

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

DRAFT

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Manze Block

other names/site number 461-471 Niagara Street

name of related multiple property listing N/A

## 2. Location

street & number 461-471 Niagara Street

city or town Buffalo

state New York code NY county Erie code 073 zip code 14201

|                          |                     |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | not for publication |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | vicinity            |

## 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 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

    national     statewide X local

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property     meets     does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

    entered in the National Register     determined eligible for the National Register

    determined not eligible for the National Register     removed from the National Register

    other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

|                                     |                  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | private          |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | public - Local   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | public - State   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | public - Federal |

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

|                                     |             |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | building(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | district    |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | site        |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | structure   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | object      |

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

| Contributing | Noncontributing |              |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1            | 0               | buildings    |
|              |                 | sites        |
|              |                 | structures   |
|              |                 | objects      |
| 1            | 0               | <b>Total</b> |

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

N/A

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

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE

DOMESTIC/Apartment Building

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE

DOMESTIC/Apartment Building

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> & EARLY 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN

MOVEMENTS/ Commercial Style

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Stone

walls: Brick, Concrete Block

roof: Rubber

other:

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**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

**Summary Paragraph**

Located on a 0.46-acre plot, the Manze Block consists of a two-story brick commercial building on the northwest corner of the Hudson Street and Niagara Street intersection. The north boundary is formed by the residential properties at 330 Prospect Avenue and 336-344 Prospect Avenue, at the northeast end of a yard behind the 465 Niagara Street building. Hudson Street forms the east boundary. The property line with the neighboring 473 Niagara Street forms the west boundary. Niagara Street forms the south boundary of the property. The building primarily exists in a commercial setting, with residential buildings to the northeast. The block stands near the center of the Lower West Side area of Buffalo, Erie County.

The commercial block was constructed following the designs by Charles Forrest in January of 1923, using a variation of Commercial architecture style incorporating elements of Italianate and Gothic styles. The building plan consists of three large, shared basements, six commercial spaces on the first floor, and six apartment residences on the second floor. The apartments are accessible by side entrances from Niagara Street. The basements are shared between 471-469, 467-465, and 463-461. The commercial spaces follow an open plan customized by partition walls and non-historic flooring alterations, with pairs of commercial units connected by openings under the stairs from the street to the second floor, and these small corridors also contain the stairs to the basements. The second-floor apartments are each divided into five rooms with the central dining room also serving as the entrance hall from the stair hallway. The second floor of 461 was altered to consolidate two rooms into a single large space, but the majority of the apartments are intact. The roof has a non-historic rubber surface and a crenelated parapet with concrete coping and coping tile.

The Manze Block retains the setting, design, materials, workmanship, association, and feeling that define historic integrity. Retained historic fabric includes exterior vertical scratch brick facade cladding, brick window frames, the Italianate roof cornice around the south and east elevations, the recessed storefront entrances from 471-467 and 461 Niagara Street, and the crenelated brick roof parapet. The brick veneer frame patterns outline the south and east elevations, the space for signage above the storefront transom windows, and the second-floor windows. Retained interior historic details include steel supports and wood stud walls, hardwood and exposed concrete flooring, the open-planned commercial spaces, and the layout of the second-floor apartment residences.

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**Narrative Description**

The Manze Block is located on a 0.46-acre parcel of land at the northwest corner of Niagara Street and Hudson Street on the Lower West Side of Buffalo. The building is surrounded by commercial buildings and brick residential buildings to the east, west, and south, with a residential area to the north behind the rear boundary containing typical Colonial Revival, Italianate, and Queen Anne houses that were popular at the end of the

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nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. The Manze Block at 461-471 Niagara Street is a rectangular building on the southwestern edge of its parcel while the rest of the property consists of an open space. This open space was the former site of a building at 178 Hudson Street, which was demolished in 1982 and the parcel consolidated into the 465 Niagara Street commercial block property.

The south front facade contains six storefronts and three side entrance doors on the first floor and eighteen windows on the second story. The east elevation has one first-floor storefront, a first-floor side door, and four infilled window openings on the second floor. The west elevation has four second-floor window openings filled with non-historic vinyl double-hung windows. The north elevation has seventeen window openings and a non-historic rear door on the first story, with the northeast corner having glass block windows, and eighteen window openings on the second story. Almost all first-floor rear window openings have been infilled except for the glass block windows. The second-story windows on all elevations are non-historic double-hung vinyl windows in a one-over-one configuration. All window openings are red brick, with some windows on each elevation retaining historic wood frames while others have non-historic metal frames. The northeast corner is positioned over a concrete platform at street level, while the rest of the parcel is a foot higher in elevation. The roof is flat surrounded by a brick parapet, with coping tile on the rear side and concrete crenellations on the sides visible from the sidewalk. The building retains almost all of its exterior features and openings as depicted on architectural drawings from January 1923.



*Figure 1: Architectural plan drawing of the south facade, created on January 1923 by the architecture firm of Charles Forrest. The drawing shows the intended tapestry-style brick veneer and Italianate projecting roof cornice, which are features of the finished building.*

**EXTERIOR:**

This is a two-story brick mixed-use commercial building consisting of six commercial units between 461 and 471 Niagara Street and smaller doorways at 471, 467, and 463 Niagara Street leading from the street level to the second-floor residential apartment units. The southwest elevation has the facades containing the storefronts for each unit, the northern two storefronts (471 and 469 Niagara Street) having recessed entrances while the southern unit (463) has a recessed entrance double door on the southwest corner. The south corner of the building also has an open corner extending from the first floor to the roof, containing the entrance to the 461 Niagara commercial space. The flat roof has a tall brick parapet with crenellations on the east, west, and south elevations, while the north elevation has ceramic coping tile. The east and south sides of the roof parapet are decorated with crenellations capped with concrete sections, including the southeast corner over the entrance to

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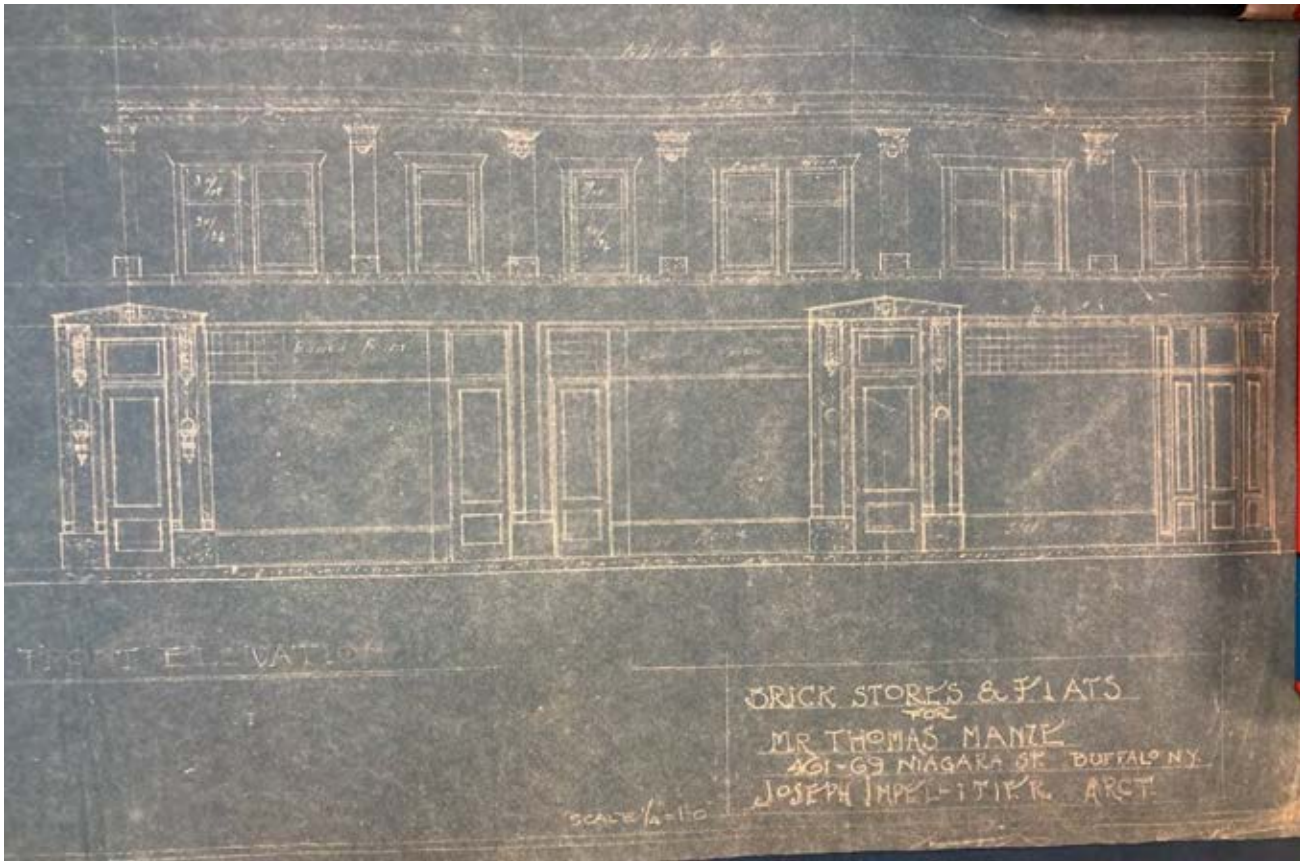


Figure 2: Architectural drawing of the south facade with additional ornamentation around the entrance doors, and window frames, and using an alternative window configuration on the second story. The drawings were created in March of 1923 by Joseph Impellitier.

461 Niagara Street. The central crenelation over the door to the second-floor apartments of 467 and 465 Niagara Street carries a plaque inscribed with the word "MANZE."

The south front facade retains the identifying tapestry-style brick veneer, which uses lighter colored brick as the primary color of the elevation and darker red brick to frame window openings, storefronts, exterior doors to stairways to the second floor, and on the second story to create Gothic-arched motifs above the entrance doors to the second-floor apartment stairs. The pattern of the tapestry brick facade is unique to the Lower West Side neighborhood, with most examples of buildings with tapestry brick facades having less ornate patterns and using fewer brick colors. The 465 Niagara Street facade shows signs of earlier repairs to the red bricks and to the mortar, with the new material including non-historic mortar of a lighter color than the historic fabric. The newer mortar is also applied closer to the plane of the brick while the older mortar exposes more of the brick.

The exterior doors to the second floor are non-historic wood composite doors with historic wood-framed transoms above. The first-floor storefronts have non-historic aluminum doors with large single-light windows, and the second floor has three window openings over each storefront. The rear, northeast, elevation has non-historic metal doors. The storefronts have historic wood single-light windows resting on brick walls and transoms obscured by non-historic signage banding. The bulkheads below the storefront windows are exposed brick at 471, 469, and 467 Niagara Street, while the 465 and 463 units have painted bulkheads supporting the



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Figure 3: Looking northwest along Niagara Street in October 1952. The front facade of 461-471 Niagara Street is visible on the right-hand side of the photo.



Figure 4: Looking at the central commercial unit at 467 Niagara Street within the Manze Block, ca. 1960.

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storefront windows. The second floor has eighteen non-historic vinyl windows set into historic wood window frames and three arched openings over the doors to the second-floor apartment units.

The side elevations, rear elevations, and the roof parapet use a red brick lighter than those used to decorate the façade and lacking the vertical-scratch finish of the facade bricks. The first-floor rear elevation has eighteen original openings, with three glass prism block windows on the rear of the 461 unit and a non-historic metal door at the rear of the 471 unit; thirteen have been infilled with wood boards, and one opening was infilled with bricks. One of the first-floor rear window openings at 467 Niagara Street is missing bricks around the window opening, leaving a hole in the wall. The second story features non-historic vinyl windows set into historic wood window frames.

The southeast elevation has a first-floor non-historic metal door on the northeast corner of the 461 unit and the rear elevation and four second-floor window openings with historic wood frames. The southwest side of the elevation has a first-floor storefront window resting on a dark red brick bulkhead and non-historic signage banding above the storefront window. Additional dark red bricks create decorative frames around the storefront, the second-floor windows, the buff brick panel with furring strips where commercial signage would historically be installed, and the red brick wall composing the rest of the elevation. One of the second-floor window openings contains a non-historic vinyl window and the other three openings are infilled with wood boards.

The northwest elevation has four second-floor non-historic vinyl windows with historic wood frames. The rest of the wall is red brick with no additional openings. The roofline of this elevation is capped with coping tile.

