

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 BUILDINGS AT NIAGARA AND SEVENTH STREETS

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

name of related multiple property listing N/A

### 2. Location

street & number 610-628 Niagara Street [ ] not for publication

city or town Niagara Falls [ ] vicinity

state New York code NY county Niagara code 063 zip code 14303

### 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 Mackay  
Signature of certifying official/Title

12/17/2015  
Date

DHDD  
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) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
date of action

Chris Obernally

3/7/19

**Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets****Niagara County, New York**

Name of Property

County and State

**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 |              |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| <u>3</u>     | <u>0</u>        | buildings    |
| <u>0</u>     | <u>0</u>        | sites        |
| <u>0</u>     | <u>0</u>        | structures   |
| <u>0</u>     | <u>0</u>        | objects      |
| <u>3</u>     | <u>0</u>        | <b>TOTAL</b> |

**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)

COMMERCE/businessDOMESTIC/multiple dwelling**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT**7. Description****Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/ Commercial Italianate**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stonewalls Brick, stoneroof Synthetic

other \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

## **Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets**

Name of Property

## **Niagara County, New York**

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

COMMERCE

#### **Period of Significance:**

1908-1911

#### **Significant Dates:**

1908, 1911

#### **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.)

### **9. Major Bibliographical References**

#### **Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

#### **Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- ☒ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. **NPS #38,019, 38,021, 38,023**
- ☐ 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: \_\_\_\_\_

**Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets****Niagara County, New York**

Name of Property

County and State

**10. Geographical Data**Acreage of Property .27 acres**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 1 7 658354 4772517  
Zone Easting Northing3 1 7          
Zone Easting Northing2 1 7        4 1 7        **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 Caitlin Moriarty, Ph.D., Kelsie Hoke, M.Arch., Joey Duggan [Edited by Jennifer Walkowski, NY SHPO]organization Preservation Studios date 11/1/2018street & number 170 Florida Street telephone 716-725-6410city or town Buffalo state NY zip code 14208**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 locationA **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 &amp; 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

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Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets

Name of Property

Niagara County, New York

County and State

Narrative Description of Property:

The Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets are three contiguous, mixed-use, early twentieth-century buildings which occupy half of a block on Niagara Street in Niagara Falls, New York, one-third of a mile east of downtown and two-thirds of a mile east of Niagara Falls State Park. The group reflects the rapid growth of Niagara Falls in the early twentieth century and represents a relatively rare concentration of the historic mixed-use buildings which once made up much of downtown. Standing next to one another in a short but cohesive row, this small group of buildings retains its historic character and feeling as a turn-of-the-century urban block. The surrounding area to the east and to the northwest is primarily residential, consisting of frame houses dating from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century interspersed with scattered vacant lots. Southwest of the nominated buildings is the urban center of Niagara Falls, which is primarily characterized by large city blocks and large-scale buildings dating from the second half of the twentieth century. The district includes three contributing buildings.

The three buildings are located on the north side of Niagara Street between Sixth Street to the west and Seventh street to the east. The Wilson Building, at 610-12 Niagara Street, sits at the west end of the group adjacent to a narrow alley that bisects the block and abutting 614 Niagara Street to the east. A single lot (616) separates 614 Niagara Street, the John Cadzow Building/ Jeanette Apartments, from 626-8 Niagara Street. This lot has always been vacant, acting as a sort of pocket park or unexpected greenspace over the course of this block's history. The building at 626-28 Niagara Street, known as the Dooher & Seager Plumbing Building and D&S Apartments, forms the east end of the group and is located at the corner of Niagara and Seventh streets with prominent elevations facing both streets. Each of the buildings is built to the lot line on every side and all back up to a large, grassy field, which extends behind them to the north. Across the street to the south is a large, asphalt-paved parking lot.

The buildings at 610-12, 614, and 626-28 Niagara Street are all late-Victorian, mixed-use brick buildings. Each is three-stories in height, largely rectangular in plan, and runs half the block in depth (approximately eighty feet). 610 Niagara Street is six bays wide across its primary (southern) façade and has a modernized first story with a shingled awning and beige brick cladding. The intact upper floors feature regular windows and a pair of two-story oriel bays with a heavy cornice and a flat roof above. Number 614 Niagara Street is a narrow building that measures just two bays in width. At the first story, its primary façade is occupied by a storefront with large glazing and a recessed entry at the east end, while the upper stories have a pair of tall, pressed metal, oriel bays with deep spandrel panels and matching parapets at the top. At the corner of the block, 626-28 Niagara Street has a south-facing primary façade as well as a secondary elevation facing east onto Seventh Street. It is rectangular in plan with two small light wells on the west elevation and a flat roof wrapped by a heavy cornice. The first story has two modern storefronts at the primary facade and an articulated side entry on the east

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elevation while the upper stories are punctuated by large, two-story, oriel bays alternating with pairs of regular single window openings.

**1.) Thomas A. Wilson Building**  
**610-612 Niagara Street**  
**Constructed ca. 1908-10; addition ca. 1920s**  
***One contributing building***

**Exterior**

The Thomas A. Wilson Building, at 610-612 Niagara Street, is a three-story, red brick, commercial Italianate building six bays in width with a flat roof. The three westernmost bays were constructed first in 1908 as a narrow mixed-use building, but two years later the three eastern bays were added, seamlessly expanding the building at a conveniently located pilaster. In the 1920s, an addition was made to the rear of the building consisting of a two-story, red-brick garage at the northwest corner along with a single-story, utilitarian volume built of hollow clay tile which extends across the width of the rear elevation. On the first floor, the building contains two commercial spaces while the upper floors contain two apartment units at the second floor and three apartments at the third floor for a total of five units. The addition at the rear contains garage space at the first floor and has a small living area at the second floor. While the building has been vacant for the past several years, both the interior and the exterior retain a great deal of original integrity and are in good condition. At the rear of the building, the additions are currently in quite poor condition.

Primary (South) Façade

The façade is six bays in width and symmetrically composed. A non-historic storefront stretches across the first story and the intact upper stories feature large, two-story, oriels at the outermost bays beneath a deep cornice at the roofline. At the first floor, the existing storefront appears to date to the late 1990s or early 2000s and consists of a beige brick veneer cladding and several very narrow, slit-like windows. Door openings containing non-historic panel doors with an X pattern at the bottom are located at the center and at either end. A non-historic shingled awning runs across the storefronts, extending from a simple pressed metal cornice which caps the first story to just above the tops of the doors and windows. At the red brick upper stories, brick pilasters frame the corners of the building and a wide brick pilaster at the center conceals the location of the expansion. The three bays to either side of the central pilaster are identical, representing the building's growth from three bays to six and giving the upper floors the appearance of side-by-side, matching townhouses. At each, the outer bays have regular single window openings at each floor with rock-faced limestone sills and lintels while a two-story, pressed metal, polygonal oriel bay window occupies the wide center bay. The oriel bays have a single window opening on each face at each story and both are wrapped by a short, paneled base at the bottom, a tall spandrel at the center articulated with decorative panels, and a deep cornice with a frieze at the top. All of the

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windows are one-over-one, double-hung, wood windows and appear to be original. Above, the building is capped by a heavy, bracketed, Italianate cornice made of pressed metal and a short brick parapet.

West Elevation

The remaining sides of the building are quite simple. The west side elevation runs along an alley and is composed of the three-story 1908 building to the south and the 1920s garage addition to the north. The 1908 portion is blank common brick at the south end and bears remnants of old painted advertisements. The north end has alternating single and paired windows at the upper stories lighting the apartment units and a single side entry door at grade. Each of the openings on this elevation has a segmentally arched brick lintel and a rough-hewn stone sill with one-over-one, double-hung, wood sash at the window openings.

The garage addition to the north is built in a similar red brick and consists of a one bay portion two stories in height at the south end and a single-story portion extending two bays to the north. The two-story portion has a single door opening and a garage door opening at the first floor (both filled in with concrete masonry units) and a single window opening at the second floor matching those adjacent to the south. At the single-story portion to the north there are two garage door openings, one filled in with concrete masonry units and one with a boarded over, paneled, wood, overhead door.

Rear (north) Elevation

The rear elevation consists of the projecting, single-story garage across the first story, the tall parapet of which largely obscures the second story, and the third story of the 1908-1910 building visible beyond. The garage is quite utilitarian in its appearance and is constructed of a mixture of brick, hollow clay tile, and concrete masonry units with an infilled window opening west of center and an infilled door opening at the east end. Both the single-story and the two-story garage additions have failed roof systems; as a result, the two-story portion is structurally compromised and the single-story portion is in an advanced state of structural deterioration. Beyond, a non-original wood porch built of contemporary lumber stretches across both the second and third stories, replacing original wood porches that once occupied the same location. Both upper stories have a door opening at each end with a glazed wood door and regular, single windows openings matching those at the side elevation.

**Interior**

Due to the building's construction in two phases, the interior is divided into an eastern and a western half with a thick, masonry, load-bearing wall down the center. Each half of the building has a commercial space at the first floor and an original staircase along the eastern wall providing access to the apartment units at the two upper floors. At the first floor, the commercial spaces are interconnected by an open doorway at the south end of the wall which does not appear to be historic.

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At the first floor, the commercial spaces each consist of a single open space with some gypsum partitions enclosing storage space at the rear/north end. The western space has exposed brick and lath at the walls, exposed wood decking at the ceiling, and vinyl tile at the floor, potentially concealing hardwood flooring beneath. On the eastern half, the same exposed decking is present at the ceiling but the floors are original hardwood. The walls are exposed brick and the western wall, as this was once an exterior wall, is painted with a highly intact Quaker Oats advertisement dating to c.1908. The visible portion of the painting consists of a dark green background with stripes of black and white at the base, the famous Quaker at the south end in a red suit (slightly obscured by some modern paint) and the words "Regular Pkg's" in white at the north end. Originally, the advertisement likely extended above the first floor of the building but this has been covered over by the second and third stories. Along the back wall of the space there is a non-historic, wood stud and gypsum mezzanine level that appears to date to the mid-century. Further north, both the eastern and western commercial spaces access the single-story garage and storage addition at the rear of the building. This space has a concrete floor, exposed brick and hollow clay tile walls, and regular wood bracing throughout to brace the failed roof.

There are currently five apartment units located on the upper floors. Originally, each half of the building contained a single large apartment unit at each floor for a total of four apartments; however, the third floor unit on the western half of the building has since been divided into two smaller units. In each half of the building, there is a staircase just south of center on the east wall that provides access to the apartment units.

In the eastern half of the building both flights of the wood stair are original and have bull-nosed wood treads articulated with a molded trim piece, and plastered sidewalls with original wood baseboard. The two flights are connected by an original wood railing at the second floor stair hall that has straight wood spindles, a molded handrail, and square wood newel posts. At the western half of the building, the stair flight between the first and second stories is a non-historic painted, wood stair enclosed on both sides with gypsum walls. The flight from the second to the third floors, though, is an original, curving, open wood stair. The stair is very narrow and has turned spindles, a molded wood handrail, and simple square newel posts, all in the original stain.

At the second and third floors, there are two original apartment units at each floor with one in the eastern half and one in the western half. They appear to have been partially updated in the late 1990s with some alterations made to the floorplan at the western half of the building, but all remain significantly intact and the original floorplan is still easily discernible where altered. The apartments are oriented north-south with a long, central hallway along the stair hall wall and rooms arranged around the perimeter. Each has a large living room across the south end incorporating the bay windows, two bedrooms and a bathroom along the west wall, a kitchen at the northwest corner, and another small bedroom at the northeast corner. At the second floor and the eastern half of the third floor, original plaster walls remain in most of the rooms and, although dropped ceilings have been installed in each apartment, the original plaster ceilings are still present above. Handsome original wood



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casings are present at the door and window openings throughout, as are original wood baseboards and some original four-panel doors. The original flooring material is unclear as a mixture of modern carpeting and vinyl tile currently covers the floors in all three of the units. In the eastern half of the building, original, full-height, built-in cabinetry units remain in place in the kitchens and have solid, raised panel wood doors at the base and multi-paned glazed doors in the upper portion.

At the third floor of the western half of the building, the original, large apartment was divided into a smaller, one-bedroom apartment at either end while largely maintaining the original walls, hallway, and layout. The southern apartment has original hardwood floors in several of the rooms and plaster walls and ceilings throughout with a simple, painted, wood cornice. Original, five-panel, wood doors also remain, though the original casings and baseboard have been replaced with stained, knotty pine and 1970s era wall coverings are present in several rooms. The northern apartment has plaster walls throughout with original, painted, wood casings, baseboards, and five-panel doors. Carpeting is present on all of the floors and all of the ceilings have dropped acoustic tiling, but the original plaster appears to be present beyond. In the kitchen, an original, early twentieth century, built-in cabinet unit remains and has a wood beadboard base with glass-fronted upper cabinets.

**2.) John Cadzow Building/Jeanette Apartments**

**614 Niagara Street**

**Constructed 1911**

***One contributing building***

**Exterior**

The John Cadzow Building/Jeanette Apartments at 614 Niagara Street was constructed shortly after its neighbor in 1911 and is a three-story, blond brick building in the commercial Italianate style. It has a narrow rectangular footprint, measuring two bays wide across the front by ten bays deep with two small lightwells on each side and a flat roof. Like its neighbor, it is a mixed-use building and has a single commercial space at the first floor and four apartment units at each of the two upper floors. The building has been vacant for an extended period of time and is only in fair condition inside and out; however, it is somewhat remarkable in that almost no changes have been made to the apartment floors, meaning that the building is significantly intact to its original construction.

Primary (South) Façade

The building at 614 Niagara Street is simply and largely symmetrically composed with a tall storefront at the first story and a two-story oriel bay window occupying each bay in the upper stories. The first story is framed at the corners by panelized, blond brick pilasters and capped by an original, pressed metal frieze. Above, some

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ghost lines in the brick indicate that a cornice and signboard were also likely part of the original composition, although they are no longer present. A tall, glazed storefront occupies the western two thirds of this story while a deep, recessed entry occupies the eastern third. The storefront appears to consist of a knee-wall with glazed windows and transoms above; however, it is currently covered with plywood and so it is unclear whether the existing storefront is historic. To the east, the deeply recessed entry contains a door to the commercial space on the west side and the apartment entry door to the east. Both door openings appear to retain the original casing and consist of a single door topped by a transom with a secondary transom above. Like the storefronts, the entries are also covered with plywood and so it is unclear whether the original doors remain in place. The recess itself has an original, patterned, hexagonal ceramic tile floor, original tin at the ceiling, and painted brick at the east wall.

At the upper stories, the two bays each contain a two-story, pressed metal, polygonal oriel bay window framed by blond brick at the sides. The oriels have an original, one-over-one, double-hung, wood window on each face at both the second and third stories and are wrapped by a panelized spandrel at the center and a frieze and denticulated cornice at the top. The base of each appears to have also been wrapped by a panelized spandrel at one point but this has been replaced with plywood. Above, the building has a tall, blond brick parapet with a heavy, pressed metal, panelized parapet capping each of the oriels.

Side and Rear Elevations

The west side of the building abuts its neighbor, while the east side, which faces the empty lot, is of common red brick without any window openings. On both sides of the building there is a lightwell centered on the northern and southern third flanking the interior staircase, and both have a single window opening on each face at each floor. The rear elevation of the building is also standard red brick. At the first story, it has a large door opening at the west end with a second door and a pair of windows to the east. The two upper floors have a pair of windows in each bay. On both the rear and lightwell elevations, the openings each have a rock-faced stone sill and a jack-arched brick lintel with original, one-over-one, double-hung, wood windows.

