

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**FILE COPY**

**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 Richmond Avenue Methodist-Episcopal Church

other names/site number Richmond Avenue United Methodist Church, Upper West Arts Center

**2. Location**

street & number 525 West Ferry Street [ ] not for publication

city or town Buffalo [ ] vicinity

state New York code NY county Erie code 029 zip code 14222

**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.)

Ruth A. Pappert  
Signature of certifying official/Title

DSAPO

10/20/08  
Date

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation  
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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Richmond Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church  
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**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>1</u>	<u>          </u>	buildings
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	sites
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	structures
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>          </u>	<b>TOTAL</b>

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(enter categories from instructions)

RELIGIOUS/ religious facility

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION and CULTURE/

theater

music facility

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals

Norman Revival

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Medina Sandstone

walls Medina Sandstone

roof Slate/ Copper Flashing

other Stained Glass

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

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Richmond Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church  
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Narrative Description

The Richmond Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church overlooks the Fredric Law Olmstead designed Ferry Circle located in the city of Buffalo, New York's west side, just north of the downtown. The neighborhood reflects the city's rapid population growth in the late nineteenth-century and early-twentieth century and is characterized by a large variety of finely styled residences in the Revival and Victorian styles designed for the city's more affluent residents. The church is sited on a one acre corner lot on West Ferry Street and Richmond Avenue, with the structure and front lawn consuming the majority of the parcel. There is minimal landscaping, with sparsely planted evergreens and new curbside saplings. Access to a parking lot and rear entrances are from a driveway to the west of the building on West Ferry Street.

The church is formed from two connected components; a rectilinear Chapel structure, which dates to 1885-91 and faces onto West Ferry Street, and a larger Temple structure dating to 1887-98, which is oriented to both West Ferry Street and Richmond Avenue. These two segments have been designed sympathetically to one another in materials, forms, rhythms, and ornamentation. The Chapel is a hipped gabled form with a projecting, faceted apse to the north and features a square tower. The Temple is cross-gabled and features an octagonal tower. Both structures are two and half stories set on a raised basement story, with two three-story towers. The primary building material on the main north and east facades is red, random coursed, rough-faced ashlar Medina sandstone, with brick used on the secondary facades facing the east and south. The mortar used for the Medina sandstone is tinted red to coordinate with the stone, and has been tooled with a simple bead-joint. The roof is sheathed in slate tiles, with copper flashing, and at various locations asphalt shingles have been used minimally patching. The church features a variety of stained glass windows, including a prominent east-facing Rose Window. While the older Chapel portion is constructed with a masonry and wood structural system, the Temple portion was constructed using a wood and steel truss system.

Principal Exteriors- Temple

West Ferry Street & Richmond Avenue-

The Temple serves as the structure's main sanctuary space. It features the church's two main entrances facing Richmond Avenue and West Ferry Street. Resting on an elevated basement story, the Richmond Avenue façade features a large two-story gable with steps leading to a one-story, chamfered rectangular entry vestibule. Symmetrically placed on the façade of the entry vestibule, a wooden door is surrounded by a compound round arched entry flanked by small, rectangular casement windows. The entry is in a typical simple Romanesque portal from the period, except for the unique addition of the tympanum, which is formed from a semi-circular stained glass window and features circular and semi-circular tracery. The entire entry is surrounded by a larger archway, which is formed from the surrounding rough ashlar Medina sandstone, featuring rough voussoirs, which are edged with a wishbone-shaped molding. The deeply set rectangular windows rest on an angled belt-course, which marks the top of the basement story and wraps the entire building. The lintel is formed by another smoothly carved belt-course, which also wraps the entire building. The chamfered corners of the vestibule feature similar rectangular windows, but each has a small, semi-circular transom window, which rests on the lintel above. This transom window is surrounded by an arch of ashlar voussoirs. The front and sides of

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the vestibule feature four stylized carved rosettes with a six-pointed floral design. Topping the vestibule is a molding formed from rusticated brackets and a copper trim. The bracketed molding wraps the entire vestibule, and becomes a simplified belt-course around the rest of the structure, marking the level of the second story. On each side of the vestibule, inserted into the main wall of the first story of the façade is a small rectangular window with a rectangular transom above. Above the vestibule on the gabled façade is the Rose Window, which is flanked by smaller rectangular stained glass windows. The Rose Window is slightly recessed into the sandstone and similar to the vestibule's arched entry door, surrounded by simply carved voussoirs. The window is hooded by a drip molding with a projecting rectangular detail to the top of the arch. Above the Rose Window, toward the peak of the gable, is a small pointed arched opening for a ventilation shaft with louvers. This form is surrounded by uncoursed ashlar stonework. Underneath the horizontal moldings and copper gutters, a band of bracketed detailing runs around the entire building. At the peak of the gable is a wishbone shape, which is formed from the molding dividing the façade from the roofline. The slate tiled roof features a decorative band of fish-scale shaped tiles, which runs near the ridgeline. A series of small, hip-roofed dormers, which act as vents for the attic are positioned on the roof, either placed individually or in pairs. Originally the building featured crenellated galvanized iron cresting along the ridgelines, which would have emphasized the building's castle-like Norman appearance. This feature was removed at some point during the 1960s.

North/West Ferry-

The northern façade of the Temple features the additional entryway fronting West Ferry Street and follows a similar program to the eastern façade with a two-story gable and a one-story, chamfered rectangular entry vestibule. The vestibule features the same entry door details, rectangular windows, and the two carved rosettes. The addition of two wrought-iron lamps as well as the simplified rectangular shape differentiates the north vestibule from the east vestibule. Flanking each side of the vestibule and inserted into the main wall of the first story of the façade is a small rectangular stained glass window with a rectangular transom above. Above the vestibule is a large compass-headed stained glass window, flanked by a slightly smaller round-headed stained glass window on either side. The series of three windows is unified by the rusticated voussoirs, and an enlarged keystone surmounts the large central window. A simple stone chimney stack rises out of the roof to the west of the gable, crowned with a simple band of dentils at the top, and supported by two metal braces.

Temple/Octagonal Tower-

An octagonal tower serves as a bridging device between the junction of the north and west transepts of the Temple. Maintaining the raised basement and belt-courses of the main building, the tower features two buttresses, and three first-story rectangular stained glass windows. Three second story round-headed lancet stained glass windows are surmounted with an arch, and a series of paired rectangular louvered ventilation grates located near the top of the tower, resting on a narrow belt-course molding, with one pair on each side of the octagon. The top of the tower wall is crenellated with the Medina sandstone, and is topped by an octagonal roof of slate tiles.

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Principal Exteriors- Chapel

North/West Ferry-

The principal façade of the Chapel faces north and consists of a three-sided apsidal projection, flanked on the east by a square tower and to the west by a vestibule, which serves as the connection from Chapel to the Temple. Similar to the Temple, the Chapel features a raised basement story, from which the first and second stories rise. The belt-course, which demarcates the basement from the first floor level is continuous between the Chapel and the Temple, helping to unify the two structures.

The apsidal bay at the basement level contains paired, two-over-two sash windows on each side and a central three-over-three sash window at the center of the wall, which is parallel to the street. Resting on the first story belt-course and aligned directly with the basement level windows below, paired stained glass windows are featured on each facet of the bay. Again on the wall, which is parallel to the street, a slightly larger central stained glass window is inserted, maintaining the same rhythm of the windows below. A series of paired and tripled rounded arcaded windows mark the second floor of the building. These windows feature stained glass windows from a newer vintage with opaque milk glass. The wooden cornice is painted a dark brown-red color to coordinate with the stone. Above this bay is a three-sided roof which meets at a central ridgeline.

Chapel/Rectangular Tower-

A rectangular tower abuts the apsidal projection, and contains an entry into the building. Originally, the tower entry was reached by a small concrete stair and opened directly to the first floor. Entry is now at grade, and the first floor is reached by a small run of stairs. A non-historic framed door with glass panels features a sidelight and a rectangular transom above. The transom is topped by a semi-circular non-historic stained glass window. At the second story, the tower features a paired set of rectangular, replacement stained glass windows with another similar semi-circular stained glass window above. Both rounded windows are framed by rusticated ashlar Medina sandstone arches, in keeping with others on the façade of the Chapel and Temple. Separating the second and third stories is a band of molding, which is painted a reddish color. The third story of the tower is sheathed in slate tiles, and features a group of three narrow rectangular stained glass windows that share a common simple entablature header. Wooden columns and quarter-columns separate the series of three windows, and the woodwork is also painted a reddish color. A series of moldings, including a dentil molding, separates the top of the third floor from the pyramidal, slate tile roof. This entry features a cornerstone engraved with the congregation's principal dates.

Small Vestibule-

Originally, this portion was only one story in height, with a roof coordinating to the original building. Much like that of the rectangular tower, the stairs have been removed and entry is now at grade, with the first floor accessed up a short run of stairs. The other side of the projecting bay is a small entry vestibule, which provides an additional entry from West Ferry Street. This small, rectangular block features a non-historic steel door, which is similar to that used in the rectangular tower. It features a non-historic stained glass semi-circular window similar to that found at the rectangular tower. A second story addition of recent vintage is of steel and plate glass ribbon windows under a flat roof surmount the vestibule.

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Secondary Exteriors- Temple & Chapel

The Chapel's secondary façades face the small parking area and driveway, which connects to West Ferry Street. The eastern common bond brick façade of the building is predominantly a rectilinear wall surface, featuring an off-centered gabled projection in need of repair. At grade, a series of small rectangular windows illuminate the interior basement spaces. Aligned with each of these above is a rectangular, round-head stained glass window with sandstone sill, which stretches the two stories of the Chapel. The gabled projection features a centered basement window with a series of three round-headed stained glass windows. The south, rear façade also uses simple, brick construction with minimal architectural detailing. The gable end of the original Chapel structure is composed of four bays and punched with a series of round-headed stained glass windows, some of which are boarded over. Just under the peak of the gable are two segmental arch-topped ventilation openings, resting on stone sills. A small, painted, incompatible concrete block addition has been added.

The south facing common bond brick façade of the Temple is even more starkly and plainly ornamented than that of the Chapel with a few window openings that serve to illuminate the vestry and passageways within. The most notable feature of the south façade of the Temple is a large projecting oriel-type bay, which houses the choir loft and organ for the interior sanctuary. The base features corbelled brick, which steps out to support the hexagonally faceted projection and the roof is of slate tile, with a squat, round-headed window above. A pointed arch shaped ventilation structure, similar in design and shape to those located on the primary facades completes the ensemble.

Interiors

Temple-

The interior of the Temple is composed of a large auditorium space, which is roughly octagonal in plan and is enclosed within a large, groin-vaulted octagonal ceiling, with a smaller gallery located on the north and western walls on the second floor. On the primary level, the pews are arranged facing towards an altar, which is located in the southeastern wall of the octagon. Entry into the auditorium is provided through vestibules to the north (from West Ferry Street) and to the west (from Richmond Avenue), as well as through a smaller vestibule, which connects the Chapel to the Temple. The south wall contains a choir loft and an organ niche. The eastern wall is shared with the Chapel.

