 8 Page 15

year, the children saved about sixteen dollars and collectively decided to spend the money on carfare to take a trip to the countryside, as well as on Christmas gifts for their parents.⁶⁸ In addition to the kindergarten, the club house also provided space for a 'children's hour' on Sunday afternoons, where the children would gather to tell stories or play quietly. This service not only aided the children, but also provided respite for the families at home. Holmes stated, "Many of these children would otherwise spend this time on the street, and very often it affords a tired mother an opportunity for resting quietly, free from the care of her little ones."⁶⁹ Providing a space for children to gather off the streets, and a time for parents to relax at home, the club house provided space for programming that aimed to benefit all members of the community.

Outside of the building itself, the staff at the club house arranged several visits, outings and events for residents in the neighborhood and at their own homes. Recreational facilities at Fort Erie were permanently established, with the aid of the COS, "for brief outings to people of the Westminster House neighborhood,"⁷⁰ as well as a summer camp which had 16,000 attendances in the summer of 1910, ranging from a single day visit to a week's stay.⁷¹ Other outings included an annual "picnic for women at the home of staff member Mrs. R. Porter Lee in Elma, where an average of seventy women would attend."⁷² There were also trips to Crystal Beach at reduced rates, where the Westminster Camp enabled over 520 people in the neighborhood to visit in a single year.⁷³ Cultural outings were also popular, including visits to museums, lectures around town, or musical events. One report spoke of an instance where the kindergarten teachers took the children's mothers to the Albright Art Gallery, where "Not one of the mothers had ever visited an art gallery before and they were most susceptible to the dignity, beauty and refining influences of their surroundings."⁷⁴ By reaching out to the community and extending their programmatic offerings beyond the building's walls, Westminster House encouraged neighborhood residents to do the same.

The club house staff also created connectivity with the surrounding community by visiting residents in their own homes. Through the 'Diet Kitchen' program, staff members would provide medical aid, nutritional supplements and health advice to citizens in need. The diet kitchen was "a needful and helpful dept of the Settlement activities, and that its form of organization in its simplicity and mobility best fits the need of the neighborhood and renders possible aid that is essential and lasting."⁷⁵ Typically, a team of nurses and physicians would "go into the homes of the aged, the infirm, or the sick, in the spirit of friendship, and give what is needed- sympathy, advice, or a special diet- or provide some of the articles so often wanted for the

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 16.

⁷⁰ Larned, 102.

⁷¹ *Bibliography*, 66.

⁷² Holmes, *Annual Report...1899*, 7.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 12

⁷⁵ Holmes, *Annual Report...1896*, 2.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 16

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County , New York
County and State

proper care of the sick.”⁷⁶ Dr. Charles S. Jewett and Dr. Edward Koehler provided frequent medical assistance, which proved to be substantially helpful to the community. In just the first four months, the diet kitchen at Westminster House received 799 requests for aid. In 1899, for instance, the diet kitchen made 2578 calls during a single year, and “food supplies or medical treatment have been given to 1535 cases. From the vicinity of Westminster House 301 calls have been received by the physician.”⁷⁷ This kind of service demonstrates the direct, immense impact that Westminster House had not only within its own buildings, but also within the surrounding neighborhood community itself.

Although the organization first operated out of a four-building complex located between Monroe Street, Adams Street, Sycamore Street and Broadway Street, the club house at 421 Monroe Street is the only remaining building that was historically affiliated with Westminster House. As demonstrated, the club house provided space for multiple programs, recreational activities, educational classes and events. The building has not been significantly altered and the spaces that housed the functions and services provided by the Westminster House remain extant. The other three buildings, wood-framed cottages that functioned as residences before they were used by the institution, were located at 420, 424 and 426 Adams Street. By 1979, all of these buildings were demolished, and 421 Monroe Street is the only one that remains extant.

Neighborhood Transformations, 1925-1962

The Westminster House neighborhood experienced substantial demographic changes beginning in the 1920s and 1930s, resulting in an institutional need for new approaches for serving this new community. While initially characterized by its predominantly German population, an influx of Black citizens into the neighborhood at this time created new challenges and opportunities for Westminster House. Historian Mark Goldman has noted this demographic change, addressing “the sudden departure of its hundred year old German community and the massive influx of Blacks.”⁷⁸ Noting this shift in population, Goldman observed, “The German exodus from this neighborhood was sudden. The changes that occurred in this staid, steady and peaceful neighborhood- the construction of Kensington Expressway, the large and sudden influx of African Americans- were too much, too soon, and the people panicked and fled.”⁷⁹ While the Black population in the neighborhood began to increase as early as 1925, the transformation was not complete until the 1950s and 1960s. These population changes were coupled with the impact of several public policy decisions on the East Side. The construction of the Kensington Expressway from 1962-1965 made the biggest impact on this area, as

⁷⁶ Ibid, 47

⁷⁷ Ibid, 48

⁷⁸ Mark Goldman, *City on the Lake: The Challenge of Change in Buffalo NY* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1990), 189.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 295

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 17

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

it bisected the Fruit Belt neighborhood located adjacent to the Westminster House community. By the mid-1960s, when the Kensington Expressway was completed, “all but a few of the old German residents had left.”⁸⁰

