

1.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Clinton Brown Company Architecture, PC has completed the Intensive Level Historic Resources Survey of the Grant-Ferry-Forest neighborhood, the last neighborhood of the Phase I City of Buffalo Historic Building Survey, under contract to the City of Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency (BURA) in conjunction with the Buffalo Preservation Board and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (NYOPRHP—New York State Historic Preservation Office [SHPO]). The survey was conducted in conformance with the City of Buffalo's Programmatic Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) governing the City's historic preservation review responsibilities for activities funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and executed as per 36 CFR Part 800 "Advisory Council Procedures for the Protection of Historic and Cultural Properties." The City is updating, amending and continuing its existing survey of historic resources within the City.

The intensive survey project manager was Christine M. Longiaru, CBCA Architectural Historian. The CBCA project team included sub-consultant, Buffalo State College Distinguished Professor Dr. Francis R. Kowsky. The principal researcher was sub-consultant Martin Wachadlo, an architectural historian. Ms. Longiaru and Mr. Wachadlo conducted the intensive level field documentation. Rebecca Bateson-Brown served as the assistant architectural historian. The CBCA project team members meet or exceed 36 CFR Part 61 "Professional Qualification Standards" of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

Historic buildings, landscapes, structures, and other features are distinct components of communities that highlight history on the local, regional, and national levels. A survey of the City's historic resources is an important first step in recognizing the significance of these properties and keeping them a vital part of the community's built environment. Placing a resource in a larger context provides a sense of place. The information gained from documenting historic resources forms the foundation for integrating historic preservation into planning, community development, and economic revitalization efforts.

The Grant-Ferry-Forest neighborhood is an urban residential area located in the Eleventh Ward on the west side of the City of Buffalo, New York (Figure 1-1). The majority of this west side neighborhood was originally part of the lower village of Black Rock, a settlement laid out in 1802. Due to its location at the eastern most point of navigation of four of the Great Lakes, Buffalo grew in the nineteenth century from a meager village to one of the most important manufacturing and transportation centers in the United States, gradually expanding as it did so northward and eastward from Niagara Square. After a brief rivalry, the developing city of Buffalo annexed the village of Black Rock in 1853, and the area became transformed into an early residential neighborhood of prominence in Buffalo. With continued advancements and improvements, the neighborhood developed as a typical "streetcar suburb" where most workers were employed at nearby industries. Taking advantage of the abundant waterpower provided by the swift flowing Niagara River, industry gradually replaced the fine residences in the far western section of the neighborhood. Various commercial enterprises grew up along the eastern boundary.

Grant-Ferry and Forest, as defined by the City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning, are designated City of Buffalo Planning Neighborhoods. These two neighborhoods have been combined for this Historic Resources Survey Intensive Level report, as per request of Greg Bernas of the City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning. (Figure 1-2, 1-3). For both neighborhoods, the western boundary is the Niagara River and the eastern boundary is Elmwood Avenue. The northern boundary for Forest is primarily Forest Avenue from Elmwood

to Grant Street. The neighborhood then extends north on Grant Street to Sqajaquada Creek. The creek borders the northwestern section of the Forest Neighborhood to where it intersects with the Black Rock Canal. The following streets divide the northern boundary of the Grant-Ferry neighborhood and the southern boundary of the Forest neighborhood, from east to west, Lafayette Avenue; Parkdale Avenue; West Delevan Avenue from Parkdale Avenue to Herkimer Street and from Dewitt to West Avenue; Helen Street; Penfield Street; and Brace Street. The southern boundary of the Grant-Ferry neighborhood from east to west is comprised of Ferry Avenue, Albany Street, and Hampshire Street. These boundaries incorporate the original regional north-south thoroughfares Broadway (present Niagara Street) and Rogers Street (present Richmond Avenue), as well as long standing east-west bisectors, Ferry Avenue, Delevan Avenue, and Forest Avenue. Elmwood Avenue, which is today so prominent, was not a significant north-south roadway until after 1880. The historic Erie Canal channel which once defined the neighborhood was filled in the 1960s to become the roadbed of the Niagara Section of the New York State Thruway.

Greg Bernas (City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning) and Claire Ross (Field Services Bureau of the NYORPHP) conducted a comprehensive reconnaissance, or “windshield,” survey of the following City of Buffalo Planning Neighborhoods: Triangle, Broadway-Fillmore, Grant-Ferry and Forest. The reconnaissance survey identified potentially significant historic resources in each of the four neighborhoods. The findings of the initial survey served as the basis for the Intensive Level Survey conducted by CBCA. The Historic Resource Survey Intensive Level Survey reports contain completed New York State Historic Resource Forms (or “blue forms”) for each selected property.

