

Organic Revitalization



Artspace Buffalo

Think



Different

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Artspace -- Context for Redevelopment

Artspace, a non-profit organization based in Minneapolis, MN, is pursuing the development of a new artist loft project in a historic, five-story former automobile factory at 1219 Main Street, in what has been historically known as the Sarabeth Building. Completed in 1911, the Sarabeth Building was constructed to house the Buffalo Electric Vehicle Company, a pioneer of America's nascent automobile industry in the early 20th century.

The project will consist of 55 live/work units in the Sarabeth Building and a series of new builds to be constructed in the space behind the building. There will be 30 live/work units in Sarabeth and 25 in the new structures, ranging in size from 800-square-foot efficiencies to 1,700 square foot three-bedroom units. In addition, at least 13,000 square feet of commercial and retail space on the street level of the Sarabeth Building will provide space for arts organizations and arts-friendly retail businesses. A new public space will be created between the two buildings to provide a staging ground for performances, outdoor arts displays, and community gardening.

Artspace is bringing to Buffalo an exciting project, a key initial investment in a much broader revitalization effort planned for Midtown.

Midtown -- Poised for Renaissance

The investment being made by Artspace is being affirmed by the City's commitment to undertake a comprehensive revitalization strategy for Midtown, anchoring the promised influx of new



The Artspace project will be located in the former Buffalo Electric Vehicle Company Building on Main Street.

residents with plans for a revived urban fabric, new parks and public spaces, and neighborhood restoration and reconstruction initiatives. These investments aim to make Midtown Buffalo a case study in enlightened city planning.

Midtown is highly advantaged by its location. It is poised to seize opportunities made possible by its proximity to two transit hubs, the resurgent Fruit Belt neighborhood, the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, the arts-friendly Allentown and Elmwood Village communities, and the new loft districts emerging along Main Street to the south. The decision by Artspace to locate their new artist residence in Midtown was thus made with remarkable foresight. The influx of new residents from the arts and creative industries will coincide with, as well as be a catalyst for, the natural north- and eastward flow of redevelopment progressing from areas nearby. Midtown is effectively the “next frontier” for neighborhood revival in Buffalo.

The first step in producing a space for artists to locate and embrace was to designate neighborhood boundaries that are pedestrian friendly and lend to it a sense of place. Therefore, this document has defined the boundaries of Midtown to include the areas bordered by North Street to the south, East Utica Street to the north, Masten Street to the east, and Main Street to the west. It is considered to be in the very southern stretches of the old hamlet of Cold Springs, an early 19th century settlement centered around a natural spring near Ferry and Main streets, later incorporated into the City of Buffalo. This document will focus new improvements within a more focused area adjacent to the Artspace project, bounded by the more widely recognized core areas of Midtown between Main, Michigan, Best and East Utica streets.

Since historic architecture and unique streetscapes can provide a template for neighborhood “rediscovery,” Midtown is ideally positioned for future investment. Its historic residential and



The former Packard Showroom still reigns supreme over the Midtown skyline.

commercial building stock, composed of a rich panoply of late nineteenth and early twentieth century styles, is comparable to the best neighborhoods of Buffalo. This unique architectural milieu strengthens the neighborhood's ability to create retail-supporting densities, provide a walkable and uniquely urban atmosphere, invite new investment, and improve the quality of life for neighborhood residents.

A neighborhood once distinguished by its jazz clubs, automobile manufacturers and showrooms, and comfortable urban streetscapes, Midtown exuded a concrete identity and sense of place that could be resurrected and reinvigorated by this renewal effort.



The old St. Vincent's Convent awaits rediscovery on Ellicott Street.