Westminster House staff began addressing these demographic changes as early as 1925, conducting studies and surveys of the new population in order to reorient their institutional approach. These documents indicate that the transformation of the neighborhood was not instantaneous, but happened over time during the 1920s-1960s. These decades were characterized by the growth of a Black population and the shrinkage of the German one, but it is also essential to note that these two groups coexisted in the vicinity of Westminster House for many years until the shift was complete in the 1960s. In 1925, Westminster House representative Earle Hamm completed his report on the neighborhood during this transformation. The document explicitly grapples with the “constant change which is taking place every day in the locality in which the Club House [421 Monroe Street] stands.”⁸¹ Describing the atmosphere of the neighborhood at the time, he wrote, “At the moment Adams Street near Sycamore is in arms—the first negro family north of the [Westminster] House has moved in.”⁸² Identifying the “influx of the negro fringe communities to the south and west” towards Westminster House, Hamm conducted a demographic study of the neighborhood populations: 656 German families, 233 American families, 201 Jewish families, and 49 Negro families lived in the vicinity of the club house in 1925.⁸³ While the number of Black families is certainly substantial compared with the demographic consistency of the area ten years prior, the German population still represented the overwhelming majority at this time. Nonetheless, Hamm had already acknowledged the atmosphere of change in the community, stating “in the recent past the character of the population around WH has been in a continuous state of flux. The German family...has moved to newer property developments of our city and a polyglot population has moved in.”⁸⁴

Recognizing this substantial change to the community long before the transformation was complete; Hamm encouraged the club house staff to evolve alongside the neighborhood. Acknowledging “It was with the before mentioned German neighborhood that the Westminster House began its history,”⁸⁵ Hamm recommended that the institution take steps to better serve this new population as well as the old one. He described the institution’s situation in 1925, revealing that some German members continued to visit the house even once they had moved out of the neighborhood. He stated, “Distance has presented no problem to this group, coming either by automobile or street car if needs be.” Yet while this consistency attests to the important role the house had played in the German community, Hamm feared that it would prevent the new population from utilizing the facilities. “Each individual identified with the Westminster House coming from afar,” he wrote, “usurps the

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Earle E. Hamm, *Westminster Club Records, amongst Buffalo Federation of Neighborhood Centers* (Buffalo, NY: Westminster Club, 1925), 1.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid., 2. ‘American families’ was defined in this study as third-generation families or longer.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 1.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 8.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County , New York
County and State

Section 8 Page 18

place of an individual from the community, a community which, at the moment of this study, presents and prophesies a true social challenge.”⁸⁶ Prioritizing the new population, rather than reaching out to those who had left the community, was the path that Hamm hoped the institution would take in order to survive.

If the institution did not take direct action to invite the increasingly Black population into its realm, then, Hamm worried, “it is easily discernible that Westminster House is slowly being ostracized from its rightful place in the community.”⁸⁷ Hamm reminded the club house leaders, “National groups may leave the neighborhood for other sections of our city but the Community House remains fixed. It is with those, therefore, who come to take the vacated homes that Westminster House must busy itself with in determining programs for the very near future.”⁸⁸ Hamm’s suggestions for implementing this evolution of services included actions such as conducting more house calls, establishing a ‘Parent’s Night’ at the club house, encouraging more casual community usage of the building’s gymnasium and reading room, and conducting more neighborhood studies each year in order to remain aware of the ever-shifting demographics.

The institution continued to implement new programs and initiatives in order to reach out to this new population in a neighborhood that was constantly in flux at this time. Westminster House also experienced some internal changes to the organization, which occurred simultaneously to the change in neighborhood population. Head worker Emily S. Holmes, who ran the institution and resided there since Westminster House was established in 1894, passed away in 1925, leading to a major change in management. In 1932, the Rev. Dr. Samuel V.V. Holmes retired after nearly forty years of service for Westminster Presbyterian Church and the Westminster House organization that he was instrumental in establishing. At this time, the Rev. Dr. Butzer became the pastor for the Westminster congregation, which was listed at about 1800 members. The Rev. Dr. Butzer continued Holmes’s work at Westminster House for the next thirty years, implementing many of the same programs to an increasingly different population on the East Side.

Westminster House after 1962

In 1962, the Rev. Dr. Butzer retired after thirty years of service for the Westminster Presbyterian Church and Westminster House. The Rev. Dr. Ray H. Kiely stepped in as pastor, occupying the position until 1971. By this time, the underlying approach to social work that was once integral to the Settlement House Movement was more closely related to nineteenth century reform movements and therefore no longer typified twentieth century social work practices. Not only did this change in leadership demarcate a new era for the organization and its staff, but it also occurred at a time when the transformation of the Westminster House neighborhood was complete. The community no longer resembled the German community, which Westminster House was

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 19

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County , New York
County and State

founded to serve, and instead the neighborhood was populated with a strong majority of Black residents. Nearly all the German immigrant families and their descendants had moved to other neighborhoods by this time, and Westminster House no longer offered its unique blend of German classes, book clubs and holiday events that once characterized the institution's commitment to this population.