**INTERIOR:**

The 461-471 Niagara Street commercial building is configured for commercial and residential purposes, with the front entrances facing south onto Niagara Street. The first story houses commercial units, the entrance stairs leading to the second floor, and the stairs to the shared basements below the commercial spaces. The building is arranged in three larger sections, containing pairs of commercial spaces on both sides of the street-level stairs to the second-floor apartments. Each pair of first-floor commercial spaces – 471 and 469, 467 and 465, and 463 and 461 – is connected by a hallway running under the south stairs, and these same hallways also access the stairs to the basement. The flooring inside these corridors and at the top of these stairs is historic hardwood. Each space is designed around an open plan, allowing the occupant to customize the space using partition walls to suit their needs. The north rear side of each commercial unit contains a small bathroom, except for the 461 and 463 Niagara Street units.

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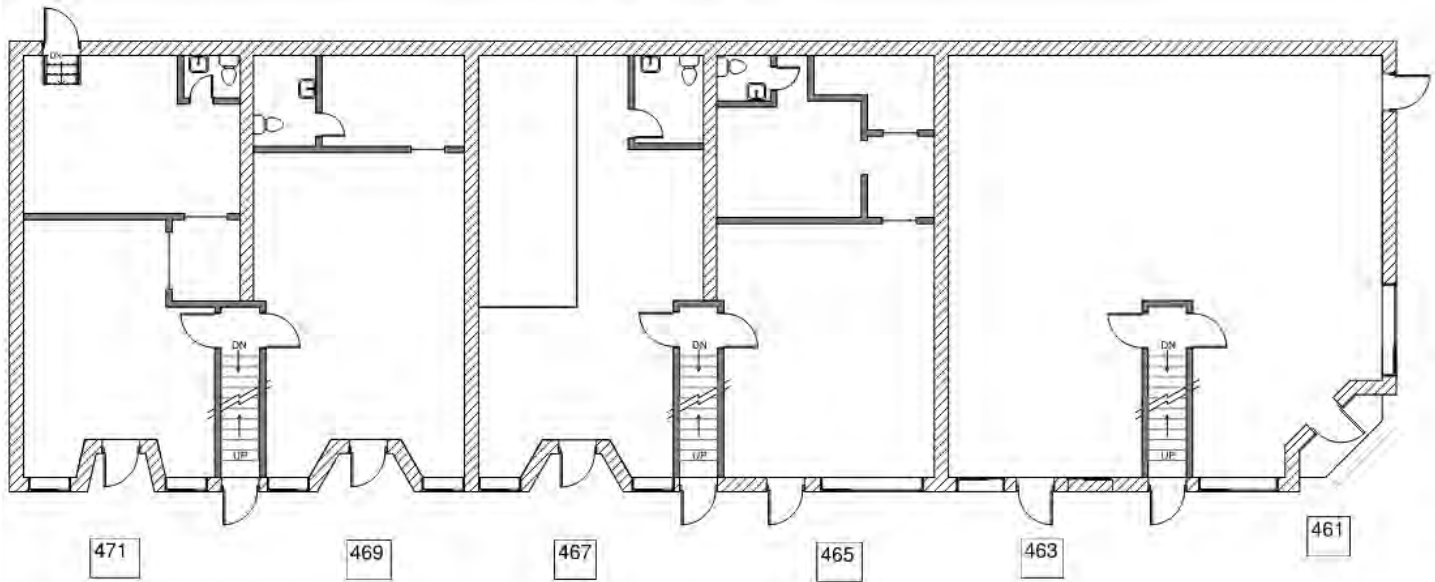


Figure 5: The first-floor layout of 461-471 Niagara Street, Buffalo, New York.

The first-floor units are arranged with large commercial spaces inside the storefronts, and the rear of each unit contains smaller offices and storage spaces. Non-historic wood stud walls sheathed with gypsum board partition the commercial units, with wood-look sheet vinyl and vinyl tile floorings popular in the front commercial spaces and carpeted flooring present in some of the rear spaces.

The first floor of 471 Niagara Street has non-historic vinyl flooring, with vinyl tile inside the storefront entrance and wood-look vinyl tile flooring in the rest of the commercial space and rear office. The unit has acoustic panel drop ceilings, gypsum board-sheathed walls, non-historic wood and composite doors set into non-historic wood frames, and a section of sheet vinyl flooring inside the southwest storefront doorway. The east side of the space has openings into a corridor connecting to the 469 Niagara commercial unit and a rear office space. This rear office has a door to the rear elevation, accessed by a short flight of steps.

The 469 Niagara Street unit contains a commercial space inside the storefront, a rear office and storage space, and a partitioned bathroom. The rear office of 469 contains a kitchenette area and the space is finished with carpeted flooring, acoustic tile drop ceiling, and wood partition walls sheathed with gypsum board. Non-historic cabinets and a sink exist in the rear space.

The first floor of 467 contains a bar setting, with a non-historic bar area on a raised platform on the west side of the space and the east side having the floor at grade. The storefront has an infilled transom window opening over the recessed entrance door, while raised wood stages are located inside the storefront windows. The flooring combines historic hardwood in the northeast corner of the space and non-historic engineered hardwood throughout the rest of the space. The ceiling is non-historic acoustic tile obscuring the historic pressed metal ceiling, and the historic ceiling trim includes crown molding featuring a Greek Revival egg and dart pattern. The non-historic walls have dark wood floor trim. The interior walls are non-historic wood stud walls with gypsum board sheathing in good condition covering the historic brick, concrete block, and plaster walls in fair-



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to-poor condition. The east wall has a paneled wood door into the stairs to the basement - also providing access into the neighboring 465 unit and situated directly below the facade stairs to the second floor - and another non-historic paneled wood bathroom door with a non-historic metal frame.

The first floor of 465 Niagara Street has plaster walls with wood furring strips, non-historic wood partition walls with gypsum board sheathing, sections of non-historic applied wood wall finish painted white, non-historic acoustic panel ceilings, non-historic vinyl tile flooring, and wood floor trim within the front commercial space. The west door connecting to 467 Niagara Street is a historic wood door with a Classical Revival post-and-lintel frame. The rear office space has sections of sheet vinyl flooring and non-historic carpeted flooring, non-historic partition walls with gypsum board sheathing, and acoustic panel drop ceilings. The retained historic fabric includes paneled wood doors, pressed metal ceilings behind the acoustic panels, and historic plaster walls visible behind the rear bathroom partitions.

The 463 and 461 units suffered a fire in late 2023 causing significant damage to the interior and necessitating removal of much of the first-floor non-historic fabric. This exposed the underlying wood stud walls and lath-and-plaster walls between each unit, brick masonry perimeter walls, and the wood storefront displays have been retained. The 463-461 Niagara Street units are connected internally by a large opening below the facade stairs to the second floor, with this hallway formed by historic wood lath and plaster walls. Directly behind this opening is the exposed steel beam dividing the ceiling of each unit and two massive openings where partition walls previously separated both commercial units. The sheet vinyl flooring in 463 is in poor condition, with sections of the concrete subflooring visible. The ceilings above both units are exposed, revealing the joists and subfloor above. The steel lintels supporting the storefronts of both units are visible, the storefront windows have non-historic signage banding in the transoms, and the transom over the recessed entrance doors to 461 Niagara Street are infilled. The east storefront window of 461 is also infilled with particle board, as are four of the six rear window openings on the north wall across both units.

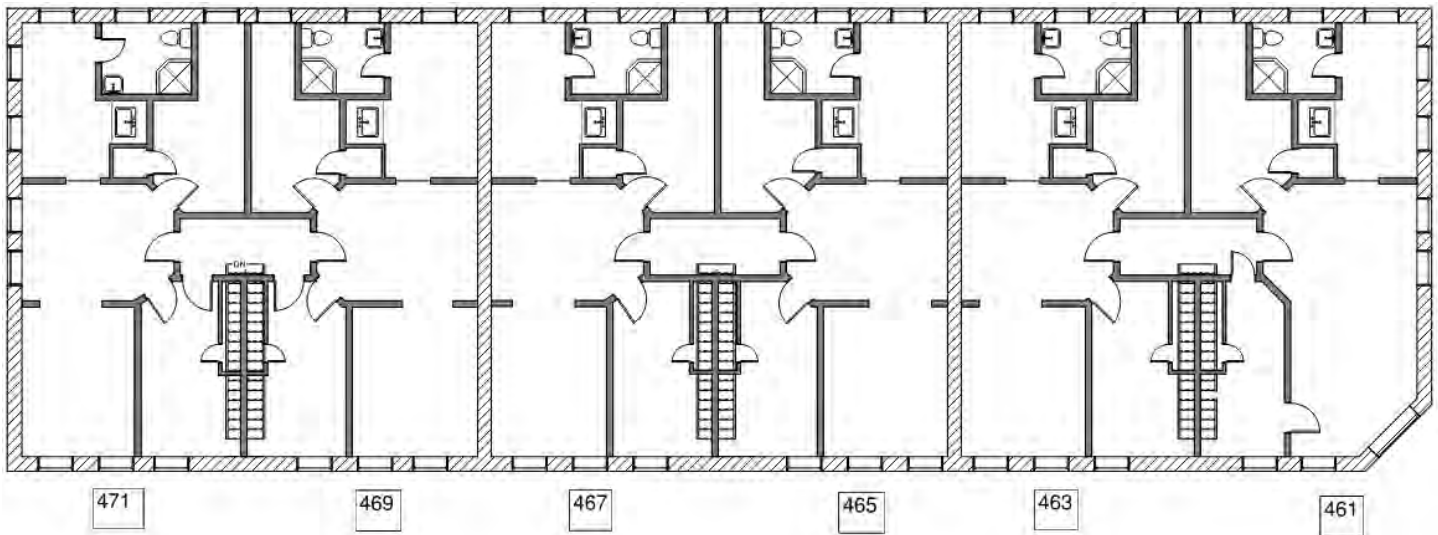
The second story contains residential apartment units accessible by the stairs from Niagara Street, with the stairs leading to hallways connecting pairs of apartments: 471 and 469 Niagara Street, 467 and 465 Niagara Street, and 463 and 461 Niagara Street. The entrance doors of each apartment lead into a central dining room, connecting to the additional rooms by large openings. All apartments except 461 Niagara Street have a living room, a kitchen, and two bedrooms on the north and south sides of the unit. The kitchen also contains access to the apartment bathroom. The rooms are symmetrically arranged on both sides of the dining room, and each pair of apartment layouts is mirrored across the hallway's centerline. The second-floor interior was revised during the 1923 construction so the 461 Niagara apartment unit could be redesigned with an enlarged studio space for a business tenant. The plans of the upper-story apartments within 471-463 Niagara Street has not changed since the building's original construction.

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*Figure 6: The second-floor layout of 461-471 Niagara Street, Buffalo, New York. Historically this contained apartment residential units with the southeast unit (461, on the right-hand side of the floor plan) containing a dentist's office in the 1950s.*

The second floor of the block is divided into residential apartments above each commercial unit. These residences have gypsum board-sheathed walls, engineered hardwood flooring throughout the main residential spaces, sheet vinyl and vinyl tile flooring in the kitchens and bathrooms, plaster ceilings and non-historic acoustic tile ceilings, and historic wood trim around the door openings. This wood door trim is in a minimally articulated Classical Revival post-and-lintel design with unadorned entablature lintels. The stairs from the southwest facade have landings providing access to the entrances of 471-469, 467-465, and 463-461 Niagara Street.

The 471 Niagara Street second-floor apartment has plaster ceilings, plaster walls, and wood Classical Revival door frames throughout the space. The kitchen ceiling has non-historic acoustic panels covering the historic plaster. The entire apartment has wood-look sheet vinyl flooring and the bathroom has vinyl tile flooring. The apartment has Classical Revival post and lintel frames around the door openings and closets (with historic wood doors), with some non-historic composite doors are present in the apartment.

The 467 second-floor apartment unit has historic plaster walls and ceilings, wood Classical Revival door and window frames, wood base molding, and wood two-paneled doors into the bedrooms and on the closets. The non-historic fabric includes the wood-look vinyl tile flooring throughout the space, six-paneled composite doors to the bathroom and into the apartment, and altered openings into the kitchen, including a countertop between the kitchen and the central room. Non-historic cabinets are installed in the kitchen space.