Secondary spaces, which served the church functions (a vestry space, small passageway to the pulpit, and a secondary staircase to the gallery), are housed along the southern wall. Seating is provided in oak pews, which are highlighted at the top by carved Gothic floral motifs. These pews are formed into four primary areas and radiate out from the altar. The octagonal tower provides the primary flight of stairs up to the gallery level.

These oak stairs have two sets of risers, which join at a shared landing, before joining to a single curved stair, which enters the gallery space above.

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The gallery level is a curved balcony around the north and western walls, with a convexly curved front. It also connects to the second floor of the Chapel at the east. Additional pews are located in six primary rows, radiating from a central point. The gallery is open to the church interior.

Alterations to the interior of the Temple have been minimal, and the floor plan of rooms has remained essentially intact and unchanged since the building's completion.

First Floor- Auditorium Level-

While the exterior of the church maintains loyal to the Norman Romanesque style, the interior more freely blends Romanesque, Gothic, and Classical details. Non-historic carpeting covers most of the pitched floor of the Temple, and the walls feature paneled quarter-sawn oak wainscot and molding. Numerous rectangular stained glass windows of opalescent glass in a variety of colors, with a smaller transom of stained glass directly above, characterize the first floor. At the landing of the octagonal tower stairs is a window depicting Christ. The other windows on the lower level contain dedications to family members and images of crosses, lyres, medallions, and decorative patterns in a range of rich colors including blues, reds, browns, and golds.

Behind the bowed front oak pulpit between two curtained doors to the vestry passageway is a Gothic-influenced reredos. This wall features a carved blind arcade between two engaged column forms and is topped with a heavy, carved bracketed molding. The center of this reredos is convex, and curves away from the auditorium slightly. From the wooden columns, large white Corinthian columns spring. Between them, the wall is stenciled in shades of blue and red with metallic gold accent. Resting on the four engaged Corinthian columns and pilasters is a shallow, triangular Classical pediment. The choir loft and organ niche rests on a paneled oak balcony. The rear wall features additional oak paneling with the organ's numerous white pipes rising above. A niche in the southern transept is surrounded by an elliptical archway supported by Corinthian pilasters. A small rectangular stained glass window is located above the organ pipes in the ceiling of this niche, allowing the colored light to suffuse this important space within the auditorium. These Corinthian elements are also used to support vaulting in other locations around the auditorium. Near the tower stair at the northwestern corner, a series of four large Corinthian columns puncture through the balcony above, and support a series of arcaded vaults. To the southwest and northeastern edges of the seating areas, groups of four columns repeat this design, supporting the front of the balcony half wall. While the woodwork and floor plan remain largely intact, the most significant alteration to the interior of the Temple is the interior painting. Early photographs indicate that the vaults of the ceiling were ornamentally painted with geometric and floral stencil work, of which the only remaining indication of this work is found in the reredos.

Second Floor- Gallery Level-

The gallery floor features many of the same materials and elements found in the main auditorium level including the heavy balcony rail which is made of oak paneling and turned details. Notable stained glass windows, which are found at this upper level include the Rose Window to the west and the West Ferry grouped windows to the north. The Rose Window is divided by tracery into circular and arrow-shaped panels done in floral and abstract patterning. To each side is a rectangular stained glass window similar to those found on the

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main level, but without the transom panel above. The round-headed window group contains a large central window, which features elongated tracery elements and circular medallions. The design is geometric and abstracted, with an anchor design at the top center. It is flanked by smaller, similar windows to either side with floral and dove motifs. Like the lower level stained glass windows, a variety of colored opalescent glass is used in blues, greens, reds, and golds.

Ceiling-

The ceiling of the domed interior features a large, circular central stained glass window in a palette of blues with a geometric floral motif divided into eighths and from which a large circular pendant fixture hangs. This conceals up-lights, which splash onto the curved ceiling. The ceiling window originally would have been illuminated by the exterior roof skylight (now covered over), which was angled to receive the morning sun and illuminate the church during morning services. The pendant light fixture may be a later addition.

Chapel-

With the completion of the Temple addition, the Chapel was redesigned for Sunday school classrooms and office spaces for the church. Currently, it is composed of three levels; a basement used for storage, materials, and workspace, a first floor, which is partially renovated to become a small performance space, and a second floor, which contains an upper gallery and the Sunday school classroom spaces. Because of the numerous historic alterations made to the Chapel during the 1880s, it is impossible to track the exact appearance of the original structure; however, it retains an apsidal bay oriented towards the north and a large eastern facing stained glass window, which likely illuminated the original nave interior.

Basement-

The basement of the Chapel was originally constructed to house a large Social Room, which was served with a small kitchen and service rooms at the south wall. A banquet was run around the perimeter of the room to allow seating. The smaller room in the apsidal bay housed the Beginner's Department. In Edwin V. Denick's 1926/27 alterations to the Chapel, the separate kitchen and serving rooms were eliminated. The Social Room was renamed the Dining Room and stepped seating was installed around the cover. The Beginner's Room became the kitchen for the church and a more substantial wall was built to separate the two areas of the basement. The basement is currently being used as a workspace during the construction. The large open room to the south retains remains of a cove, which encircled the entire perimeter, red painted panels from a banquet seating area, and red-painted wainscoting. A brick fireplace in a pyramidal shape is surrounded by walls of exposed plaster and wood lathe.

First Floor-

Originally the largest room in the Chapel, the first floor served as a large gathering hall for the Sunday school. After its conversion from the original church, it was ringed along the east wall by smaller classroom spaces which could be created with folding doors extending between the east wall and the posts supporting the balcony. The storage rooms to the south were formerly used as additional classrooms and had fixed walls, which could be opened to the main hall with the wood timbre doors. Double-hung windows provide lighting.



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The apsidal room to the north was used by the Junior League to host their meetings and events. Denick's alterations in the 1920s to this floor appear to be minimal.

Currently, the main floor of the Chapel is set up primarily as a small thrust theater. At the north is an apsidal room, which is similar in shape and plan to the basement room below, with wood flooring, darkly colored paneled wainscot of either clear pine or maple and plastered wall above. On the eastern wall is another pyramidal brick fireplace, surrounded by cabinets. This room is separated from the space to the south by a wood door as well as with timbre doors, which are darkly stained.

Seven rectangular stained glass windows with transom lights above, a group of three facing West Ferry Street and two on each diagonal side of the apse, are similar to the most common windows of the Temple. Dedicated to the first pastor of the church, Benjamin Copeland, these windows are done in a gold, green, and red color palate and feature abstracted Gothic tracery-type patterns and floral motifs.

Adjacent to this room is the small performance room, a two-story room with a first floor performance level, and a second floor gallery above. The performance space features wood flooring, darkly stained wainscoting similar to that found in the apsidal room to the north, and some walls have a white painted wall treatment. The west wall features two stairs which lead to the upper gallery, centered with a rectangular performance stage. A metal stud wall separates this room from the adjacent apsidal. The east wall has a series of posts, which support the upper gallery and classrooms above. Along this wall are visible the lower halves of the original stained glass windows. The visible portions are rather simply designed, featuring a checkerboard pattern of glass in colors of pink, blue, white, and green. The largest central window displays an anchor medallion on the lower level. The southern wall of the performance space contains three wooden timbre doors. To the far south of the first floor are two rooms, which are currently being used for storage.

Second Floor/ Gallery Level-

The northern apsidal room known as the Primary Room in the late-nineteenth century now overlooks the performance stage. This area, which may have originally been the chancel, appears to have been filled in after the construction of the exterior walls of the Chapel, likely around the time of the construction of the Temple, since the division of the space into two floors interrupts the viewing of the tall stained glass windows of the east. In Denick's alterations, the gallery was expanded on the north and eastern sides to accommodate his larger classroom additions. He enlarged the existing southern classrooms, and created pocket door partitions, which separated the classrooms. These new partitions of the classrooms all radiated from a central origin point, which aligned with a point at the center of the speaking platform on the ground level. The floors of Denick's classrooms were stepped into three levels rising from the balcony upwards towards the rear wall of the classrooms.

The second floor contains a gallery balcony, which allows access to a series of small rooms along the east and south walls of the Chapel. It also features a large room in the apsidal bay, comparable to those found on the lower two floors. Non-historic stained glass windows have been inserted into the seven round-headed windows along the projecting bay to the north. The ceiling is dished. The south facing wall contains a pair of

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pocket doors. Passing through a small angled corridor and down two steps, the narrow balcony rings the upper areas of the performance space. The gallery overhangs the lower performance space by less than 15 feet, allowing for a large opening in the second floor to the space below. The balcony is bordered to the east by numerous dark wood paneled doors, which divide the several small classroom spaces from the main space of the Chapel. These doors could be fully opened, allowing for the removal of divisions between the performance and old classroom spaces. These eastern classrooms vary in size and are formed from angled walls. Many of the rooms contain the upper portions of the two story stained glass windows (the bottom of which was viewed from below). Where these windows run up through the floor, the surrounding gap from below is shielded by decorative cast iron railing, which is painted white. Classrooms are also located along the south wall of the Chapel. An additional classroom is located to the northwest, while the northeastern room has been opened up with a panel of glass for use as a control room for theatrical productions. Above the brass and wood rail of the balcony, theatrical lighting has been installed, which is attached to pipes running parallel to the rail. The ceiling of the Chapel has been painted black, and is similar to the dished ceiling of the apsidal north room. Of note is the large rectangular stained glass skylight, which is located in the ceiling of the main performance space. Although currently it no longer has access to exterior illumination, the use of electrical lighting can illuminate this large panel in vibrant shades of golds and green.

Key Stained Glass Windows-

Temple-

**The Rose Window:** Facing Richmond Avenue, the building's most featured window is referred to as the Rose Window. Measuring fourteen feet in diameter, around the perimeter of the window are sixteen flower medallions, including a stylized Gothic flower and a more conventionally appearing lily. Radiating around a central round medallion is a series of arrow-shaped glass panels, which feature daisies and lilies. Lilies serve as a traditional Methodist symbol of Christ's resurrection. The center of this window contains the memorial to Cornelia F. Bloomer, and the window was donated by her husband. The motifs used at the central medallion features a crown over cross design, which symbolized Christ's dominion over death. The use of the colors of red and white, which dominate the scheme of the Rose window, indicated a sense of love and purity.

**West Ferry grouping:** This large round-headed window group facing the north has three arch-topped windows. The larger central window is flanked by two smaller windows to each side and is dedicated to Thomas Maytham and his family. At the bottom of each window is a decorative band of opalescent glass in geometric forms in colors of green and red, indicating growth and love. Above this band, the central window features columns with a chain-link type patterning between. From the columns springs an arch with a stylized iris. The smaller flanking windows contain the same chain-link pattern, with irises and round floral medallions above. The iris is a symbol of Mary, Mother of Jesus, in the Methodist church. The central window contains an anchor motif, which indicates Christ as the "anchor of our souls" intertwined with an olive branch of peace, harmony and healing. Stylized kaleidoscope-like circular forms are on either side. One of the smaller windows features a medallion with blue flowers and the other features a dove, indicating the Holy Spirit bringing peace.

