



CITY OF ERIE

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

MAY 31, 2023



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ERIE IS...

The **fourth largest city in Pennsylvania**, home to more than **92,000 residents** committed to revitalizing its historic core neighborhoods and districts.

A community traditionally held by the **Eriez Indians, the Iroquois Confederacy, and the Seneca Nation**, later settled by a succession of European-Americans, including **Italians, Poles, Germans, Irish, Russians, as well as African and Hispanic Americans, and many more** who helped shape Erie's **built landscapes**.

A place that **developed and prospered as a shipping center and an industrial powerhouse** in northwestern Pennsylvania from its strategic location along the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence Seaway.

A city with a rich array of **distinctive, quality architecture and places of compelling meaning that tells the diverse stories** of Erie's heritage and peoples.

Known for its **historic districts and landmark properties, sites, and structures** worthy of preserving for the next generations.

Poised to use **historic preservation as a tool** for achieving a **sustainable future by maintaining heritage assets, adapting buildings** for new uses and intentions, and conserving neighborhoods as places of choice.

A **strong and dedicated network of preservation partners** from the **City of Erie down to its stakeholder institutions and residents** who work diligently to build and advance an ethic of preserving the past for the benefit of the future.

FORWARD

LEADING ERIE'S FUTURE WITH ITS PAST

In 2022, the City of Erie and its Historic Review Commission launched a new community-wide planning effort to shape a living and flexible framework for preserving the community's historic buildings and places. This **Erie Historic Preservation Plan** documents the results of a year-long planning process — a journey that invited the collective input and collaboration from a range of stakeholders across the community, including the everyday Erie citizen who has the most to benefit from the Preservation Plan's initiatives. All preservation partners and stakeholder participants played a critical role in shaping the Preservation Plan's contents.

Now, after careful study of available information, and many meetings and conversations with property and business owners, local institutions, developers, philanthropists, elected leaders, municipal staff, neighborhood leaders, and preservation advocates, the **Erie Historic Preservation Plan** offers a blueprint for preservation action and decision-making. Most importantly, however, the decision-making does not solely rest with the City of Erie and its Historic Review Commission, or for one mayor or one commission at this point in time. The Preservation Plan is for the entire community, outlining roles for a variety of stakeholder partners to participate in its implementation now and in the years going forward. Together, all stakeholders can realize a vision of a sustainable and resilient future for Erie that capitalizes on its architectural, cultural, and historical assets.

Ambitious and aspiring in its scope, but attainable and realistic with dedicated patience and collective effort, the Preservation Plan starts with an understanding of what buildings and places merit preservation and stewardship as part of Erie's heritage legacy. From there, the Preservation Plan maps pathways forward in coordinating resources,

tools, and investments in promoting property rehabilitation and adaptive use and regenerated neighborhoods and traditional commercial districts. This emphasis on preservation-based community development will complement the City of Erie's concurrent efforts to create jobs, maintain and enhance existing infrastructure, improve the overall quality of life, and build economic prosperity.

Alongside acknowledging its usefulness beyond just the present generation of preservation advocates, the Preservation Plan is not the end of one finite process but rather the beginning of another - its ongoing implementation. As part of that process, the roles of the Historic Review Commission and other key preservation partners will need to evolve to serve as resource providers and mentors to those who want to use the Historic Preservation Plan and participate in its implementation. Furthermore, new partnerships forged among public, private, and non-profit sector agencies and entities can help leverage and coordinate incentive programs and resources for targeted preservation projects aligning with Erie's community and economic development goals. Last and just as important, the Preservation Plan contains many on-the-ground, foundational projects that will help set the stage for long-term preservation success.

The City of Erie and the preservation community look forward to a bright future where historic buildings, neighborhoods, and places contribute to Erie's broader vitality and the greater engagement of stakeholders in historic preservation's benefits.





Chapter I

The Erie Preservation Vision

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DEFINED**

**CHALLENGES AND
OPPORTUNITIES**

**A VISION FOR HISTORIC
PRESERVATION**

WHAT WE VALUE

PLANNING PROCESS

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

KEY DEFINITIONS

THE ERIE PRESERVATION VISION

This Historic Preservation Plan outlines a compelling vision and a strategic policy and action framework for the future of historic preservation in Erie, Pennsylvania. This vision and framework are the results of a year-long community engagement program that garnered the thoughts, aspirations, and ideas of stakeholders across the community, from civic and elected leaders to neighborhood residents and preservation advocates. The results of these engagement efforts provided the background and support for creating a preservation vision that defines the roles historic preservation will play in revitalizing and sustaining places of importance to the citizens of Erie. With this, the vision helped to shape specific strategies and actions, refined over the planning process with additional information and stakeholder insight to determine a realistic and attainable roadmap to success.

