



# LANDMARKS *Preservationist*

## BUILDINGS WORTH SAVING: 2003 UPDATE

The Landmarks Society's release of our "Buildings Worth Saving" list last year brought widespread attention to a number of significant properties. That helped trigger some encouraging developments.

Following is a 2003 edition of the list. We have also classified the condition of each site adapting the U.S. Department of the Interior's status designations for National Historic Landmarks.



► "Old Main"

**Emergency** — Recent catastrophic damage has occurred requiring immediate intervention;

**Threatened** — Has suffered or is in imminent danger of a severe loss of material integrity;

**Watch** — Faces impending actions or circumstances that likely will cause a loss of material integrity;

**Guard** — No known current or potential threat.

► **UTICA STATE HOSPITAL MAIN BUILDING** *Watch*

Greek Revival, ca. 1843. One hundred and sixty years after it opened and 25 years after it closed, Mohawk Valley Psychiatric Center's "Old

Main" building appears to be on track to reopen later this year as the Records Archive for the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH). Work toward this end had been gaining momentum over the past several years spurred on by strong efforts of the Landmarks Society and its adjunct group, the Old Main Redevelopment Advisory Committee. Developed and chaired by Landmarks President Michael Bosak, the committee brought together key individuals from a variety of backgrounds in an effort to find a reuse for the building, adjacent structures and grounds.

The plan saw light last year as OMH Commissioner James L. Stone agreed in principle to reuse the first public mental health facility built in New York State as the repository for the OMH records and archives for the entire state. Plans also call for a small museum that would document the fascinating history of mental health care in the state that all began and evolved dramatically at "Old Main."

The concept received a major boost last fall when the *Save America's Treasures* program announced that "Old Main" was awarded a grant of \$200,000. It was obtained through the tireless efforts of Karen Nicholson, historian for OMH, member of the Advisory Committee and the agency "guardian angel" of this National Historic Landmark. The grant will ensure that an elevator can be installed to access the upper floors and aid in future occupancy. This was a matching grant and NYSOMH, through Commissioner Stone, had already earmarked \$200,000 for the building. A series of capital projects are

slated to begin this spring, to clean the interior, install utilities and begin restoration and renovation. Officials are cautiously positive that the necessary work can be completed by year's end, if not sooner. This phase is projected to cost just under \$1 million.

The Records Archive and Repository and associated museum will occupy the majority of the first floor, leaving approximately two-thirds of the building available for other compatible and complementary development. Utica Mayor Tim Julian is currently exploring a potential use for some of the remaining space as a training center. This could have a very positive impact on the local economy.

► **RUTGER-STEUBEN PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT & VICINITY**

The elegant mansions of the Rutger-Steuben Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, reflect the prosperity of Utica between 1830 and 1890. The District includes properties around Steuben Park, and Rutger Street from Steuben Park east to Taylor Avenue and Second Street.

► **1 Rutger Park** *Threatened*

Italian Villa, ca. 1854. Designed by A. J. Davis. Last summer the owner started to show signs of action. Stucco was patched and temporary roof repairs apparently were made. Although this action is greatly appreciated, it is long overdue. The Landmarks Society will continue to encourage further strengthening our relationship with the owner in the hope of developing a long-term plan for ultimate restoration.

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# LANDMARKS AT FOREFRONT OF LOCAL PRESERVATION MOVEMENT

While many were saddened by the closing of the alternative coffee-house *Virgo Bat and Leo Phrog's* (VB&LP) on lower Genesee Street, a quiet rebirth has been ongoing in the historic Varick Street district. Both the former *Metro* and *Lily Langtry's* have reopened as new nightclubs in Utica's miniature version of Syracuse's *Armory Square*.



• The Fianchetto café at 600 Varick Street

An arguably even more important event has occurred at the corner of Varick and Columbia streets. *Fianchetto*, a small café, has opened in a structure that has been around since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The oversized canopy that nearly obliterated the façade of the building is gone, replaced by a much more tasteful one. What makes this all the more enticing is that the owner, Christian

Garramone, is a preservationist and has spared no expense in bringing the upstairs apartment back to much of its former glory.