During the Rev. Dr. Ray Keily's time as pastor for the Westminster congregation, Westminster House also underwent significant organizational changes. The majority of the first few generations of staff no longer worked or lived at the house by 1962, and the institution struggled to redefine itself in order to serve this new Black community. Under financial strain, Westminster House sought new management solutions at this time. In 1962, Westminster House officially became a member agency of the United Way, although it remained an independent, community-controlled agency. This change in management and institutional affiliation effectively marked the end of the period of significance for Westminster House, as it no longer operated as a social settlement wherein social workers lived within the house. Although the history of Westminster House remains affiliated with the Settlement House Movement, the activities at the club house had substantially changed by 1962, reflecting a broader shift in social work practices by the mid-twentieth century. Furthermore, the club house's daily operations, management structure, funding sources and staff relationships were significantly changed by the time it was acquired by United Way in 1962.

The Westminster House buildings on Monroe Street and Adams Street also underwent significant changes during the late 1960s-1980s, as the era of urban renewal led to many demolitions in the neighborhood. City permits indicate that 424 Adams Street was demolished in 1967 and 426 Adams Street was demolished in 1979, indicating that these houses were no longer used as residences or for programmatic services at Westminster House. Additionally, many of the windows were replaced at 421 Monroe Street in 1983, and the building was owned by the City of Buffalo at that time.⁸⁹ In 1986, the Buffalo Federation of Neighborhood Centers acquired the building at 421 Monroe Street, using it for limited community services. They did not make any significant alterations to the building.

Summary

As the only building associated with the Settlement House Movement remaining in the city today, the Westminster House Club House at 421 Monroe Street provides an excellent example of this type of institutional architecture and its affiliated values associated with this social crusade. Designed to accommodate large groups of people for educational and recreational activities, the architecture of the club house embodies the principal aims of the Westminster House organization. Known as a settlement house, the club house operated as a community center for neighborhood residents and also provided living quarters for a small number of middle-

⁸⁹ City of Buffalo, Building Permit, dated July 7, 1983.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 20

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County , New York
County and State

class social workers who relocated to the area in order to better integrate the socioeconomic classes and ethnicities of the growing city of Buffalo during the late-nineteenth century. The Club House was the largest building on the Westminster House property, the only one designed and constructed specifically for its institutional purposes, and thus served as the nucleus of its programmatic activity. Built in 1909-1910, the club house continued to serve the surrounding community in this manner until both the neighborhood and the organization itself underwent major changes in 1962. The club house building constructed for Westminster House at 421 Monroe Street is significant from 1909-1962 for its contribution to the history of early-twentieth-century institutional architecture as well as to the history of social work and the Settlement House Movement in Buffalo.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 1

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Westminster House Club House

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

Section 9 Page 2

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 9 Page 3

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 10 Page 1

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is indicated with a heavy line on the enclosed maps with scale.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses that land historically and presently associated with the Westminster House Club House.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Westminster House Club House

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

Section 10 Page 2

Westminster House Club House
City of Buffalo, Erie Co., NY

419 Monroe Street
Buffalo, NY 14212



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



NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Westminster House Club House