The 465 Niagara second-floor apartment unit has historic plaster walls and ceilings, wood Classical Revival post-and-lintel frames around the door and window openings, wood two-panel doors, and wood crown molding on the studs framing the entrance to the living room. The non-historic fabric includes the wood-look vinyl tile flooring throughout the space, the sheet vinyl flooring in the bathroom and the kitchen, paneled composite doors to some of the rooms, and the gypsum board wall panels in the kitchen.

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The 463 Niagara second-floor apartment has wood-look vinyl tile flooring in fair condition, historic plaster walls and ceilings, and non-historic acoustic ceiling panels over the central space. The doorways and window openings have historic wood Classical Revival frames. Classical Revival crown molding is also present on the wall studs framing the entrance to the south living room. Historic two-panel doors exist on the bedroom closets; non-historic composite doors are installed in the doorways between each room, and historic wood base molding exists in all rooms. The kitchen has a tile wall finish painted to match the surrounding plaster walls.

The 461 Niagara Second-floor apartment has carpeted flooring and applied wood veneer wall finishes throughout the largest, southeast room. The 461 Niagara Street apartment converted the dining room and southeast living room into a studio space containing a dentist's office, and the southwest bedroom was reconfigured as a closet was installed accessible to the stair hallway. Retained historic fabric in this apartment unit includes the wood Classical Revival door and window frames, wood base molding, hardwood flooring in the northwest room, two-paneled wood doors, and the layers of wallpaper visible on the south wall of the northwest room. The northeast, northwest, and southwest rooms have historic white plaster walls. The southeast and northeast spaces have non-historic acoustic panels applied to the ceiling. The angled wall between the southwest and southeast rooms contains a closet accessible from the second-floor stair hallway. The southeast and northwest rooms connect to the central dining room stair hallway by non-historic composite doors.

The basements of the commercial block are accessed by wood stairs directly below the stairs to the second-floor apartments, and inside the hallways connecting each pair of first-floor commercial units. The basements were originally divided by a wall below each commercial unit, dedicating each smaller basement space to that corresponding commercial occupant. After the 1969 alterations these dividing walls were removed and the spaces consolidated into three shared basements.

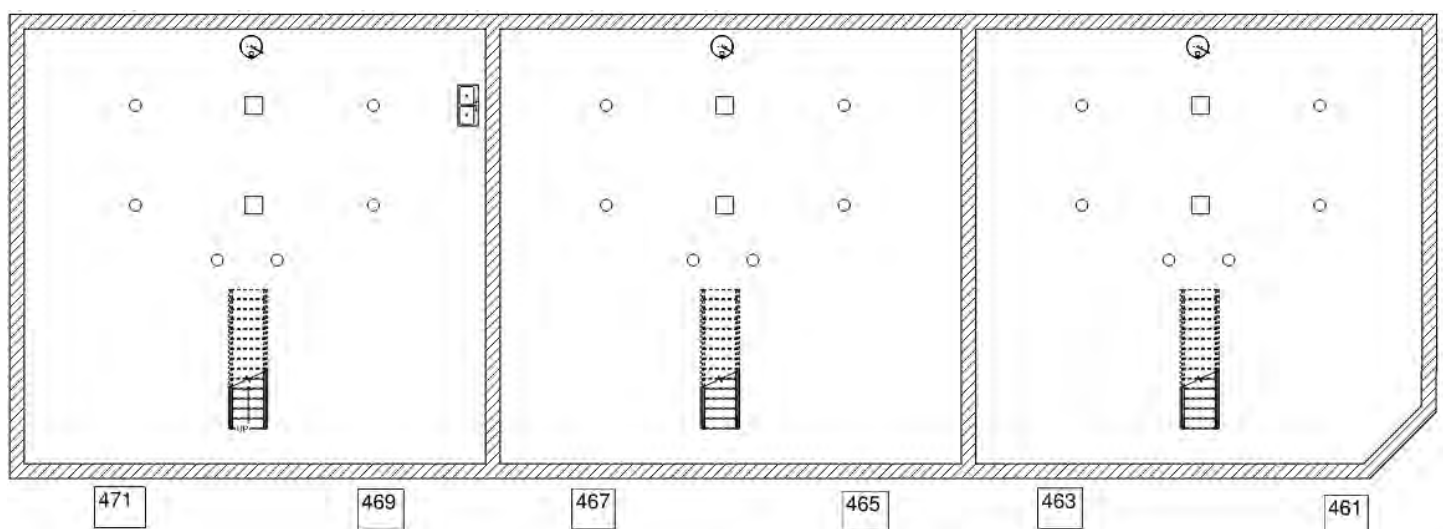


Figure 7: The basement layout of 461-471 Niagara Street, Buffalo, New York.

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The basements below 471 and 469 are also interconnected into one larger space, with 471 serving as a storage area for the market within 469. The walls of the basement are fieldstone painted white, the flooring is unfinished concrete, and the ceilings have exposed joists supported by steel I-beams. The ceilings and steel supports are painted white to match the walls, and the northeast rear wall is made of brick.

The shared basement of 467-465 Niagara Street retains the historic wood flooring at the top of the stairs. Like the other basements of the commercial block, 467-465 Niagara has unfinished concrete flooring, fieldstone walls, and exposed ceilings including wood and steel members resting on steel supports. The east wall is made of brick painted white to match the other basement walls and ceiling.

The shared basement below 463-461 Niagara Street has fieldstone walls and an exposed ceiling with wood and steel members resting on steel supports. The walls and ceiling are painted white matching the scheme of the other basements. The flooring is unfinished concrete.

The exterior has received few significant alterations since its construction. The original sheet prism glass windows were removed from the transoms above the storefronts. Historical photos of the building from 1952 and 1960 depict retractable awnings over each storefront and Art Moderne signage on the framed panels above the storefronts. The storefront of the 465 Niagara Street unit was redesigned to have an offset entrance door with no recessed entry and to have one large storefront window, and the door to 463 Niagara was also installed flush with the storefront. More recent commercial signs were relocated to the storefront transoms, which were infilled. The storefronts were reconfigured after 1969 with non-historic aluminum-framed windows and the removal of recessed entrances from the 465 and 463 Niagara units. The historic brick masonry, crenelated roof parapet, and window openings have been retained on the facade and the east elevation.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1923-1969

**Significant Dates**

1923, 1969

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Charles Forrest

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period begins with the date of construction for the Manze Block and extends until the period of the last major alteration to the building.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

N/A



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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph**

(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Manze Block at 461-471 Niagara Street is significant under Criterion C as an intact example of a 1920s tapestry-brick-clad two-story two-part commercial block. The Manze block's good integrity, exceptional size (it is six storefront bays wide), and polychrome patterning lends it status as an exemplar among comparable buildings in Buffalo. Like most buildings of its type in the city, it was designed for shops on the ground floor and apartments above. The shop spaces still are largely legible in their open volumes and some feature original pressed tin ceilings, while the apartments remain remarkably intact in plan and retain much of their original trim.

The building was constructed in 1923 following designs by Charles Forrest that adorned the facade (south elevation), the public side of the building, with a tapestry-style brick veneer consisting of large panels of brick laid in stretcher bonds set in frames of header, soldier, and rowlock bricks. This veneer was extended around the southeast corner of the building onto the south side of the east elevation, facing onto Hudson Street. Commercial buildings during this period sought to replicate the character-defining open-plan interiors and sturdy construction present in massive late-nineteenth-century Italianate commercial buildings and skyscrapers on a smaller scale, inspired by a growing middle class of entrepreneurs aiming to launch ventures in major cities across the country. Many enterprising businessmen were immigrants like Thomas Manze, who migrated to America from Italy in 1889, striving to escape overcrowded living conditions of his home country for a place where land was available and affordable for development. After succeeding in a series of smaller enterprises, Manze chose to construct a much larger and more decorative multi-use building boasting a brick veneer of light buff-colored bricks with frames created by red bricks, all with a vertical scratch finish to enhance the stylistic value of the facade.

Tapestry brick was a popular choice during this time due to the sturdiness and affordability of the material, allowing brick veneers to be exhibited on two-and three-story commercial buildings and residential apartments. The prized utility and economy of the mass-produced brick combined with beauty when the designers installed them in patterns as simple or complex as the client desired. The 461-471 Niagara Street facade incorporated Gothic arches into the second-story panels directly above the street-level doors to the second-floor apartments. A wood and metal classical cornice separated the parapeted roof from the second story. Combined with the red bricks framing the buff panels above the storefront transoms and surrounding the windows, the tapestry facade demonstrated how designers of the 1920s elevated smaller-scale commercial buildings.

The interior of 461-463 Niagara Street was damaged by a fire in 2023, destroying the non-historic finishes of the previous first-floor commercial occupants. The removal of these damaged finishes exposed the historic wood interior stud walls, concrete subfloor, steel beams supporting the ceiling, and storefronts of 461-463, proving the building has maintained its underlying structure and original purpose. The building retains its historic tapestry-style brick facade. The brick veneer extends around the southeast corner of the building to the south half of the east facade, with additional buff brick panels on the second story and forming the recessed

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corner entrance to the 461 Niagara Street commercial unit. The brick veneer has remained unchanged since 1923 on either the south or east elevations.

The exterior has received few alterations to its historic appearance, except for alterations, occurring after 1969, of the 463 and 465 units so the doors are flush with the storefront. Some storefronts have historic wood frames between each window light while others have non-historic aluminum-clad storefront windows. The first-floor interiors reflect how occupants installed finishes and partition walls to suit their needs, and when a new business entered the building the partition layout would change but not the underlying stud walls or plan. The second floor has likewise received few alterations to the layout since the 1923 construction, with only one apartment changed from its original plan to accommodate another business tenant. In each apartment unit some of the flooring and wall finishes were altered in 1969 to address changes in city fire safety codes, yet the character-defining spaces and much original trim remain.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance**

Buffalo's Lower West Side

Buffalo's Lower West Side featured many brick buildings in its early development, from the 1830s to the 1860s, following the roads extending northwest from Niagara Square. These connected the southern side of Buffalo to the shipping wharfs in the Black Stone settlement to the northwest, so agricultural goods from territories in the west could be unloaded and transported overland to the markets on the Atlantic Coast. By the 1860s these buildings included the residences of the wealthy Buffalo families who made their fortunes in transportation, coal, agriculture, and manufacturing facilities established along Lake Erie and the Niagara River. In later decades these buildings housed commercial purposes to attract customers in the vicinity.<sup>1</sup> Additional brick buildings were constructed along Niagara Street towards the northwest as the Buffalo settlement expanded along the Niagara Riverbank.

Between the 1870s and the 1890s, residences of wealthy families connected to lucrative enterprises in the city were developed on Niagara Street in the Italianate, Second Empire, Queen Anne, and Classical Revival styles. Wood one- and two-story buildings also arose as the city's population increased, with migrants attracted by the range of employment opportunities presented by the range of industries and business opportunities. The increasing industrialization of the city led to the need for new housing for the growing population of workers. The 1870s also saw the emergence of "streetcar suburbs" consisting of residential areas constructed outside the city's commercial centers yet close enough to allow occupants to commute to their workplaces using this new form of transportation. These neighborhoods branched off Niagara Street to form a middle-class community. Migrants from across Europe were drawn to the city by new commercial opportunities, meeting the demands of the growing Lower West Side population. By the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the

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<sup>1</sup> H. Katherine Smith, "Memories of Niagara Street: Fine old houses were scenes of pompous living in years gone by," *Courier Express*, October 29, 1933, 4.

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twentieth century, these new arrivals would also establish rows of commercial buildings along Niagara Street to serve a broad clientele of business travelers and residents along one of Buffalo's oldest and most commercially active roads. Although Irish immigrants were the first to settle the Lower West Side neighborhood beginning in 1845, from the 1880s onward the Lower West Side neighborhood earned the nickname "Little Italy" for the large Italian American immigrant community residing between the main commercial roads and the Erie waterfront.<sup>2</sup> The urban development of the Lower West Side also allowed entrepreneurial immigrants to establish businesses in strategic locations accessible to area residents and commercial traffic. Some of this development involved business owners purchasing the large houses previously owned by Buffalo's wealthier families and whose descendants had left the city to establish their own fortunes.