The objective of the first phase of the City of Buffalo Historic Resources Survey involves the following undertakings: 1) To update and amend the city’s first Historic Building Survey (completed from 1978—1984) by documenting the history and the architecture of four specified neighborhoods within existing City of Buffalo planning districts; and 2) To complete historic building survey documentation transfers to the Buffalo Preservation Board for one City District, the Parkside Historic District (Submitted in October 2003).

This report begins with the project methodology (Section 2), which explains how the objectives of the intensive level survey were carried out. It is followed by a historical and architectural overview of the Grant-Ferry-Forest neighborhood (Section 3) that provides a historic narrative for the neighborhood’s development, as well as a discussion of the existing conditions of its historic building stock. The next section is an architectural summary (Section 4) and general context for architectural styles represented in the neighborhood and recommendations. Section 5 contains the annotated list of properties. The report also includes a working bibliography (Section 6). Completed New York State Historic Resource Forms for each selected property are found at the back the report (Appendix D).

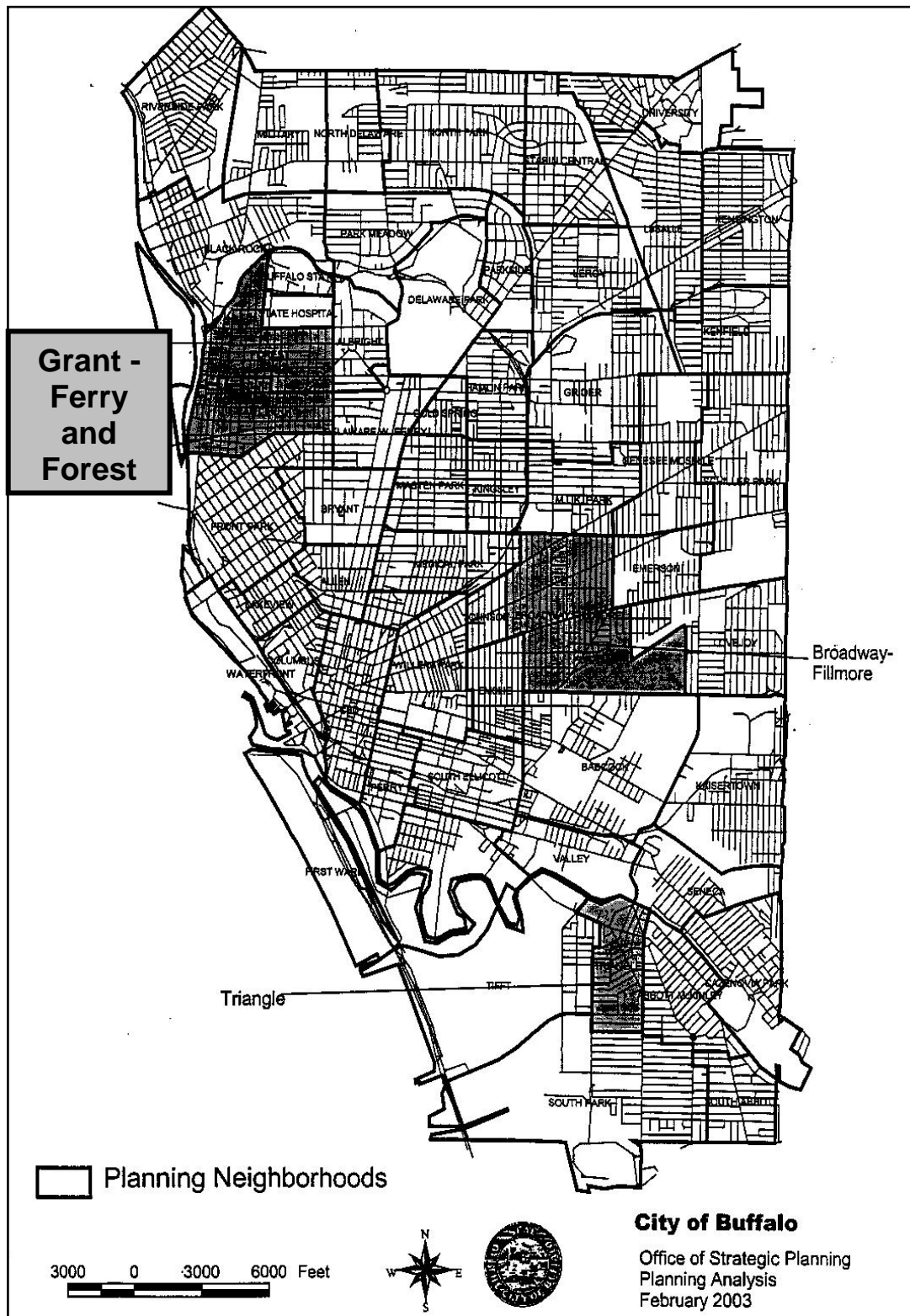


Figure 1-1. Location of the Grant-Ferry-Forest neighborhood in the City of Buffalo, New York (City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning, 2003)

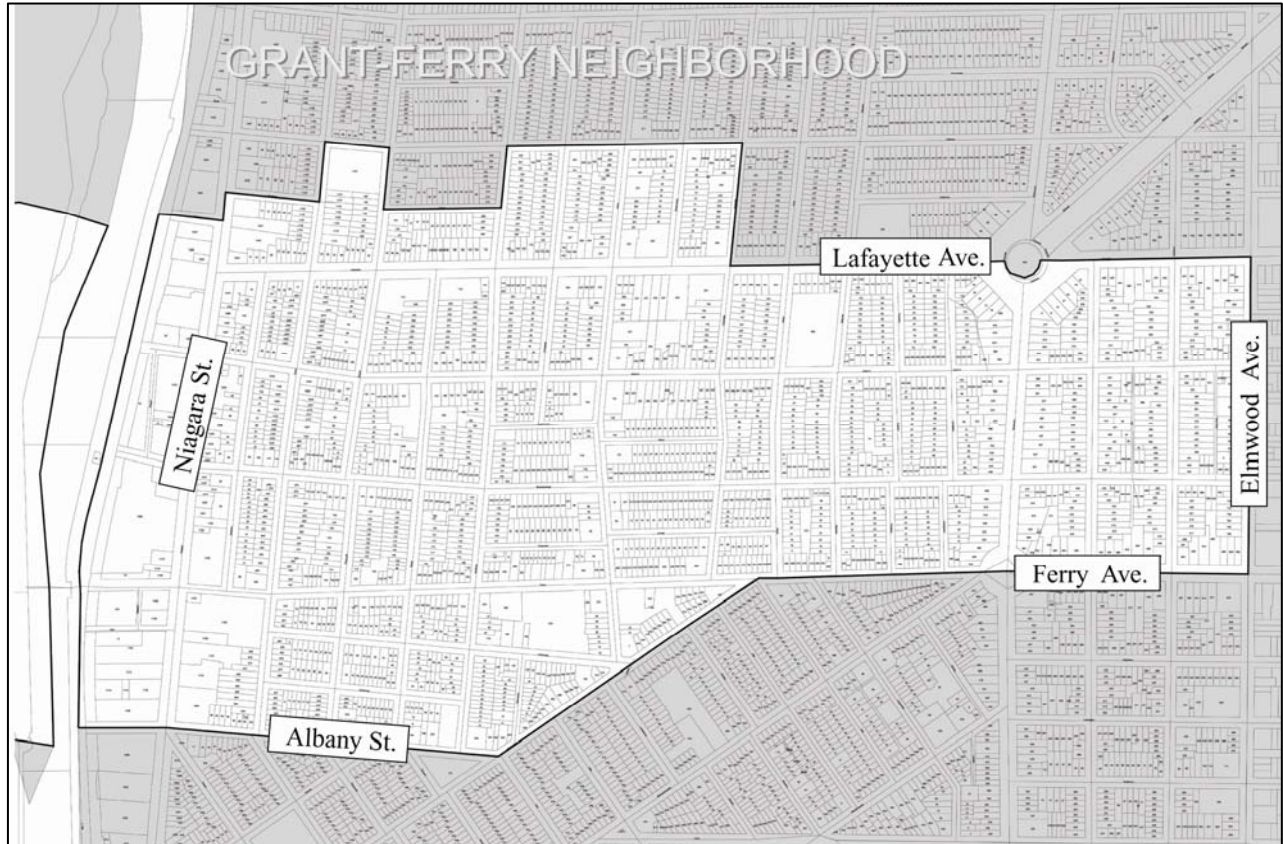


Figure 1-2. Grant-Ferry neighborhood, Buffalo, New York
(City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning, 2003)



Figure 1-3. Forest neighborhood, Buffalo, New York
(City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning, 2003)