Name of Property

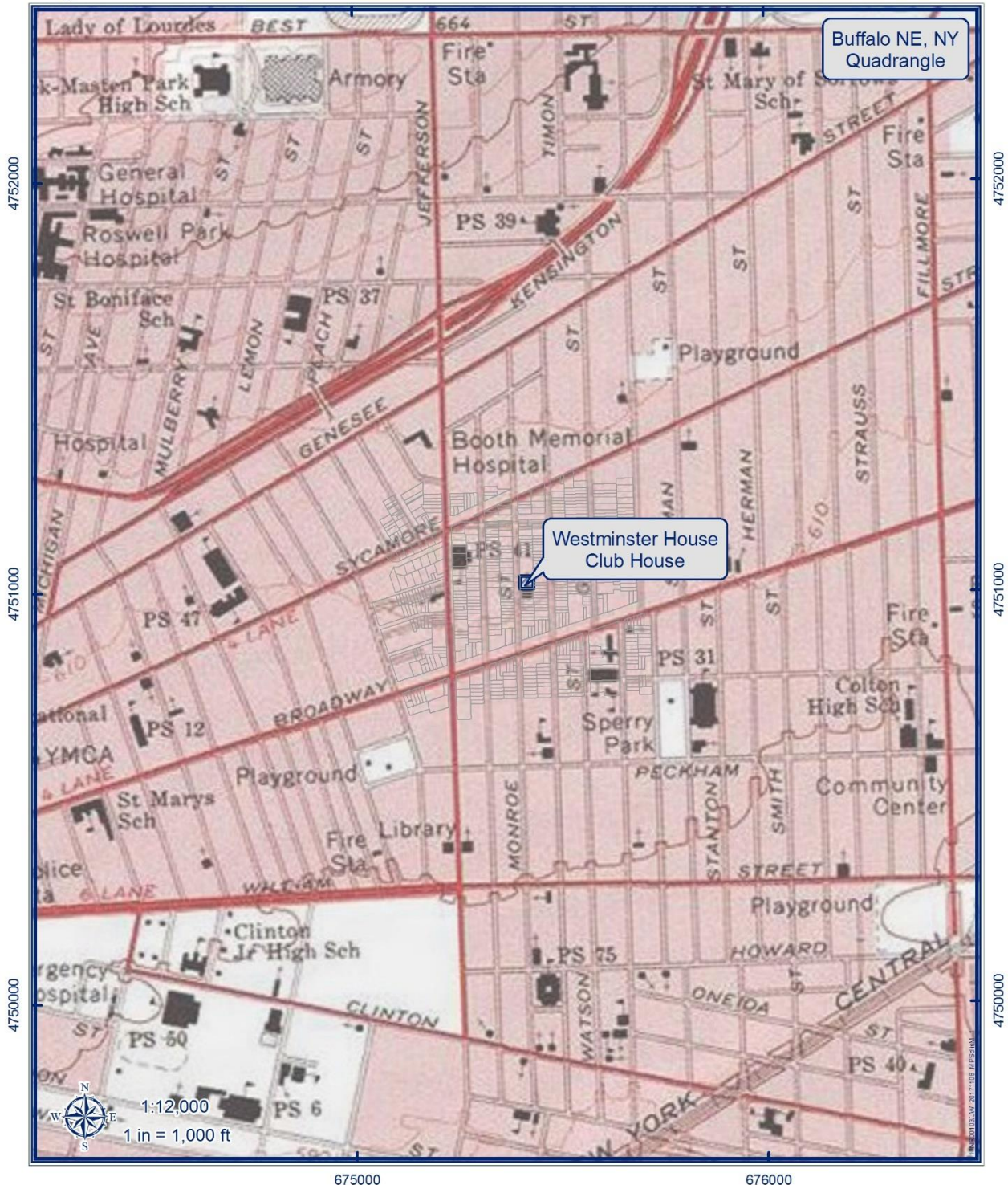
Erie County, New York

County and State

Section 10 Page 3

Westminster House Club House
City of Buffalo, Erie Co., NY

419 Monroe Street
Buffalo, NY 14212



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



NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY
Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Division for Historic Preservation

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 4

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

Westminster House Club House
City of Buffalo, Erie Co., NY

419 Monroe Street
Buffalo, NY 14212



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



NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY
Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Division for Historic Preservation

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 5

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

Westminster House Club House
City of Buffalo, Erie Co., NY

419 Monroe Street
Buffalo, NY 14212



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



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Westminster House Club House

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

Section 11 Page 1

Additional Information

Photo Log:

Name of Property: Westminster House
City or Vicinity: Buffalo
County: Erie
State: New York
Name of Photographer: kta preservation specialists
Date of Photographs: May, 2016
Location of Original Digital Files: kta preservation specialists Buffalo, NY 14216

NY_Erie County_Westminster House_0001

View looking northeast from Monroe Street showing west and south elevations.

NY_Erie County_Westminster House_0002

View looking southeast from Monroe Street showing north elevation.

Name of Property: Westminster House
City or Vicinity: Buffalo
County: Erie
State: New York
Name of Photographer: kta preservation specialists
Date of Photographs: November, 2016
Location of Original Digital Files: kta preservation specialists Buffalo, NY 14216

NY_Erie County_Westminster House_0003

View looking west showing east elevation

Name of Property: Westminster House
City or Vicinity: Buffalo
County: Erie
State: New York
Name of Photographer: kta preservation specialists
Date of Photographs: October, 2016
Location of Original Digital Files: kta preservation specialists Buffalo, NY 14216

NY_Erie County_Westminster House_0004

View looking east, 1st floor corridor.

NY_Erie County_Westminster House_0005

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Westminster House Club House

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

Section 11 Page 2

Looking south into main meeting space, southeast corner, 1st floor. Note fireplace, wood chair rail, grills at radiators under windows and continuous cabinets under window stool along east wall.

NY_Erie County_Westminster House_0006

Looking north toward stage and proscenium opening in "Dance Hall-Auditorium." Note segmental parapet at proscenium opening follows curvature of ceiling. Hardwood floors are lined for various sport courts.

NY_Erie County_Westminster House_0007

View looking south into "Dance Hall-Auditorium".

NY_Erie County_Westminster House_0008

Looking east into gymnasium toward entrance showing beaded board walls and ceiling and hardwood floors.

NY_Erie County_Westminster House_0009

Looking north from vestibule toward 1st floor showing original hardwood stair and handrail. Note simple wood baluster rails at run leading toward landing between 1st and 2nd floors.

NY_Erie County_Westminster House_0010

Looking down and north from landing between 1st and 2nd floors toward first floor showing simple wood newel post at landing, wood handrail at wall and wood treads and stringer. Note baluster rails are covered with board below wood handrail.

NY_Erie County_Westminster House_0011

Detail of relatively simple square wood newel post and baluster rails at 1st floor.

NY_Erie County_Westminster House_0012

Looking down from landing at entrance to south showing stairs accessing basement. Note sign indicating "SOFT DRINKS & CANDY – Billiard's Room-Bowling Alley – DOWNSTAIRS."