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**Skylight:** One of the most unusual windows is the stained glass circular skylight in the ceiling of the vaulted auditorium. Tracery divides it into 8 segments, each featuring a stylized wheel and floral motifs. The predominant colors are blues (Heaven) and yellows (God's abundance), which also refer to the sky and sunlight above.

**Commemorative Windows:** Located throughout the west and north facades of the building, these smaller windows are dedicated to some of the family members of people associated with the construction of the church itself, including John Coppins and William Booth, who's Queen City Stained Glass Works is credited with the majority of the windows. Others are dedicated to the church's first pastors Rev. Benjamin Copeland and Rev. W.C. Wilbor. This series of windows are all similarly designed, featuring a bottom panel for inscriptions, an upper area for an image, and a transom window above. The windows designed for Coppins and Booth compliment each other, designed with a Gothic pointed-arch arcade, similar top and bottom patterned bands, and a symbol in the center. Coppins' window contains a cross and palm motif, indicating victory and triumph over death. Booth's window contains the symbol of the lyre, which signifies music and the liberal arts. Significantly, Copeland's and Wilbor's flank the Rose window, thus tying these men and their service to the most prominent feature of the church. These windows are similar and can be seen as a pair. They are designed with a decorative band at the bottom for the inscription and feature a pointed arched form, which rises above, seemingly indicating the interior vault of a church. Wilbor's features a chalice motif, symbol of forgiveness and Communion, while Copeland's features a lyre, indicating music and joy. Other rectangular stained glass windows are set as pairs and commemorate other important parishioners in a similar fashion.

Chapel-

**Ruth Richmond Copeland Windows:** While many of the original windows in the Chapel are currently damaged, missing or boarded up for their protection, there are still visible a few examples of the beauty and color of the Chapel windows. Perhaps one of the most stunning collections is the series of seven windows on the first floor in the former Junior League Room to the north. These windows were donated by the Junior League in honor of Ruth Richmond Copeland (the widow of Rev Copeland and a long-time member of the church) and include stylized, geometric flowers, green colored borders and diamond-patterned designs. The center window contains their motif, which reads, "Look up – lift up." Running above all of the windows is a colorful transom with glass gothic tracery, flowers, and jewels.

**Other:** Along the south wall is a series of arch-headed windows, which are created in a checkerboard type pattern of soft pinks, creams, and blues. The largest of these windows includes a medallion with an anchor (indicating steadfastness and fidelity), which is visible on the first floor of the Chapel. A similar window features an open Bible in the medallion, which often symbolizes the importance of education to the Methodists. Above this image, a tracery forming the shape of a petaled flower surrounds a crown and cross motif. Many of these motifs reappear in the design of the Temple windows.

Name of Property

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### Applicable National Register Criteria

[ X] **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.

[ X] 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.

(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

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

## Bibliography

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

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67)  
has been requested.

☐ 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

(Enter categories from instructions)

## Architecture

## Social History

**Period of Significance:**

c.1885-1898

**Significant Dates:**

1885-1891, 1891-1892, 1897-1898,

1926-1927, 1929

**Significant Person:**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation:**

N/A

**Architect/Builder:**

Metzger & Greenfield Architects, Buffalo, NY  
(1897-1898), George M. Booth Company,  
Buffalo (Windows), A.B. Felgemaker  
Company, Erie, PA (Organ)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): \_\_\_\_\_ Primary location of additional data: \_\_\_\_\_

[ 1 ] State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State agency

☐ Federal Agency

☐ Local Government

[ ] Essay class  
[ ] University

☐ Other repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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National Park Service

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Richmond Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church

**Name of Property**

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Erie County, New York

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Significance

The Richmond Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church is significant as an intact representative example of a late-nineteenth century church designed in the Norman Revival style of architecture and for its association with the development of religious congregations and the neighborhoods on the west side of Buffalo, New York. Constructed between c.1885 and 1898, the two and half story church was constructed in two primary phases in 1891 and 1897, with the latter construction phase using the latest building technologies of its era, incorporating the use of steel trusses, which support the structure's doomed ceilings. This use of new advancements in engineering and architectural methods is reflective of the late-nineteenth century growth and industrial power of the city, which once ranked as the eighth largest city in the United States. Sited adjacent to Fredrick Law Olmstead's Ferry Circle, the church is in a largely residential neighborhood on the city's west side. This neighborhood is representative of the period of growth and reflected in the finely crafted Revival and Victorian era residences and churches constructed during the turn of the century. The Richmond Avenue Church serves as a visual landmark and historic resource of considerable pride in a neighborhood revitalized by both long term residents and a new generation of homeowners.

The Richmond Avenue Methodist-Episcopal Church

On April 16, 1885, a plan for organizing a new church was put before the Buffalo Methodist Union. A resolution was approved and a committee of 10 men was appointed the task selecting a site for the new church. By May 5, 1885, the committee reported to the Union that a group of four ministers and six laymen had offered to donate a lot for a church located at the present site at Richmond Avenue and West Ferry. A condition of the Union would be the construction of a suitable chapel within forty-five days. This proposal was accepted and on Sunday, August 9, 1885, a wooden Chapel was dedicated by the presiding elder, Reverend A.N. Fisher. This original structure was noted as measuring 40 x 24 feet in size, costing \$1455 for its construction. A Sunday school was organized the following week on August 16, 1885 with 127 people in attendance. This program was immensely popular at the new Richmond Avenue ME Church and featured an average attendance of 153 students in the school's first year. On September 17, 1885, the first prayer meeting was conducted by David E. Brown with 30 people present.

The church's first pastor, Reverend Benjamin Copeland, was appointed on March 15, 1886. Copeland described the church as a frontier Sunday school upon his arrival. On April 1, 1886, Rev. Copeland formally organized the church with 23 members. Copeland was a strong minister for the fledgling church and within his five years of service, the church grew to a membership of 400 people with the Sunday school enrollment climbing to 700 members. At this time the property's value increased to \$40,000. A majority of the congregation had previously been members of the Plymouth (now the Karpeles Manuscript Library), Riverside, and Delaware Avenue (NR Listed 2003) churches, with many residents coming from the growing residential neighborhood.

Due to the congregation's accelerated growth, in the spring of 1887, a decision was made to build an addition at a cost of \$700 measuring 14 x 30 feet to the church. This new building was dedicated on May 16,

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Richmond Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church

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1887. Also during this time, a Parsonage lot was donated to the Church by George L. Thorne and a new home was completed at 468 Richmond Avenue. The need to accommodate the growing membership led to the enlargement of the original wooden chapel seven times in order to accommodate the popular Sunday school. In 1889 a "Large addition" measuring 34 x 40 feet square was added to the original structure. The original little wooden chapel was remarked at the time to have been completely engulfed into the subsequent additions.

Reflecting this influx of money and membership, on September 1, 1891 a cornerstone was laid for a new stone Chapel, which was dedicated on Sunday, January 3, 1892.<sup>1</sup> The money for the project was donated by Mrs. James B. Stafford who initially contributed \$1450, but soon increased the amount to \$2500. The completed Chapel cost a total of \$19,000, most of which was raised by the church. In the January 7, 1892 issue of the *Buffalo Christian Advocate*, the new chapel was described as "commodious, cheery, and a model of what the house of a live active church should be." The interior rooms were described as reflecting practical planning, detail work, decorations, woodwork, windows, and furnishings, which made the Sunday school space attractive and functional. "Everyone will concede that a church, of which the engraving is but the shadow, must be, when completed in harmony with these outlines, one of the finest specimens of architecture in the realms of Methodism."

By 1893, the Richmond Avenue ME Church had swelled to a membership of 553 with the Sunday school hosting almost 900 students. During this period, the church boasted the largest membership and one of the highest property values of any of the Methodist Episcopal churches in Buffalo. Plans for further enlargements were begun in 1886 and by 1897, the new building enterprise was begun. The Buffalo architectural firm of Metzger and Greenfield was selected to design the new addition to the Chapel, known as the Temple. Robert A. Greenfield, who was himself a congregant of the Richmond Avenue ME Church and a teacher in the Sunday school, was the primary designer of the new structure. Working in a style familiar to contemporary Methodist churches in Buffalo, including the Linwood Avenue Church (1895-96) and the Central Park Church (1894), the Norman Romanesque was a popular style used for many Protestant churches during the late 1890s due to its somber, simple yet religious connotations. The numerous stained glass windows were designed by the prominent Queen City Stained Glass Works, whose primary designer George M. Booth was a member of the parish. Contractors John C. Watson and Daniel McGinniss of Buffalo completed the stonework. The organ was designed by the A.B. Felgemaker Company<sup>2</sup> from Erie, P.A. and the interior painting and decorations were completed by Frances T. Coppins, who also served as the church's Sunday school director.

<sup>1</sup> Presently, information regarding the Chapel's architect and how much of the original c.1885 wood chapel and subsequent additions were retained in the 1891 remodeling is unknown.

<sup>2</sup> Originally founded in Buffalo, the A.B. Felgemaker Company relocated to Erie, PA in 1872. During this year, the company was known as the Derrick and Felgemaker Pipe Organ Company and was located at the corner of 25<sup>th</sup> and Ash Streets in Erie. During the 1870s, the company employed over 55 workers and had \$75,000 worth of capital. The firm had the capacity to produce 15 to 20 portable church organs in one week. Specialties of the company included church organs and portable pipe organs for small churches, schools, and residential parlors. By 1878, the company was renamed as the A.B. Felgemaker Company. Several workers from the Felgemaker Company, joined to form the Organ Supply Industries, Inc. in Erie which is today the largest and most comprehensive pipe organ manufacturer and supply house.

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On March 20, 1898, the new Temple was officially dedicated, and it was estimated that \$24,000 was collected in the offering.

Upon its completion in 1898, the Richmond Avenue ME Church played a prominent role in the local community. The church served the needs of local Boy Scout troops, Women's organizations, and other local organizations. The church established two missionary Sunday Schools in Buffalo, which expanded on the church's popular Sunday school classes. The church also established foreign missions in Japan, India, and Africa, as well as a hospital in China.

In order to adapt and respond to the swelling number of church members and Sunday school students, several plans were proposed which would help to update and modernize the Church. Although the original lighting system had utilized combination gas and electric fixtures, in 1919 a new lighting scheme was installed by Pierre E. Haynes. In 1926/27, Pittsburgh architect Edwin V. Denick<sup>3</sup> prepared plans which made alterations to the Sunday Schools rooms of the church. On March 18, 1929, Harold Jewett Cook<sup>4</sup>, a Buffalo based architect, submitted his proposals for additional renovations to the Chapel portions of the Richmond Avenue ME Church. His plans included alterations to the basement social room, the auditorium, new furniture, and the addition of a vestibule on Ferry Street. By the 1940s, the Richmond Avenue ME Church had 1200 active members in its congregation. Commemorated its fortieth anniversary, church officials burned the last remaining mortgage on the church Parsonage property (valued at \$11,000), wiping clean any remaining debt.