**Interior**

On the interior, a single commercial space occupies the first floor and is accessed by the western entry door while the eastern entry door accesses a small vestibule and staircase area along the western wall leading to the residential floors. Above, the residential floors are fully intact and have four long and narrow, north-south oriented apartment units at each level. Two units are located at the north end and two units are located at the south end for a total of eight units, each accessed by a circulation area and staircase at the center.

In the stair hall, the original painted wood stair is still present and wraps around the perimeter walls to create a light well at the center. The stair, while simple, is well-articulated and quite graceful. It has simple treads and

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risers with a railing composed of closely spaced, straight, slender spindles, a molded wood handrail, and panelized square newel posts with pyramidal caps. The stair remains at both the second and third floor, however the straight-run flight from the first floor to the second floor is no longer present as it was removed due to deterioration, leaving the first floor entry vestibule empty and the second floor currently accessible only via ladder. The stair hall itself is simply finished with plaster at the walls and ceiling and original painted wood baseboard.

The first floor commercial space has been remodeled several times over the course of its history and has painted faux paneling at the walls, a dropped ceiling, and a mixture of wood plank and vinyl tile at the floors. At the south end of the space, there is a historic (but not original), sinuously shaped, wood and leather, Art Deco-style bar in very good condition along the west wall. Along the eastern wall, the adjacent entry vestibule is not accessible.

The upper apartment floors are very intact in terms of their floorplans, features, and finishes. Both floors contain two units at the north end and two units at the south end with the stair hall at the center. Given the building's narrow footprint, the apartments are both unusual and interesting in that they are very petite and consist of a series of quite small, narrow rooms laid out in a long floorplan. The southern units have a combined living/bedroom area at the south end, lit by the bay windows, with a tiny galley kitchen and eating area to the north, and a small foyer, closet, and bathroom further north, just inside the entry. The northern units are the mirror image with the living/bedroom area along the well-lit, northern wall. Each of the apartments has plaster walls and ceilings with original, painted wood casings at all of the door and window openings, original, painted four-panel wood doors, and painted wood baseboards. Additionally, Tudor arches articulate many of the openings between living spaces. In the kitchens, most retain their original, painted wood cabinetry. Original hardwood flooring is present in a number of the rooms along with modern carpeting and vinyl tile. Some units have received faux paneling treatments at the walls and dropped acoustic tiles at the ceilings; however, these changes have caused minimal impact to the historic fabric and are easily reversible.

**3.) 616 Niagara Street**

*Historically vacant lot – not counted*

**4.) Dooher & Seager Plumbing Building/D&S Apartments**

**624 Niagara Street**

**Constructed 1911**

*One contributing building*

The building at 624 Niagara Street is the largest of the three buildings and was also built in 1911. Blond brick and Italianate in style like 614 Niagara, it is three stories in height with a rectangular footprint and measures three bays wide by seven bays deep with a flat roof. It is situated at the corner of Niagara and Seventh Streets so

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Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets

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that its three-bay primary facade faces south onto Niagara Street and its seven-bay east elevation is a secondary façade addressing Seventh Street. The first story of the building contains commercial space along with an apartment entry lobby and stair, and the upper stories contain four large apartment units at each floor. As is common, the commercial spaces at the first floor have seen updates over the course of their history but still retain a number of original features and finishes. In both the 1930s and 1940s, small fires damaged the northern portion of the building and so the apartments at the north end of both the second and third floors are more recent in their layout as well as their finishes. The apartments at the southern end, however, are significantly intact and retain their original circulation patterns and layouts with numerous original features and finishes in each unit.

**Exterior**

Owing to the building's corner location, the primary façade and east elevation are both highly visible and well-articulated, sharing a number of common features. Both have a tall first story capped by an original, pressed metal cornice while the two upper stories are blond brick with a pale, cast-stone lintel course articulating the second floor and a deep, pressed metal frieze and bracketed cornice crowning the third story. The upper stories feature large, two-story, oriel bay windows that alternate with typical bays containing a simple pair of windows. All of the regular openings are a simple brick opening with a cast-stone sill, flat, cast-stone lintels at the second story, and segmentally arched brick lintels at the third story. All of the windows are one-over-one, double-hung windows, although only about half are original wood units. The rear and west elevations of the building, by contrast, are built of standard red brick and are more utilitarian in appearance.

Façade (South Elevation)

The façade is simply and symmetrically composed. The first story is equally divided into two storefronts while the upper bays feature a polygonal oriel bay in the two outer bays and typical window openings in the center bay. At the first story, the storefronts are non-historic and consist of glazing set into stuccoed infill walls with deep spandrel panels beneath the cornice. Both storefronts are framed by the original, cast-iron pilasters at the corners and have retained a recessed entry in the historic location at the outer bay. At the second floor, the center bay has a pair of window openings at each floor as described above, which access a simple metal balcony and fire escape. Occupying each of the outer bays is a two-story, polygonal, pressed metal oriel bay with a single window on each face. Beneath the windows at each story, the bays are wrapped by a panelized spandrel with a denticulated trim just below the sills. At the third story, each of the bays is capped by a deep, bracketed cornice just below the building's frieze.

East (secondary) Elevation

On the east elevation, the first story features the apartment entry in the center bay, composed of a large opening framed by an original, wood pediment supported on oversized, carved brackets. The opening retains its tall transom window and has a modern entry door and flanking sidelights. Originally, an additional storefront was

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present in the three bays adjacent to the north, and the original cast-iron pilasters matching those on the primary facade remain in place. The storefronts themselves, however, have been filled in with stuccoed walls with applied half-timbering and regularly spaced, modern, one-over-one windows. The three bays to the south of the apartment entry are simple blond brick and contain just a single, tall door opening adjacent to the apartment entry and filled in with plywood. Above, a two-story oriel bay matching those on the primary facade is present in the center bay above the apartment entry and in each of the penultimate bays. The outer bay at each end has a single centered window at each floor while the remaining bays flanking the center oriel both have a pair of windows at each floor with openings as described above.

Rear (North) and West Elevations

The rear and west sides of the building are executed in a common red brick. The west elevation has a lightwell present in the middle with a single bay of windows centered to either side but is otherwise unarticulated. At the rear, the easternmost bay is blank. The first story has two door openings with flush metal doors in the center bay and a group of three windows to the west. The window grouping sits on a parged concrete base and has a continuous steel lintel, indicating that it is likely a later alteration. Above, the upper stories have a pair of windows in the center and western bays. All of the window openings at the side and rear have a concrete sill with a segmentally arched brick lintel and contain one-over-one, double-hung, wood windows.

**Interior**

On the interior, the building has commercial space at the ground floor and four apartment units at each of the upper floors for a total of eight apartment units. At the first floor, a long and narrow commercial space occupies the western half of the building with a second, smaller commercial space adjacent in the eastern half. The residential entry vestibule and stair are located at the center of the east wall while the northeast corner contains a third commercial space that has been converted to a living unit. The two upper floors of the building each have four spacious, north-south oriented apartments units at each floor with two located at the south end, two located at the north end, and a stair hall at the center.

At the first floor, the east and west commercial spaces consist of a large, open volume at the south end with some gypsum partitions at the rear. Both have plaster walls at the perimeter with vinyl tile at the floor, and a dropped ceiling overhead. Beyond the dropped ceiling, a patterned, pressed tin ceiling with a coved cornice is present in both of the spaces and indicates, owing to its layout, the size and location of the original recessed entries. The deeper, western commercial space has a utilitarian area at the north end that contains a large kitchen and enclosed office. This space is raised approximately two feet from the storefront space and has painted brick walls, a vinyl tile floor, and a dropped ceiling overhead with gypsum partitions enclosing an office at the center of the east wall. In the northeast corner of the building, non-original gypsum partition walls have divided the former commercial space into a one-bedroom apartment. The space is in poor condition with carpeting at the

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floors and a dropped ceiling overhead. Here, too, decorative pressed tin and a coved molding are present at the ceiling and indicate the location of the original storefronts and recessed entry.

At the center of the east wall, the apartment entry vestibule is very intact. It has an original, hexagonal, ceramic tile floor, plaster walls with stained, paneled wainscoting and wood baseboard. Over the entry, there is a detailed plaster ceiling with a coved and molded plaster trim. The original, open, wood staircase is still present in the northwest corner and retains its original finish. It has wood treads and risers with a square, panelized newel post, straight wood spindles, a molded wood handrail, and wood paneling at the base and sidewall. In the stair hall at the center of the two floors above, the original open staircase remains in place and matches the first floor stair except that it does not have paneling at the sides. Currently, the stair halls have vinyl tiling and carpet at the floors, a dropped ceiling, and faux paneling at the walls. Some exploration has revealed that the original plaster ceilings are still present above, however, and that the original plaster remains behind the applied faux paneling.

The residential floors contain a mixture of intact and remodeled apartments in varying conditions ranging from fair to poor. At both the second and third floors, the two units at the southern half of the building are very intact in regard to their plans, features, and finishes. Each of these four apartments has a long, north-south oriented floor plan featuring a small entry at the north end, a hallway down the center with bedrooms to one side, the kitchen and dining area to the other side, and a large living room at the south end of the hall lit by one of the bay windows. Throughout, the finishes consist of plaster walls and hardwood floors with tall wood baseboards, and wood casings at the doors and windows. Many rooms also retain their five-panel wood doors and decorative corner guards, and original transoms are present over hallway doors in some locations. Carpeting and dropped ceilings have been installed in some of the rooms; however, the original hardwood and plaster ceilings remain in place beneath them. In most of these units, the kitchens retain their original, built-in wood cabinetry and painted wood beadboard at the walls capped by a wood chair rail.

The two northern apartments at both the second and third floors appear to have been remodeled after the fires of the 1930s and 1940s. These four apartments have altered floorplans with a large living room just inside the entry door and a short hallway beyond accessing two bedrooms and a corner kitchen. The finishes throughout consist of gypsum or sheetrock partitions sheathed in faux paneling in many cases, carpeted or vinyl tiled floors, dropped ceilings, and modern trim consistent with an early mid-century aesthetic.

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**Summary Statement of Significance:**

The Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets are locally significant under criteria A and C as examples of early twentieth century mixed-use buildings that reflect a speculative real estate boom in this section of Niagara Falls, New York that occurred in a relatively brief period during the early years of the twentieth century, particularly between 1908 and 1911. In the decades around the turn of the twentieth century, new building activity in the city pushed out of the historic downtown as a burgeoning industrial economy spurred unprecedented development and population growth. The area around Niagara and Seventh Streets was mostly vacant until after 1900, when, as the city economy shifted towards industrial and manufacturing firms, the population expanded with industrial workers and real estate investors moved northeast of the existing downtown area, which was generally south of the Hydraulic Canal. Commissioned by three different owners—Thomas A. Wilson, John Cadzow, and business partners John E. Seager and John J. Dooher—the Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets created seven commercial spaces and twenty-one residential units on a previously vacant block. While Niagara Street did not become a dense commercial street in the following years, the nominated buildings communicate the expectation that at the time of their construction that Niagara street was “bound to become one of the leading business streets in the city.”<sup>1</sup> These buildings are locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as examples of early twentieth century, commercial Italianate, mixed-use buildings and under Criterion A in the area Commerce for their role as a local commercial hub and site of companies such as Dooher & Seager Plumbing and Heating and the Cataract Grocery, which each operated for over fifty years. When constructed between 1908 and 1911, these buildings were the only mixed-use buildings within two blocks. They remained visual landmarks throughout the twentieth century, as no other three-story mixed use buildings were erected within the immediate surroundings. The mixed-used function of the buildings fostered both the newly socially acceptable apartment living and accommodated commercial tenants who became central to the identity of this area. The period of significance pertaining to these criteria is c.1908-1911, the period in which all of these buildings were constructed. In this short time, the block transformed from vacant to a mix of neighborhood commerce and residential apartments. While the rest of Niagara Street did not become a dense commercial thoroughfare, these three buildings evidence the zeitgeist of c.1908 Niagara Falls, at which time boundless optimism in continued city development spurred speculative neighborhood development.

**Niagara Falls, New York – History and Neighborhood Development**

A dynamic tension between the interests of industrialists and those of naturalists pervades the history of American national settlement in Niagara Falls. As awareness of the area spread among white settlers in North America, the site became a major attraction for travelers. The unique features of the Niagara River and the cataract evoked opposite reactions in different interest groups: the beauty of the marvel inspired awe in some

<sup>1</sup> “Will Build Big Business Block,” *Niagara Falls Gazette*, May 11, 1911.

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onlookers, while the potential energy of the torrent stirred an industrious urge in others. The competitive industries that emerged out of these two opposite reactions struggled for control over the urban landscape of the city of Niagara Falls from its foundation well into the twentieth century.

Tourism in the Niagara Falls area has persevered in one form or another ever since Western explorers first witnessed the natural phenomenon of the cascade. Father Louis Hennepin's record of his visit to the area from 1683 remains the earliest known Western eyewitness account of the falls.<sup>2</sup> During the next century, Niagara Falls remained a remote destination coveted by adventurers.<sup>3</sup> In the years leading up to the War of 1812, however, Augustus Porter and his brother, Peter, led an effort to settle the village of Manchester on the American side of the falls.<sup>4</sup> The development of a transportation route and a tavern, and, shortly thereafter, the completion of the Erie Canal in nearby Buffalo ensured a steady flow of tourists to the region thereafter.<sup>5</sup> Historian H. William Feder describes the impression left by Niagara Falls on these tourists and the national consciousness overall: "Early artists' depictions and descriptions of Niagara Falls as a sublime icon of nature and proof of a supreme being helped to create immediate identification and credibility for the geographic location as an unofficial symbol of America."<sup>6</sup> Americans flocked to the falls in order to witness the symbol and participate in this construction of nationalism, and by 1840, the major influx of tourists inspired the establishment of numerous tourist ventures lining the waterfront.<sup>7</sup>

While the falls signified American sublimity for many onlookers, the untapped potential of the Niagara River evoked in others another dominant thread in the national narrative. In an era of revolutionary development, industrialist sensibilities posited Niagara Falls as an intuitive center for manufacture. The roots of industry in the area stretch back to the 1758, when French settlers under the direction of Daniel-Marie Chabert de Joncaire de Clausonne constructed a sawmill that drew power from the Horseshoe rapid.<sup>8</sup> When Augustus Porter, an early civic leader in Western New York, settled in the area, he directed the construction of a number of small

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Berton, *Niagara: A History of the Falls* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 23.

<sup>3</sup> Berton, *Niagara: A History of the Falls*, 31.

<sup>4</sup> Berton, *Niagara: A History of the Falls*, 44-45. The choice of the name Manchester reveals the careful deliberation steering the area toward industrial preeminence. During early industrial revolution, the City of Manchester in England thrived a center of manufacture, and between 1770 and 1832, the population of the city grew from 17,000 to 142,000. Hoping to imitate the progress of this behemoth of industry, the early settlers of the Niagara Falls area christened their city "the Manchester of the West," a common practice for settlers of American towns during the early nineteenth century. William Irwin, *The New Niagara: Tourism, Technology, and the Landscape of Niagara Falls 1776-1917* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 25, 29.

<sup>5</sup> Berton, *Niagara: A History of the Falls*, 44-45.

<sup>6</sup> H. William Feder, *The evolution of an ethnic neighborhood that became united in diversity: the east side, Niagara Falls, New York 1880-1930* (Amherst, New York: BMP Inc., 1999), 37-38.