NY_Erie County_Westminster House_0013

Looking east, basement, showing interior "windows" (inlaid) with original wood trim (casing, apron, stool) wood bead board on walls and ceilings, columns encased in wood and concrete floors.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 3

Westminster House Club House

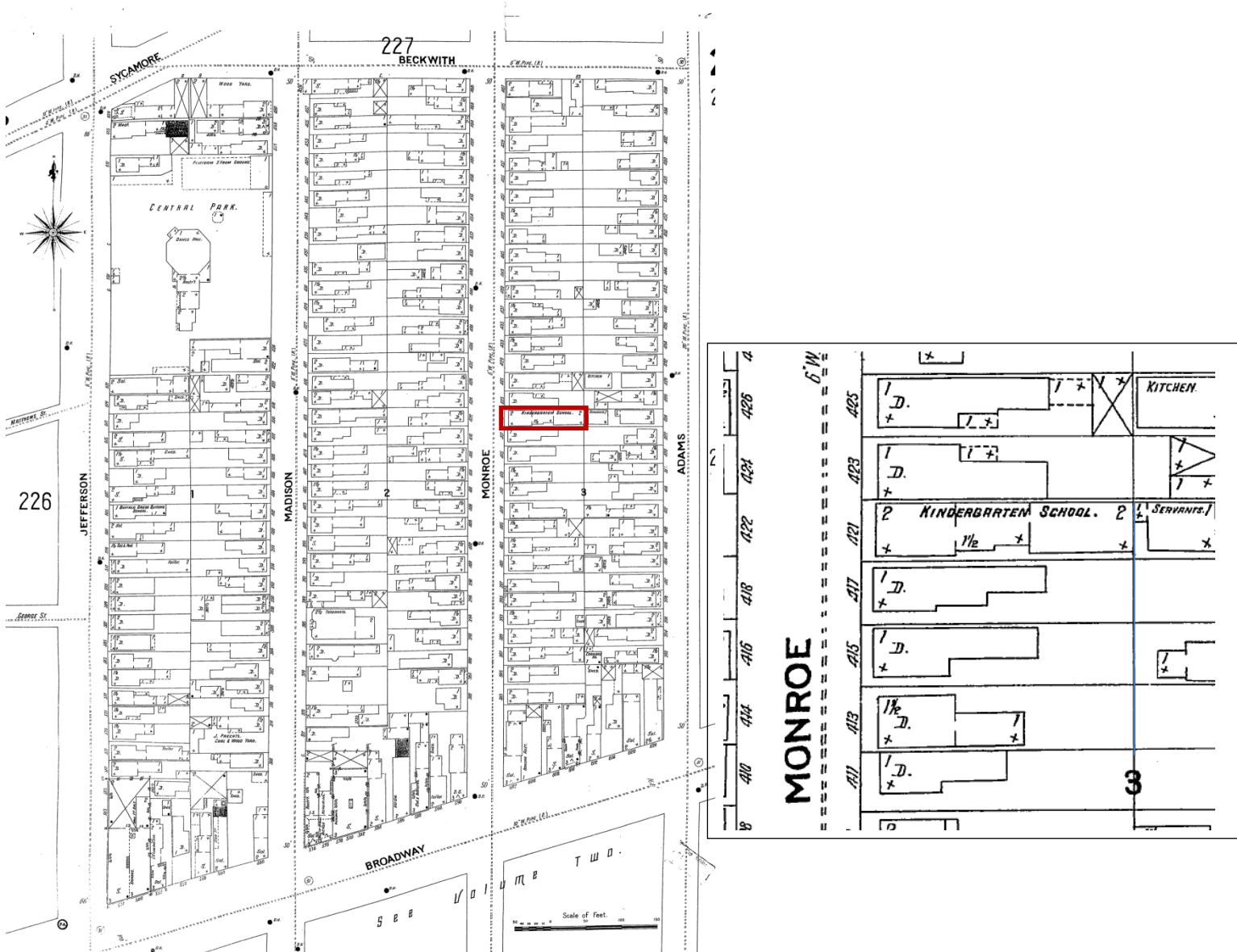
Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

Historic Maps and Images

Figure 1. *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, c.1899.* Note 421 Monroe Street labeled as 'Kindergarten School.'