The work in creating the Historic Preservation Plan involved not only a cross-section of stakeholders from around the community but also a talented and dedicated Steering Committee of individuals knowledgeable in Erie history and architecture, nonprofit community and economic development work, arts and culture, urban planning, and downtown and neighborhood revitalization. Building a workable roadmap for the many preservation challenges facing this architecturally and culturally diverse city required local expertise and perspective. Their participation and assistance made the planning vision and action framework more authentic and practical.



400 FRENCH ST. ERIE STEAM BAKERY



“ Many of our
oldest citizens
could tell us
stories about
places that
should be
preserved.
”



HISTORIC PRESERVATION DEFINED

In the most practical sense, historic preservation serves to retain the properties, sites, neighborhoods, and districts of cultural, historical, and architectural value in continuing, productive use while accommodating change where necessary to achieve those ends. In turn, the ongoing use and stewardship of historic places contribute to a city's overall economic vitality and sense of place.

From a planning perspective, historic preservation is a process and dialogue with community residents and stakeholders regarding what buildings, places, sites, traditions, and cultural assets are worth retaining and enhancing for the benefit of future generations. Preserving such assets helps us understand the many facets of local history, the people and events that shaped it, and the noteworthy buildings and places that embody reminders of shared stories and memories.

ERIE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Despite a history of local preservation efforts, the City of Erie only recently created the Historic Review Commission by municipal ordinance in 2021. Among its responsibilities, the Commission serves to “[p]rovide for the designation, protection, preservation, and rehabilitation of historic properties and historic districts,” and to “[s]timulate revitalization of the business districts and historic neighborhoods” (City of Erie Zoning Ordinance, 2021, 141). The ordinance also allows the Commission to prepare landmark and district nominations “...as an outcome of a Preservation Plan completed by the [Commission] and duly adopted by the City Council which includes an inventory of historic resources within the City” (City of Erie Zoning Ordinance, 2021, 140).

Apart from the Commission, previous preservation efforts resulted in several individual property listings in the National Register of Historic Places, among them the Warner Theater (1931) and the Erie Armory (1920, 1929) - both landmark icons in the Erie community. In addition, the West 6th Street, West Park Place, Federal Row, and West 21st Street National Register Historic Districts showcase the rich architectural, historical, and cultural dimensions of Erie's built heritage. In all, Erie's National Register landmarks and districts encompass 194 properties ranging from Italianate commercial buildings to single-family Queen Anne homes. Administered by the National Park Service and the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (Pennsylvania SHPO), the National Register of Historic Places is this nation's official inventory of significant buildings and places deemed worthy of preservation and stewardship.

However, National Register landmarks and districts are not the only valued places in Erie. Many parts of the city feature intact neighborhoods, commercial corridors, schools, industrial complexes, parks, and open spaces that contribute to Erie's historic character and urban design. They also serve as places to live, invest in, and start new businesses and ventures that add to the community's quality of life and vibrancy.





While many buildings and places are of special interest and importance among Erie residents and stakeholders, many face challenges to their long-term stewardship. Many properties have diminished integrity due to façade alterations. Others face demolition due to extensive deterioration or abandonment. Such challenges come in part from owners not understanding the significance of their properties or the proper measures for maintaining the architectural features of their homes. Others simply lack the resources and wherewithal to maintain them. And, in the background, is the larger macro issue of ongoing population loss in Erie, which lowers property values and the demand for housing and commercial spaces throughout the city.

Going forward, a key purpose of this Historic Preservation Plan is to identify buildings and places of historic, architectural, and cultural significance that merit future preservation, whether they are National Register-listed or designated as future City of Erie Landmarks or contributing resources to an Erie Historic District. However, while this Preservation Plan outlines historic resources of special importance and worthy of preservation, future survey, and documentation efforts will identify and recognize others that may be eligible for formal designation and protection from the Historic Review Commission.

Beyond landmarking and designation responsibilities, the City of Erie and the Historic Review Commission will need to respond to the broader preservation challenges by coordinating resources, creating new partnerships, and providing information and assistance to those who want to participate in the community's preservation program. The City of Erie sees clear opportunities for integrating historic preservation as a strategy for neighborhood conservation and revitalization and for adapting existing buildings as catalytic investments in the city's business and industrial districts. Such a strategy will complement the City's other economic and community development initiatives focused on quality of life and job creation. Above all, there is now a present understanding among local stakeholders and decision-makers that historic preservation will make Erie more livable and resilient.

A VISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

During the course of the planning process, Erie residents and stakeholders envisioned a clear and compelling preservation future — one where historic preservation makes Erie a more vital, desirable city. The following statement summarizes this vision.

In the future, historic preservation in Erie will become an integral part of the local quality of life, its living and working environments, and its long-term sustainability in light of evolving economic, social, and environmental challenges. Erie's preservation program helped preserve a diverse heritage — from its maritime and archaeological sites to its downtown district, industrial complexes, and traditional housing stock — helping to provide tangible links to Erie's eminent past and the stories of the various peoples who settled and built the city. Along the way, adopted policies and pursued strategies facilitated investments in historic properties, making them useful and key contributors to vibrant neighborhoods and places. These successes would not be possible without conscientious efforts to identify significant properties and resources, educate the public about preservation's benefits, and implement needed tools and programs to manage appropriate change for historic properties and districts. Most importantly, Erie's preservation program is community-based with the support and participation of many different stakeholders, institutions, and residents. It is this strong commitment to historic preservation that allows the community to be pragmatic and forward-looking — it achieves a prosperous future while making the best use of its existing built environments.

WHAT WE VALUE

The vision statement serves as the benchmark for measuring the long-term realization and success of the Erie historic preservation program. The following statements express the particular values, principles, and standards in which the Erie community will undertake its preservation efforts.

1

VALUE STATEMENT #1

Erie's heritage story is diverse and inclusive, encompassing the places and sites of known histories and those not known and underrepresented in the past.

In the years ahead, as the City of Erie and its preservation partners embark on surveying and documenting properties as worthy places to preserve, the focus of efforts should be on understanding an all-inclusive narrative of the different sites, peoples, events, and customs that shaped the community's built character and cultural traditions.

2

VALUE STATEMENT #2

Leadership and philosophical commitment build a strong and effective local preservation program.

Preserving and revitalizing historic neighborhoods and downtowns requires ongoing management, stewardship, and most importantly, patience. Just as important, it involves and necessitates long-term commitment and collaboration on the part of the City of Erie, its elected leaders, and a diversity of partners to build and sustain a successful preservation program.

3

VALUE STATEMENT #3

Adapting and investing in historic buildings is critical to community resiliency and sustainability.

Rehabilitating older homes and adapting commercial and industrial buildings to new uses helps to maintain existing infrastructure and to conserve existing materials and the embodied energy inherent in all existing buildings. Retrofitting historic properties can also make them more energy efficient in a time of rising energy costs.



4

VALUE STATEMENT #4

Erie's preservation program is accessible to stakeholders and responsive to preservation challenges.

Erie's preservation program serves as an effective and intelligent provider of information and resources to all people in the city who desire to participate in preservation endeavors. Erie citizens can also engage stakeholders in different ways as volunteers, mentors, researchers, investors, convenors, and motivators for preservation action. With engaged partners, the City of Erie can mobilize the talent, expertise, and enthusiasm needed to address what preservation challenges lie ahead.

5

VALUE STATEMENT #5

Historic preservation is critical to enhancing community quality of life.

Old buildings are the witnesses to the architectural and cultural evolution of a city. They also provide a sense of comfort and familiarity, serve as the background stage for events and traditions, and promote local identity and civic pride. Erie residents and citizens recognize and embrace the positive roles historic preservation contributes to the quality of life.

301 FRENCH ST



UNION STATION, 123 WEST 14TH



HOW DID WE GET HERE - THE PLANNING PROCESS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Creating the Erie Historic Preservation Plan involved two discrete phases of information collection and analysis, an assessment and mapping of the community's heritage resources, the development of preservation planning strategies, and the engagement of various stakeholder groups to help shape and inform the Historic Preservation Plan's contents, vision, and goals. This process occurred over the course of a year from August 2022 to July 2023.



I

PHASE 1: STATE OF THE CITY

August - December 2022

- ▶ Information Collection
- ▶ Mapping
- ▶ Community Outreach
- ▶ Analysis
- ▶ Interim Report

2

PHASE 2: PRESERVATION PLAN

Ongoing

- ▶ Draft Preservation Plan
- ▶ Community Outreach
- ▶ City Council Adoption

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

To help guide and serve as astute and intuitive voices in the development of the Preservation Plan, the City of Erie formed a Steering Committee of key stakeholders, meeting with chosen preservation professionals several times over the course of the planning process to review findings and refine planning strategies.