By the 1920s the architectural landscape of the Lower West Side district consisted of brick commercial buildings serving traffic along Niagara Street and the roads branching from Niagara and residential zones containing wood and brick buildings. The commercial buildings ranged from purpose-built two- and three-story commercial blocks to older buildings renovated with one- or two-story brick additions facing onto Niagara Street. The latter approach compartmentalized the spaces for stores and businesses while retaining the older residential building. These new buildings and building additions featured tall windows, flat roofs, and cornices occasionally decorated with pronounced wood or masonry cornice brackets and brick corbelling. This new commercial development along Niagara Street was influenced by the expansion of roads catering to automobile traffic and the railroad, further incentivizing commercial buildings to be established along the major road connecting the downtown area to the northern neighborhoods.

Buffalo's fortunes stagnated during the Great Depression. The downturn was somewhat alleviated by the Curtiss-Wright Corporation establishing a factory near the city in 1929, yet this was not enough to prevent mass unemployment and insufficient food or shelter for families during the 1930s. Beginning in 1935 federal relief money was provided by the Works Progress Administration to improve public housing, municipal services, and city infrastructure. These construction and infrastructure projects provided meaningful employment and relief from hunger for the city and helped improve the quality of life for the historically immigrant neighborhoods such as the West Side. The demand for military supplies during the Second World War provided a surge of investment in the city's aircraft manufacturing, steel production, railroads, and grain transportation industries, which provided hundreds of thousands of new manufacturing jobs for city residents. Once the war ended these manufacturing jobs were phased out, leaving thousands out of work once again. Throughout the later 1940s and into the 1950s major businesses left Buffalo for cities where land was cheaper to develop, and new highways were constructed from 1953 to replace some of the old residential areas in the downtown neighborhood east of the Lower West Side.

Areas of the Lower West Side neighborhood were demolished during the 1960s and 1970s due to urban renewal programs, resulting in the loss of historic commercial and residential buildings along Niagara Street. The loss of historic buildings in the neighborhood was compounded by the loss of manufacturing jobs in the city, leading

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Adelman et al., "Buffalo's West Side: Migration, Gentrification, and Neighborhood Change" *City and Community* 19, 1 (June 2019): 773.

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many residents to leave Buffalo to find employment in the suburbs.<sup>3</sup> The remaining West Side residents consisted of Irish and Italian families, including those who lacked the finances to move to the northern neighborhoods or leave Buffalo for the suburbs, and Puerto Rican migrants arrived in the Lower West Side beginning in the 1960s. These new arrivals worked in manufacturing, railroads, and agricultural sectors and, like the Irish and Italian migrants of the previous century, the Puerto Ricans formed religious, charitable, and social organizations to support their community.

Many of the historic residences in the Lower West Side are narrow two-story buildings following the Queen Anne architectural style, which rose to popularity beginning in the 1870s. These houses feature a pronounced front gable or a projecting tower, an enclosed cornice below the front to signify a change in decorative cladding, a steeply pitched roof, and, frequently, a cross gable or a projecting side elevation. The windows are tall and commonly in a one-over-one configuration, and some earlier buildings retain their historic arched window openings (for Italianate ones), six-over-six wood windows, and multi-pane Queen Anne windows above single light windows. Many of the residences have porches around the front entrance supported by squared wood supports, and commonly feature wood or cast-iron rails. Other residential buildings exhibit the Colonial Revival style from the 1880s or the shallow-pitched gable roof of the earlier Greek Revival style. Additional residences in the Lower West Side were constructed in the Second Empire, Colonial Revival, and American Four-Square styles. The Colonial Revival and American Four-Square buildings are most concentrated on the southwest side of the neighborhood towards the waterfront, where the removal of older industrial buildings provided land for constructing pre-manufactured housing with limited ornamentation.

Niagara Street and 465 Niagara Street

Surveyor Joseph Ellicott laid out Niagara Street between 1803 and 1805 as part of a larger settlement plan for the village on the east bank of Lake Erie that would later be named Buffalo. Ellicott designed Niagara Street as one of the radial streets emerging from the central public square and cutting through the otherwise largely gridded plan. The road was intended to connect with the Black Rock Ferry, a major transportation network for goods over land and water. This road brought needed supplies to the town and nearby Fort Erie through the War of 1812 and into the 1820s. Goods from the boats on the Niagara River would be unloaded and hauled by cart to warehouses and commercial buildings further south. The constant movement of people and goods through the area led to taverns, coaching inns, farmsteads, and civic buildings established along the route aiming to capitalize on the commercial value of the traffic between Niagara Falls, the Niagara River, and Lake Erie.

The completion of the Erie Canal in 1825 created a new waterway alongside the Niagara River connecting the city to the broader trade networks across New York State while encouraging intensified development along the western shore.<sup>4</sup> The new construction hoped to profit from the canal, which would link the markets of the Atlantic seaboard to the farms, mines, and timber harvesting operations in the American Midwest through

<sup>3</sup> Adelman et al., "Buffalo's West Side," 772.

<sup>4</sup> Mark Goldman, *High Hopes: The Rise and Decline of Buffalo, New York* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1983), 56.

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Buffalo. City and business leaders anticipated the flow of raw materials and refined products to generate substantial commercial traffic, especially along the shipping ports along the Niagara River edge. The result was the construction of new residential neighborhoods clustered around Niagara Street and its intersecting roads, docks along the waterfront to access the shipping networks, and industrial buildings concentrated along the river edge to the north drawing energy from the flowing water there.

Niagara Street was designated a public highway in 1826 after the Black Rock harbor was incorporated into the Erie Canal network, connecting the early Buffalo settlement to the docks along the Niagara River. Niagara Street allowed goods to be unloaded from the harbor and transported via railroad lines throughout the city and to the hubs in New York City. Niagara Street ran parallel to the New York Central rail line across the southwest side of Buffalo. The access to water and rail transportation led to the establishment of lodging, warehouses, and refining mills along the north side of Niagara Street, with the heaviest industry concentrated on the Niagara River to draw power from the water flow.

An 1835 city map showed Niagara Street running parallel to the Buffalo and Niagara Falls Railroad. Many of the wealthiest families in the city profited from investing in the railroads. The northern portions of Niagara Street were historically situated away from the intense commercial activity of downtown Buffalo, especially the offices around Niagara Square, heading towards the Black Rock neighborhood and the shipping wharfs and grain elevators in the northwest.

The installation of the first grain elevators in 1842 greatly contributed to the city's economic growth by making Buffalo a foremost distributor of agricultural products to the large cities on the East Coast. The increased commercial activity and employment opportunities in this part of the city allowed residential neighborhoods to arise on the roads intersecting Niagara Street, named after local geographic features including Hudson, Huron, Pennsylvania, Jersey, and Virginia Streets. Niagara Street became the first road in Buffalo to receive streetcar access in 1860, leading to the development of "streetcar suburbs" allowing workers to commute from areas outside of downtown, and to the construction of new residential neighborhoods in previously underdeveloped lands between Niagara Square and the Black Rock ferry.

The area around Niagara Street and Hudson Street is characterized by brick commercial buildings along Niagara Street dating to suburban development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, constructed in Italianate, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival styles. Many commercial buildings along Niagara Street retain historic masonry construction and other character-defining decorative details of early twentieth century commercial buildings. The streets intersecting and running parallel to Niagara Street are residential developments with wood Colonial Revival, Italianate, and Queen Anne-style buildings.



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The Niagara Street area northwest of the city center was historically the location of residences owned by wealthy residents since the 1840s, whose houses expressed a range of architectural styles.<sup>5</sup> These buildings have received some exterior alterations since their construction, mainly converting the residential building interiors into commercial units accessible from Niagara Street. Niagara Street became a major road for commercial and commuter traffic as public transport and later the automobile influenced the settlement patterns of the city. Niagara Street changed from a residential neighborhood into a commercial area beginning in the 1860s, slowly adding more business units towards the 1890s and 1900s as the descendants of early families left the city.

Another factor in the development of the West Side of Buffalo was the migration of Sicilian families to the United States. Initially, these newcomers would settle in the downtown areas filled with low-quality tenement housing. These contained minimal space, were poorly illuminated and ventilated, were susceptible to diseases, had limited access to clean water, and were vulnerable to fires. Migrants from various nations inhabiting downtown Buffalo established businesses to raise funds so the family could afford to construct or move to a new home with more spacious interiors, and improved access to water, lighting, and clean air. As more migrant families established themselves in the city this upward social mobility continued, with residents of Italian origins forming enclaves based on their province (and even village) of origin, providing a network of contacts with shared language and traditions which eventually helped further migration. The Italians in the West Side and Lower West Side neighborhoods lived in wood-framed houses with multiple generations living in the same building, as it was not uncommon for entire extended families to move to the United States.<sup>6</sup> These families commonly found blue-collar employment in the factories and warehouses along the riverfront. Similar phenomena occurred with migrants from other origins who settled in enclaves based around shared languages, religions, social customs, and incorporated architectural elements from their home culture into their new residences and businesses.

The 465 Niagara Street parcel, which originally extended the entire depth between Niagara Street and Prospect Avenue, contained a two-story Italianate brick villa from 1863 onward (see Figure 8), with another two-story building occupying the neighboring 471 Niagara Street site to the northwest.<sup>7</sup> The villa had a two-story secondary building including a carriage house on the north side of the property facing Prospect Avenue. The residence was commissioned by Thomas Brown, a prominent local businessman who earned a fortune investing in the railroads, coal mining, and the Akron Cement Company in nearby Akron, New York. Brown lived at 465 Niagara Street until his death in 1884 when ownership of the property passed to Daniel Lockwood-Brown and his wife, Sarah Brown, Thomas's daughter. By 1901 the 465 Niagara Street house is the listed residence for the lawyer Thomas Brown-Lockwood, Thomas Brown's grandson. Thomas Lockwood owned the residence until the early 1910s. Then, from 1912 to 1915 the 465 Niagara Street building contained the St. Catherine's girls school operated by the Sisters of Mercy.

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<sup>5</sup> Smith, "Memories of Niagara Street," 4.

<sup>6</sup> Goldman, *High Hopes*, 180.

<sup>7</sup> *The Buffalo Address Book and Family Directory 1915-1916* (Buffalo, New York: Peter Paul & Son, 1915), 287.

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*Figure 8: 1979 east facade photograph of the Tuscan Villa building on the 465 Niagara Street parcel. The building was constructed ca. 1863 and demolished in 1982. The left side of the image depicts part of the rear elevation of the 461-471 Niagara Street commercial block.*

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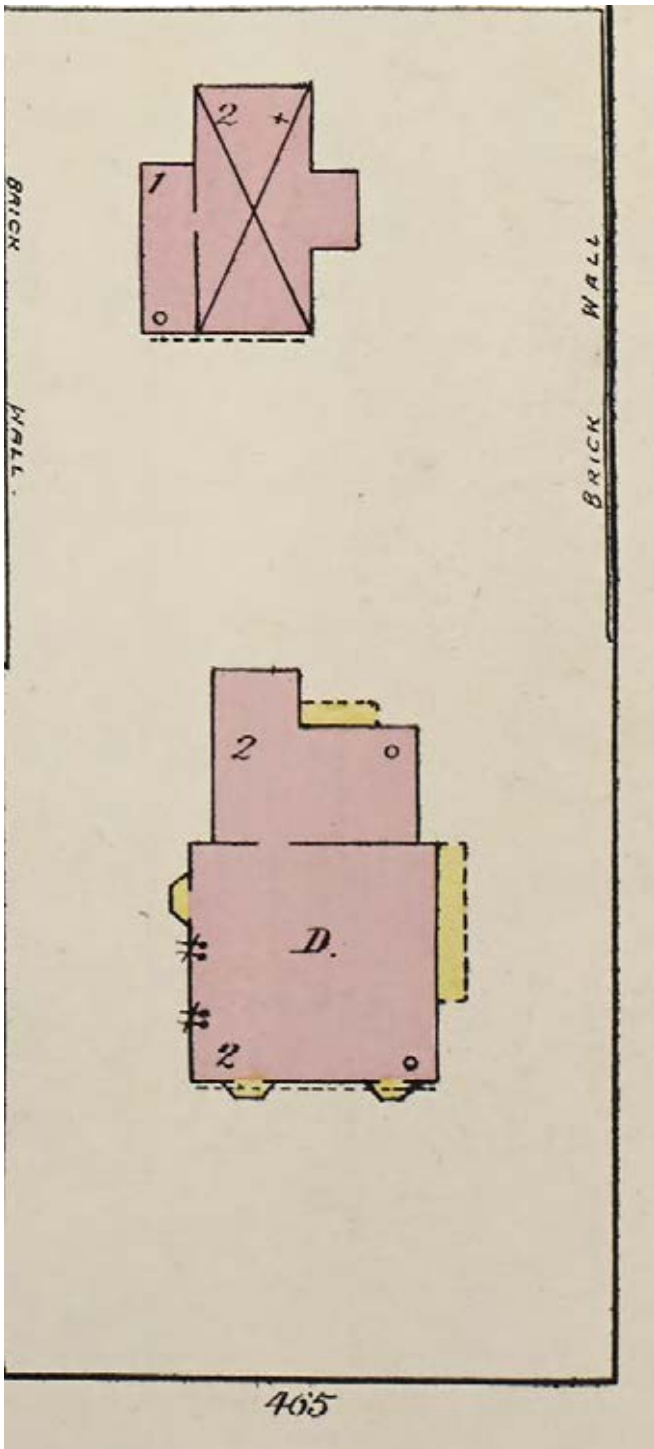


Figure 9: 1889 Sanborn Map page showing the villa and rear secondary building on the 465 Niagara Street site.