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 4

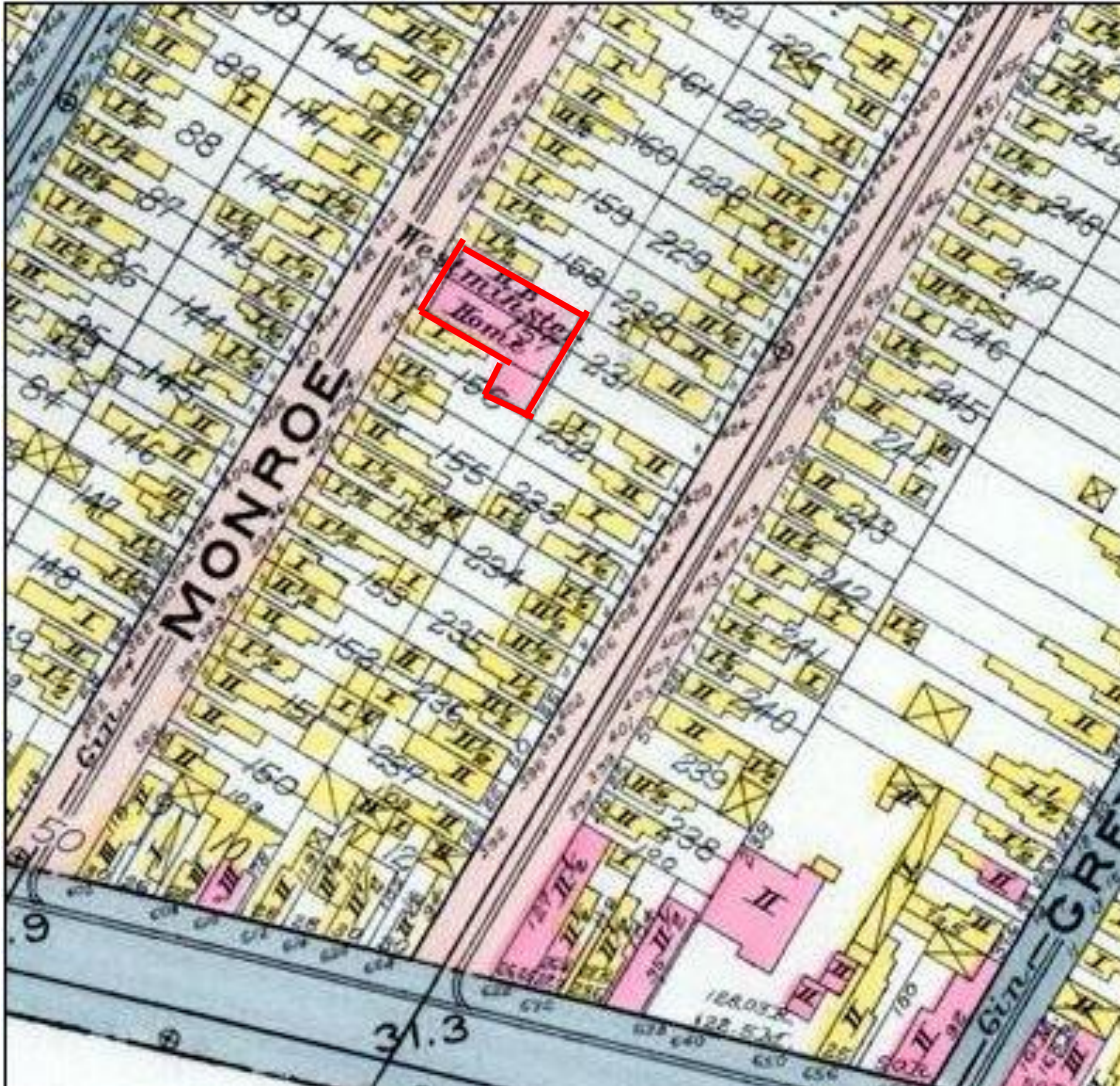
Westminster House Club House

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

Figure 2. *Century Atlas, New York, US, Plate 039 – Tax Districts III & IV, Buffalo 1915 Vol. 2.* View of Westminster House.



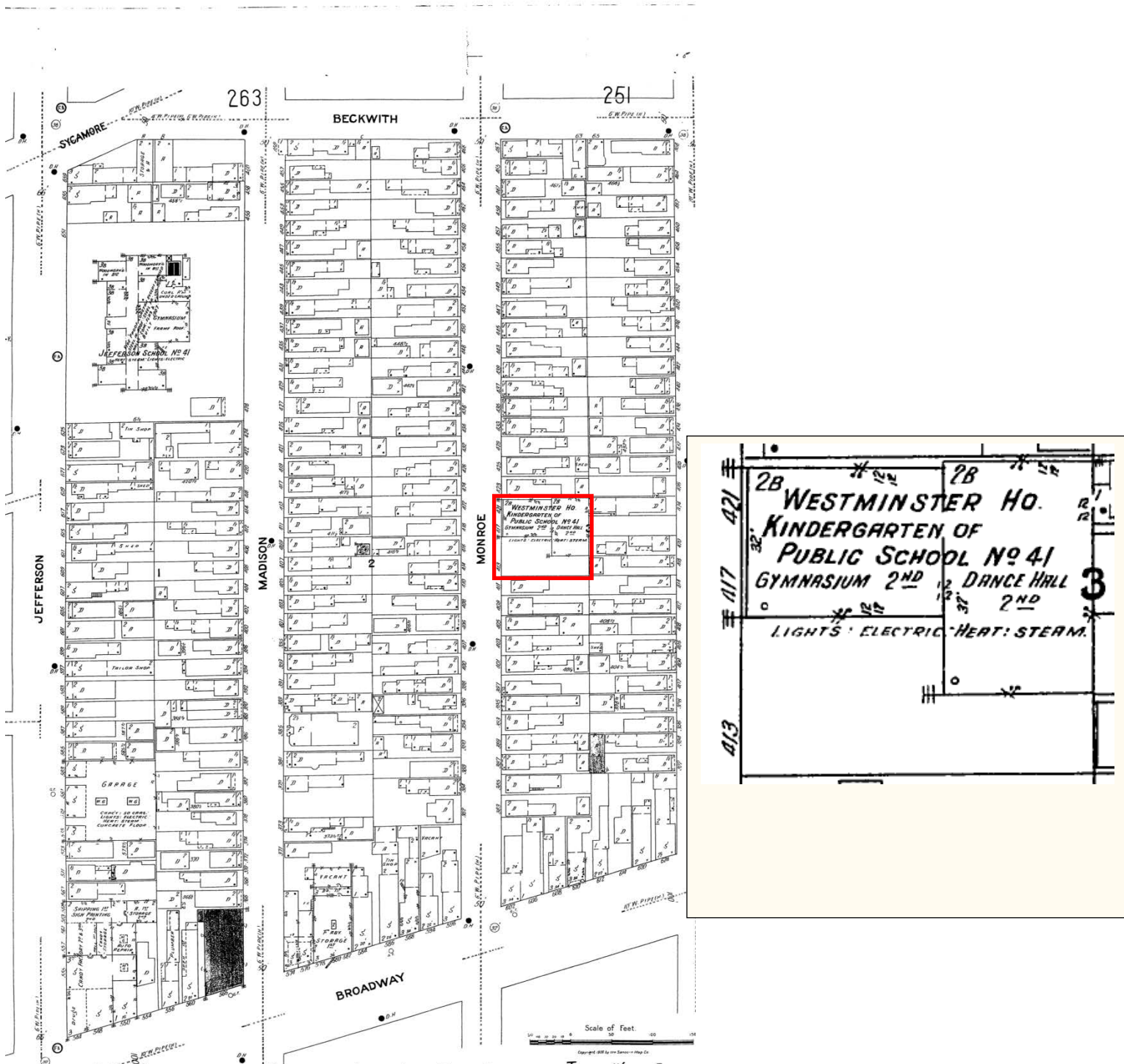
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 5