## ‘MAKING A STAND’

Garramone is a young gentleman who grew up in Utica but left the area to find greater opportunities. He has lived in a variety of interesting places, but chose to return home to ‘make a stand.’ We wish him the best — and the same to all who choose to stay here or return home to make a go of it.

## MORE DEVELOPMENTS

The City of Utica's Scenic and Historic Commission is in the process of producing a ‘how-to’ brochure for property owners in the Scenic and Historic Districts. Landmarks has agreed to assist in reviewing the piece to make sure it is as comprehensive and understandable as possible. This is another example of the good working relationship on preservation matters we have developed with the City under the Julian administration.

Oneida County Executive Ralph Eannace has enlisted The Landmarks Society to work with the Municipal Housing Authority in selecting homes worthy of preserving and restoring as part of the recently awarded Hope VI grant. While we don't agree with all of the concepts of Hope VI, we are encouraged to be included in the plan's preservation aspect.

Landmarks is also playing an advisory role to the Central New York Community Arts Council (CNYCAC) in its expansion of the Stanley Performing Arts Center. The architects have been hired and have begun preliminary design work.

Hotel Utica continues to do well, gaining a well-deserved reputation as a world-class destination.

We were saddened to note the passing of longtime Landmarks member and ardent preservationist Easton Pribble. A kind, gentle, intelligent, dedicated and talented man, Mr. Pribble will be greatly missed by all of those whose lives he touched.

## CAN YOU HELP?

Searching for Stories: We are looking for people with stories, remembrances, old photographs, etc., pertaining to Union Station, Hotel Utica and the Stanley. Please leave a message at the Landmarks office (315-732-7376) or call me directly at 315-736-1807.

There is a tremendous amount of preservation-oriented activity taking place in the area! That's not to say there isn't demolition, misguided remodeling, abandonment and neglect. Overall, however, the preservation movement locally appears to be gaining ground — and the Landmarks Society is the spearhead of that momentum!

MICHAEL BOSAK, PRESIDENT

## • DID YOU KNOW?

### NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

Buildings and other structures, sites, districts and even large objects such as fountains and monuments can be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. To qualify, a property must have significance at the national, state or local level in one or more ways:

- Be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- Be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction;
- Possess high artistic values;
- Represent an entity significant and distinguishable as a whole, although its components may not individually (a district, for example);
- Yielded or be likely to yield information important in history or prehistory.

More information about the National Register is available from the National Park Service, 1849 C Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20240; 202-208-6843; [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov).

## • What Style Is It? FIND OUT APRIL 23

The Landmarks Society will present one of its popular *What Style Is It?* workshops to help identify various styles of architecture on Wednesday, April 23. The program will run from 9:30 a.m. until 3 p.m., with the morning session at First Presbyterian Church (corner of Genesee and Scott streets in Utica) and the afternoon featuring a walking tour of the neighborhood.

The morning segment will include a lecture and slide presentation.

The cost is \$6 for Landmarks Society members and \$16 for nonmembers. The fee includes dessert and a beverage. Participants are invited to bring a bag lunch.

To make a reservation or for more information, call Judith Olney at 826-3742.

# "BUILDINGS WORTH SAVING: 2003 UPDATE"

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*Preservationist*

## ► 3 Rutger Park *Threatened*

Greek Revival, ca. 1830. Designed by Philip Hooker. The Miller or Roscoe Conkling house is one of the most significant structures in Oneida County. The house's exterior surfaces and their components, including the roof, walls and wood trim still suffer from severe deterioration. We hope the owner, who also owns 1 Rutger Park, makes the same effort as they did with #1.

## ► 215 Rutger Street *Threatened*

Italianate, ca. 1869. Vacant, part of theUCAI property liquidation. The new owner must develop a plan for restoration and preservation.

## ► 217 Rutger Street *Threatened*

Vacant, also part of theUCAI liquidation. Stripped by its last owner of many architectural features, this house needs immediate roof repairs. The new owner must develop a plan for restoration and preservation.