At the time of its construction, the Richmond Avenue ME Church was the only church which served the surrounding community. Therefore, in its earliest days many area residents attended services, even those who were not Methodists. However, by the 1940s, nearly 20 other churches had been built in the area, and this marked the turning point which would begin the church's slow decline in membership. Many members of the congregation withdrew from the Richmond Avenue ME Church once their denomination built a church in the neighborhood. More recently, the Richmond Avenue ME Church became a victim a common phenomenon which was striking many residential Buffalo churches. As church members aged and residents moved out of the city and into the suburbs surrounding Buffalo beginning in the 1950s, many churches were forced to consolidate and close due to dwindling numbers of members. Although it continued to serve a small and devoted number of parishioners, the Richmond Avenue ME Church was forced to close its doors in 1996.

<sup>3</sup> Born on August 12, 1876 in Syracuse, NY, Edwin V. Denick studied architecture at Syracuse University from 1896-1901 before graduating from the school with a Bachelors degree. He relocated to Pittsburgh after graduation, where he worked as a draughtsman before establishing his own architectural practice.

<sup>4</sup> Born in 1885 in New York City, Harold Jewett Cook attended Columbia University and the University of Wisconsin. He began his architectural career in Little Falls New York in 1905 and relocated to Buffalo 1908. From 1913 to 1919, Cook was partnered with Paul F. Mann (1881-1943), the architect credited with the design of the Curtiss Building (pending NR Listing 2008). The firm designed numerous bank buildings across New York State and a number of substantial residential structures in the western portion of the state. Houses the firm designed in Buffalo included those for Archer Landon (1913) at 76 Penhurst Park, Laura Letchworth (1915) at 96 Rumsey Road, and Francis Dewes (1916) at 104 Chapin Parkway. They also designed the Grant Theater (1914) at 363 Grant Street, the First Church of Evan [(1915) NR Listed 2005], and the Depew Masonic Temple [(1916) NR Listed 1999] in nearby Lancaster, New York. Cook served as the treasurer of the Buffalo chapter of the American Institute of Architects. He died in Buffalo in 1933.

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Metzger & Greenfield

Local architects D. Edward Metzger and Robert A. Greenfield founded the firm of Metzger and Greenfield in 1894. Initially the firm assumed the offices formerly used by Metzger in his private practice, located at the White Building in downtown Buffalo. In 1897, the firm relocated to office number 1318 of the recently completed Guaranty (later Prudential) Building (NHL Listed 1975), designed by Dankmar Adler and Louis Sullivan.

Robert A. Greenfield was noted as the primary designer behind the Temple structure of the Richmond Avenue ME Church. Born in Auburn, NY on January 4, 1872, Greenfield trained in the office of prominent Buffalo architects Green and Wicks<sup>5</sup>. In his private practice established prior to his partnership with Metzger, Greenfield's most notable works from this period include the Christian Science Church on Norwood Avenue in Buffalo, the Knights Templar Building in Utica, NY, and the 14-story Postal Telegraph Company Building in New York City. Later in his career, he designed the 16-story Security Building in Miami [(1927) NR Listed 2003]. In the 1930's, Greenfield supervised construction of the Courthouse in Pittsburgh, PA [(1931-34) NR Listed] before he returned to Buffalo in November 1935 to serve as supervisor of the Federal Court House Building ((1936) on Niagara Square. Greenfield was a member of the American Institute of Architects and the American Society of Civil Engineers and served as supervising construction engineer for the Treasury Department for several years. Robert Greenfield died in Geneva, NY in 1938.

D. Edward Metzger was born in Buffalo in 1864 and began his architectural training in 1881. By 1885, he was managing his brother, George J. Metzger's<sup>6</sup> prominent architectural practice, where he supervised construction of the State Office Building and his brother's design for the 1902-1907 Masten Avenue Armory (burned 1931). In addition to his role in his brother's architectural practice, Metzger established a practice for himself in 1890. His early designs include several homes for prominent Buffalo residents, the Sacred Heart Academy High School, and the Buffalo Catholic Institute. He was appointed as Superintendant of construction for the State Department of Architecture in 1909, and then later appointed construction engineer when that agency merged with the Department of Public Works, before retiring in 1935. Edward Metzger died on December 30, 1951.

<sup>5</sup> The firm of Green & Wicks is responsible for some of the city of Buffalo's most notable landmarks and helped shape enormous portions of the city's architectural landscape with their notable designs. These include the National Register Listed Albright-Knox Gallery (1900-05), the Market Arcade (1892), the Buffalo Savings Bank (1900-01), and numerous others.

<sup>6</sup> Col. George J. Metzger (1855-1929) was born in the city of Buffalo and educated in the city's public schools. He began his architectural training at the early age of 20 in the office of Cyrus K. Porter, architect of the Springville Baptist Church [(1869) pending NR Listing 2008] and Trinity Church [(1886) NR Listed 2007]. In private practice he went on to design numerous private and public projects, including the Lancaster Town Hall and Opera House (1896) and Buffalo's School 13 [(1915) NR Listed 2005]. A 30 year serving member New York National Guard, Metzger's most prominent building, the 1902-07 Maston Avenue Armory for the Sixty-Fifth Regiment, burnt to the ground on May 6<sup>th</sup> 1931.



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Queen City Stained Glass Works/Booth Art Glass Works

Born on October 1 1820, William H. Booth learned the trade of glass design early in his youth in Ightham, Kent, England. He immigrated to New York City with his young family in 1849. Four years later, he moved again to Buffalo, where he found work at the Queen City Stained Glass Works. At the time, the small company was owned by William G. Miller who had established his business in 1845. During the next decade, William Booth worked for the company as well as apprenticed his young son, George in the art of glass design. George M. Booth would take a detour in following his father's footsteps and serve in the Grand Army of the Republic during the Civil War. Before the end of the War, William Booth and another Queen City Stained Glass Works employee, a Mr. Reister, took over the company in 1864. The company soon after expanded their staffing to twenty artists and craftsmen. It is unclear how long this partnership lasted.

By the 1880's, William and his son George received commissions and had created a large body of work across North America. Specializing in the design of emblems, monograms, medallions, and scriptural pieces, examples of the firm's residential and ecclesiastical designs could be found throughout the eastern seaboard, California, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. At one point the company boasted that they had done over 200 churches in New York as well as installed a piece of glass in every state in the Union.<sup>7</sup> An 1887 brochure from the company stated that recent works included the Olean Baptist Church, Presbyterian Church of Gowanda, St. James Protestant Church in Buffalo, and the English Lutheran Church of Canton, Ohio.

William H. Booth remained active in the firm until 1888 and passed away in 1892. At the time of his death, the company was preparing the installation of their signature glass in the family's parish church; the Richmond Avenue Methodist-Episcopal Church. A commemorative window to William is installed prominently in the church.

George M. Booth assumed the roll of President and changed the name of the company to the Booth Art Glass Works in 1898. The firm continued to thrive in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Three generations of Booth's had assumed leadership roles in the company. George's son William had become the principal craftsman and his daughter Alice helped to manage the business. George Booth had become a prominent figure in Buffalo and on February 12, 1909 gave a speech at the Richmond Avenue Methodist Church regarding his war years entitled: Lincoln and the War. He died on January 22, 1920 in Buffalo.

Frances T. Coppins, Interior Painting and Frescoes

A prominent member of the Buffalo political community, Frances Coppins also was active in the Richmond Avenue ME Church congregation. Originally born in Toronto on January 17, 1850, Coppins moved to Buffalo at age 2. In 1871, he joined his father in the business of house painting and decoration. While serving as President of the active decorating company. Coppins was also appointed to serve as Sheriff of Erie

<sup>7</sup> Commerce, Manufacturers & Resources of Buffalo and Environs, 1880, Commercial Publishing Co. A.F. Marthens, Editor, Cosack & Co., Buffalo, NY. Pg 135

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County in 1902, and was elected to serve as Alderman for the old 24<sup>th</sup> Ward in 1903-09. He later served as a city Councilman from 1912-15, acting as the Chairman of the Committee of Schools. Frances T. Coppins was a founder of the Richmond Avenue ME Church, and served as superintendant of the Sunday school for 27 years.

The Coppins painting firm was well known both in Buffalo and across the country and in 1887 Coppins was elected President of the New York State Master Painters and Decorators Association. In addition to completing the interior painting and stencil work in the Richmond Avenue church, among the other works attributed to the company are the Gluck Building in Niagara Falls, the Tonawanda YMCA, and the G.V. Forman residence. Coppins retired from active work at the firm in 1918, although he continued to serve as President of the Lyman T. Coppins Painting Company (run by his son) until his death on December 29, 1925. His funeral services were held at the Richmond Avenue ME Church on December 31, 1925. Although he was a noted local politician and community leader, Coppins was said to have been most proud of his work with the Richmond Avenue ME Church.

Frederick Law Olmsted and the Buffalo Park System

Although not personally connected to the Richmond Avenue ME Church, Richmond Avenue and the Ferry Circle would become integrated as part of Frederick Law Olmsted's Buffalo Parkway system, which connected Delaware Park to Front Park. Initially conceived between 1868 and 1870, the Buffalo park system was substantially constructed by 1876. These parkways played a crucial role in Olmsted's thinking about parks and landscapes, and the broad, tree lined avenues gave a tranquil, forested atmosphere to the rapidly growing city. The parkways of Buffalo were among the first to be designed in the country. The Richmond Avenue ME Church was designed to respond to the curve and prominent setting of its location on the southeastern corner of Ferry Circle. Images of the Richmond Avenue ME Church following its construction demonstrated the lush landscaping and canopy of trees, which clearly was intended to enhance the landscaping of Olmsted's Richmond Avenue and Ferry Circle.<sup>8</sup>

Norman Romanesque Revival Architecture

Norman architecture is a category of Romanesque architecture developed by the Normans during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The style originated in Normandy and became widespread in Europe and especially in England where castles, fortifications, monasteries, abbeys, and churches were built across the country. The architecture of the Normans was characterized by its solidity and massive proportions created from simple geometries, as well as by the use of round arches, which were especially common over windows and doorways. Exteriors typically featured crenellations and towers, as well as plain archways and column capitals. Common interior features to Norman design included arcades and galleries. Notable English examples of religious Norman Romanesque architecture include Durham Cathedral (c.1093), Winchester Cathedral

<sup>8</sup> Additional information regarding Frederick Law Olmsted and the Buffalo Park System can be found in the Olmsted Park and Parkway System Thematic Resources. NR Listed 1982.

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(c.1079) and Oxford Castle (1074). As a Revival style, Norman Romanesque became popular in late-nineteenth century architecture where it was commonly used for churches.