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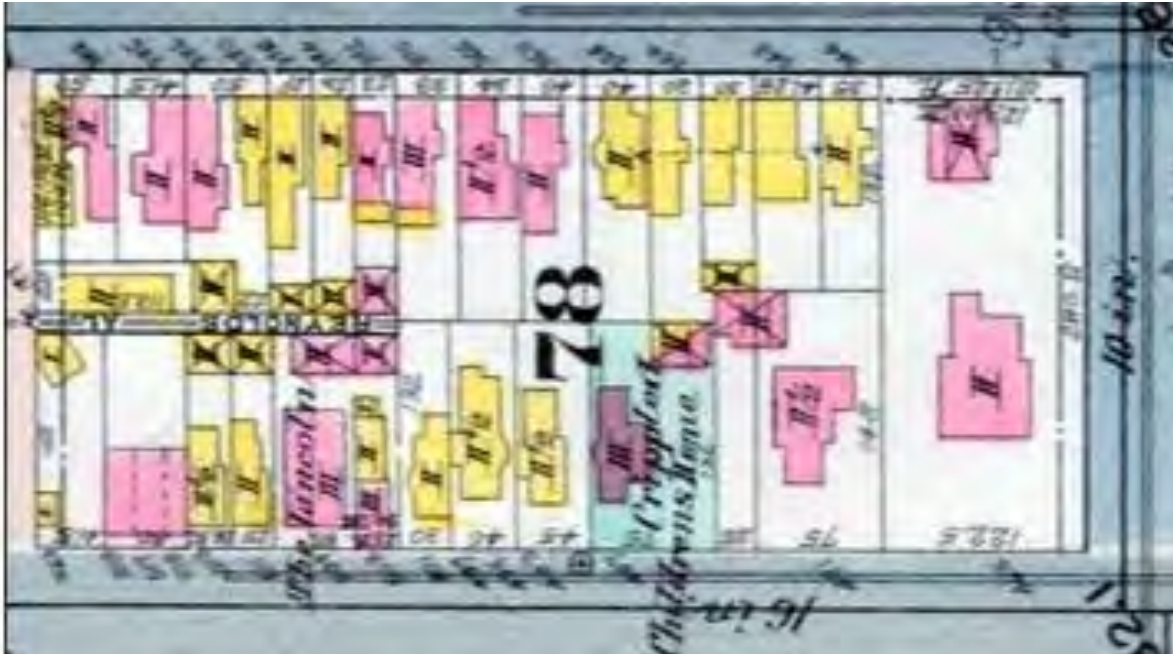


Figure 10: 1915 Sanborn map showing 465 Niagara Street at the bottom left corner, on the north side of the intersection of Niagara Street and Hudson Street.

Thomas Manze emigrated from Italy to America in 1889, first appearing in the Buffalo city directory in 1896. In 1901 Manze owned a barbershop at 131 Main Street, which became a restaurant in 1911. Manze also owned a saloon at 133 Main Street in 1911, expanding his commercial holdings and providing additional income for future ventures. Manze purchased the vacant 465 Niagara Street property in 1915, demolishing the north carriage house and constructing four residential buildings facing Prospect Avenue in their place. Two of these remain today. The 1920 Buffalo business directory notes the main house contained tailors' shops, mechanics, an ice cream company, and offices of the *Buffalo Courier* newspaper. Thomas Manze resided on Lloyd Street within the downtown neighborhood, continuing to operate his Main Street restaurant until he could invest in building the commercial block on Niagara Street.

Construction of the Manze Block

By 1922, Manze was ready to invest in a commercial building on Niagara Street and he commissioned designs from two different architects a year apart. Charles Forrest design was dated January of 1922 and Joseph Impellitier's came a year later, in dated March of 1923. He chose Forrest's design, prioritizing the utility and economy of the brick patterns over Impellitier's more ornate and expensive classical decorations. The key to the Manze Block's design was the use of brick walls supported by steel beams with wood stud walls lining the interior spaces. The brick and steel elements improved the weight efficiency of the building, and the facade expressed the decorative capabilities of this new construction method.

The 1923 Charles Forrest designs for 465 Niagara Street note the intent for the building to have a tapestry-inspired south facade. The southwest facade of 461-471 Niagara Street retains buff-colored bricks as the primary color for the wall accented with dark red bricks, forming decorative frames around the storefronts,

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storefront signage panels, window openings on each floor, and as quoins on the west and south corners of the facade. The second-floor of the facade also retains decorative Gothic arches outlined by red bricks, positioned over the side entrance doors from the street level to the second-floor residential units. The 471-467 and 461 storefronts retain their historic recessed entrance designs. A set of drawings from March of 1923, drawn by Joseph Impellitier, indicated additional Classical ornamentation was planned for the roof cornice and around the storefront entrance doors, and a different window frame configuration was planned for the second story (see Figure 2). This alternative was not chosen for the finished building, which completely reflects Forrest's earlier design. The brick patterns, decorative arches, and window openings on all elevations have been retained since the original construction with no alterations.

Tapestry Style Construction

Tapestry brick was a proprietary system of brick production, installation, and decoration developed by Fiske & Company in the 1910s and marketed in catalogs as a new and economical method of designing fireplaces.<sup>8</sup> The decorative patterns in these fireplaces came from orientation, earthy finishes, rich color, and molded elements emphasizing a natural appearance. The brick material was affordable, mass-producible, and tailored to customer's needs. Tapestry brick was beautiful, economical, customizable, and accessible to a broader clientele than ornate granite or marble fireplaces, leading designers to experiment with it for exteriors. The application of this brick design technique to building exteriors resulted in an architectural form focusing on economy and functionalism and provided a subtle but distinct aesthetic emulating details from more traditional styles.

The economy of tapestry brick facades appealed to the growing middle class of the 1890s-1920s, including families migrating to major cities to chase economic opportunities during the construction boom following the end of the First World War. The style was employed on the facades of commercial and residential buildings as an affordable stylish design whose details could be scaled to the size of the building more effectively than earlier styles. This artistic flexibility made the style appeal to both working- and middle-class citizens as an affordable option. Although the residential spaces were frequently organized into multiple apartments rather than a single-family residence, new tapestry brick buildings were designed with improved amenities and access to clean water.<sup>9</sup> The style originated in major cities such as New York before spreading to the urban centers in the west, originally to create row housing before the style was applied to dedicated commercial buildings across the country such as the McConahay Building in Kansas City.

The McConahay Building in Kansas City, Missouri (NPS reference number 78001655, nominated May 1978), was noted as an example of a tapestry brick facade applied to a two-story commercial building. It is an example of how popular tapestry brick was across the nation from the 1910s onward. The McConahay building was constructed in 1922, one year before the Manze commercial block. The facade consists of a common-course brick background decorated with the signature soldier, rowlock, and stretcher stack bonds used for tapestry

<sup>8</sup> "Tapestry Brick Fireplaces," Fiske & Company, Inc., 1911, 4.

<sup>9</sup> Johnathon D. Taylor, *Tapestry Brick Dwellings: The Emergence of a Residential Type in Brooklyn* (Columbia University, 2013), 157. <https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/D8JQ10CJ>



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brick patterns; the roof parapet was capped with concrete and peaked over the center of the facade. The McConahay Building has a projecting cornice like the 465 Niagara Street commercial block, but there it is supported by a course of brick modillions and decorated with terra-cotta classical panels. Unlike the Manze Block, the McConahay building uses cast-stone and terra-cotta blocks alongside the veneer bricks to create geometric patterns. The 465 Niagara Street block also features a crenelated parapet in contrast to the solid parapet with a triangular peak centered over the facade of the McConahey Building. Furthermore, the rear elevation of the McConahey building consists of bricks laid in common courses that include segmented lintels above the rear window openings.

A tapestry-style veneer uses rowlock, header, and soldier brick courses to frame larger brick panels laid in stretcher bonds. The use of colored brick made the tapestry more decorative and impressive, enhanced by the simple or intricate patterns.<sup>10</sup> Common color ranges for these tapestry bricks were reds, gray-browns, and buff tans. As exhibited by 461-471 Niagara Street, buff bricks were laid in stretcher bonds to make the panels appear large and impressive, complemented by the red bricks laid in stack bonds and soldier bonds to create the frames around these buff panels. A common implementation of tapestry veneers involved having a “background”



*Figure 11: The McConahay Building at 1121-1131 East 31st Street, Kansas City, Missouri. Constructed in 1922.*

primary brick course, onto which the decorative panels and frames would be inserted. This would take the form of large swathes of stretcher bonds broken up by rowlock and soldier bonds, and all brick courses were secured to the facade with steel anchors or a pointing system specified by the manufacturer (see Figure 19). The new brick veneer systems were often combined with steel beams to provide greater structural support without needing bulky full masonry construction, shown by a lack of arched window lintels on buildings from the end of this period, allowing windows to be larger and the scale of the building to be smaller than earlier buildings.

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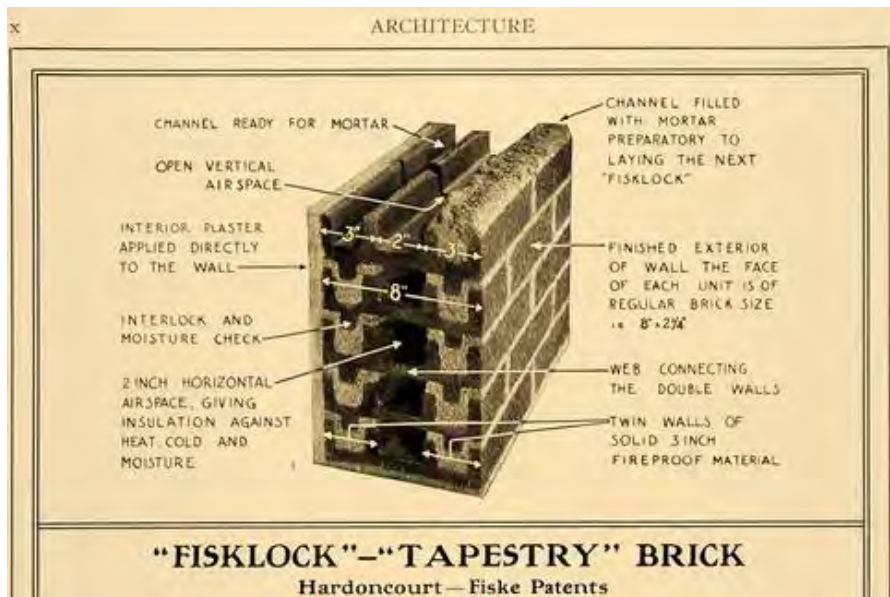


Figure 12: Cross section of the tapestry brick wall system devised by Fiske & Company, 1915.

The accessibility of tapestry-style facades to developers across the United States and the versatility of the materials to designs of different scales and complexity made brick veneers a popular choice for two- and three-story residential and commercial buildings across the United States.