<sup>7</sup> Irwin, *The New Niagara*, 18.

<sup>8</sup> Berton, *Niagara: A History of the Falls*, 45.



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industries that drew hydropower from the Niagara.<sup>9</sup> Sensing the immense potential for profit in the area, Porter and his brother, Peter, issued an “Invitation to Eastern Capitalists and Manufacturers” on June 24, 1825:

The adjoining banks appear to have been designed for the convenience of leading water from the river for hydraulic operations. Practically speaking, the extent to which waterpower may be here applied is without limit. A thousand mills might be erected with the same ease and equally accessible, as if on a plain; and each supplied with a never failing waterpower.<sup>10</sup>

Progress in Manchester underwhelmed visitors during the first few decades of settlement, but the pace of industrial development accelerated throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century. In accordance with the Porters’ vision, local advances in the generation of hydroelectric power made this progression possible.<sup>11</sup> In 1853, construction began on a hydraulic canal that diverted water away from the Niagara above the falls and carried it to the High Banks downriver.<sup>12</sup> For the several years following its completion in 1861, the canal performed well below expectation, and only one mill stands in the existing pictures of the High Banks from 1875.<sup>13</sup> Horace Day, the original owner of the hydraulic canal, steered the project into financial disaster, and in 1877, Jacob Schoellkopf purchased the canal at a bankruptcy auction for \$71,000.<sup>14</sup> Schoellkopf’s management attracted several new industries, and his decision to install a direct current generator on the canal began a legacy of short distance electrical provision along the banks of the Niagara.<sup>15</sup> The Schoellkopf power plant commodified electricity for the emerging industrial center around the falls, but another project unfolded in the area that redefined the limits of electricity altogether. A conglomerate of investors from New York City lead by Edward Dean Adams financed the joint enterprise of George Westinghouse and Nikola Tesla, two innovators who designed a groundbreaking hydroelectric power plant upriver of the falls.<sup>16</sup> The Adams power plant utilized alternating current in order to transmit electricity a distance of unprecedented scale. Adams’s company sold the power they generated near Niagara Falls roughly twenty miles downriver to the Buffalo.<sup>17</sup> The promise of the power generated by these two companies ensured the preeminence of Niagara Falls as a location for industry.

<sup>9</sup> Stan Horab, Patricia Rice, and Tom Yots, “City of Niagara Falls,” in *Niagara County Bicentennial*, edited by Craig Bacon, Melissa Dunlap, Douglas Farley, Shirley Frombgen, Kellie Schiavone, and Patricia Tracy (Niagara County: Niagara County Historical Society, 2008), 118.

<sup>10</sup> Stan Horab, Patricia Rice, and Tom Yots, “City of Niagara Falls,” in *Niagara County Bicentennial*, edited by Craig Bacon, Melissa Dunlap, Douglas Farley, Shirley Frombgen, Kellie Schiavone, and Patricia Tracy (Niagara County: Niagara County Historical Society, 2008), 118.

<sup>11</sup> Irwin, *The New Niagara*, 29.

<sup>12</sup> Horab et al., “City of Niagara Falls,” 118.

<sup>13</sup> Horab et al., “City of Niagara Falls,” 118.

<sup>14</sup> Horab et al., “City of Niagara Falls,” 118.

<sup>15</sup> Berton, *Niagara: A History of the Falls*, 204.

<sup>16</sup> Horab et al., “City of Niagara Falls,” 119.

<sup>17</sup> Horab et al., “City of Niagara Falls,” 119.

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Although industrial interests in the area showed signs of an imminent takeover, naturalists did prevent a complete industrial eclipse of the area through a major conservationist effort. In a major victory for naturalist interests in the area, Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. and a coalition of reformers secured park status for the areas adjacent to the cataract on both sides of the river in 1885.<sup>18</sup> Olmsted and his followers' success ensured that the overgrowth of industry would not interfere with the natural phenomenon, an effort that protected a commerce of tourism directly adjacent to the falls, albeit a modest one in the years to come.

By the turn of the century, however, industrial enterprise clearly controlled the rest of the landscape of Niagara Falls. In accordance with the imaginations of early innovators, readily available electrical power undergirded the dominance of industry in Niagara Falls. Adams's and Schoellkopf's power companies merged and formed the Niagara Falls Power Company, and during the first decades of the twentieth century, the updated Schoellkopf plant became the largest individual power producer in the world.<sup>19</sup> In the meantime, the promise of the company's cheap electricity drew dozens of large manufacturing and electrochemical companies to Niagara Falls. A few of the more prominent companies offered an abundance of employment opportunities and fused their interests with those of the city as a whole as a result. ALCOA moved to Niagara Falls in 1895 and produced aluminum in the area for half a century.<sup>20</sup> ALCOA's imposing plant on the High Banks by the river defined the industrial landscape of Niagara during the company's tenure in the city.<sup>21</sup> The Union Carbide Company, another major employer, consolidated in 1898 and produced industrial chemicals in Niagara Falls for most of the twentieth century.<sup>22</sup> The success of the Carborundum Company on Niagara Falls constituted another major influence on Niagara Falls. The company, founded in 1894, produced abrasives and employed over 2,000 people by 1925.<sup>23</sup> In addition to offering employment to residents of Niagara Falls, the Carborundum Company furthered the community by commissioning a stately office building downtown and a museum complex in the tourism district.<sup>24</sup>

An unprecedented population boom accompanied the meteoric rise of industry in Niagara Falls. Job opportunities and the promise of state of the art technology attracted tens of thousands of immigrants to the city, which expanded through a series of municipal mergers. The villages of Manchester and Suspension Bridge (the settlement north of the falls) merged in 1890 to form the City of Niagara Falls, with a combined population of 9,000.<sup>25</sup> In 1900, about 19,500 people lived in Niagara Falls; this number climbed to nearly 30,500 in the

<sup>18</sup> Irwin, *The New Niagara*, 193.

<sup>19</sup> Horab et al., "City of Niagara Falls," 120.

<sup>20</sup> The name of the company at the time of move was Pittsburgh Reduction Company; in 1907, the company adopted the name ALCOA, or the Aluminum Company of America. Horab et al., "City of Niagara Falls," 120-121.

<sup>21</sup> Horab et al., "City of Niagara Falls," 120-121.

<sup>22</sup> Horab et al., "City of Niagara Falls," 120-121.

<sup>23</sup> Horab et al., "City of Niagara Falls, 120, 122.

<sup>24</sup> Horab et al., "City of Niagara Falls, 122.

<sup>25</sup> Berton, *Niagara: A History of the Falls*, 147.

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following decade.<sup>26</sup> City industrial agent E. T. Williams described the way this influx of people redefined the demographic character of the city in a 1915 article for the *Niagara Falls Gazette*, declaring that the population was “cosmopolitan, so far as race is concerned, and the strictly American portion hailed originally from many different states of the Union.”<sup>27</sup> By 1920, the population had increased by over 20,000 people and, by 1930, nearly 15,000 more, totaling just below 80,000 at the onset of World War II.<sup>28</sup> In addition to immigration, the annexation of exterior land contributed to the increase in the population of the city. In 1927, the Niagara Falls annexed the village of LaSalle, an area to the east of the original city limit and the traditional East Side of Niagara Falls, which centered around Niagara Street.<sup>29</sup>

Industrial development swept Niagara Falls with such a force that by the turn of the century, authorities apprehended an ever more pressing need to provide commercial and residential amenities for the swelling workforce. Between 1911 and 1914, prices paid for building permits in the city totaled over four million dollars.<sup>30</sup> The construction of factories accounted for a significant portion of this total, but the acceleration of residential development contributed to this number as well: in 1911 alone, estimates place the number of new homes constructed in Niagara Falls around 500.<sup>31</sup> Within the first three decades of the twentieth century, the city built nine elementary schools and a high school.<sup>32</sup> By 1915, the city laid eighty three miles of sewer lines, compared to roughly thirteen existent miles in 1893.<sup>33</sup> These amenities accompanied a major street paving campaign. In addition to paved roads, the infrastructural advances during this burst of municipal development included an electric streetcar system that stretched the length of the city.<sup>34</sup> By 1910, this streetcar network included a line on Niagara Street.<sup>35</sup> Signaling a modern development that subsequently swept the United States in the decade to come, the availability of electricity allowed the city to install streetlights in the downtown

<sup>26</sup> Horab et al., “City of Niagara Falls,” 129.

<sup>27</sup> E. T. Williams, “What Was Once a Mere Summer Resort Town is Now Thriving Industrial and Commercial Center of 36,000 People,” *Niagara Falls Gazette*, May 1, 1915, Niagara Falls History -1939, Special Collections, Niagara Falls Public Library, Niagara Falls.

<sup>28</sup> Horab et al., “City of Niagara Falls,” 129.

<sup>29</sup> Horab et al., “City of Niagara Falls,” 129.

<sup>30</sup> E. T. Williams, “What Was Once a Mere Summer Resort Town is Now Thriving Industrial and Commercial Center of 36,000 People,” *Niagara Falls Gazette*, May 1, 1915, Niagara Falls History -1939, Special Collections, Niagara Falls Public Library, Niagara Falls.

<sup>31</sup> E. T. Williams, “What Was Once a Mere Summer Resort Town is Now Thriving.”

<sup>32</sup> Horab et al., “City of Niagara Falls,” 125, 127. 10th Street Grammar School stood just a few blocks away at 10th and Ferry (SBRN1914Sheet65), 5th Street Grammar School stood just a few blocks away at 5th between Ferry and Walnut (SBRN1914Sheet57)

<sup>33</sup> E. T. Williams, “What Was Once a Mere Summer Resort Town is Now Thriving Industrial and Commercial Center of 36,000 People,” *Niagara Falls Gazette*, May 1, 1915, Niagara Falls History -1939, Special Collections, Niagara Falls Public Library, Niagara Falls.

<sup>34</sup> “Phenomenal Growth of Niagara Falls,” *Buffalo Courier*, 1910, Niagara Falls History -1939, Special Collections, Niagara Falls Public Library, Niagara Falls.

<sup>35</sup> “Phenomenal Growth of Niagara Falls,” *Buffalo Courier*, 1910.

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area.<sup>36</sup> By 1915, the streetlight array of Niagara Falls lit streets for a length that totaling somewhere between two and three miles, an impressive secondary attraction for visitors to the area.<sup>37</sup>

### Commercial Development & the Construction of the Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets

The Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets are located northeast of the central business district. While residential buildings occupied some lots on nearby blocks of Niagara Street by the 1890s, this area of the city—particularly east of Fifth Street—remained mostly vacant until the early 1900s. Historically, commercial activity in Niagara Falls concentrated in the blocks around Main Street and Falls Street, southwest of the nominated district about half of a mile. Later commercial nodes developed near Third and Niagara (three blocks west of the nominated district) and Tenth and Falls Streets (three blocks southeast of the nominated district). The Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets formed a commercial cluster in between these areas during a period of city growth spurred by industrial development in the first decade of the twentieth century.

#### Historic Commercial Center at Main and Falls Streets

The early tourism economy spurred a variety of commercial enterprises near the intersection of Main Street and Falls Street prior to 1875 (**Figure 2a, 2b**).<sup>38</sup> By that time, a train depot served passengers at Falls and Second Streets and commercial buildings lined Falls Street. In contrast to residential buildings nearby, the rectangular buildings were built to the lot lines. North of the Hydraulic Canal, residential buildings lined Third, Fourth and the west side of Fifth Street. The east side of Fifth Street and west side of Sixth Street featured some homes but also a fair amount of vacant lots. Few buildings existed east of Sixth Street and all that did were located south of Niagara Street at Falls Street. A decade later, the same patterns persisted with little built east of Fifth Street; in lieu of a thorough depiction, Sanborn maps from 1888 indicate only “scattered dwellings” past that road.<sup>39</sup>

#### City Building 1890-1910

In the two decades straddling the turn of the twentieth century, Niagara Falls experienced immense growth as manufacturing topped tourism as the leading economic generator for the city. Reporters in 1910 expressed pride at the strides of business and city leaders during that time. For instance, the valuation of the city rose from approximately \$3,000,000 in 1892 to \$24,177,000 in 1909.<sup>40</sup> At the same time, the population increased from approximately 9,000 to 35,000 people.

<sup>36</sup> Irwin, *The New Niagara*, 98.

<sup>37</sup> E. T. Williams, “What Was Once a Mere Summer Resort Town is Now Thriving Industrial and Commercial Center of 36,000 People,” *Niagara Falls Gazette*, May 1, 1915, Niagara Falls History -1939, Special Collections, Niagara Falls Public Library, Niagara Falls.

<sup>38</sup> D.G. Beers and W. Upton, *Niagara and Orleans County 1875* (Philadelphia: Beers, Upton & Company, 1875).

<sup>39</sup> Sanborn Map Company, *Niagara Falls, Niagara County, New York*, 1888, Sheet 8.

<sup>40</sup> “Eighteenth Birthday of Niagara Falls,” *Niagara Falls Gazette*, March 16, 1910, Niagara Falls History -1939, Special Collections, Niagara Falls Public Library, Niagara Falls.

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Industrial development propelled the rapid growth of the city at this time and spurred infrastructure improvements such as sewers, street paving, and a water filtration system.<sup>41</sup> James Simmons, a member of the Niagara Falls Board of Trade, declared 1910 to be “The Greatest Year in the History of the City” on account of the expansion of factories, industrial employment, and production output through the year.<sup>42</sup> The following year proved just as impressive; in 1911 alone, builders erected homes for over 500 families and building permits totaled almost \$1 million in activity.<sup>43</sup> Factory construction and enlargement and residential construction accounted for most of the additional \$3 million dollars in building permits approved between 1912 and 1914.<sup>44</sup>

Amidst this industrial economic expansion and population increase, two commercial areas joined the longstanding Main and Falls Streets area. A small area near Niagara and Third Streets likely started as an offshoot of the Falls Street commercial district but railroad tracks separated the corner from that older, larger retail area. A more neighborhood-based commercial area developed at Tenth and Falls Streets, catering to the surrounding Italian and Polish communities in Tunnel Town.

**Niagara and Third Streets**

By the late 1880s, the area southwest of the intersection between the Hydraulic Canal and Niagara Street at Third Street, four blocks west of the Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets, showed the start of a civic and commercial node. In 1888, a police and fire station, dwelling, saloon, hotel, and grocer lined the south side of Niagara Street between Second and Third Streets across the street from a passenger rail station.<sup>45</sup> Commercial activity did not extend east of the intersection, as a saloon at the northeast corner of Third and Niagara Street was the only commercial enterprise east of the Hydraulic Canal.<sup>46</sup>

By 1900, the commercial character of the area expanded as more retail enterprises opened in the vicinity of Third and Niagara. For instance, by 1897, three commercial buildings fronting Third Street at the southwest corner of Niagara replaced a dwelling present in 1888. East of the Hydraulic Canal, a dwelling was converted into two storefronts, and two three-story commercial buildings fronted Niagara Street on a parcel at Fourth Street previously labeled “garden.”<sup>47</sup> Similarly, two commercial buildings were erected east of Fourth Street and three adjacent commercial buildings filled the northeast corner of Fifth and Niagara Streets. Despite these

<sup>41</sup> E. T. Williams, “What Was Once a Mere Summer Resort Town Now Thriving Industrial and Commercial Center.”

<sup>42</sup> “The Greatest Year in the History of the City,” *Niagara Gazette*, December 3, 1910, Niagara Falls History -1939, Special Collections, Niagara Falls Public Library, Niagara Falls.