Perhaps the most notable nineteenth century American architect who was instrumental in introducing Romanesque styles to the U.S. was Henry Hobson Richardson, whose work was characterized by heavy, solid massing, simplified geometries and the use of the rounded arch. In Buffalo, Richardson completed his largest work at the Buffalo Psychiatric Center [(1872-1900) NHL 1986], which like the Richmond Avenue ME Church, was also constructed out of rough-faced ashlar blocks of Medina sandstone. Other examples of the Norman Romanesque style in Buffalo can be seen at the Westminster Presbyterian Church designed by Harlow M. Wilcox (1858-59), First Presbyterian Church designed by Green and Wicks (1889-91), and the Connecticut Street Armory by Lansing and Beierl [(1898-1900), NR Listed 1994]. The last two structures which date to a contemporary era also share Richmond Avenue ME Church's solid, heavy massing, use of crenellations and towers as well as using round-headed arches as a predominant design element. During the same period it was constructing the church at Richmond Avenue, the Methodist Union also constructed the Linwood Avenue Church (1895-95) and the Central Park Church (1894) in Buffalo. These churches, like the Richmond Avenue ME Church, share similar Norman details including weighty, simplified massing, small squat towers, crenellated cresting along the roof ridgelines and even small dormered roof vents.

Recent History

After sitting vacant for a few tenuous years, the church was purchased by The Alleyway Theater for \$75,000 on October 28, 1998. Calling the project the Upper West Arts Center, the Alleyway Theater hopes to restore and renovate the church for use as a performance venue with a 600-seat theater concert hall, a 99-seat drama theater, rehearsal rooms, meeting spaces, exhibit galleries, dressing rooms, offices and artists lofts. Initially after it was purchased by the Theater company, the Richmond Avenue ME Church continued to house a small religious congregation, a dance school, a professional caterer, and spaces were rented as artist studios.

Since the purchase of the building, the not-for-profit organization has taken on the exhaustive task of restoring the structure, as well updating the facilities to meet local building requirements. The process has involved a dedicated group of volunteers from the local community, many with past ties to the church itself. Funding for the project has come from numerous public and private investments including The Margaret L. Wendt Foundation, The Erwin H. Johnson Memorial Fund, Inc. and The Elster Foundation. Other support has come from the New York State Council on the Arts, M&T Bank, New York State Cultural Facilities Enhancement Fund, The Spaulding Foundation, the Fatta Foundation, Erie County, a \$250,000 Strategic Investment Program Grant, and hundreds of donations from private investors.

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Closing Statement of Significance

For over a century, the Richmond Avenue ME Church played a vital role in both the religious and secular lives of the West Side community it served. It served as a significant place where the local residents could join for worship, meetings, weddings, funerals and other important events in their daily lives. It was a vital, active congregation which supported not only the betterment of the city and the area residents through its active Sunday school, but also sought to extend its services across the globe. Its very existence mirrored the rise of residential neighborhoods in the West Side of Buffalo in the 1880s and 90s, and its closing reflected the shifting demographics of the city as residents relocated to the suburban fringes. The architecture of the Richmond Ave ME Church sought the highest standards in design, painting, woodworking, glass making and other crafts. The use of new steel technologies was intended to heighten the sense of religious glory by creating an immense vaulted interior for the main auditorium. The use of this new technology was rather innovative for the late 1890s, as its possibilities had only recently been explored by architects. The potentials of steel construction had been demonstrated in Buffalo by Adler and Sullivan at the Guaranty Building which was completed in 1896- only one year before construction began at the Richmond Avenue ME Church. For many years, the church has served as a silent witness to the activities of the local community, mirroring its triumphs and failures, always linked to the people, activities and spirit of the city.

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The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Dedication of the Richmond Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church: Corner Richmond Avenue and West Ferry Street, Buffalo, New York: March Eleventh to Eighteenth, Nineteen Hundred and Twenty-Three. Buffalo: s.n, 1923.

Richmond Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church (Buffalo, N.Y.). Richmond Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church, Buffalo, New York. Fiftieth Anniversary, 1886-1936. Buffalo, N.Y.: Press of C.E. Jameson & Son, 1936.

--- Richmond Avenue Methodist Episcopal Sunday School Illustrated, 1899. Buffalo, N.Y.: Brotherhood of St. James, 1899.

**Additional Sources:**

Scrapbook Collections of the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library

Richmond Avenue M.E. Church File at the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society

The American Institute of Architects Archives

The collections of the Richmond Avenue ME Church and Neil Radice

Richmond Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church  
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## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1 acre

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 183168 4758704  
Zone Easting Northing

3 18    
Zone Easting Northing

2 18

4 18

### 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 Daniel McEneny-Historic Preservation Program Specialist

organization New York State Historic Preservation Office date 8/26/2008

street & number PO Box 189 telephone 518-237-8643 x3275

city or town Waterford state NY zip code 12188

## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

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

### Additional items

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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

name Alleyway Theatre Inc.

street & number One Curtain Up Alley telephone 716-852-2600

city or town Buffalo state NY zip code 14202

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

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

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 1

Richmond Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

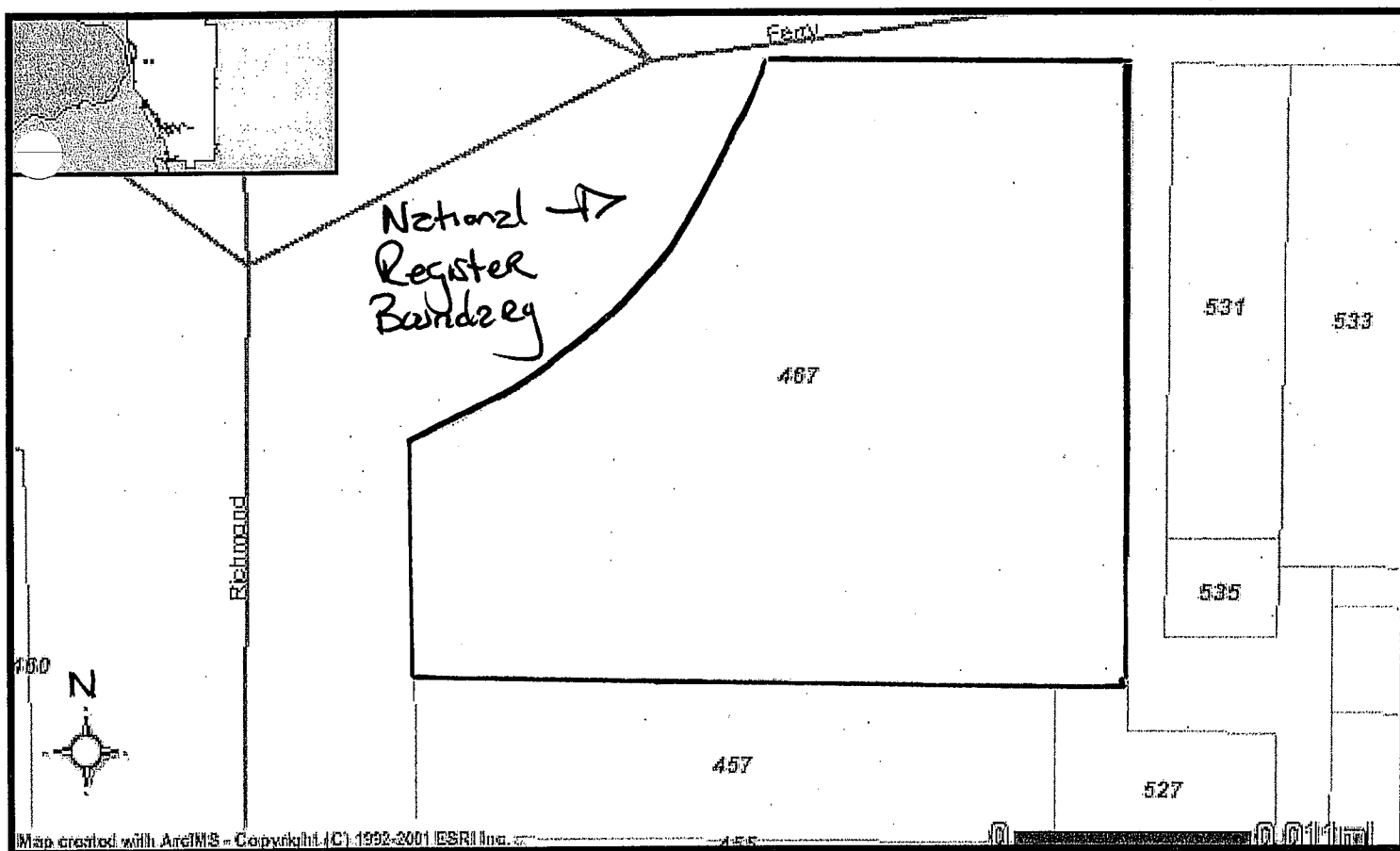
County and State

Boundary Description

The nominated resource is located within the lands from W. Ferry Street to the north, a common alley way to the east, abuts a city parcel to the south, Richmond Avenue to the west, and curves along Ferry Circle to the northeast. The Boundary is indicated by the heavy line on the attached map.

Boundary Justification

The property is located on lands historically associated with the church throughout the period of significance. The property is within the boundary lines of parcel 467 on the attached map.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Richmond Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

Section 11 Page 1

Photography: Jennifer Walkowski 2008

Digital Archives: NYS Office of Historic Preservation, Peebles Island, Waterford, 12188

Photos List:

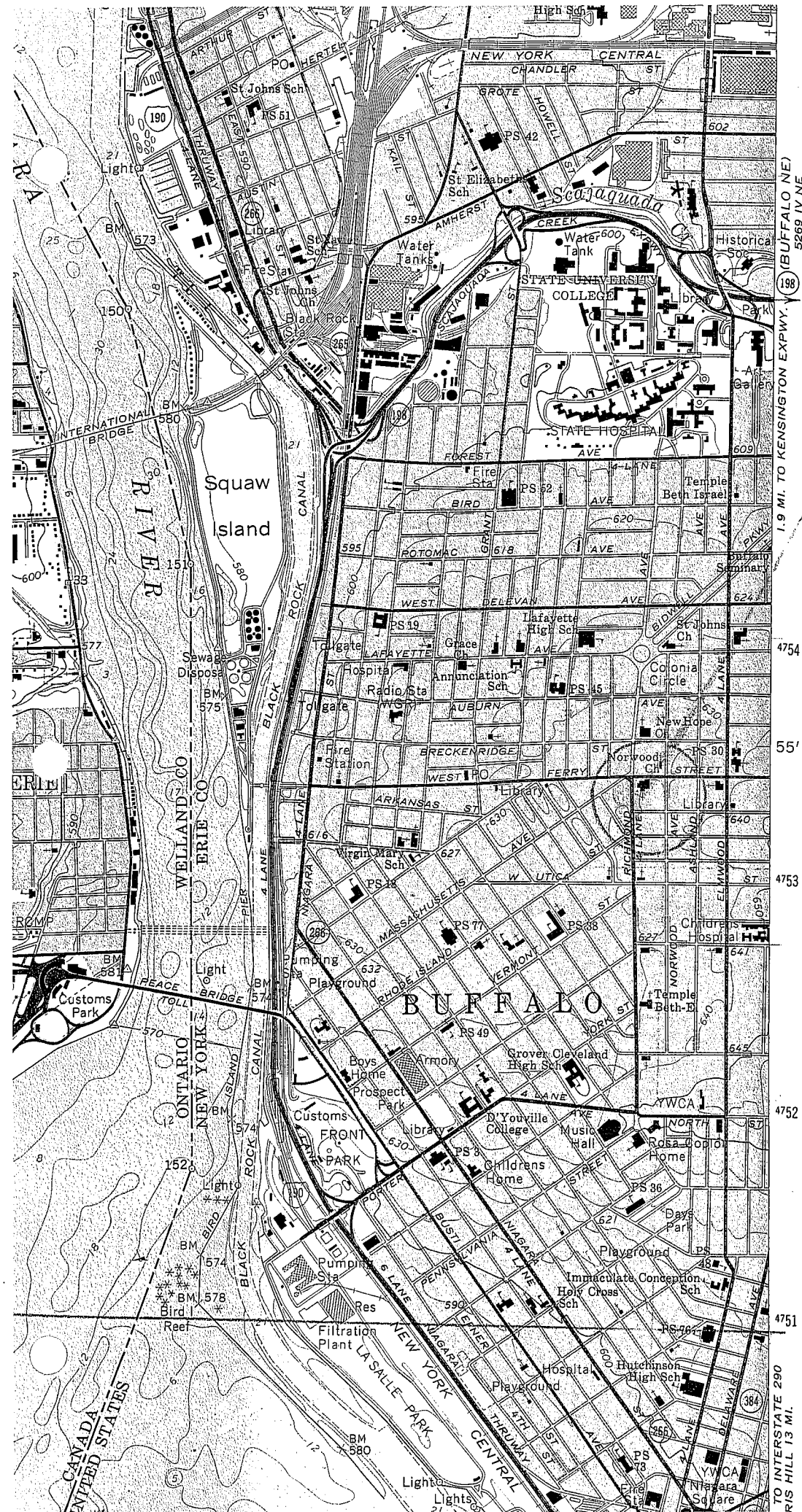
1. Principal Temple Exterior: Facing Northwest
2. West Ferry Street Entrance: Facing North
3. Chapel Cornerstone
4. Temple & Chapel rear: Facing Southeast
5. Temple Altar
6. Temple Mezzanine
7. Temple Organ, Altar, & Skylight
8. Typical Art Glass
9. Rose Window
10. Chapel Interior