## ► 223 Rutger Street *Threatened*

Queen Anne, ca. 1880. Vacant for over a decade, the interior is in total disarray. Its grave state requires immediate action. The City of Utica recently took title of the property and, in a bold move, also secured a Supreme Court order allowing the City to charge the last negligent owner for repairs the City may be required to undertake.

## ► 401 Rutger Street *Threatened*

Italianate, ca. 1886. Also part of theUCAI property liquidation. A fire in the winter of 2002 has threatened its stability. The ultimate owner needs a plan for restoration and preservation.

## ► 22 Steuben Park *Emergency*

Queen Anne, ca. 1872. The City of Utica has taken over this property for non-payment of taxes. The rear masonry wall previously reported to be in urgent need of repair has collapsed. The City has advised that it recently sold the building and the new owner intends to renovate the structure and use it for an office. Landmarks will monitor.

## ► 1001 Miller Street *Threatened*

Shingle Style, ca. 1885. Vacant, stripped of many architectural features, in imminent danger of being lost. The City has gained ownership and made temporary roof repairs.

## ► Corner of Hobart and Oneida Streets *Threatened*

In desperate need of boarding up. In another bold move to preserve a landmark structure, the City, under the direction of Mayor Tim Julian, put on a new roof. The cost, approximately \$48,000, was far less than an estimated \$600,000 demolition. The City has also agreed to partner with Landmarks and sponsor a board-up. We hope soon to clean out, board up and mothball until a long-term plan can be adopted.

## ► 1005 Park Avenue *Watch*

Italianate. With help of the City of Utica and personnel from the DPW and Urban Renewal Agency, Landmarks sponsored a clean-out last November. The building is structurally sound and Landmarks hopes to assist in its marketing when our new web site is launched.

## ► 1003 Park Avenue *Watch*

Italianate. Adjacent to 1005, Landmarks also hopes to help market.

## ► 1025 Park Avenue *Watch*

Italianate. The city has transferred ownership and it appeared that before the hard winter set in, the new owner had begun exterior renovations. Further updates will be published.

## ► 100 South Street *Threatened*

Queen Anne. At our 2002 annual meeting Landmarks awarded the owner a \$500 grant to help renovate the front porch. We hope to provide further assistance for the ultimate restoration of this important building.

## LOWER GENESEE STREET AND BAGG'S SQUARE HISTORIC DISTRICTS

### ► Mechanics Hall *Guard*

Ca. 1836. Designed by J. McGregor, this building is owner-occupied and stable, perhaps underutilized and certainly under appreciated.

### ► Railway Express Agency (REA) Wing of Union Station *Watch*

Ca. 1914. Has attracted new interest as a potential antiques mall or international market. County Executive Ralph Eannace has said he is committed to its renovation and reuse. That is most encouraging. Landmarks eagerly awaits an update.

## ► 400 Main Street

*Threatened*

Has been left standing on a block where all other buildings have been lost. If the REA wing is renovated, it too could be targeted for demolition to create a parking lot. Landmarks encourages the County and City to include this structure in any long-term plan formulated for the REA building itself.

## DOWNTOWN

### ► 3 Hopper Street

*Threatened*

Thanks to roof repairs and other actions taken by the City of Utica, the building is stable. Landmarks encourages the owner to develop a plan for its renovation or else sell the structure to a party that will.

### ► Cathedral Church of the Theotokos of Great Grace

*Watch*

Gothic Revival, ca 1870-72, corner of South Street and Howard Ave. Designed by English-born Thomas Birt. Owned by the City of Utica, continues to be used as a church. The structure's stained glass windows are extraordinary. Roof needs immediate repairs.

## PARKWAY

### ► Swan Memorial

*Fountain Threatened*

Sculpture, by Frederick William MacMonnies ca, 1910. Nearly a century of exposure and an ill-advised acid cleaning have left it in dire need of repair. Landmarks is pleased to announce that the City of Utica has agreed to partner in an effort to conserve and restore this extraordinary landscape object.

### ► Valley View Vista

*Guard*

The water tank that mars the scenic view of the southern reservoir is an eyesore that should never have been allowed. Rumors of the reservoir being filled are equally disturbing; hopefully such action will never take place.