<sup>43</sup> E. T. Williams, “What Was Once a Mere Summer Resort Town Now Thriving Industrial and Commercial Center”; Niagara Falls City Directory (Niagara Falls: Roberts Brothers Company, Inc., 1912), 17.

<sup>44</sup> E. T. Williams, “What Was Once a Mere Summer Resort Town Now Thriving Industrial and Commercial Center.”

<sup>45</sup> Sanborn Map Company, *Niagara Falls, Niagara County, New York*, 1888, Sheet 4, 7.

<sup>46</sup> Sanborn Map Company, *Niagara Falls, Niagara County, New York*, 1888, Sheet 7.

<sup>47</sup> Sanborn Map Company, *Niagara Falls, Niagara County, New York*, 1897, Sheet 19, 21.

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commercial additions, Niagara Street remained sparsely built and primarily residential with a number of vacant lots and very little built east of Fifth Street.<sup>48</sup>

**Falls and Tenth Streets**

Employment opportunities associated with the construction of a large hydroelectric tunnel project attracted a surge of first generation immigrants to Niagara Falls. In the 1890s, many of these immigrant families settled the Tunnel Town district between Tenth Street and Portage Road and south of Niagara Street, which formed the core of the neighborhood that later became the East Side of Niagara Falls.<sup>49</sup> Tunnel Town included a Polish neighborhood, known as Polonia, and an Italian neighborhood.<sup>50</sup> By 1914, the community supported a commercial district centered on Falls between Tenth and Fourteenth Streets.<sup>51</sup>

**Niagara Street & the Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets**

The sporadic construction of commercial buildings near Niagara and Third Streets prior to 1900 did not extend into a full transformation of the Niagara Street into a commercial strip, but investment signaled the potential for more commercial development, particularly moving eastward. Despite plans for a streetcar line on Niagara Street, the hydraulic canal crossing at Third Street and the railroad tracks between Eighth and Ninth Streets posed physical barriers that likely made this stretch of Niagara more difficult to develop.<sup>52</sup> In addition, earlier marketing of land for industrial use could have delayed investors' initiative for residential and commercial projects. In 1897, the intersection of Niagara and Seventh Streets was vacant, as were the lots immediately to the west, north, and for many blocks east. The nearest buildings, including directly across the street, were residential, and the closest commercial buildings occupied the northeast corner of Niagara and Fifth Streets.

As population growth and building construction in first decade of 1900s expanded the footprint of the city, the area of Niagara near Seventh Streets was ripe for new development. The streetcar line, delayed from its initial timeline, started service early in the decade and residential development accompanied this increased transportation access.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Sanborn Map Company, *Niagara Falls, Niagara County, New York*, 1897, Sheet 23.

<sup>49</sup> Feder, *The evolution of an ethnic neighborhood*, 191.

<sup>50</sup> Feder, *The evolution of an ethnic neighborhood*, 422.

<sup>51</sup> Sanborn Map Company, *Niagara Falls, Niagara County, New York*, 1914, Sheet 9, 10, 11.

<sup>52</sup> It appears that this land was never developed.

<sup>53</sup> Plans for a Niagara Street streetcar started in 1896 but the city council nullified the contract in February 1901, stating that the company had not fulfilled the agreement, which stipulated completing a portion on Niagara Street before November 1, 1900. The company rebutted that they had been waiting for permission to cross at grade delayed construction but still lost the contract. See *The Street Railway Review*, Vol.6 (1901): 374.

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1897 Sanborn maps showing Niagara Street between Fourth and Tenth Streets.



1908 Atlas showing Niagara Street between Fourth and Tenth Streets. Residential buildings composed the majority of buildings erected in this area between 1897 and 1908.



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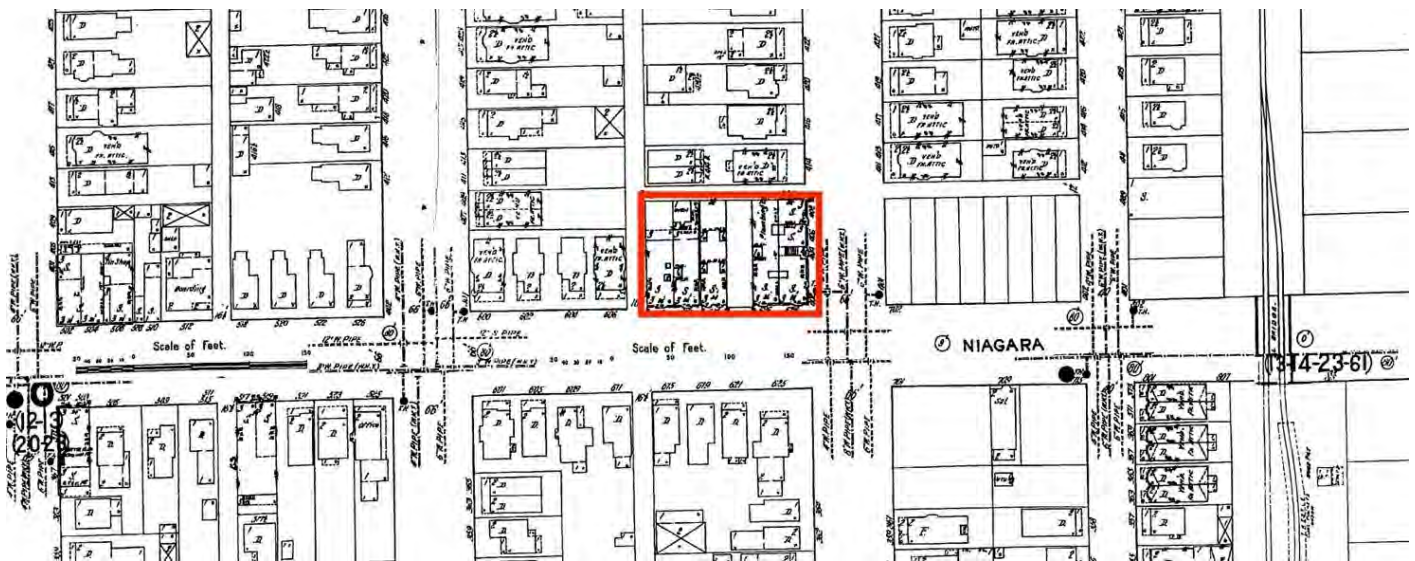
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By 1908, buildings filled many of the lots fronting Niagara Street between Third and Sixth Streets, but the stretch was primarily residential. A commercial building at the southeast corner of the alley between Fifth and Sixth joined the commercial building at the northeast corner of Fifth Street as an exception to the predominance of residences. Yet, the optimism of industrial development in the city and anticipation of residential and commercial demand prompted several people to invest in this area at the eastern edge of this increasingly developed area.

Construction of the building commissioned by Thomas A. Wilson at 610 Niagara Street began in 1908, and in the course of three years, the Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets transformed the intersection of those streets into a mixed-use hub. Heralding the change as a sign of future commercial development, the *Niagara Falls Gazette* called the completion of the building at 626 Niagara Street—which consisted of the D&S Apartments, the Dooher & Seager Plumbing headquarters, and two additional commercial spaces—a sign of “renewed progress [on] a fine thoroughfare, which is bound to become one of the leading business streets in the city.”<sup>54</sup>



1914 Sanborn Map.

By 1914, however, little additional density filled the blocks of Niagara Street. While the addition of an alley behind (north) the lots fronting Niagara between Seventh and Eighth Streets suggests anticipated commercial use for that block, the lots remained vacant. Records indicate that the J.C. Stricker Realty Co. built a store and flat building on the block kitty-corner to the buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets, at Eighth and Niagara, in

<sup>54</sup> “Will Build Big Business Block,” *Niagara Falls Gazette*, May 11th, 1911.



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1912.<sup>55</sup> Dooher & Seager Plumbing Company performed the plumbing and furnace work for the job. The 1908 atlas indicates that the same realty company owned the land at Niagara and Seventh prior to its development and a number of other lots.

The three-story buildings at Niagara and Seventh became visual landmarks in this area, staking claim on this intersection which marked the east end of a developing stretch of Niagara. They characterized early twentieth century neighborhood development as Niagara Falls became an industrial city.

**Building Histories & Notable Tenants**

The history of the Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets reveals a network of close proximity among the residents and commercial occupants. While some business owners also lived in the building, those who did not lived within a couple of blocks. Within the context of a growing industrial city, this commercial and residential node characterized the urban lifestyle of Niagara Falls residents.

*The Thomas A. Wilson Building, 610-612 Niagara Street*

The building at 610-612 Niagara Street was built in two phases. It seems likely that Thomas A. Wilson built 610 Niagara in 1908 and 612 Niagara was added c.1910. Wilson lived at the address with his family, and the 1910 federal census indicates that he had a mortgage on the building.<sup>56</sup> Newspaper advertisements for apartments in the building directed interested parties to TA Wilson.<sup>57</sup>

Perhaps a result of the speculative nature and anticipated growth of this block, early grocers at 610 Niagara storefront only stayed one year, perhaps an indicator that business was not strong enough to support a grocer at this location in its earliest years. A 1908 advertisement for J. Jean at 610 Niagara listed items such as flour, butter, potatoes, and soap.<sup>58</sup> In fact, Jacob Jean—a 26 year old who immigrated from Russia in 1904—was a roomer with Thomas Wilson’s family at 610 Niagara in 1910. In 1911, Harry Schreiber operated a grocery at

<sup>55</sup> “Notes From New York State,” *The Journal of Plumbing, Heating & Air Conditioning*, Vol. 52 (1912): 739. There is some confusion about this building, as the 1908 atlas shows a building on this block in the same location as the only building depicted in 1912, 1914, 1925, and 1950. The 1912 Sanborn depicts a building façade flush with the street while the later maps show recessed storefront entire, suggesting that Stricker rebuilt the building in 1912 or undertook a significant renovation at that time. In 1909, John C. Stricker was appointed by the Industrial Commission to a committee charges with articulating a plan to bring manufacturing companies and residents to the city. According to the 1908 atlas, he owned a significant amount of land in this area of the city. See “Real Estate Men Form Organization,” *Niagara Falls Gazette*, October 25, 1909, front page.

<sup>56</sup> Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, “Thirteenth Census of the United States – 1910 Population,” Niagara Falls Ward 2 District 1010.

<sup>57</sup> “For Rent,” *Niagara Gazette*, November 17, 1915, 12.

<sup>58</sup> “J. Jean,” *Niagara Falls Gazette*, November 30, 1908, 7.

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610 Niagara while living on Seventh Street, but the next year, grocer Ira McIntosh ran his business in that location while also living in an apartment above. The city directory in 1913 reports a vacant storefront at 610 Niagara. The following year, however, the Cataract Grocery and Meat Company appears at 610 Niagara for the first time. After fifteen years at 610 Niagara, the business moved down to 614 Niagara. It became a staple of the area and operated from this block until the 1960s.

The east elevation of the 1908 building at 610 Niagara features a Quaker Oats mural that remains in good condition, although partially covered, on the interior of 612 Niagara Street. On a dark green background, the iconic "Quaker Man," wearing a red jacket and hat, holds a box labeled "Quaker." White lettering indicates "Regular Pkg's 10c," and the Buffalo based Cusack company left its name along the bottom in a credit line for the mural. The mural likely dates to c.1908-1909, when J. Jean ran a grocery on this site and prior to the construction of 612 Niagara in c.1910. Between 1914 and 1925, two garages were added to rear (north) elevation of 610 Niagara. The garages reflect the change in transportation systems and the increase in automobile deliveries in the early twentieth century.

The address of 612 Niagara first appears in city directories in 1911, with Carl Hess as the commercial tenant and James A. Butcher as a resident (and employed as clerk). German immigrant Carl Hess opened a bakery at 612 Niagara Street in May 1911 and operated from that location until the 1920s. The bakery oven was located at the rear of 612 Niagara in a one story section of the building (extant). Around 1950, Perricelli Plumbing & Heating Co and Ace Electric Appliances moved into the commercial space at 612 Niagara, and the 1954 Sanborn maps show that the area formerly used for the bakery oven was converted for the plumbing business.

*Peter DiLaura*

Peter DiLaura was an Italian immigrant whose livelihood revolved around the Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets. Peter immigrated to Niagara Falls from Palermo, Italy, in 1906. He found work at ALCOA before entering the grocery business. DiLaura worked at a grocery on Eleventh Street in the Italian East Side of Niagara Falls for a short time before leaving the neighborhood in search of commercial opportunity in 1913.<sup>59</sup> Along with Joseph R. Caccamise, he opened the Cataract Grocery in its first iteration at the 610 Niagara address, after the closure of a succession of other groceries in the space. In 1925, they moved the business to 614 Niagara, and DiLaura continued to operate the business through Caccamise's death in 1934.<sup>60</sup> DiLaura successfully ran the business until his retirement in 1950: Cataract Grocery received a license for the sale of beer soon after the Twenty-first Amendment repealed Prohibition, and the *Niagara Gazette* continued to list the

<sup>59</sup> "Ex-Operator of Grocery Store Dies," *Niagara Falls Gazette*, February 22, 1965.

<sup>60</sup> "Ex-Operator of Grocery Store Dies," *Niagara Falls Gazette*, February 22, 1965; "Caccamise Estate Valued at \$22,100m," *Niagara Falls Gazette*, October 5, 1934.

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advertisements for the business well into the 1960s.<sup>61</sup> From at least 1920 on, DiLaura lived with his wife, Orsola, and their children in one of the apartments at 610 Niagara. One of their sons, Joseph M. DiLaura, found a livelihood in the district. Joseph DiLaura received a degree in education from Niagara University and joined the military during World War II.<sup>62</sup> After returning from the war, he and his wife, Mary, operated DiLaura Confectionery at 610 Niagara Street in partnership with Peter DiLaura and offered their business as a polling place from the time they opened it until its closure in the mid-1970s.<sup>63</sup>

*Carl Hess – Bakery*

For the first few decades after the construction of the building at 612 Niagara Street, a bakery occupied the storefront on the ground floor. The original proprietor of the business, Carl Hess, emigrated from Germany in 1908 and found employment at a bakery in the Third Street Business District. He and his wife, Emma, rented a house on Seventh Street, but when he opened his own bakery at 612 Niagara Street, they moved into an apartment upstairs.<sup>64</sup> Upon opening the business, an advertisement in the *Niagara Gazette* boasted that the bakery's catalogue included "Everything from homemade bread to wedding cakes" and had a "Soda fountain in connection."<sup>65</sup> The Hess family lived and worked in the building for the remainder of the decade: Emma performed sales while Carl baked, and the couple raised their daughter, Winifred, who was born during the early years of their occupancy of 612 Niagara Street.<sup>66</sup> Their operation also employed other bakers. One of these employees was likely Anthony Betz, an Austrian employed as a baker who lodged at the Hess's apartment in 1915.<sup>67</sup> Another employee, Alfred Pilling, was an experienced baker who bought the business from the Hess family in 1920. He rebranded the operation as A. Pilling and Sons and operated it until his bankruptcy in 1922.<sup>68</sup>

*John Cadzow Building & the Jeanette Apartments, 614 Niagara Street*

While unverified, it appears likely that John Cadzow erected the building at 614 Niagara in 1911. In November 1911, the *Niagara Falls Gazette* reported that Cadzow applied for a building permit to construct a brick and

<sup>61</sup> "Legal Notices." *Niagara Falls Gazette*, July 27, 1933.

<sup>62</sup> "Joseph M. DiLaura, Teacher, Businessman," *Buffalo News*, October 3rd, 2003.