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

Figure 3. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, c. 1926.



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 7

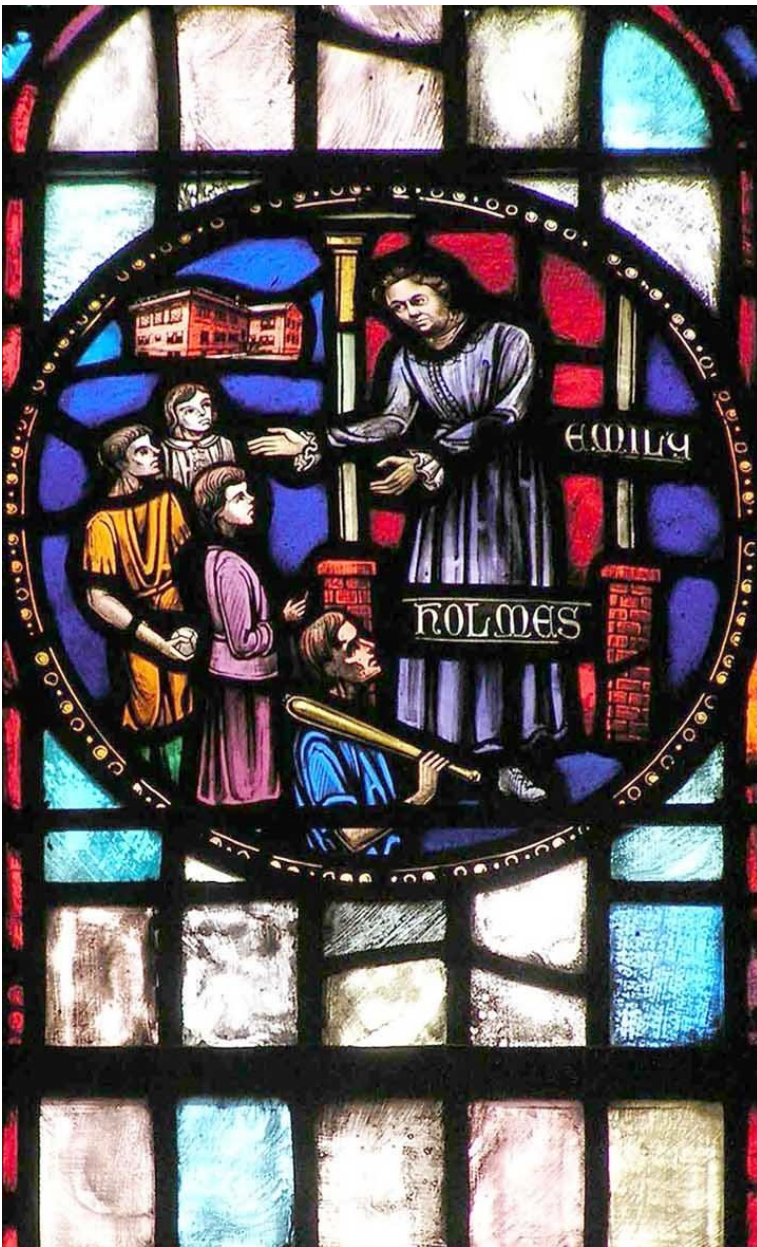
Westminster House Club House

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

Figure 5. Stained Glass depiction of Head Worker Emily S. Holmes with exterior of Westminster House, c. 1935. At Westminster Presbyterian Church, 724 Delaware Ave, Buffalo NY.



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 8

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

Figure 6. Historic View looking northeast from Monroe Street. (Source: *Westminster Buffalo*, "A History of Westminster: 1854-1999." Accessed December 29, 2016, <http://www.wpcbuffalo.org>.)