Historic View: Postcard- Postmarked 1909

Principal research and documentation provided by:

Jennifer Walkowski  
Clinton Brown Company Architecture  
653 Main Street, Ste 104  
Buffalo, NY 14203



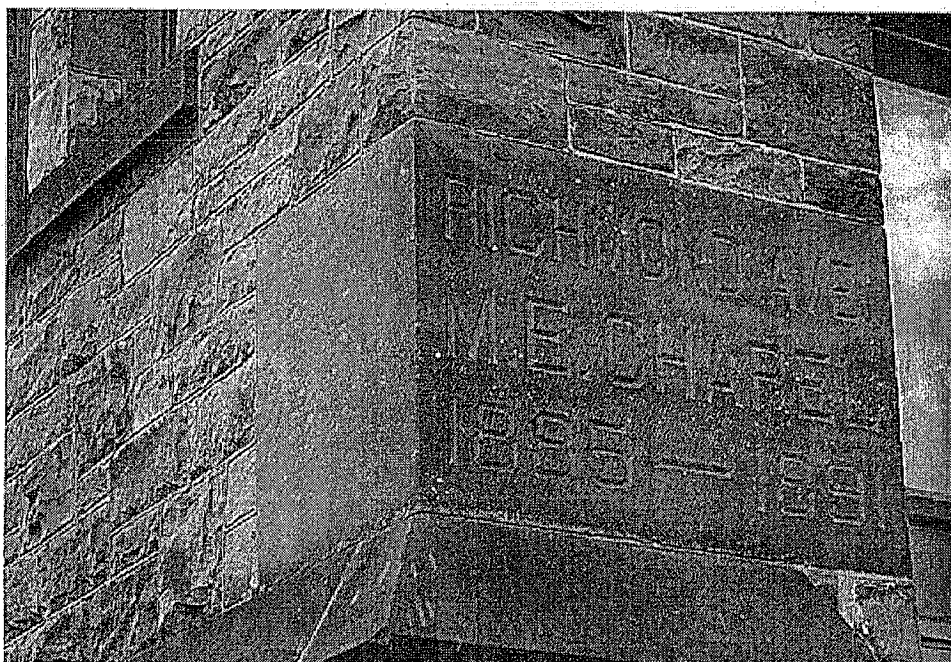
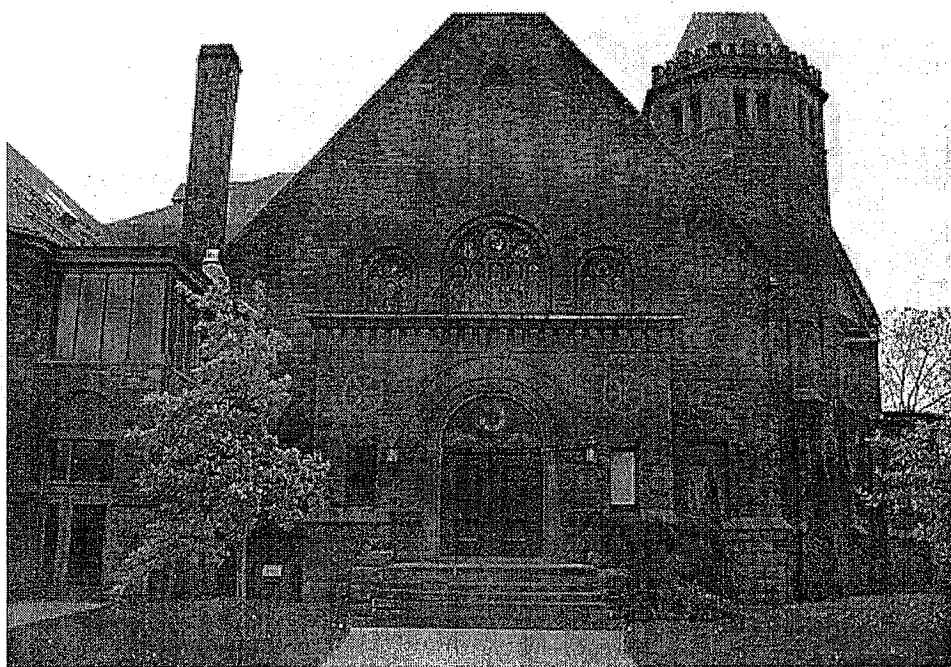
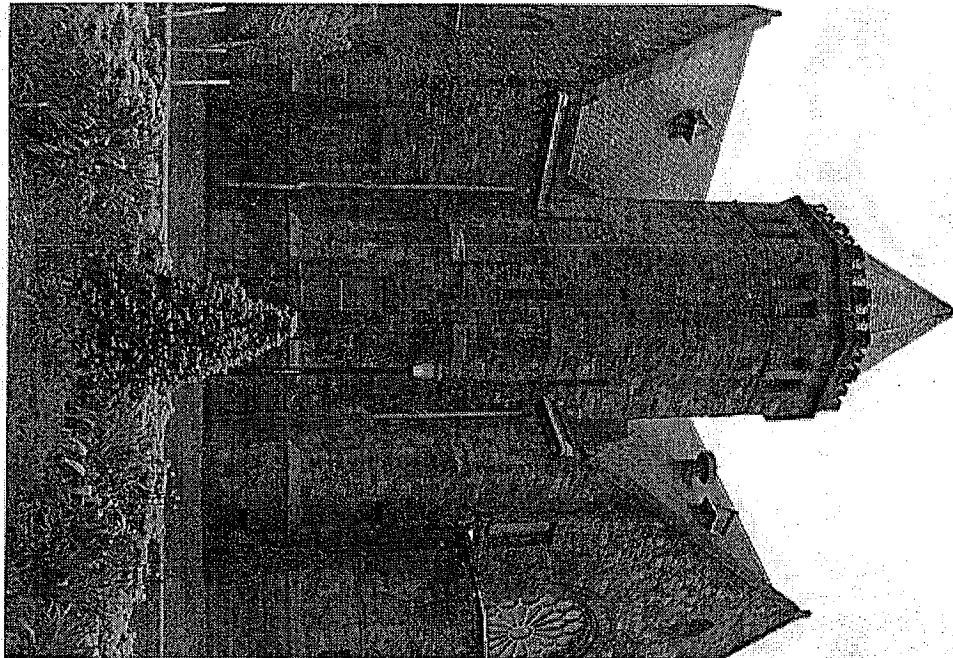


Richmond Avenue  
Methodist - Episcopal  
Church

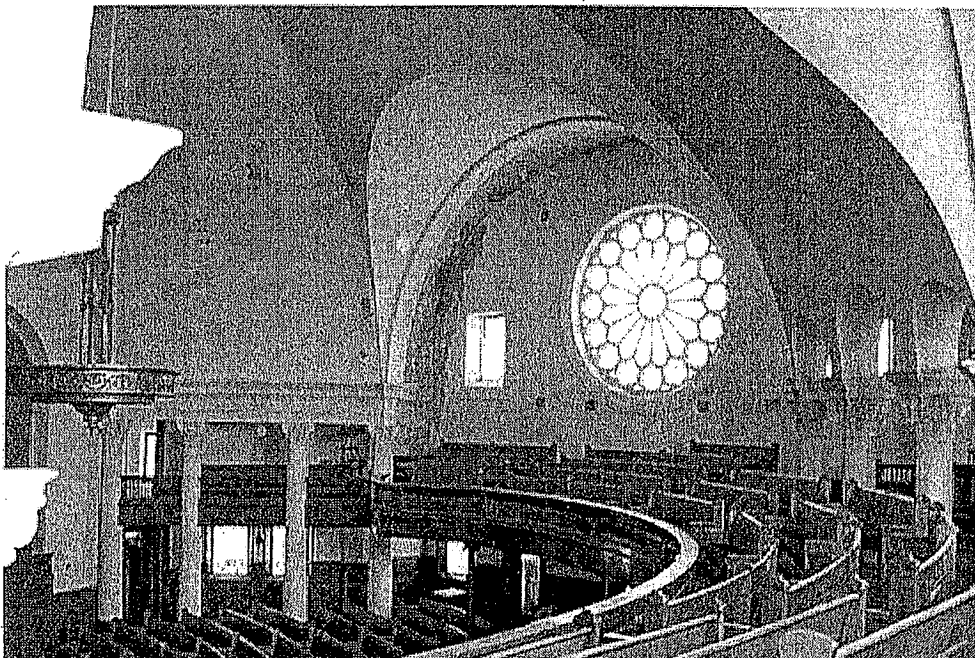
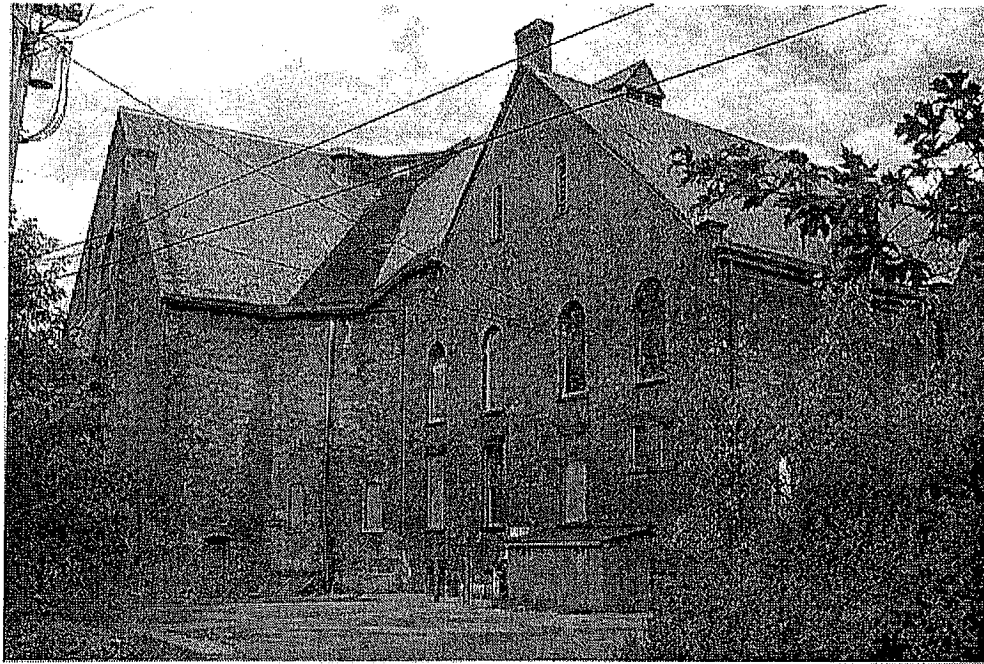
Buffalo, NY  
Erie County  
Buffalo NW Quad