<sup>63</sup> "Voters Confused." *Niagara Falls Gazette*, October 15, 1935; "Joseph M. DiLaura, Teacher, Businessman," *Buffalo News*, October 3rd, 2003.

<sup>64</sup> *State Population Census Schedules, 1915*. New York State Archives, Albany, New York.

<sup>65</sup> "Announcement: Carl Hess Bakery," *Niagara Falls Gazette*, May 1st, 1911.

<sup>66</sup> 1915 State Census.

<sup>67</sup> 1915 State Census.

<sup>68</sup> "Hess Bakery Sold," *Niagara Falls Gazette*, October 5th, 1920; "Legal Notices," *Niagara Falls Gazette*, May 1st, 1922.

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frame store and flats for \$5,800 on Seventh Street.<sup>69</sup> It also appears that he named the Jeanette Apartments for his daughter, Jeanette, who was born in 1911.<sup>70</sup>

The building first appears in city directories in 1912. That year, Cadzow ran a confectionary from the location while living nearby at 535 Sixth Street and also working at a contractor. Cadzow ran his confectionary until 1915, when Jerome Brett took over the store, providing “many little luxuries that people of the present day demand.”<sup>71</sup> While Brett did not live on this block of Niagara, he resided across the street at 611 and later 621 Niagara Street (not extant). The Cataract Grocery & Meat Company relocated from 610 Niagara to 614 Niagara in 1925 and remained there until the 1960s.

Around 1970, the Capri Lounge opened in 614 Niagara and the current configuration and finishes in the space appear to date from that time. The storefront at 614 Niagara appears to be the only site of major renovations in the building, as the apartments are in poor condition but are largely intact.

*Dooher & Seager Plumbing Building & the D&S Apartments, 624 Niagara Street*

Dooher & Seager Plumbing and Heating commissioned the building at 626-628 Niagara in 1911. They formally moved into the new location in January 1912, news which made the front page of the *Niagara Falls Gazette*.<sup>72</sup> Boris Meyers ran a grocery in the second storefront, at the corner of Niagara and Seventh, until c.1918, when Fleckinger’s opened one of its twelve branches in the space. Around 1940, Anna Perry operated a grocery from the location, and in 1951, Oliver Hooker changed the use into a hardware store. An upholsterer later operated from the commercial space. The same tin ceiling pattern is present in the commercial spaces at 626 and 628 Niagara. Between 1925 and 1954, a one-story frame garage was erected at the west rear wall, but it has since been removed. The building also featured small commercial spaces around the corner at 406 and 408 Seventh Street. A tailor, meat market, confectionary, and barber all operated from these spaces. At some point in the late twentieth century (after 1970), these spaces were converted into a residential unit.

*Dooher & Seager Plumbing*

Dooher & Seager Plumbing and Heating, an important occupant of the Buildings at Niagara and Seventh, helped define the commercial character of the area for over half a century. The original owners of the business,

<sup>69</sup> “Successful Industry A Good Asset,” *Niagara Falls Gazette*, November 18, 1911, 8.

<sup>70</sup> United States of America, Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1930) T626, 2667 rolls, Ward 5 District 0051.

<sup>71</sup> “Brett’s Sweetery Popular Place in South End Section,” *Niagara Falls Gazette*, February 29, 1916, 4.

<sup>72</sup> “Dooher & Seager in New Store,” *Niagara Falls Gazette*, January 26, 1912, front page.

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John E. Seager and John J. Dooher, immigrated to Niagara Falls from Canada in the 1890s.<sup>73</sup> They founded Dooher & Seager Plumbing and Heating in 1898 at 345 Third Street, in the center of the emergent Third Street Business District.<sup>74</sup> By 1911, these entrepreneurs achieved a noteworthy degree of economic success, evident from their decision to construct a new building for their business at the corner of Niagara Street and Seventh Street. A brief report from the *Niagara Gazette* reports that their \$40,000 real estate investment was a fortuitous indicator for the Niagara Street area: "This realty deal marks renewed progress of a fine thoroughfare, which is bound to become one of the leading business streets in the city."<sup>75</sup> Dooher & Seager purchased the lot closest to the northwest corner of Seventh Street and Niagara Street from John C. Stricker and commissioned the construction of the existent mixed-use building complex, which houses the addresses 626 and 628 on Niagara Street, and 402, 404, 406, and 408 on Seventh Street.<sup>76</sup> Dooher and Seager's decision to establish this substantial concern indicates not only the stability of their own practice, but also the perceived scope of opportunity offered by the burgeoning district during early years of the twentieth century.

Active in the community, John Seager served on the Niagara Falls Examining and Supervising Board of Plumbers and Plumbing.<sup>77</sup> Although John J. Dooher died November 1918, Dooher & Seager maintained in business at the 626 address for over half a century, taking full advantage of the property by leasing the remaining three spaces on the first floor to other businesses and renting out the eight apartments that occupied the second and third floors.<sup>78</sup> Other businesses in the building came and went, but Dooher & Seager consistently occupied 626 and rented out the apartments above. The business closed at some point during the 1960s, and by 1969 a takeout restaurant occupied 626 Niagara Street.<sup>79</sup>

**Architecture of the Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Street: Two-Part Commercial Blocks**

The buildings at Niagara and Seventh Street are a distinguishable entity, distinct from the surrounding area by their commercial storefronts, height, and commercial Italianate details. Erected in a short time frame, they share common design features, including oriel windows with polygonal bays. Fire insurance maps from 1912 and 1914 show many residential buildings and undeveloped lots lining the blocks around the buildings at Niagara and Seventh Street. As larger, more urban buildings with a unified street edge, this cluster became a visual landmark in the area.

<sup>73</sup> United States of America, Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930, Ward 5 District 0051; United States of America, Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1910) T624, 1,178 rolls.

<sup>74</sup> "Handsome Apartment Houses Being Erected," *Niagara Falls Gazette*, October 14th, 1911.

<sup>75</sup> "Will Build Big Business Block," *Niagara Falls Gazette*, May 11th, 1911.

<sup>76</sup> "Real Estate, Home Owners and Accessories Page," *Niagara Falls Gazette*, May 13, 1911.

<sup>77</sup> *Niagara Falls City Directory* (Niagara Falls: Roberts Brothers Company, Inc., 1914), 47.

<sup>78</sup> "Handsome Apartment Houses Being Erected," *Niagara Falls Gazette*, October 14, 1911.

<sup>79</sup> "Fish Fry," *Niagara Falls Gazette*, June 19, 1969.

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Identified by architectural historian Richard Longstreth, the two-part commercial block is one of the most common typologies in urban locations dating to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>80</sup> Typically two-to-four stories in height, the design of the facades and elevations reflected differing uses on the first and upper floors; the ground floor served commercial tenants while the upper floors consisted of residential units. As in the case of the buildings at Niagara and Seventh, the two-part typology was well suited to neighborhood retail locations, which paired commercial and residential functions on major thoroughfares and provided a variety of income sources to the building owner.

Each of the buildings in the Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets demonstrates the two-part commercial block typology in its design and function. In each building, the storefronts at street level are visually distinguished from the upper residential floors by fenestration and a cornice. Large plate glass windows, as extant in 614 Niagara, served commercial spaces, while smaller one-over-one windows indicate residences in the upper floors. The polygonal bays of the upper two floors on each building further emphasize the change in use. The cornice between the storefronts and the projecting bays is visible at 610 and 624 Niagara Street and likely existed at 614 Niagara Street as well.

The nominated buildings also express another typical feature of two-part commercial blocks: separate entrances and circulation for the commercial and residential users of the buildings. Residential entrances are generally less visible from the exterior, with minimal articulation compared to the commercial spaces. The entrance at 614 Niagara typifies this arrangement, with a door along the exterior wall next to the recessed entry of the commercial space, which would have been surrounded by plate glass. Due to its corner location, the apartments in the building at 626 Niagara Street utilized the side street for a more formal, private entrance. While there were two commercial spaces at the back (north) side of the Seventh Street elevation, the apartment entrance is a significant feature of this side of the building. Articulated by a pediment supported by brackets, this was the most ornate residential entrance of the three buildings. Inside, the spacious vestibule reinforces the distinguished entry sequence with a high degree of finish and a wall of mailboxes on the wall next to the staircase

In addition to the visual communication of different interior functions, two of the building owners emphasized the distinction by naming the apartment portion of their buildings. John E. Seager and John J. Dooher, who commissioned the building at 624 Seventh Street called the apartments in that building the “D & S Apartments” and used the side street address, 404 Seventh Street, for them. John Cadzow named the apartments at 614 Niagara Street the “Jeanette Apartments” after his daughter. These owners followed the growing practice of

<sup>80</sup> Richard Longstreth, “Compositional Types in American Commercial Architecture,” *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 2, (1986): 17.

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naming the apartments, which became fashionable and “assigned distinction” to the buildings and their residents.<sup>81</sup>

As good examples of the two-part commercial block, these buildings represent a common urban typology in American cities at the turn of the twentieth century. Buildings like these expressed the urban identity emerging as Niagara Falls grew from a small tourist-based village to a large industrial center. The Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets both symbolize the widespread excitement and embody the physical changes that transformed the city.

**Apartment Living and the Residents of the Buildings at Niagara and Seventh**

The concept of the apartment building was popular in Europe long before it became socially acceptable in the United States. As apartment living gained popularity in the United States, apartment design developed into a specialty design field. Prior to the late nineteenth century, multi-family residential buildings were generally associated with crowded tenement houses in cities like New York City, and books like *How the Other Half Lives* exposed unthinkable conditions.<sup>82</sup> However, as regulations curbed the most atrocious aspects of tenement houses, multi-family units appealed to the economic sense and shifting social norms in American society. As industrial cities like Niagara Falls fostered growing working and middle-class populations, apartment buildings in residential neighborhoods offered an alternative to living in congested downtown districts.<sup>83</sup>

The novelty of the building type is evident in the fact that the Niagara Falls city directory did not include a section for “apartments” or “flats” in 1911, by which time the buildings at Niagara and Seventh housed a number of renters. By 1916, however, the city directory listed twenty-seven buildings under the “Apartment Houses” headings, including the D & S Apartments at 404 Seventh Street and the Jeanette Apartments at 614 Niagara Street. While these apartments were located in mixed-used buildings, their unique names differentiated the residential use, a useful marketing tool.

Constructed in 1906, the Lochiel Apartments at Buffalo and Third Streets were among the earliest apartments constructed in Niagara Falls that catered to wealthier residents. An advertisement boasted its aesthetic inspiration, being “modeled after the big and fashionable apartment houses in other cities.”<sup>84</sup> The Jefferson (NR 2004) opened in 1925 at Third and Jefferson, providing Niagara Falls with another luxury apartment building.

<sup>81</sup> Doucet and Weaver, *Housing the American City*, 406.

<sup>82</sup> Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives: Studies among the tenements of New York* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1890).

<sup>83</sup> Kerry Traynor, *Wayne and Waldorf Apartments*, Buffalo, Erie County, New York, National Register Nomination, Sec.8, Pg. 1.

<sup>84</sup> “Elegant New Apartments To Open This Week,” *Daily Cataract Journal*, January 18, 1906, 6. Buildings Clipping Folder at the Niagara Falls Public Library, Niagara Falls, New York.

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In contrast to these apartment buildings, the residences in the buildings at Niagara and Seventh catered to a working and middle-class clientele. Despite the different audience, the apartments employ many standard practices for apartment design. Public rooms like the living, dining, and kitchen are separated from the more private bedrooms and bathrooms, and light wells enable natural lighting to most units. While nearly all of the apartments retain their original layouts, some units retain more original materials than others; plaster walls, wood trim, built-in cabinetry, and wood corner guards are examples of extant historic material.

The apartments on this block feature a range of sizes, from 300-1,300 square feet, reflecting the speculative nature of these developments in a growing area of town. Three independent small-scale developers approached this block with differing plans that catered to different residents. Since the area did not already have an identity as a working-class, middle-class, or upper-class neighborhood, each building owner catered to a different income level or family size. The variety of apartment sizes and finishes reflects the speculative development of the properties in a short time period.

Owing to the both lack of other apartment buildings nearby and the range of apartment sizes, it is not surprising to find that the residents of the buildings at Niagara and Seventh varied in age and occupation. While some tenants worked in more established areas such as Falls Street, others worked in factories or for companies in the power and water industries.

*The Thomas A. Wilson Building Apartments:*

While containing only five units, the apartments in 610-612 Niagara are large, ranging from approximately 700-1,320 square feet. Each apartment features a living room at the front (south) of the building, with projecting polygonal windows affording views out to Niagara Street. A central corridor connected the living space to a kitchen, three bedrooms, and a bathroom. Perhaps one reason for the larger units is that it appears Thomas A. Wilson erected the building and lived there with his wife and two sons for a number of years. The larger units housed other families with children or housed boarders to contribute to the rent. Carl and Emma Hess lived in 612 Niagara with their daughter, Winifred, and a boarder, Anthony Betz, from Austria. Betz appears to have worked with Hess in the bakery downstairs.

*The Jeanette Apartments at 614 Niagara:*

In contrast to the neighboring units at 610-612 Niagara, the Jeanette Apartments at 614 Niagara are arranged to be as compact and efficient as possible. Four apartments on the second and third floors yield a total of eight residences that average only 300 square feet. These efficiency apartments contain only four rooms: a living space (with a closet), a kitchenette, a small dining alcove, and a bathroom. The rooms are connected via a



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hallway that runs along the interior wall, but only the closet and bathroom have doors. The other rooms are distinguished by Tudor arches.

Perhaps because of the tight quarters and the lower income levels of the tenants, the Jeanette Apartments experienced more turnover than the others. Records show different tenants each year in the first five years in service, except for Louis Furman, a clerk and then manager at the United Cigar Store Co, at 114 Falls Street, who resided in the building for three consecutive years. The Jeanette attracted transient workers, who perhaps moved on to other accommodations as their finances allowed.

The federal census in 1915 illuminates the demographics further, showing a few young couples, like Roy and Ruth Stauton and Jesse and Myrtle Quick, who were all between 19 and 22 years old.<sup>85</sup> Like many other women living at 614 Niagara, Myrtle and Ruth were employed to do "housework." Thirty-year-old Grace Martin, 32-year-old Anna Stillwell, and 37-year-old Rella Scott also worked as housekeepers. Each of these women lived with her husband at 614 Niagara. Allison Grace, a 43-year-old widow, lived with her 17-year-old daughter, Ruth, in another apartment at the Jeanette in 1915. Allison worked as a saleslady, while Ruth was a bookkeeper, both earning an income to contribute to the family expenses.

*D & S Apartments at 404 Seventh Street:*

The eight apartments at 404 Seventh Street range from approximately 700-850 square feet and contain a living room, formal dining room, kitchen, bathroom, and three bedrooms. This building features a formal entrance from Seventh Street that leads into a vestibule with mailboxes and a wooden staircase. The floor tile, wainscoting, and baseboards continue to communicate the higher level of finish in this building compared to the other apartments in this group of buildings.

The D & S Apartments appear in the city directory for the first time in 1913. Two residents that year, Robert Kells and George E. Dean, lived in the building for at least a decade. Records reveal that tenants of this apartment building were likely striving for upward mobility.