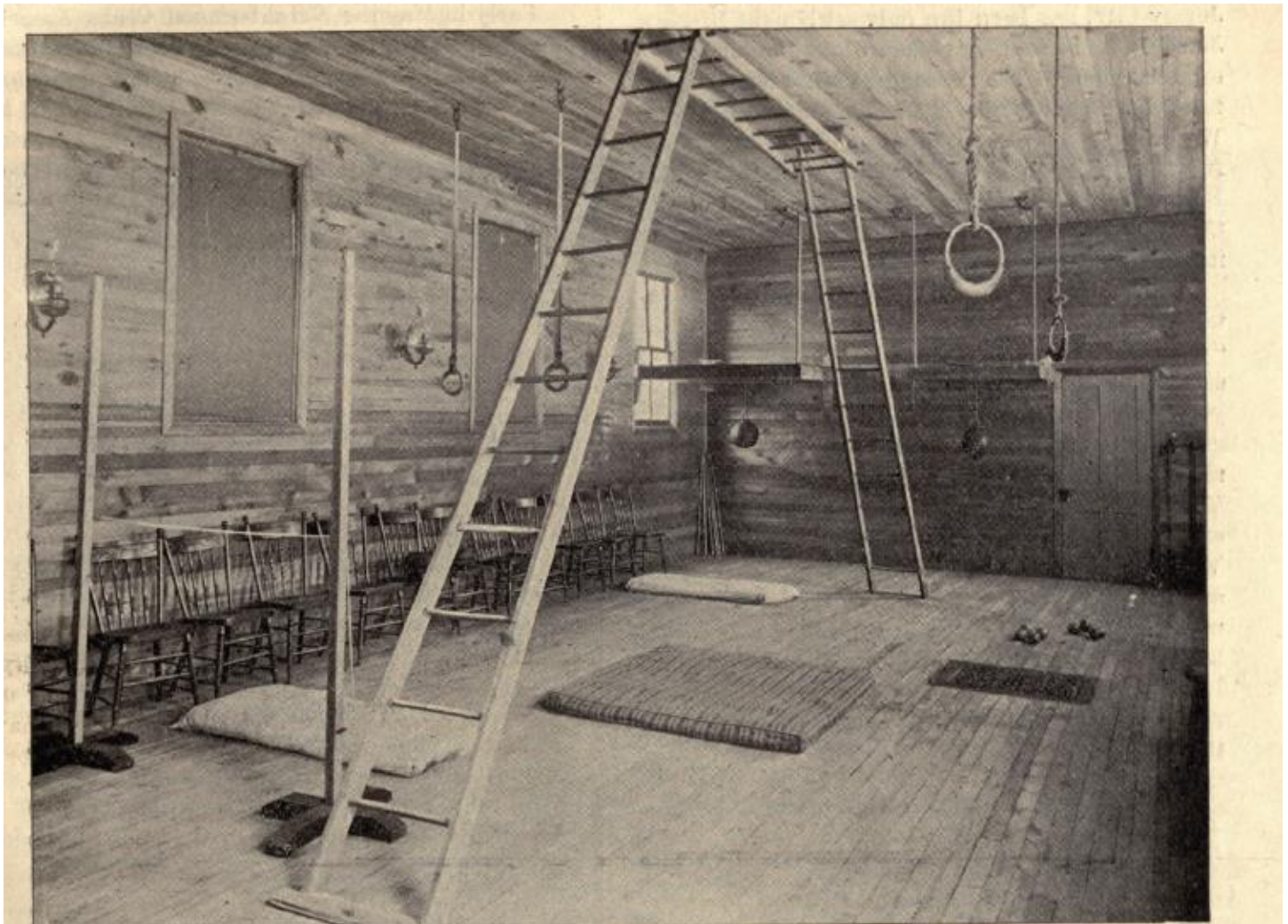
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 9

Westminster House Club House
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

Figure 7. Gymnasium at Westminster House, c. 1897



A SIMPLE GYMNASIUM.

Attractive Room and Inexpensive Apparatus at Westminster House, Buffalo.



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NO







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SMOKING







EXIT

PINNACLE RUBBER WALL BASE

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SOFT DRINKS & CANDY
Billiard Room ^{Roussin} Bowling Alleys
DOWNSTAIRS ⁶⁵⁵⁻¹⁵¹⁰





FIRE EXIT

EXIT



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 4/19/2018 Date of Pending List: 5/4/2018 Date of 16th Day: 5/21/2018 Date of 45th Day: 6/4/2018 Date of Weekly List: 5/25/2018

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 5/25/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary
Comments:

Recommendation/
Criteria

Reviewer Alexis Abernathy Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2236 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ROSE HARVEY
Commissioner



15 April 2018

Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places

Mail Stop 7228

1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to submit the following eight nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

Edith B. Ford Memorial Library, Seneca County
Austerlitz Historic District, Columbia County
Spencertown Historic District, Columbia County
Ingleside Home, Erie County
Westminster House Club House, Erie County
Copeland Carriage House, Saratoga County
Tibbetts-Rumsey House, Tompkins County
Buffalo General Electric Complex, Erie County

In addition, I have also enclosed a request for a change to contributing status for 348 Ashland Avenue in the Elmwood Historic District (West), Erie County. Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank
National Register Coordinator
New York State Historic Preservation Office