### Tapestry Brick in Buffalo

Tapestry brick buildings are evenly distributed throughout the city of Buffalo, clustered around major sources of foot, streetcar, railroad, and automobile traffic. Such areas include further a stretch south along Niagara Street closer to the civic offices and skyscrapers around Niagara Square, the historic Allentown neighborhood to the north, and to the north along Main Street. These buildings are distinct within their surroundings, often surrounded by buildings with Queen Anne or Italianate details, and it is rare to find tapestry veneers on more than three buildings neighboring each other. Like many commercial buildings from the 1900s and the interwar construction boom of the 1920s and 1930s, approximately half of the tapestry-style brick buildings were constructed as row units, denoted by the lack of windows and discoloration of the bricks and mortar on the side elevations where neighboring buildings previously stood. Other tapestry-brick buildings do feature windows on the side elevations and are separated from their neighbors by alleyways, yet their surroundings are still oriented around commercial activity from the major road.

The following examples all use similar early twentieth century brick veneer systems on their front elevations. These tapestry-style buildings employed bricks in soldier, stretcher, rowlock, header, and stack bonds to form the major panels and decorative frames adorning the front facades. The use of multiple brick colors highlighted the decorative frames created by these patterns. Other complementary details used by tapestry-style buildings

<sup>10</sup> Taylor, *Tapestry Brick Dwellings: The Emergence of a Residential Type in Brooklyn*, 16.

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were cast-stone or terra-cotta blocks with raised patterns, especially on buildings that did not employ two different brick colors, and window openings with minimal or non-existent lintel arches due to steel beams supporting the weight of the building. Roofs were commonly flat surrounded by solid, crenelated, or stepped parapets capped with stone or concrete pieces over the facade, and ceramic coping tile on the side and rear parapets. A common practice of tapestry-style buildings facing onto Niagara Street was for a business owner to purchase a nineteenth-century residential building and construct a storefront addition. This pattern reflects changes in the neighborhood due to the influx of working-class Italian migrants during the 1920s.

233Niagara Street



*Figure 13: Looking at the west front facade of 233 Niagara Street, Buffalo. Constructed ca. 1920.*



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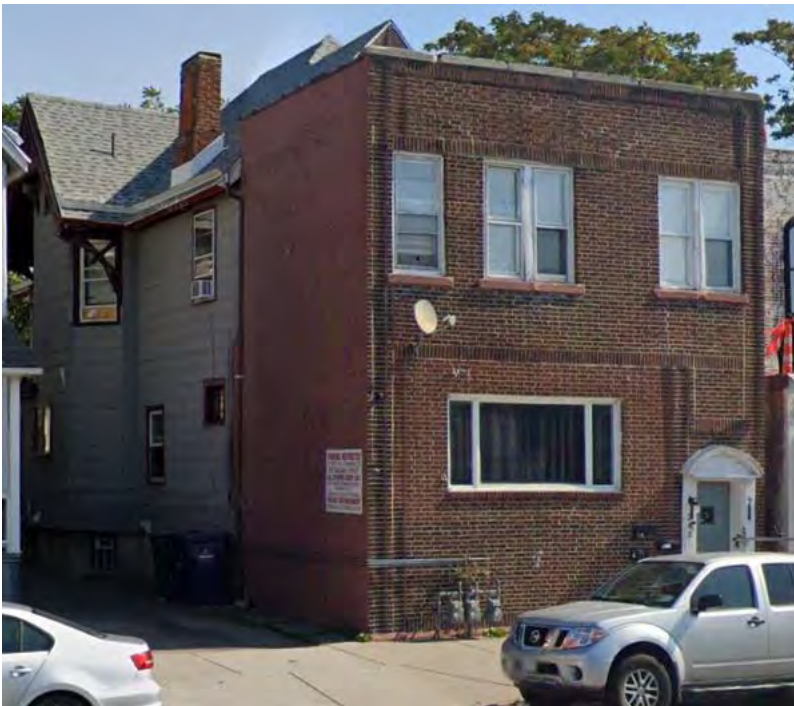
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To the southeast along Niagara Street stands the two-story commercial building at 233 Niagara Street within the Lower West Side neighborhood. The building consists of a first-floor commercial unit behind a storefront with a recessed entrance and a non-historic composite side door leading to the second-floor residential space. .

The layout of the south facade mirrors that of the 465 Niagara Street block with most of the facade composed of buff brick laid in stretcher courses to form large panels and the “background” of the veneer, with panels created with additional bricks laid in soldier, rowlock, and header courses to frame the first-floor openings and signage panel, an additional panel below the second-story cornice, and framing the perimeter of the front roof parapet. The corners of the facade are framed by a stack bond consisting of a stretcher brick flanked by header bricks. Limestone blocks are incorporated into the corners of the veneer, the corners of the storefront piers, the signage band above the storefront, and a diamond-shaped stone block is inserted in the center of the facade roof parapet. The windowsills are also limestone.

The building at 233 Niagara Street is much smaller than 461-471, uses one color of brick for its entire facade rather than the two used on 461-471 Niagara Street, and employs the limestone blocks that are absent from the Manze Block. However, the parapet over 461-471 Niagara Street has multiple crenelations over the facade, features an open corner on the eastern 461 Niagara Street unit, uses a prominent cornice, and its tapestry brick includes Gothic arches on the second story.

243 Niagara Street



*Figure 14: Looking north at the south facade of 243 Niagara Street. The Queen Anne portion towards the rear was constructed in 1880, the tapestry brick section ca. 1920.*

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Further north in the same vicinity of 233 Niagara Street is 243 Niagara Street, a two-story residential building. The building at 243 Niagara Street has an asymmetrical entrance with a round-arched wood lintel supported by fluted wood engaged pilasters. The first floor has a large picture window looking out over Niagara Street consisting of a large single-light window flanked by tall, narrow sidelights. The second floor has three window openings with cast-stone sills and wood window frames, with the west opening containing a single non-historic one-over-one vinyl window, the center opening containing two one-over-one windows, and the east opening also containing two one-over-one windows. The flat roof has coping tile on the side elevations and concrete pieces on the facade, though with no step or crenelation.

The 243 Niagara Street building differs greatly because the brick building was incorporated into a Queen Anne cross-gable house at the rear, with non-historic metal siding terminating where the brick portion begins. Compared to the 233 and 465 Niagara Street properties, 243 Niagara Street uses only red brick on its front veneer, with the main panels composed not of stretcher brick bonds but Flemish bonds. Additionally, the stretcher stack bonds that are used to create the decorative frames on the facade are slightly recessed compared to the surrounding bricks, using three-dimensional effects to beautify the tapestry brick. The east elevation of the 243 Lake Street brick portion has no windows, indicating it was once part of a connected row of buildings along this area of Niagara Street. Like 465 Niagara, this commercial building was constructed by an Italian immigrant.

207 Niagara Street



*Figure 15: Looking at the tapestry brick facade of 207 Niagara Street, Buffalo, New York. Constructed ca. 1880.*

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The 207 Niagara Street building consists of a two-story residential building constructed ca. 1880 and a single-story commercial block addition constructed ca. 1925 with the addition extending to the sidewalk of Georgia Street to the west and Niagara Street to the south. The commercial unit has two storefronts and a non-historic metal door opening facing south onto Niagara Street, five storefront openings facing west onto Georgia Street, and the southwest corner contains an entrance door. The west storefront windows have been covered with wood boards or corrugated metal sheets, and the northwest corner of the west elevation includes a single-story garage addition. The commercial building has a flat roof with stretcher brick parapet capped with stone coping on the south and west elevations. The commercial unit is clad with buff-colored bricks arranged in stretcher bonds, with header and rowlock bricks used to create decorative frames around the bulkheads below the storefront windows. A course of soldier bricks forms the lintel above all the storefront window openings on the west and south elevations. A course of dentils consists of an alternating pattern of projecting headers next to headers that are flush with the building plane, below the parapet of the commercial addition. Any transoms above the storefront windows are obscured by large non-historic signage bands.

Like 465 Niagara Street the facade has no arched lintels around the windows and boasts a corner entrance to one of the commercial units. The storefront windows rest on brick bulkheads, and the street-facing elevations predominantly uses buff-color bricks. Unlike the classical motifs retained by 465 Niagara Street, the 207 Niagara Street building expresses the rounded corner and smoothed brick veneer of the Moderne style. The 207 Niagara Street building exemplifies the trend of adding commercial additions to existing brick and wood residences.



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Figure 16: Looking at the facade of 351 Niagara Street, Buffalo, New York. Constructed ca. 1875.

351 Niagara Street

The 351 Niagara Street building is an example of a tapestry brick commercial false front looking south onto the historic main commercial road through the west edge of Buffalo, attached to a two-story brick residential building. The two-story building is located on the north side of the street, between the intersections with Virginia Street and Maryland Street in an area where existing buildings along Niagara Street were demolished during urban redevelopment programs in the 1960s, yet the two brick buildings east of 351 Niagara (the single-story commercial building at 349 Niagara Street and the historic Italianate apartment block at 337-345 Niagara Street) have been retained. The residential areas bordering this section of Niagara Street exhibit Queen Anne and Colonial Revival buildings constructed between the 1880s and the 1900s.

The building is two stories tall with a stepped parapet over the facade. The first story has a large metal storefront window resting on a brick bulkhead, two entrance doors flanking the storefront window, and a historic paneled wood double door with four-light windows. The first-floor storefront has large panels covering the transoms above the storefront windows and the three entrance doorways, including the paneled wood double



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door on the southeast corner. The transom board above the storefront window carrying non-historic signage. The second story has a three-part window with casement sidelights and two individual one-over-one windows behind non-historic storm windows. The second story windows and the central first-story entrance door have fabric awnings. The stepped roof parapet has concrete caps like the 465 Niagara Street commercial block, and the side elevations of the false front have ceramic coping tile like the 465 Niagara Street building. The residential building behind the storefront has a gable roof. The residential portion has infilled arched window openings on the first-story northwest elevation while the second story has tall one-over-one historic wood windows and small sliding windows.

The brick veneer on the south facade consists almost entirely of stretcher bonds with a course of soldier bricks separating the first and second stories and separating the second story from the roof parapet. The second-story windows are flanked by rounded-arched alcoves containing historic decorative urns, with both the alcoves and urns painted to contrast with the surrounding brick. The false front portion is bare brick while the residential building to the rear has painted brick walls, further contrasting with the design of 465 Niagara Street.

349 Niagara Street



Figure 17: Looking east at the front facade of 349 Niagara Street, constructed ca. 1925.

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The 349 Niagara Street building stands to the east of 351 Niagara Street and west of the apartment building at 339 Niagara Street, forming a commercial row along the north side of Niagara Street. Like 351 Niagara, the building consists of an earlier two-story front-gabled residential building with a two-story commercial storefront addition constructed during the 1920s. The residential building has a long rear addition consisting of a gable roof on the west side and a hipped roof over a shorter east side extension. The commercial addition has a central first-story storefront consisting of a recessed non-historic metal door flanked by non-historic metal storefront windows resting on brick bulkheads covered with gypsum boards. The transoms above the storefront are covered with non-historic signage. Side entrance doors flank the storefront to the east and west, consisting of non-historic wood composite six-panel doors. The large transoms above each side entrance door are covered with wood boards. The second story has three one-over-one windows behind non-historic vinyl one-over-one storm windows, with concrete sills and fabric awnings. The flat roof of the commercial addition is surrounded by a parapet capped with ceramic coping tile. The tapestry brick veneer of the facade uses a lighter buff color than the neighboring 351 Niagara Street building, with the tapestry patterns formed by this singular color. The first story has a frame formed by stretcher stack bonds on the east and west corners of the addition sandwiched between header stack bonds, a common pattern for tapestry brick facades that imitated pilasters. These columns meet a course of soldier bricks forming the lintel above the storefront and side entrance doors and dividing the first and second stories. Additional courses of soldier bricks are present above the second story windows and on the roof parapet directly below the coping tile. This building is similar to 351, 243, and 207 Niagara Street as an example of a commercial storefront being added to an earlier residential building between 1915 and the 1920s.

631 Niagara Street



*Figure 18: Looking southwest at the front facade of 224 Allen Street, constructed ca. 1910.*

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On the northwest side of the Lower West Side neighborhood near the northwest boundary with the West Side neighborhood is a two-story brick educational building located at 631 Niagara Street. The Renaissance Revival brick building with a hipped roof incorporates tapestry brick ornamentation into the decoration of its facade. The buildings surrounding 631 Niagara Street are either wood Queen Anne residences, brick Second Empire residences, or brick Moderne-style educational and industrial facilities. The side elevations have less brick ornamentation than the facade but do feature the parged foundation, stone water table, banding between the first and second stories, and historic six-over-six wood windows. Like the facade, the side elevations have a belt course of soldier bricks below the stone banding separating the first and second stories. The northwest elevation has a center gable over the side entrance containing an oculus with cast stone surround. A trabeated Tuscan aedicule surrounds the door. The unadorned southeast entrance features a concrete stair porch with cast-iron handrail. The roof features dormers with segmental-arched pediments over six-over-six sash windows. The facade features brick quoins, shallow blind arches over the first story windows and entrance, a parged foundation with a stone water table, a stone cornice between the first and second stories, and an ornate second-story window opening over the entrance porch including a plaque with the address number featuring volutes and finials. The central front entrance door is at the top of a concrete masonry porch ascended to by a dual curved stair. There are six-over-six windows on each elevation instead of the one-over-one windows exhibited by 465 Niagara Street. This building represents how tapestry brick was used for institutional buildings.