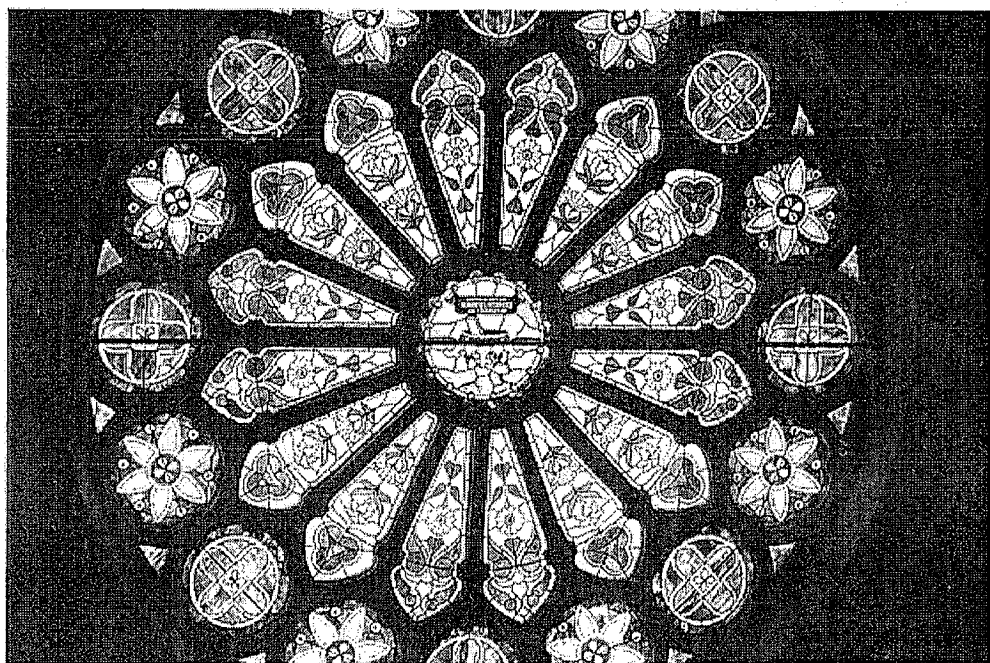
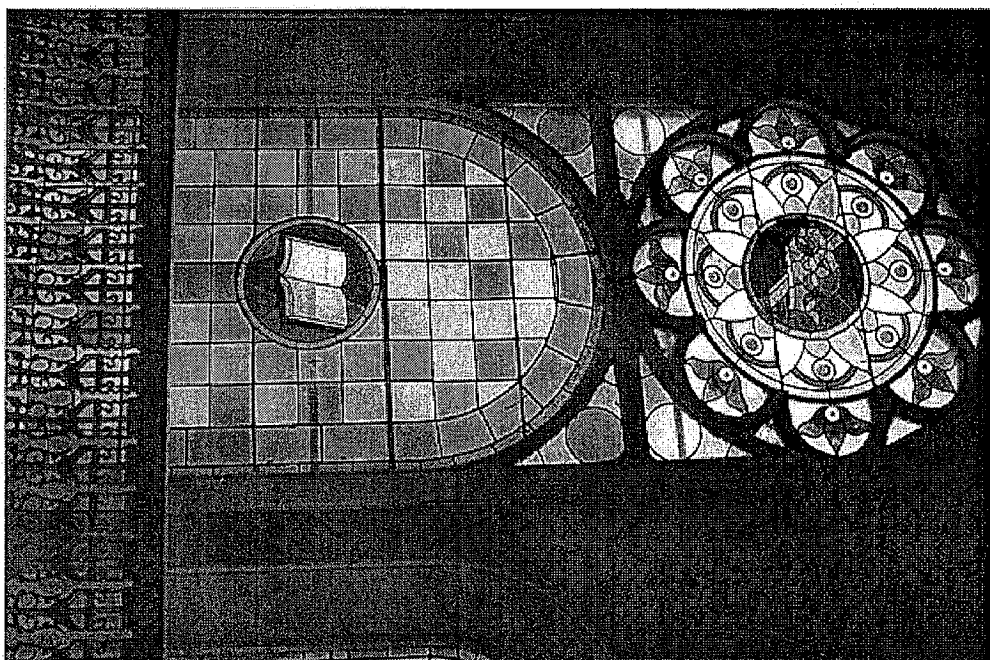
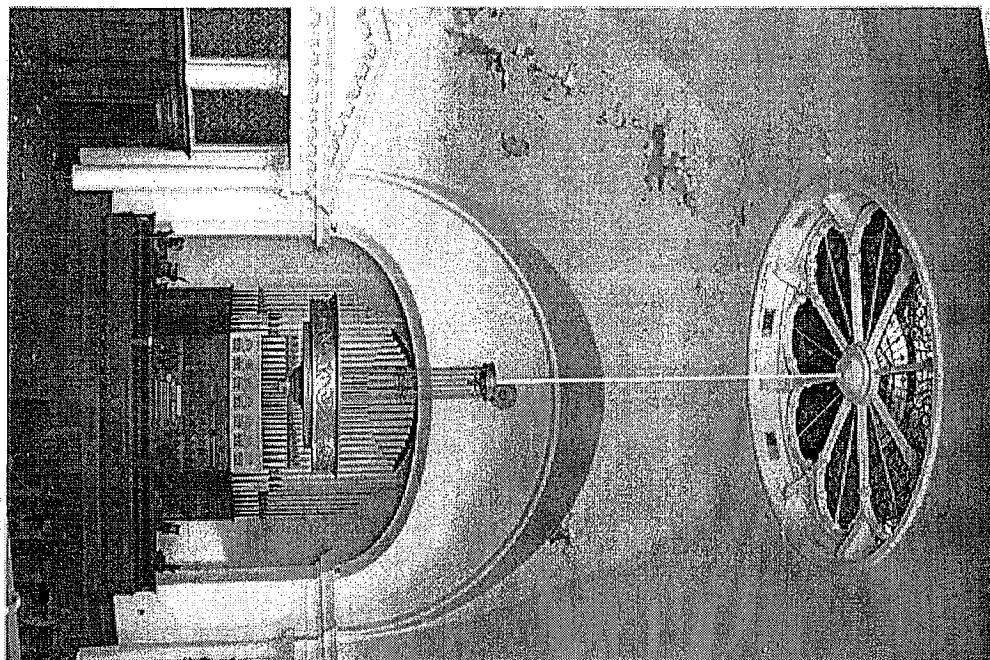
Zone 18  
E. 183168  
N. 4758704

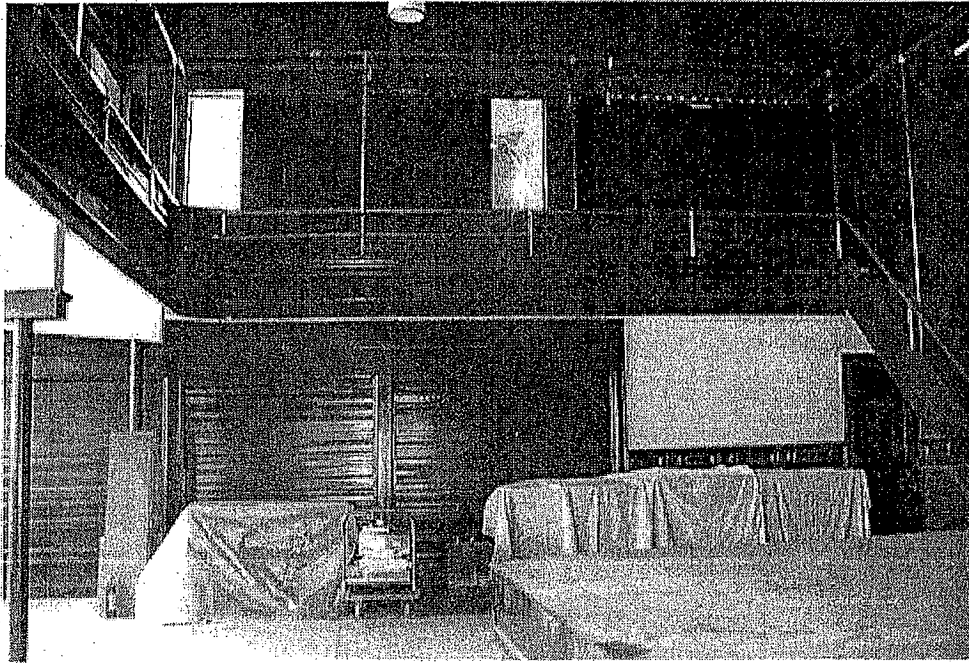
1.9 MI. TO KENSINGTON EXPWY. (BUFFALO NE) 5269 IV NE  
4754  
55'  
4753  
4752  
4751  
TO INTERSTATE 290  
RIS HILL 13 MI.