Community outreach efforts included a series of key stakeholder interviews and focus group sessions, community meetings and workshops, online surveys, and strategy discussions with elected leaders, city departments, and preservation advocates. Specifically, these outreach efforts included the following:

- Project start meeting with City of Erie staff and key preservation stakeholders (August 2022).
- Mayor's weekly press conference (August 2022).
- First Steering Committee discussion session (September 2022).
- Second Steering Committee discussion session (October 2022).
- Discussion sessions with the Mayor of Erie, the Planning, Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments, the Office of Code Enforcement, and the City Grants Administrator (October 2022).
- Discussion session with the Historic Review and Planning Commissions (October 2022).
- Discussion session with Preservation Erie, the Hagen History Center, the Erie Maritime Museum, the Erie Art Museum, and other key preservation advocates and cultural institutions (October 2022).
- Discussion session with the Downtown Erie Partnership and the Erie Convention Center Authority (October 2022).
- Discussion sessions with realtors, housing organizations, and developers.
- Discussion session with community organizations and representatives of Erie's underrepresented populations.
- Community workshops at the New Life and Spirit Revival Center, the Performing Arts Collective Alliance (PACA), and the Cathedral of St. Paul (December 2022).
- Online Workshop and survey (January and February 2023).

452-454 WEST 9TH ST

424-430 HOLLAND ST., KENNEDY DOUBLE HOUSE, FEDERAL ROW

ERIE, PENNS

WHAT WE LEARNED

The collaborative planning process and community engagement work provided insights and perspectives into key historic preservation issues facing Erie and priorities and directions for future preservation planning efforts.

1

Erie's preservation efforts should encompass buildings and places associated with the full spectrum of the city's history — from its early Native-American inhabitants to its African Americans and various ethnic groups.

2

New partnerships between public and private agencies, institutions, and entities are critical to educating and informing stakeholders on how preservation works in the larger effort of making Erie an attractive place to live and invest in.

3

Addressing the real estate value gap — the cost of rehabilitating historic properties amidst a setting of declining property values and limited resources — is the central preservation challenge to facilitating neighborhood and downtown revitalization.

4

Erie stakeholders regard design quality and the visual relationship between old and new buildings as important to creating compelling places steeped in authenticity and meaning.

5

The Erie community overlooks its extant maritime and industrial resources, including their archaeological dimensions, as essential aspects of the Erie heritage story.

6

The lack of youth involvement as well as skilled local carpenters and tradesmen pose significant obstacles to realizing quality preservation results along with preparing the next generation of preservation leaders.

7

Establishing Local Historic Districts will take extensive community engagement and consensus-building with property owners, but the City of Erie also needs additional tools to enact a more prudent and measured pace to demolitions that avoids the loss of key pieces to Erie's history.

8

Removing barriers to preservation — such as regulatory red tape and the lack of awareness of preservation programs and tools — can go a long way to making adaptive use and property rehabilitation more feasible.

“

Many sites relating to Erie's African American history have been razed and removed by urban development and should be identified with historical markers.

”

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES OF IMPORTANCE

The following icons represent the historic and cultural resources deemed important to preserve by Erieites during the community engagement process:



**Archaeological
Resources**



**Industrial Buildings
and Complexes**



**Maritime
Resources**



Neighborhoods



**Religious
Buildings**



Schools



Social Halls



Parks



**Commercial
Buildings**

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

The Erie Historic Preservation Plan presents a shared vision and action framework designed to guide decision-making and implementation from a spectrum of participants and stakeholders, not just the City of Erie and its Historic Review Commission. These participants include owners and managers of historic properties; local businesses; developers and investors; institutions such as schools, colleges, medical centers, and cultural and religious organizations; public sector departments and agencies; and advocates for preservation. Each of these participants can use this Preservation Plan to guide their own decisions, create needed partnerships, and plan for investments in historic properties, education, and advocacy.

1

For Property Owners and Neighborhood Groups, the Preservation Plan provides important background information on Erie's important architectural and historical resources and the potential for neighborhood preservation and revitalization endeavors that enhance neighborhood livability. Grassroots neighborhood groups can use the Preservation Plan to organize and enable more localized preservation efforts.

2

For Businesses, Non-Profits, and Institutions, the Preservation Plan identifies opportunities for investments and partnerships between institutions and preservationists in making existing historic buildings more functional and profitable. Historic preservation should become an everyday part of many different community interests, including housing, economic development, tourism, and resiliency.

3

For Preservation Advocates, the Preservation Plan outlines proactive programs and initiatives by which to raise awareness of Erie's diverse heritage and to educate and inform local stakeholders and decision-makers on preservation's benefits.