► 1 Rutger Park



► 3 Rutger Park



► 22 Steuben Park



► Hobart & Oneida



► Swan Memorial Fountain

# SPRING BUS TOUR HEADED TO HISTORIC DEERFIELD

This spring's bus tour, scheduled for Saturday, May 31, will have as its destination, *Historic Deerfield*. Set in rural Massachusetts, this near-ideal example of a New England village offers world-famous collections of furniture, early American silver, English ceramics and Chinese export porcelain, textiles, needlework and costumes, displayed in 14 museum houses dating from the early 18th through the 19th century, as well as the Flynt Center of Early New England Life.

The village itself was founded in 1669 as a frontier outpost in British North America. In spite of several attacks before 1750 and its near-destruction by a war party of French and their Amerindian allies in 1704, the village survived and is considered by many to be the best documented small community in the U.S.



Want to know more about historic area structures and sites? Take your own personal guided tour with the many brochures offered by the Landmarks Society. They're interesting, informative and very reasonably priced. For more information call the Landmarks office at 732-7376.

## DAY'S SCHEDULE

The bus will depart Utica at 6 a.m. and arrive in Deerfield at 9:30. After an orientation at the visitors' center, the group will enjoy a drive around the site and guided tours of two of the historic houses. Lunch at the award-winning restaurant of the 1884 Deerfield Inn will offer a time to relax before visiting another two houses. The bus will depart Deerfield at 4:30 with arrival back in Utica around 8 p.m.

The cost of the tour, including luncheon and all admission fees, is \$75 per person for members and \$85 for non-members, with a special reduced price of \$120 for couples in which at least one person is a member. Please reserve early as the number of places is limited.

Send your reservation, including a cheque in the full amount due and the number and names of the people in your party, before May 19, to Landmarks Program and Events Chair Rand Carter, 1421 Oneida

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Norman C. Batty Jr.  
Audrey Herrin  
Michael Jordan  
Charlene Nankey  
Ted & Janice Zammiello

## CLARIFICATION

Our fall 2002 issue identified the architect of SBU Bank's headquarters building as Robert Williams. The name is Robert Williams Gibson.

## 2002 Annual Meeting Highlights NOVEMBER 21 • HOTEL UTICA



Keynote speaker John Winthrop Aldrich, Deputy Commissioner of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, emphasized that historic preservation is an engine for economic development.



Utica Mayor Tim Julian, left, and Oneida County Executive Ralph Eannace, Jr., right, accepted Landmarks Society Awards of Merit from President Mike Bosak for efforts to preserve historic local buildings.



Landmarks Vice President Mike Rizzo (left) presented Awards of Merit to Utica resident Laurence Zoekler (center) for his efforts on Howard Avenue. Bartlett Brush (right) received a \$500 grant for

renovations to 100 South Street. Others honored included retiring Oneida County Planning Commissioner Michael Gapin, for his role in the preservation and reuse of Union Station; retiring Landmarks Treasurer Jean Mastrangelo; and Utica City Attorney Linda Fatata for supporting efforts to save endangered buildings.

## 2003 Ornament TO FEATURE STANLEY!

The Stanley Performing Arts Center will be featured on the Landmarks Society's 2003 commemorative ornament, the fourth in the popular Collector's Series. Ornament Committee Chair Bertha Romanow said the fact that the Stanley will be celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> birthday this year along with its status as one of the area's most extraordinary landmarks made it a choice that will be meaningful to the entire community. The new ornament will go on sale in the fall.

Meanwhile, Romanow said, additional 2001 ornaments featuring the Hotel Utica have been produced and are now available at Reid Sheldon & Co. and in the gift shop at the Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute.

A limited number of the 2002 SBU and 2000 "Old Main" ornaments are also still available and can be purchased by calling 797-3248. Each ornament costs \$20 plus tax.

The Landmarks Society of Greater Utica was chartered by the State of New York on October 25, 1974, as a non-profit educational corporation to preserve historic buildings and districts in the Utica area. Offices at 1124 State Street, Utica, New York 13502; 315-732-7376.

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