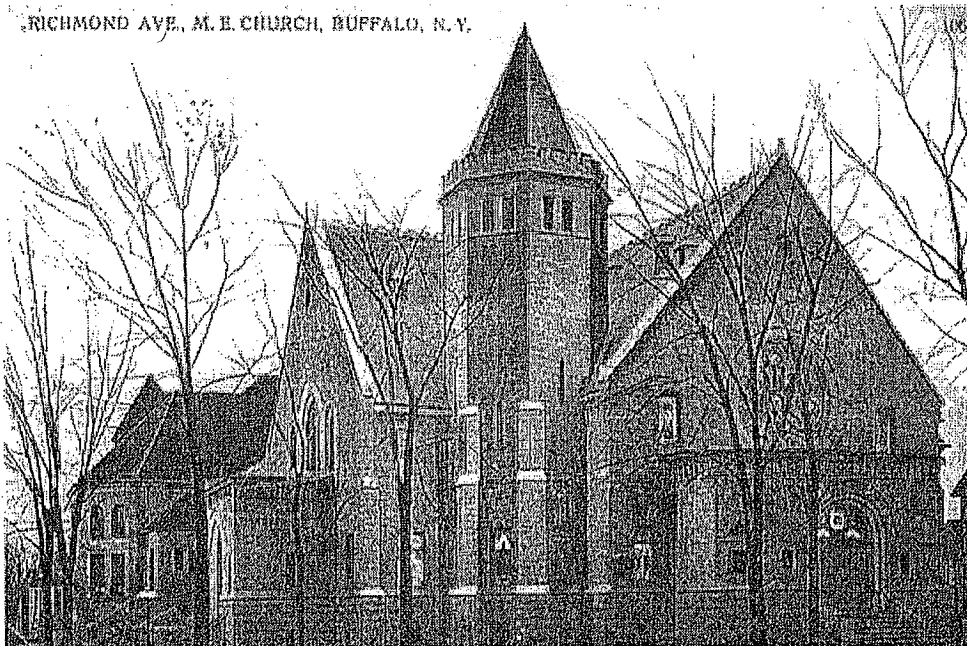








RICHMOND AVE., M. E. CHURCH, BUFFALO, N. Y.





# Richmond Ave. Meth. Epis. Church not. list 1/

## NATIONAL REGISTER NOTIFICATION LIST

2 3  
✓ ✓ ✓

08NR05909  
COUNTY : Erie  
SITE: Richmond Ave Methodist Episcopal Church  
ADDRESS: 525 West Ferry Street  
USN: 02940.002019  
NOTARIZED OBJECTION: \_\_\_\_\_

PRE-SRB LETTER SENT 8/18/08  
SRB MEETING 9/17/08  
09.17.2008  
POST-SRB LTR SENT 10/24/08  
NR LISTING DATE 12/5/08  
LISTING LTR SENT 2/6/09

(12 hrs)

1. PROPERTY OWNER  
Neal Radice  
Executive Director  
Alleyway Theatre Incorporated  
1 Curtain Up Alley  
Buffalo, NY 14202

7. LOCAL PLANNING BOARD  
Richard Baer  
Buffalo Preservation Board  
920 City Hall  
Buffalo, NY 14202

2. CITY MAYOR  
Hon. Byron Brown  
201 City Hall  
Buffalo, NY 14202

8. COUNTY HISTORIAN  
William Seiner  
Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society  
25 Nottingham Terrace  
Buffalo, NY 14216

Clinton Brown  
CBCA/Rebuild  
653 Main St. Suite 104  
Buffalo, NY 14203

9. MUNICIPAL HISTORIAN  
The Landmark Society of the Niagara Frontier  
Dennis Galucki, Executive Director  
Market Arcade Complex, Suite M108  
617 Main St  
Buffalo, NY 14203

3. COUNTY PLANNING BOARD  
Thomas J. Dearing - Community Planning Coordinator  
Edward A. Rath County Office Building  
95 Franklin Street, 10th Floor  
Buffalo, New York 14202

10. REGIONAL MANAGER  
Thomas, Mark (NIA)

5. CHIEF COUNTY OFFICIAL  
Hon. Chris Collins  
Erie County Executive  
Rath Building, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor, Room 1600  
Buffalo, NY 14202

11. FEDERAL PRESERVATION OFFICER  
N/A

Hon. Sam Hoyt  
Member of Assembly  
936 Delaware Avenue  
Suite 005  
Buffalo, NY 14209  
716-885-9630

11. Other  
Tania G. Werbizky  
Regional Director of Technical and Grants Programs  
Preservation League of New York State  
44 Central Avenue  
Albany, New York 12206

Michelle Brozak  
Chairman  
Buffalo Preservation Board  
901 City Hall Building  
Buffalo NY 14202

Cynthia Van Ness  
Preservation Coalition of Erie County  
340 Delaware Avenue  
Buffalo, NY 14202-1804



## New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau • Peebles Island, PO Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189

518-237-8643

www.nysparks.com

David A. Paterson  
Governor

Carol Ash  
Commissioner

July 18, 2008

Honorable Byron Brown  
Mayor  
City of Buffalo  
201 City Hall  
Buffalo, NY 14202

Re: Richmond Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church  
525 West Ferry Street  
Buffalo, Erie County

Dear Mayor Brown:

This letter is to notify you that the property listed above is being considered by the State Review Board, for nomination to the State and National Registers of Historic Places, at its next meeting on September 17, 2008. Enclosed is a draft copy of the fully documented nomination proposal and a copy of the criteria under which properties are evaluated.

Certified Local Governments are required to participate in the nomination process as follows:

- The commission, after reasonable opportunity for public comment, shall prepare a report as to whether or not the property, in its opinion, meets the criteria for listing on the State and National Registers.
- Within sixty days of notice from the State Historic Preservation Office, the chief local elected official shall transmit the report of the commission and his/her recommendation to the State Historic Preservation Office.

In the event that the commission and the chief elected official agree that the proposed nomination does not meet the criteria for listing, the chief elected official will return the nomination materials along with the commission's report and his/her recommendation to the State Historic Preservation Officer, who will take no further action unless appeal is filed with 30 days.

Page 2

Please send your comments to the above address before September 16, 2008 or for more information, please contact Dan McEneny at (518) 237-8643 ext. 3257.

Sincerely,

*Ruth L. Pierpont*

Ruth L. Pierpont  
Director  
Historic Preservation  
Field Services Bureau

RLP:lsa

Enclosure: Frequently Asked Questions  
Criteria for Evaluation





## New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

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518-237-8643

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David A. Paterson  
Governor

Carol Ash  
Commissioner

July 18, 2008

Ms. Michelle Brozak  
Chairman  
Buffalo Preservation Board  
901 City Hall Building  
Buffalo, NY 14202

Re: Richmond Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church  
525 West Ferry Street  
Buffalo, Erie County

Dear Ms. Brozak:

This letter is to notify you that the property listed above is being considered by the State Review Board, for nomination to the State and National Registers of Historic Places, at its next meeting on September 17, 2008. Enclosed is a draft copy of the fully documented nomination proposal and a copy of the criteria under which properties are evaluated.

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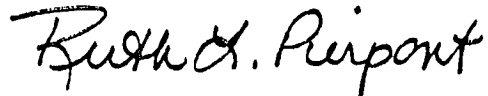
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Page 2

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Sincerely,



Ruth L. Pierpont  
Director  
Historic Preservation  
Field Services Bureau

RLP:lsa

Enclosure: Frequently Asked Questions  
Criteria for Evaluation



## New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau • Peebles Island, PO Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189

518-237-8643

www.nysparks.com

David A. Paterson  
Governor

Carol Ash  
Commissioner

August 18, 2008

Re:

Dear :

We are pleased to inform you that the property noted above will be considered by the State Review Board at its next meeting for nomination to the National and State Registers of Historic Places. These Registers are the federal and state governments' official lists of historic properties worthy of preservation. Listing in the Registers provides recognition of our national, state and local heritage and assistance in preserving it. Enclosed is a copy of the criteria under which properties are evaluated for listing.

Listing in the National and State Registers affords properties a measure of protection from the effects of federal and/or state sponsored or assisted projects, provides eligibility for certain federal tax provisions and renders certain properties eligible for federal and state preservation grants. In general, there are no restrictions placed upon private owners of registered properties. The results of listing are explained more fully in the attached fact sheet.

Owners of private properties proposed for listing in the National Register must be given the opportunity to concur in or object to the listing. Each private property owner has one vote regardless of how many properties or what part of a single property that party owns. A notarized objection by the sole owner of a private property will prevent that property from being listed in the National Register. For properties or districts under multiple ownership, a majority of the owners must object in order to prevent the listing. If a property owner wishes to object to a proposed listing, he/she must submit a notarized acknowledgement that he/she is the owner of the property in question and that he/she objects to the proposed National Register listing. Objections must be submitted before the property is listed.

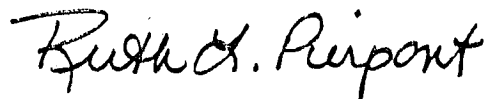
Page 2

If a property cannot be listed because of owner objection, the SHPO will submit the nomination to the Keeper of the National Register for a determination of eligibility for listing. Properties formally determined eligible for National Register listing by the Keeper are subject to the same protection from the effects of federally sponsored or assisted projects as are listed properties. There are no provisions in the New York State Historic Preservation Act that allow an owner to prevent listing in the State Register by means of objection.

If you wish to comment on whether or not the property should be nominated to the National and State Registers, please send your comments to the SHPO at the address below. Comments must be received by September 16, 2008 in order to be considered when this property is reviewed by the State Review Board.

A draft copy of the proposed nomination is on file in this office and can be made available to you upon request. For more information, please contact Dan McEneny, Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Peebles Island, P.O. Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189, (518)237-8643, ext. 3257.

Sincerely,



Ruth L. Pierpont  
Director  
Historic Preservation  
Field Services Bureau

RLP:lsa

Enclosure: Fact Sheet  
Criteria for Evaluation



## New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau • Peebles Island, PO Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189

518-237-8643

www.nysparks.com

David A. Paterson  
Governor

Carol Ash  
Commissioner

October 23, 2008

Re:

Dear :

Following a detailed review, the State Review Board has recommended to the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, who is the New York State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), that the property identified above be listed on the New York State Register of Historic Places and nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

After reviewing the nomination, the SHPO has agreed with the recommendation of the State Review Board and has listed the property on the State Register of Historic Places. We shall now forward the nomination to the Keeper of the National Register in Washington, D. C.

If the Keeper of the National Register approves the nomination, the property will be listed on the National Register. You will be notified when this decision is made.

Information about the results of State and National Register listing were included in our earlier notification letter. If you have any further questions, please contact your field representative Dan McEneny, at the New York State Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau or call (518) 237-8643 ext. 3257.

Sincerely,

Ruth L. Pierpont  
Director  
Historic Preservation  
Field Services Bureau



## New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau • Peebles Island, PO Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189

518-237-8643

www.nysparks.com

David A. Paterson  
Governor

Carol Ash  
Commissioner

February 6, 2009

Mr. Clinton Brown  
CBCA/Rebuild  
653 Main Street  
Suite 104  
Buffalo, NY 14203

Re: Richmond Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church  
525 West Ferry St, Buffalo, NY  
Erie County

Dear Mr. Brown:

I am pleased to inform you that the above referenced property has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. As you may know, the National Register is the nation's official list of properties worthy of preservation. Listing on the National Register recognizes the importance of these properties to the history of our country and provides them with a measure of protection. In addition, owners of income producing properties may qualify for federal income tax benefits. Properties owned by municipalities and not-for-profit organizations are eligible to apply for state historic preservation matching grants.

If you would like more information about any of these programs, please contact your field representative, in this case, Dan McEneny, at the New York State Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau at (518) 237-8643 ext. 3257. Field Services Bureau staff maintains a continuing interest in all registered properties and will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Ruth L. Pierpont  
Director  
Historic Preservation  
Field Services Bureau