202 Carolina Street



*Figure 19: Looking northwest at 202 Carolina Street, constructed ca. 1930.*

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The 202 Carolina Street property is a rectangular three-story residential building with the facade looking east over Carolina Street and the side elevation facing south onto Prospect Avenue. The facade is three bays wide while the south elevation is seven deep. The brick applied to the facade is a light, buff color in contrast to the common red brick used on the rest of the building. The facade has a pent roof separating the first and second stories that is clad with wood shingles. The storefront windows are covered with wood boards, resting on brick bulkheads capped with limestone. Each story of the front facade is also divided by limestone banding, integrated into the sills below the second and third story windows. The front elevation has historic wood one-over-one windows on the upper stories covered by non-historic metal exterior storm windows, and the north and south elevations have historic wood one-over-one windows with some exterior storm windows. The north and south sides also have vertically aligned steel bars installed in front of windows on the west side of the building. The building has a flat roof with a stepped parapet over the facade consisting of brick bulkheads with concrete caps. The front facade has metal coping pans over the parapet.

The veneer brick on the first-story facade is laid in stack bonds around the storefront window openings and around the recessed double door, with header bricks laid on both sides of a stack of alternating stretchers and headers. The brick veneer of the second and third stories is laid in stretcher bonds with soldier bricks forming the lintels above the window openings, and a decorative panel on the roof cornice consisting of a header and rowlock brick perimeter surrounding a recessed panel of stretcher bricks. Like the 465 Niagara Street building, 202 Carolina Street uses predominantly buff brick on its front elevation, but unlike 465 Niagara this building does not use additional tapestry brick to provide a secondary color. The 202 Carolina Street building's tapestry brick is also less intricate than that of 465 Niagara Street, relying on the stone banding to accent the second and third story window frames instead of using header, soldier, and rowlock bricks to form distinct panels between each window opening. Due to its narrow profile facing onto Carolina Street, the 202 Carolina Street building has less first-story space dedicated to commercial tenants compared to 465 Niagara Street, and allots more space for apartments. The 202 Carolina Street building can also be compared to 212 Carolina Street, neighboring to the north. The 212 building is a single-story garage decorated with a stepped parapet and recessed brick panel closely matching that of the 202 Carolina building. The 212 building is also a load-bearing masonry building yet is clad with molded concrete blocks instead of veneer bricks. The 202 Carolina Street building represents a more common, more economical, and less ornate application of tapestry-style brick facades for urban commercial and residential buildings constructed in the 1920s. These examples relied on the different courses of brick to provide the decorative pattern instead of laying multiple colors of brick.

Significance of the Manze Block

Throughout the late 1890s and into the 1920s, historic brick buildings along Niagara Street were developed into mixed-use buildings capitalizing on the traffic along the road and meeting residents' needs for specialized shops and services. These alterations occurred as the descendants of Buffalo's wealthiest families moved away from the neighborhood and the Italian communities throughout the Lower West Side took advantage of new opportunities to expand their commercial activities. These changes in the demographics and identity of the area were accelerated by the resumption of construction and international trade following the end of the First World



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War, reinforcing the mechanism by which Italian families migrated from their home villages to the United States in search of economic and social mobility. The 461-471 Niagara Street commercial block represents this gradual change in Niagara Street's function within Buffalo during the twentieth century. Where many existing residential buildings in the Lower West Side were adapted to receive commercial storefronts, Thomas Manze benefited from purchasing a property that was also a corner lot and provided him with enough space to construct the entire commercial block while retaining the Thomas Brown mansion. The entrepreneurs' adoption of new construction options led this change throughout the 1910s-1930s.

The 465 Niagara Street commercial block was constructed in 1923 to house shops and professional services on the first floor, apartments on the second floor, and large basements to store the assets for each commercial occupant. The now vanished Brown villa was retained and adapted into additional business spaces and offices, further increasing the sources of revenue for Thomas Manze and his family. The 461-471 Niagara Street commercial building is significant for retaining the historic tapestry-style exterior features from its 1923 construction, including the vertical scratch brick panels and frames, Gothic arches on the second story, and the crenelated roof parapet indicative of tapestry-style veneer. The commercial block fits the character of the Niagara Street-Hudson Street intersection since the commercial buildings around the Hudson Street intersection were constructed in the 1930s and later and have brick masonry construction with terra-cotta, cast stone, or brick veneer facades.

Occupants over time

The 1920 city directory notes tailors, an ice cream company, and the editor for the *Buffalo Courier* newspaper occupied the Brown villa on the 465 Niagara Street property, prior to the construction of the commercial block. By 1925 the residential building behind the commercial block was recorded as a boarding house owned by Thomas Manze (see Figure 12), while the commercial block housed local businesses. The 1934 Buffalo city directory noted the Lino Furniture Company occupied the 465 Niagara and a shoe repair shop occupied the neighboring 471 Niagara Street.<sup>11</sup> Since this period the first floor has relied on its open-planned interior to allow many tenants to install the partition walls needed to arrange the space to suit their needs. The alteration plans from 1969 mention a hair salon occupying one of the commercial units, reflecting the change in shops and services offered by the block's occupants to meet the demands of the local area.

The second floor of 471-463 Niagara Street was occupied as residential spaces, while 461 Niagara converted the south half of its apartment into a studio and a dentist office. The north side of the 461 unit retained the bathroom, kitchen, and north bedroom. This modified layout was retained even after the dentist moved out of the building.

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<sup>11</sup> *Polk's Buffalo (Erie County) City Directory* (Buffalo, New York: Polk-Clement Directory Company, 1934), 879 and 2134.

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Changes to the building from 1923-1969

The most significant alterations to the building during the period of significance occurred in 1923 and again in 1969. The second floor of the 461 Niagara Street unit was altered during the 1923 construction to consolidate the dining room and living room into a larger studio space to accommodate a dentist's office. This dentist's office was still present during the 1950s, as evidenced by the streamlined modernist signage present on the building in the 1952 streetscape (Figure 3). This reflected the flexibility of interior planning afforded to smaller commercial buildings by the new tapestry-style brick construction method.

The 1969 alterations focused on installing new gypsum board sheathing throughout the block to improve fire safety; wood wainscoting received fire resistant paint, and the existing windows on the doors to the hallways connecting each pair of units were replaced with wire glass. Gypsum board sheathing and fire-resistant paint was also applied to the second floor stair hallways, and additional gypsum board was installed in the ceilings of apartments where plaster ceilings had been removed since 1923. The plans for the 1969 alterations note few other changes to the apartment units, indicating the apartment layouts were still suitable for their original purpose. These plans did codify the alterations to 461 Niagara Street from when the space was redesigned to contain a dentist office. The north side of the southwest bedroom was partitioned into a new bathroom accessible from the stair hallway.

Alterations after 1969

The exterior of 461-471 Niagara Street received few alterations after 1969, chiefly focusing on the south and southeast elevations. At the 465 unit, the historic recessed entrance was removed and the doors were brought flush with the storefront windows, situating the door on the west side of the opening. These storefront alterations did not remove any of the historic tapestry brick, and the storefront windows of 471-465 have been replaced with aluminum-clad windows. The historic prism glass transom windows across the facade have been removed, the openings infilled, and non-historic signage bands installed covering the infilled transoms.

Almost all the first-floor rear windows have been infilled with wood boards while retaining the historic brick openings. A rear opening on the 469 unit has been infilled with bricks, and the northeast corner of the 461 unit retains three of its historic prism glass multi-light windows. The second-floor windows on each elevation have been replaced with non-historic vinyl and metal one-over-one windows, retaining the historic wood frames and window opening dimensions. The only significant change to the basements is removing the central dividing wall between each individual space, creating the shared basements beneath 471-469, 467-465, and 463-461 Niagara Street.

The first-floor commercial spaces of the entire block retain their historic open floor plans and wood displays behind the windows, and the spaces feature non-historic partition walls and finishes tailored to the needs of the current commercial occupants. The non-historic interior alterations include acoustic tile drop ceilings and vinyl or carpeted flooring over the historic concrete subfloor, leaving the historic fabric intact.



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The second-floor residential units retain their plans and some historic features, including hardwood flooring, the stairs connecting the residences to Niagara Street, the plaster ceilings, the facade wood windows, and paneled wood doors and closet doors.

The block maintained its commercial role during the 1940s, a period of rapid demographic changes as migrants from the southern United States moved to the city center for work and the wealthier residents moved into the suburbs to the east and southeast. Urban renewal programs from the 1960s and 1970s also threatened to demolish vast areas of the city even as the primary industries in the center of Buffalo gradually declined, with commercial and ornate residential buildings near the 465 Niagara Street block being removed during this period. The residential building at 178 Hudson Street behind the Manze Block was demolished in 1982, and some historic brick buildings along Niagara Street were demolished during this period. Most of the historic streetscape around Hudson Street and Niagara Street was retained, with many buildings featuring the storefronts present in the 1950s.

Major change to the 465 Niagara Street parcel outside the period of significance concerns the subdivision and sale of the lots on Prospect Street and the demolition of the 1863 Tuscan Villa building in the center of the property. The four residences at 336-344 Prospect Avenue were separated onto their own land parcels in 1975, and subsequently two of the four were demolished. The more substantial change to the lot of the 465 Niagara Street property was the removal of the nineteenth century villa in 1982, leaving behind the foundation and surrounding yard.

Conclusion

The Manze Block at 461-471 Niagara Street is significant under Criterion C for architecture as an intact example of an early twentieth century tapestry-style brick commercial building with minimal alterations from its original 1923 architectural plans. Tapestry-style brick veneers like on the Manze Block were popular on commercial and residential buildings in early twentieth-century urban America, a period in which construction increased after the First World War, immigrant families sought to out more space in affordable ethnically defined neighborhoods, and new technologies were developed improving access to durable, affordable materials that could be arranged in simple yet elegant designs.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Taylor, *Tapestry Brick Dwellings: The Emergence of a Residential Type in Brooklyn*, 40.