The 1915 census reveals that it was common for households in the D & S Apartments to have lodgers. Rose Curry and her daughter lodged Floyd and M. Gage, a married couple in their mid-twenties. George and Mary Dean housed one lodger, Gustave Bowin, a 22-year-old Swedish immigrant employed as a janitor. Florence Lower, only 28 years old and employed in housework, had a family of three lodgers: Minnie (51), Harry (23) and Adell (28) Carman. For working families, lodgers provided additional income that likely helped them live in the D & S Apartments.

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<sup>85</sup> 1915 State Census.

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**Post-1915 Niagara Falls**

Industrial development in Niagara Falls facilitated several decades of economic growth and general prosperity. Through the mid-twentieth century, the city was home to various large, nationally prominent companies, including Du Pont, the Carborundum Company, and the Shredded Wheat Company (later Nabisco), which employed tens of thousands of people in the city.

In 1956, after decades of prosperity, a rockslide changed the fortunes of Niagara Falls. In a matter of hours, the Schoellkopf power plant, which supplied cheap electricity to many factories, was destroyed, as the rocks above cascaded down, crushing part of the power plant. The loss of their main power source crippled the city's industrial plants and the incident initiated a series of factory closures that devastated the local economy; between 1958 and 1963, the city lost one-third of its factory jobs.<sup>86</sup> As people lost jobs without the prospect of new local employment opportunities, they moved away and the city saw population numbers decrease from a peak of over 102,000 people in 1960 to 85,000 in 1970.

Several city planning attempts to ameliorate the economic loss characterized the following three decades. City officials attempted save the city with large projects founded on acquisition and demolition of buildings in designated areas. Urban Renewal projects in the 1960s encompassed 175 acres of downtown land in five phases. In 1963, the South End renewal area was enlarged to include Niagara Street east of Third Street.<sup>87</sup> In the early 1970s, plans for the LaSalle arterial highway spurred the acquisition of land on south side of Niagara between Fourth and Seventh Streets.<sup>88</sup> Many of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century residences that lined Niagara Street west of Seventh Street were demolished during this era.

<sup>86</sup> "Intensive Level Survey Historic Resources – Downtown Neighborhood," Clinton Brown Company Architecture, 3-39.

<sup>87</sup> "Niagara Street Renewal Plan Asked," *Niagara Falls Gazette*, April 5, 1963, 17.

<sup>88</sup> "Intensive Level Survey Historic Resources – Downtown Neighborhood," Survey 3-40.

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Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets

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1934 Aerial Photograph, Niagara Falls.



c.2017 Aerial photograph of Niagara Falls.

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National Park Service**

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Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets

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**Conclusion**

The Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets represents the speculative real estate boom in this section of Niagara Falls as new building activity in the city pushed out of the historic downtown alongside industrial development and population growth. The early nineteenth century commercial Italianate, mixed-use buildings were the only mixed-use buildings within two blocks and remained visual landmarks throughout the twentieth century, as no other three-story mixed use buildings were erected within the immediate surroundings. These buildings reflected the need for local services such as bakeries, plumbers, and grocers, and also served the residential needs of those attracted to the growth and opportunity in the city of Niagara Falls in the early twentieth century. The mixed-used function of the buildings fostered both apartment living and commercial activity serving the surrounding blocks.

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**Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets**  
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**Niagara County, New York**  
**County and State**

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Continuation Sheet**

Section 9 Page 2

**Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets**

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**Niagara County, New York**

**County and State**

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 10 Page 1

**Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets**

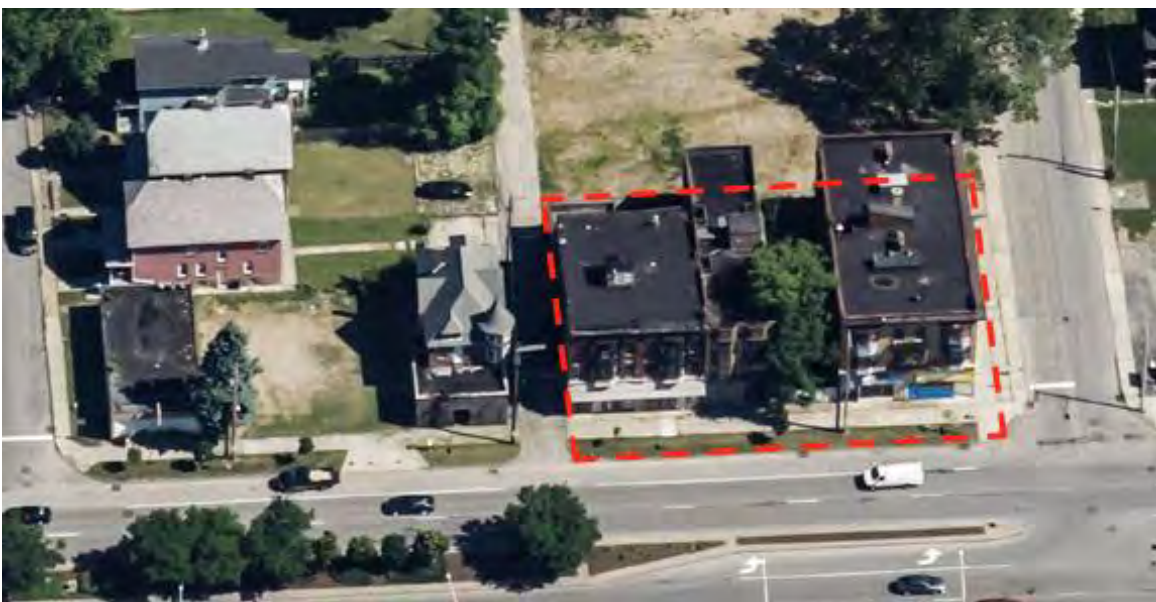
**Name of Property  
Niagara County, New York  
County and State**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

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

**Boundary Justification**

This boundary encompasses all property historically associated with the Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets, including the lot at 616 Niagara Street, which has always been vacant.





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Section 10 Page 2

Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets

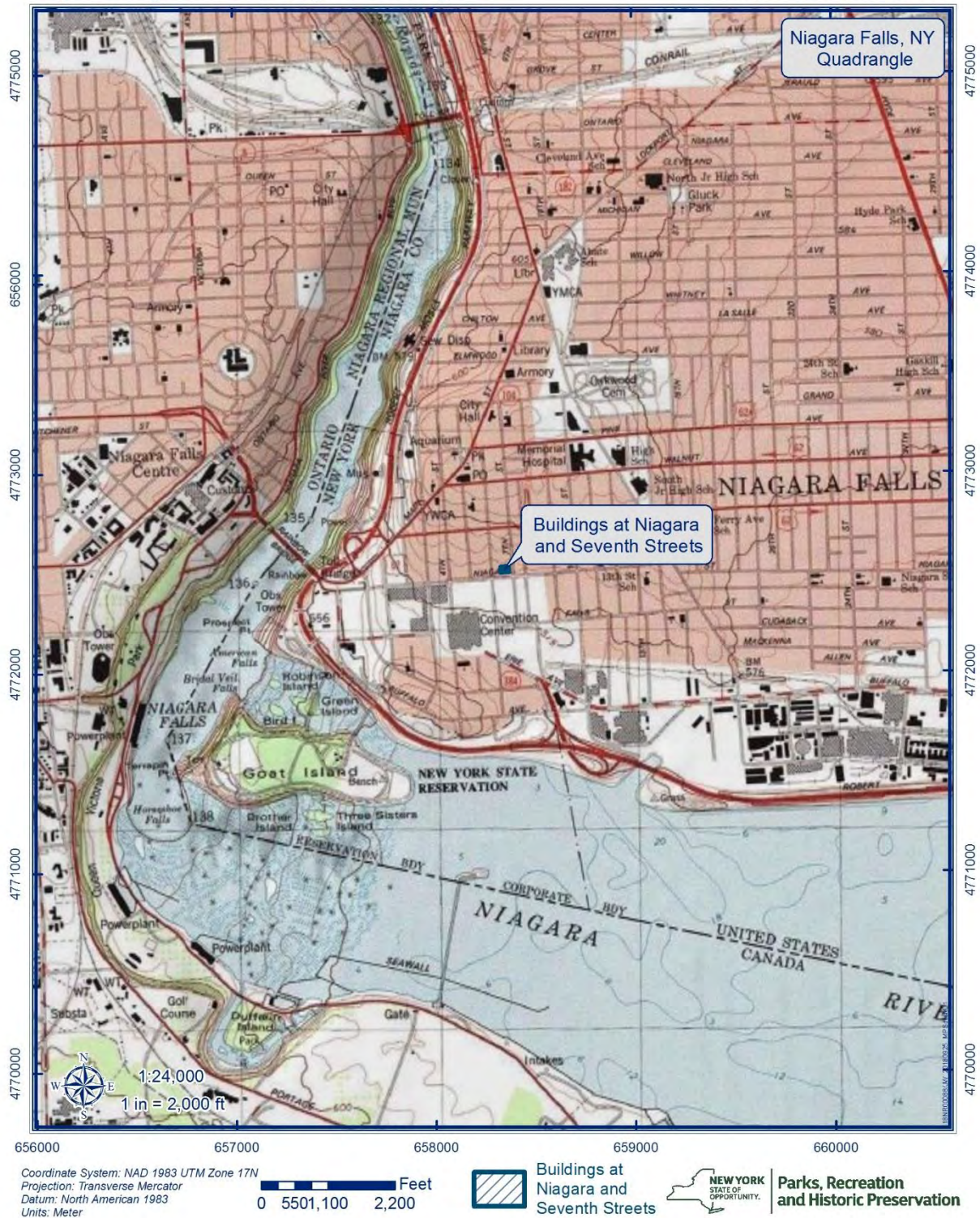
Name of Property

Niagara County, New York

County and State

Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets  
City of Niagara Falls, Niagara County, NY

610-628 Niagara Street  
Niagara Falls, NY 14303





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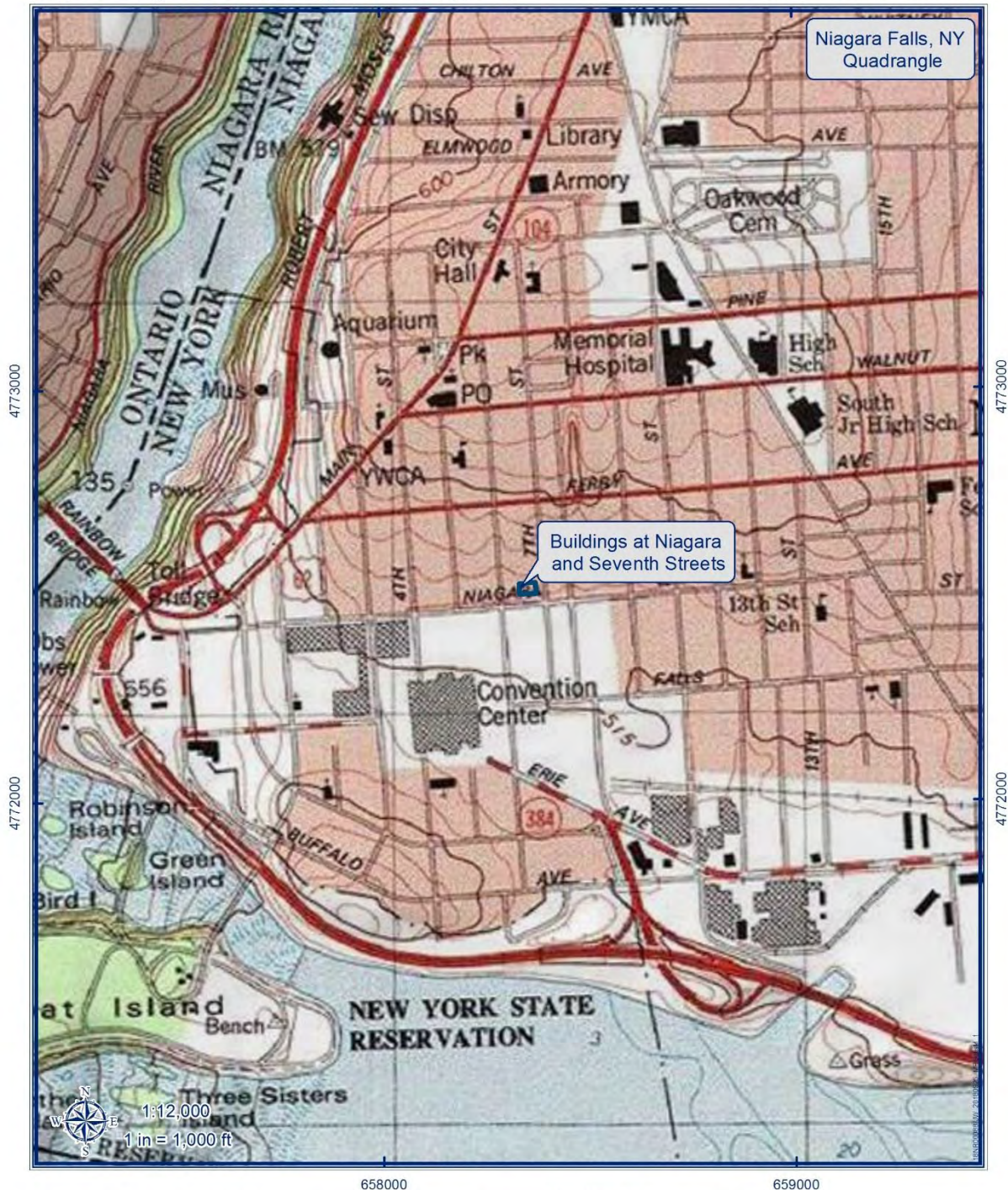
Name of Property

Niagara County, New York

County and State

Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets  
City of Niagara Falls, Niagara County, NY

610-628 Niagara Street  
Niagara Falls, NY 14303



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

0 290 580 1,160 Feet



Buildings at  
Niagara and  
Seventh Streets



Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation



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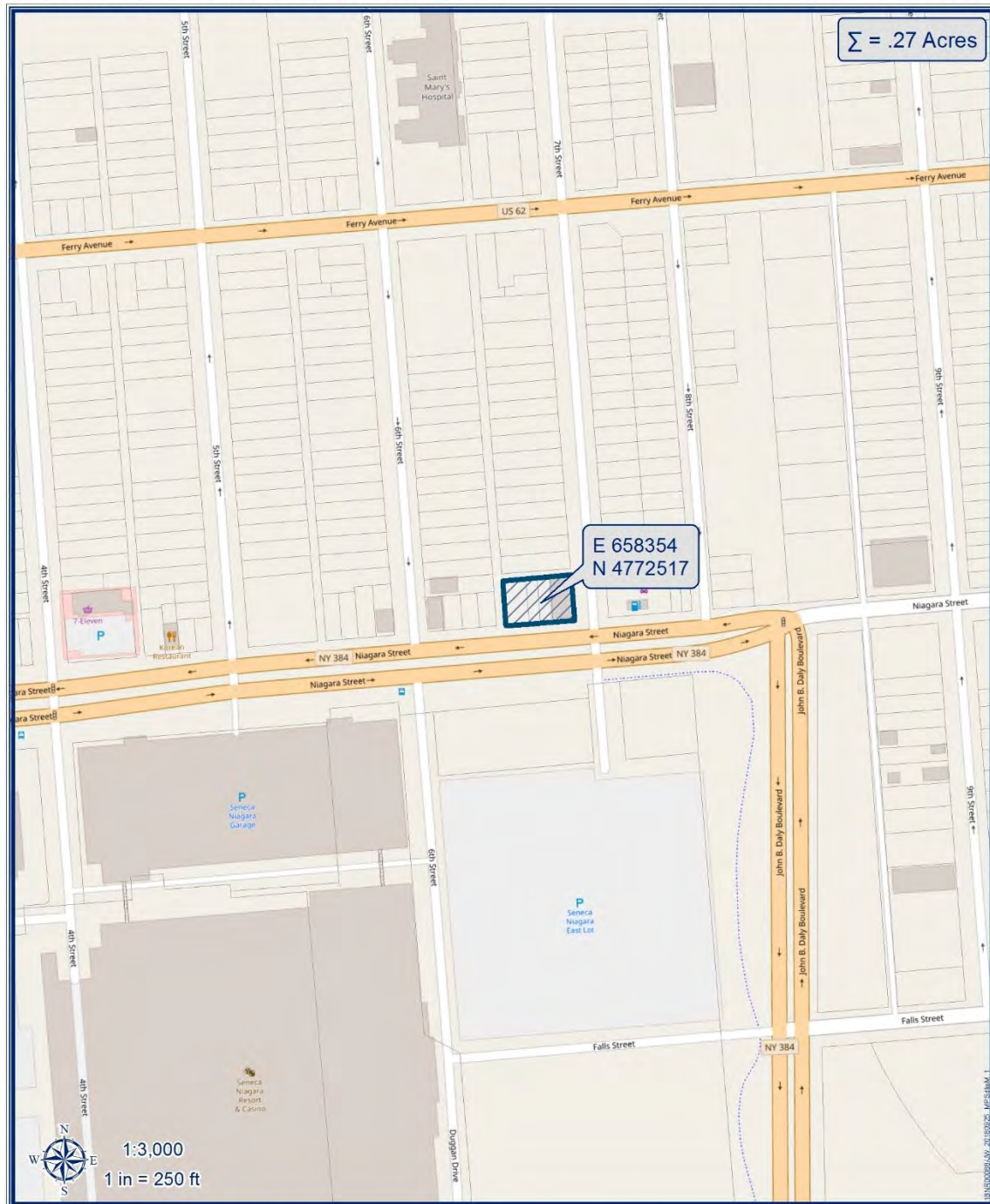
Name of Property

Niagara County, New York

County and State

Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets  
City of Niagara Falls, Niagara County, NY

610-628 Niagara Street  
Niagara Falls, NY 14303





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Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets

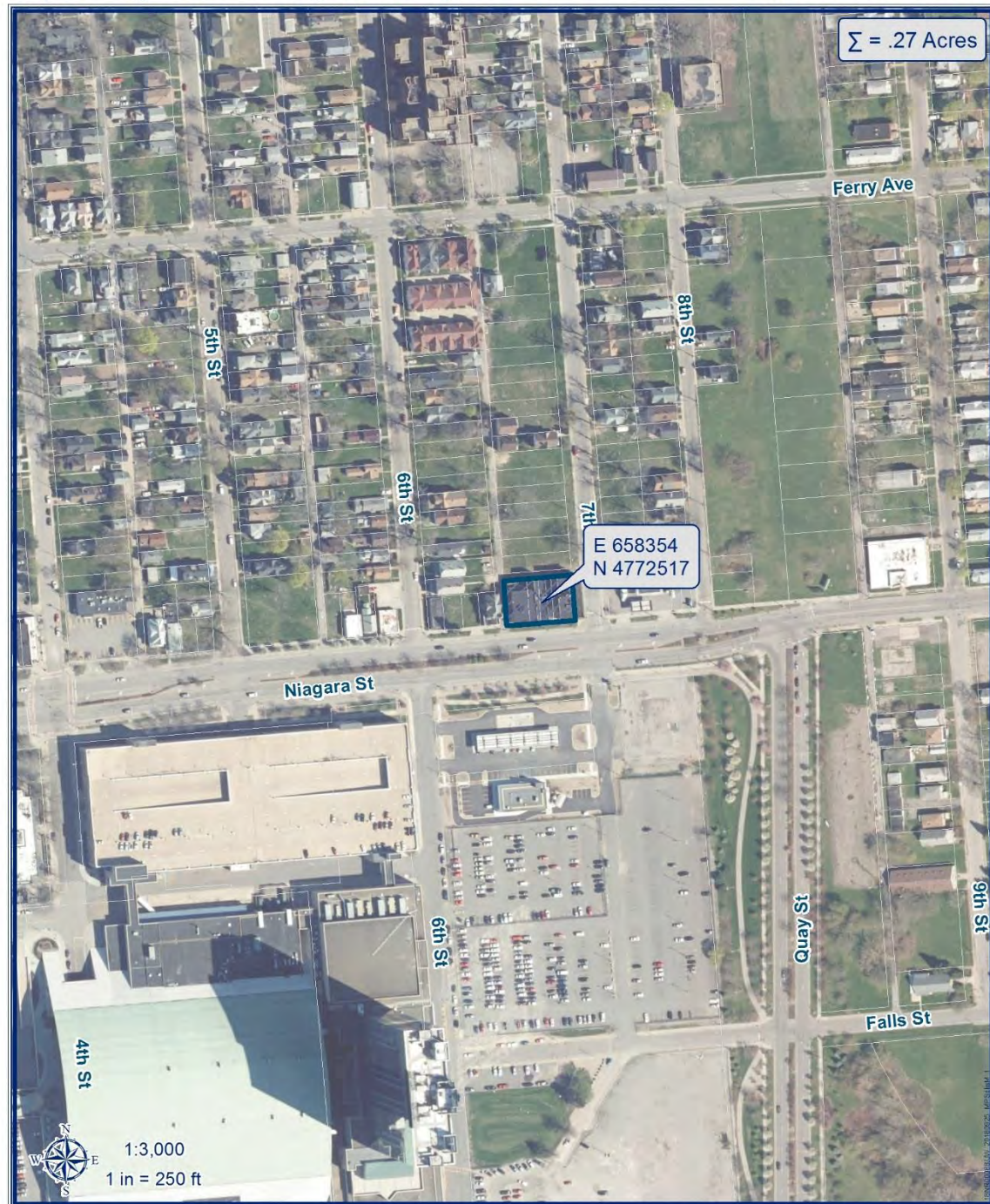
Name of Property

Niagara County, New York

County and State

Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets  
City of Niagara Falls, Niagara County, NY

610-628 Niagara Street  
Niagara Falls, NY 14303



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

0 70 140 280 Feet



Buildings at  
Niagara and  
Seventh Streets



Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation

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**Section** 11 **Page** 1

**Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets**  
**Name of Property**  
**Niagara County, New York**  
**County and State**

**Additional Information**

**List of Photographs**

Name of Property: The Buildings at Seventh and Niagara Streets  
City or Vicinity: Niagara Falls  
County: Niagara  
State: NY  
Name of Photographer: Derek King, Michael Puma  
Date of Photographs: November 2017  
Number of Photographs: 13

NY\_Niagara County\_The Buildings at Seventh and Niagara Streets\_001  
South elevation, southwest corner of 610 Niagara, camera facing northeast

NY\_Niagara County\_The Buildings at Seventh and Niagara Streets\_002  
South elevations, southeast corner of 624 Niagara, camera facing northwest.

NY\_Niagara County\_The Buildings at Seventh and Niagara Streets\_003  
South elevation, 624 Niagara, camera facing north.

NY\_Niagara County\_The Buildings at Seventh and Niagara Streets\_004  
South elevation, 612 Niagara, camera facing north.

NY\_Niagara County\_The Buildings at Seventh and Niagara Streets\_005  
South elevation, 610 Niagara, camera facing north.

NY\_Niagara County\_The Buildings at Seventh and Niagara Streets\_006  
Interior 610 Niagara, first floor, camera facing southwest.

NY\_Niagara County\_The Buildings at Seventh and Niagara Streets\_007  
Interior 610 Niagara, second floor, camera facing northwest.

NY\_Niagara County\_The Buildings at Seventh and Niagara Streets\_008  
Interior 610 Niagara, third floor, camera facing northwest.

NY\_Niagara County\_The Buildings at Seventh and Niagara Streets\_009  
Interior 614 Niagara, first floor, camera facing north.

NY\_Niagara County\_The Buildings at Seventh and Niagara Streets\_010  
Interior 624 Niagara, first floor, camera facing southwest.

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**Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets**

**Name of Property**

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NY\_Niagara County\_The Buildings at Seventh and Niagara Streets\_011  
Interior, 624 Niagara, first floor, camera facing northwest.

NY\_Niagara County\_The Buildings at Seventh and Niagara Streets\_012  
Interior 624 Niagara, second floor, camera facing west.

NY\_Niagara County\_The Buildings at Seventh and Niagara Streets\_013  
Interior, 624 Niagara, second floor, camera facing northeast.



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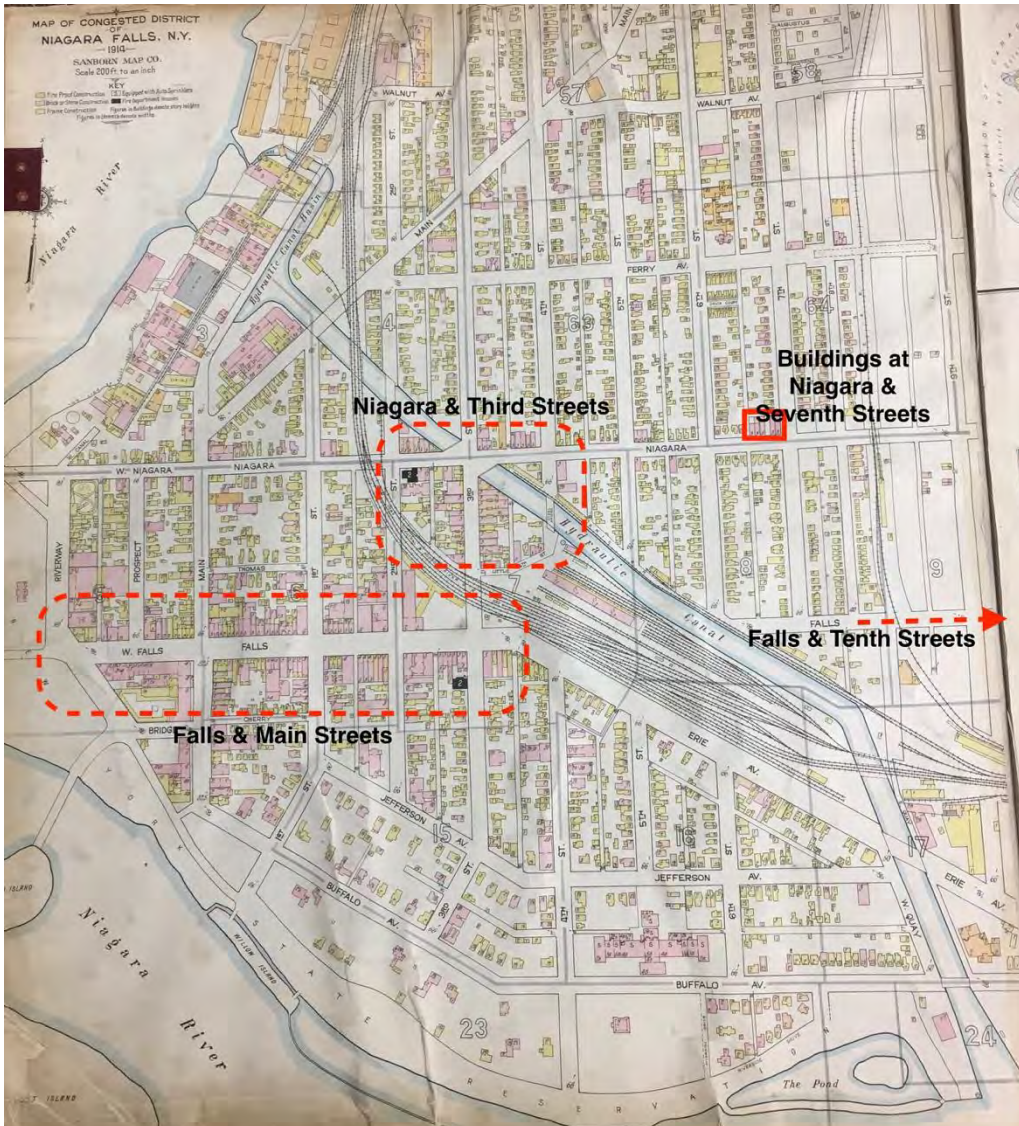
Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets

Name of Property

Niagara County, New York

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Historic Maps:



**Figure 1:** 1914 Sanborn Map of the “Congested District” in Niagara Falls indicating the location of commercial districts.

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National Park Service

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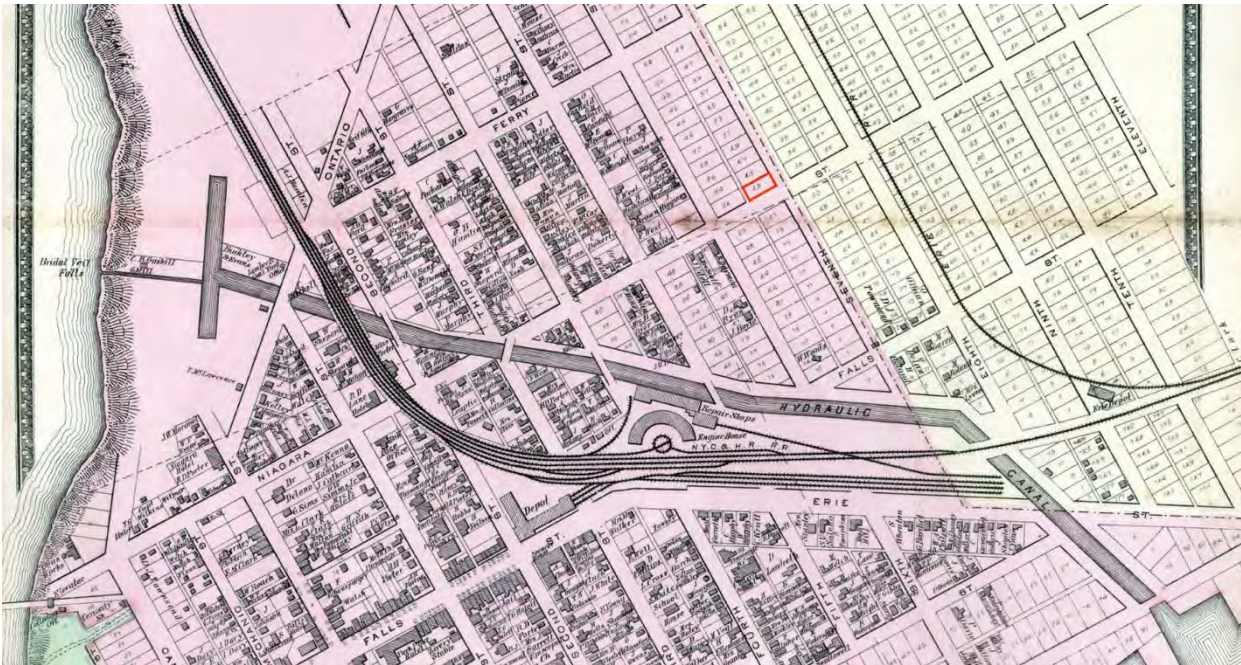
Section 11 Page 4

Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets

Name of Property

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**Figure 2a:** 1875 Atlas, showing Niagara Street. Red box indicates the site of the Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets.