**Manze Block**

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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**Manze Block**

Name of Property

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

☒ 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 Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

☐ State Historic Preservation Office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency  
☐ Local government  
☐ University  
☐ Other  
Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 0.46 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

|                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 42.896990 | Longitude: -78.887519 |
| 2. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |
| 3. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |
| 4. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed map with scale.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary was drawn to include the legal boundaries of the land parcel containing the 465 Niagara Street property, which includes the nominated resource.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Alexander Whydell [edited by Johnathan Farris and Kathleen LaFrank, NYSHPO]

organization Johnson-Schmidt, Architect, P. C.

date May 2025

street & number 15 East Market Street, suite 202

telephone 607-937-1946

city or town Corning

state NY

zip code 14830

e-mail alexander@preservationarchitects.com

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

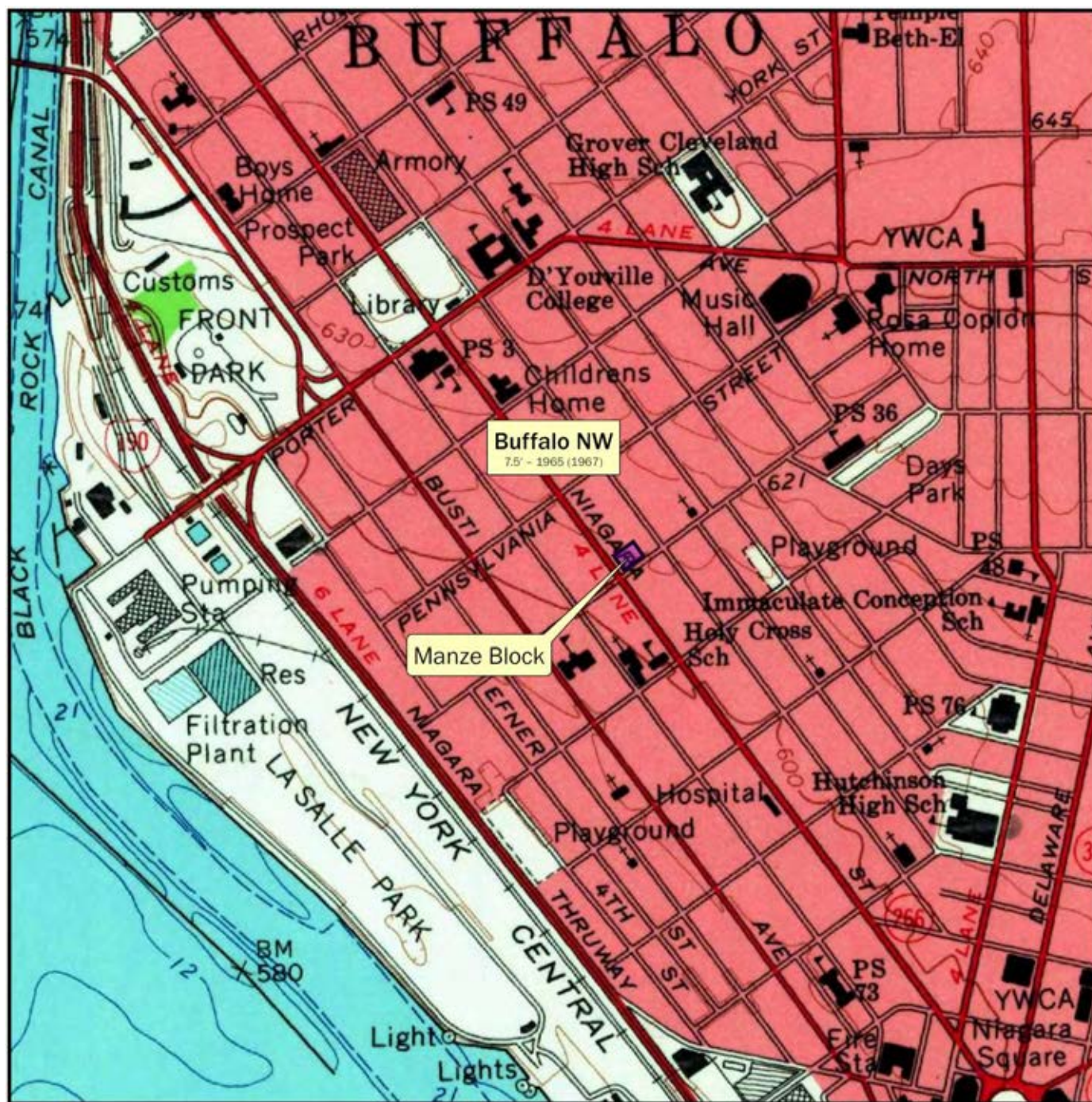


**Manze Block**

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1:12,000

0 500 1000 ft



Manze Block



New York State  
Parks, Recreation and  
Historic Preservation

Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 17N

Mapped 05/07/2025 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO



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1:1,200

0 50 100 ft

Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 17N



Nomination Boundary (0.46 ac)

New York State Orthoimagery Year: 2020



New York State  
Parks, Recreation and  
Historic Preservation

Mapped 05/07/2025 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO



**Manze Block**

Name of Property

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1:1,200

0 50 100 ft

Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 17N



Nomination Boundary (0.46 ac)



Tax Parcels

Erie County Parcel Year: 2024



New York State  
Parks, Recreation and  
Historic Preservation

Mapped 05/07/2025 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

**Manze Block**

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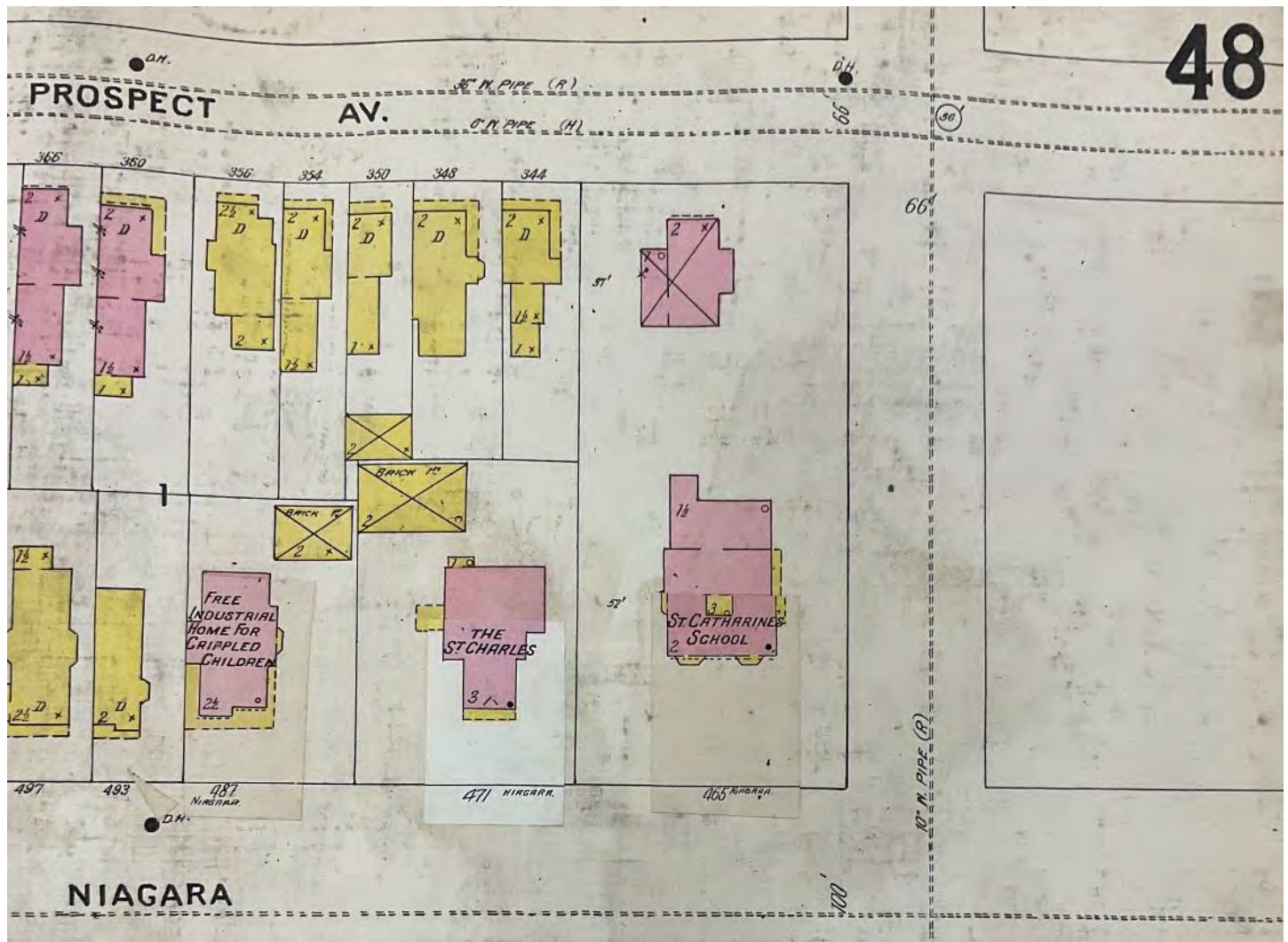


Figure 20: 1914 Sanborn map showing the 465 Niagara Street property before the commercial block was constructed.

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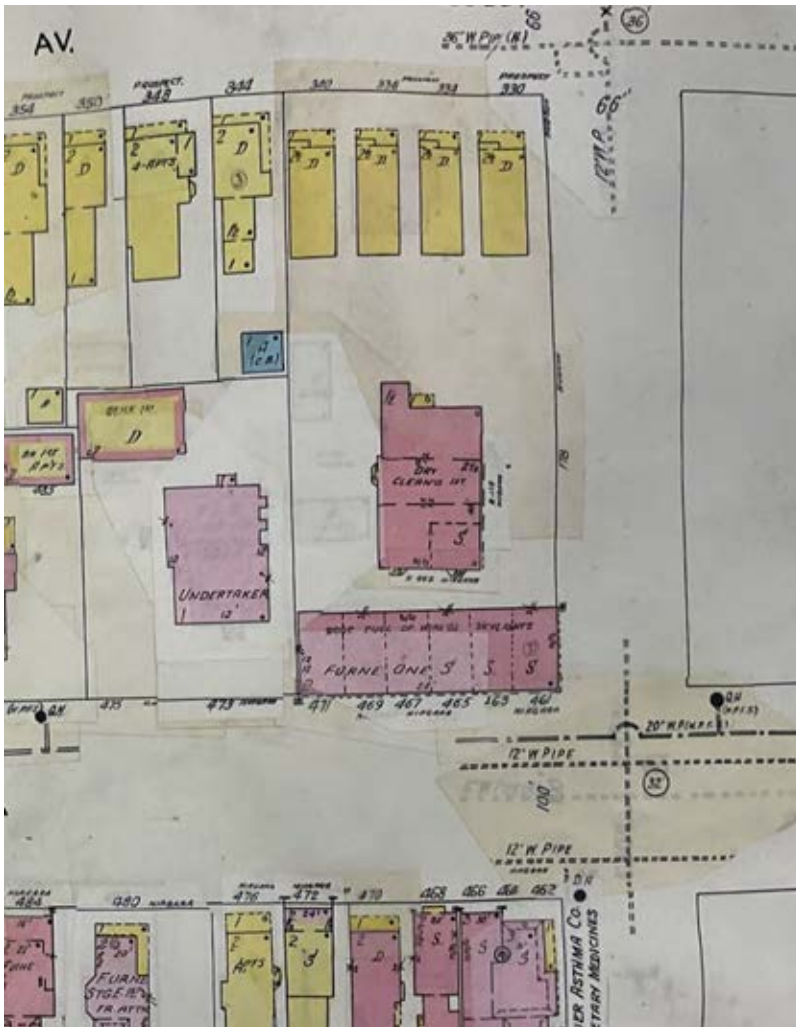


Figure 21: 1925 Sanborn map of Buffalo showing the 461-471 commercial block on the same parcel as the historic Tuscan Villa. Volume 1a, plate 141.

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**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Manze Block, 465 Niagara Street

City or Vicinity: Buffalo

County: Erie

State: NY

Photographer: Erik Lundberg (3-24); Johnathan Farris (1, 2)

Date Photographed: June 24, 2024 (3-24); April 29, 2025 (1, 2)

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 001 of 024. Looking northeast at the facade of the 465 Niagara Street block.
- 002 of 024. Looking north at the south corner of the 465 Niagara Street block.
- 003 of 024. Looking southeast at the northwest corner of the commercial block.
- 004 of 024. Looking west across the rear elevation.
- 005 of 024. Looking up the stairs from the facade to the stair hallway between the 463 and 461 second-floor apartments.
- 006 of 024. Looking west across the front commercial space inside 471 Niagara Street.
- 007 of 024. Looking southwest across the 469 Niagara Street front commercial space.
- 008 of 024. Looking northwest down the stairs to the basement shared by 471 and 469 Niagara Street.
- 009 of 024. Looking south across 467 Niagara Street.
- 010 of 024. Looking southwest across 465 Niagara Street.
- 011 of 024. Looking northeast across 463 Niagara Street.
- 012 of 024. Looking southeast inside the 463 Niagara Street storefront.
- 013 of 024. Looking south at the recessed corner entrance into 461 Niagara Street.
- 014 of 024. Looking southeast across the 471 Niagara apartment unit.
- 015 of 024. Looking east across the 471 Niagara apartment south bedroom.
- 016 of 024. Looking north across the center of the 469 Niagara Street apartment.
- 017 of 024. Looking northeast across the 469 Niagara Street apartment living room.
- 018 of 024. Looking north across the 467 Niagara Street apartment.
- 019 of 024. Looking southeast across the center of the 463 Niagara Street apartment.
- 020 of 024. Looking southwest into the 463 Niagara Street living room space.
- 021 of 024. Looking northeast across the 461 Niagara Street living room space.
- 022 of 024. Looking southwest across the shared basement of 471-469 Niagara Street.
- 023 of 024. Looking east across the roof.
- 024 of 024. Looking west across the roof.