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Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets

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Niagara County, New York

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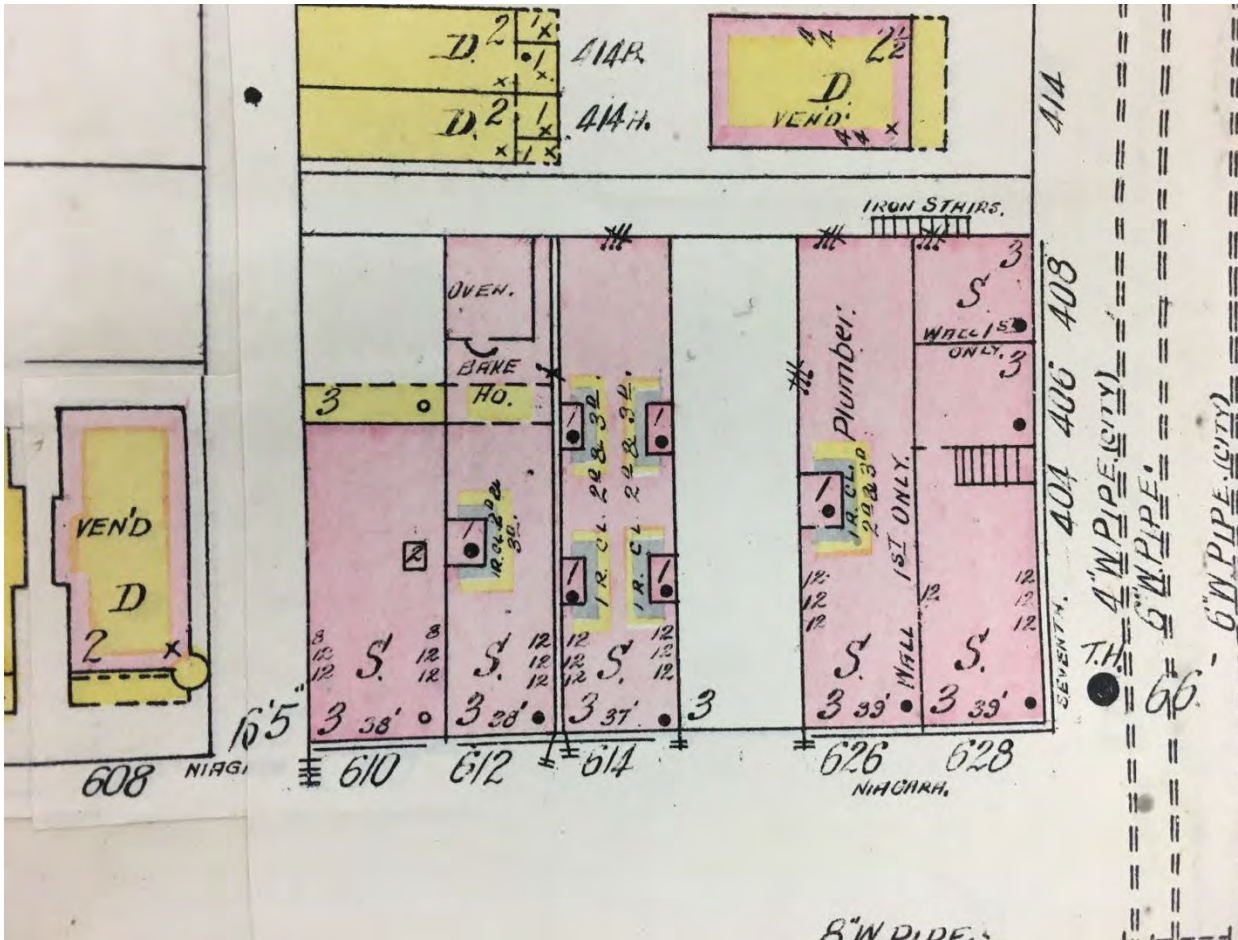


Figure 2b: 1875 Atlas showing the main commercial district on Falls and Main Streets.



## County and State

BUILDINGS AT NIAGARA AND SEVENTH STREETS



**Figure 3:** The buildings at Niagara and Seventh Street, 1912 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

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National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

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Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets

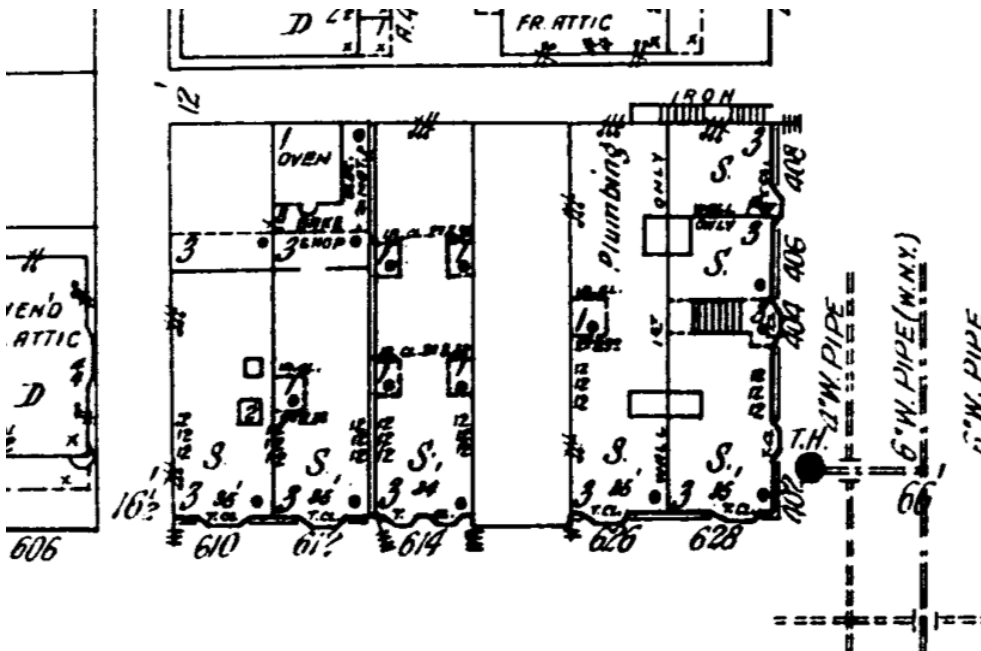
Name of Property

Niagara County, New York

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Figure 4: 1914 Sanborn Map, the Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets.



Close-up of 1914 Sanborn Map.

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National Park Service

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Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets

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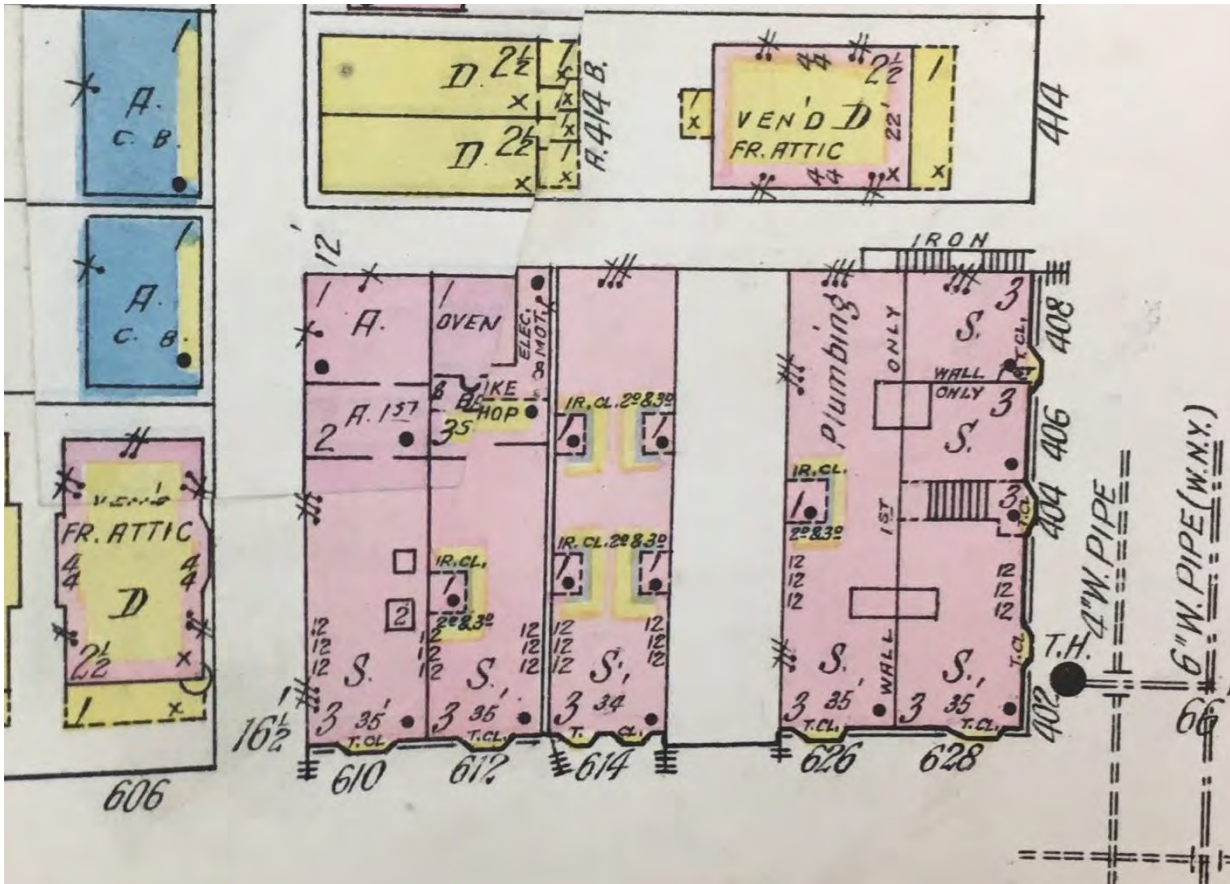
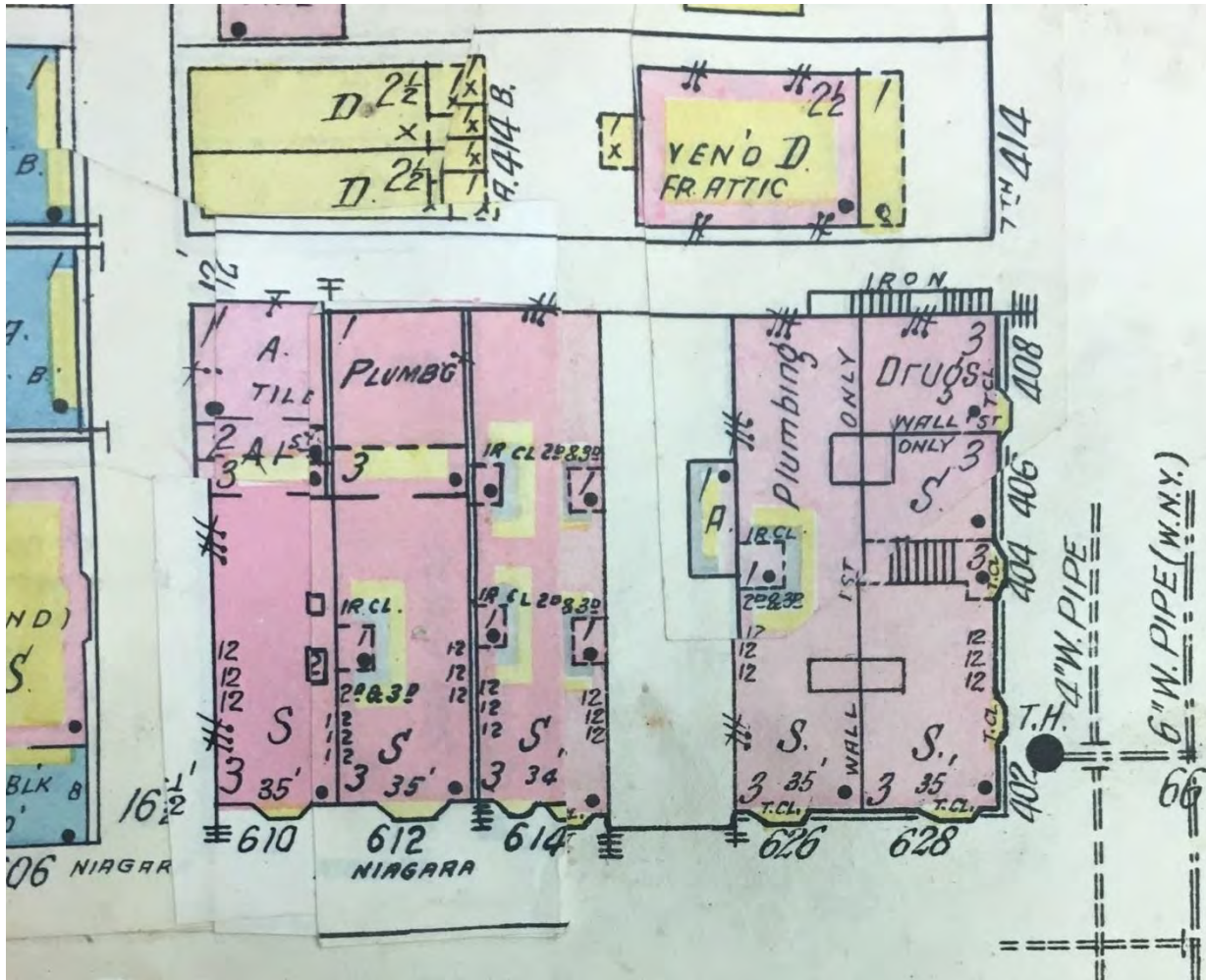


Figure 5: 1925 Sanborn Map, the buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets.



## County and State

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**Figure 6:** 1954 Sanborn Map, the buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets.









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SEVENTH ST  
NIAGARA ST

RAINBOW MART  
COLD BEER-POP-CH-ARETTES-NYS LOTTO

RAINBOW MART  
COLD BEER-POP-CH-ARETTES-NYS LOTTO





TATTOO

RAIL-BOY MART  
COLD BEER • POP • CIGARETTES • NYS LOTTO

SEVENTH ST  
NIAGARA ST

SPEED  
LIMIT  
30





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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets

Multiple Name:

State & County: NEW YORK, Niagara

Date Received: 1/28/2019 Date of Pending List: 2/12/2019 Date of 16th Day: 2/27/2019 Date of 45th Day: 3/14/2019 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number: SG100003433

Nominator: SHPO

Reason For Review:

|                                       |  |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape       | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver       | <input type="checkbox"/> National        | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other        | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP             | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
|                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG             |   |

☒ Accept ☐ Return ☐ Reject 3/7/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary  
Comments:

Recommendation/  
Criteria Crit A and C architecture and commerce

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

17 December 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 six nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

St. Anthony of Padua Church Complex, Onondaga County (2owners, 0 objections)  
Fort Wood Creek Site, Oneida County  
Monarch Knitting Company Factory, Erie County  
Payne Avenue High School, Niagara County  
Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets, Niagara County (1owner, 0 objections)  
Richmond Hill Historic District, Queens County (189 owners, 0 objections)

The Richmond Hill district is located within a certified local government (New York City). In response to our initial letter and copy of the draft, the New York SHPO received a letter from the local commission (New York City LPC) stating that the LPC had concerns about whether or not the district met the criteria (letter enclosed). After receiving this letter, we wrote to and then called the LPC to determine whether the commission believed that the district should not be nominated. In conversation and written communication (also enclosed), the commission's director of research assured me that the commission had no objections to it being nominated to the National Register and would defer to the opinion of the SHPO. Please note that this district also has support from the Historic Districts Council and the New York City Department of Parks. The district is widely supported in the community. There was no communication from the mayor's office. 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