4

For Developers and Investors, the Preservation Plan outlines prospects for investments in historic resources and pathways to financing and undertaking property rehabilitation and adaptive use projects. The Preservation Plan also provides clarity on the types of public and private collaborations that can occur to advance investor participation in local preservation efforts.

5

For Public Agencies, the Preservation Plan proposes policy and regulatory recommendations that help in managing heritage resources in Erie along with directing investments and resources in publicly-owned historic and cultural resources. Public agencies may include the City of Erie, Erie County, federal and state agencies, and local authorities.

KEY DEFINITIONS

The following are key terms used in this document:

Building Created principally to shelter any form of human activity.

Cultural Resource A prehistoric or historic remains or indicators of past human activities, including artifacts, sites, landscapes, and objects of importance to a culture or community for scientific, traditional, religious, or other reasons.

Historic Resource A historic resource is any building, site, structure, object, district, place, or landscape considered to have historical, architectural, or cultural importance.

Intangible Cultural Resource An intangible cultural resource includes the traditions, knowledge sets and skills, expressions, objects, and cultural spaces associated with a particular racial or ethnic group or community.

Local Historic Overlay District A Local Historic Overlay District is a portion of a community - a downtown or commercial district, residential neighborhood, industrial area, or park, for instance - containing a coherent collection of significant historic resources that, as an ensemble, is worth preserving for their architectural, historic, and cultural attributes and contributions toward understanding a community's history. The City of Erie designates Local Historic Overlay Districts under its Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Local Landmark A historic landmark is an individual historic resource considered significant for its architectural, historical, or cultural merits, and worthy of recognition, preservation, and designation under the City of Erie Historic Preservation Ordinance.

KEY DEFINITIONS

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is this nation's official list of historic and cultural resources worthy of recognition. Administered by the National Park Service in partnership with the Pennsylvania SHPO, a bureau within the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, designation as a National Register Landmark or District is honorary only and does not restrict a property's use or disposition.

National Register Historic District

Similar to a Local Historic District, a National Register Historic District may comprise a downtown, neighborhood, park, or other collection of historically or architecturally significant resources listed together as a district having met certain criteria for eligibility, among them that a property must be at least 50 years old.

National Register Landmark

A building, site, structure, or object having met the criteria for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Object

Constructions or compositions that are primarily artistic in nature, small in scale, and associated with a specific setting or environment, such as a park or plaza.

Site

A location of a significant event, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure, whether standing, ruined, or vanished, where the location itself possesses historic, cultural, or archaeological value.

Structure

A construction made primarily for functional purposes and not for human shelter, such as a bridge or lighthouse.





328-330 WEST 6TH ST

Chapter 2

Our Erie Heritage

HISTORIC CONTEXT

ERIE HISTORIC RESOURCES

NATIONAL REGISTER OF
HISTORIC PLACES

LOCAL LANDMARKS AND
DISTRICTS

INTANGIBLE HERITAGE

OUR ERIE HERITAGE

Erie's historic and cultural heritage encompasses over 200 years of development and its built environment, cultural landscapes, and ethnic traditions reflect this heritage. Historic contexts help to place Erie's numerous historic and cultural resources within the context of the city's development and play a role in determining their significance when identifying future historic landmarks and districts. Chapter 2 provides an overview of Erie's historic context periods and architectural, historical, and cultural resources accompanied by a timeline identifying significant events, places, people, and buildings occurring before 1980.

520 WEST 6TH ST





“ We need
a broader
discussion of
Erie’s industrial
history and how
to incentivize
and reuse
the buildings.

”



HISTORIC CONTEXT

There are innumerable ways to categorize Erie's periods of development as Erie was at the center of many of this country's settlement, manufacturing, and cultural touchpoints. This overview organizes Erie's history under four broad periods: indigenous occupation, the rise of industry, the maturation and growth of the community, and post-World War II and modern reimagining.

ERIE'S INDIGENOUS PERIOD AND FIRST CONTACT (PRE-1753)

Indigenous people have inhabited the area now known as Erie, Pennsylvania, from time immemorial. Beginning in the twelfth century the Erie, or Eriez, people (also known as Nation du Chat), an Iroquoian-related group lived in this area. French, English, and Dutch fur traders developed competing trade networks with the Algonkian, Huron, and Iroquoian tribes of the eastern Great Lakes region; the resulting tensions led to inter-tribal wars beginning in 1609. Between 1654-1656 the Iroquois (aligned with the English and Dutch) defeated the Erie Confederacy, ironically clearing the way for an aggressive French presence in the mid-1700s.

MARITIME INDUSTRIES AND RAILROADS (1753-1870)

Lake Erie has been a formative influence in Erie's evolution and development. The deep-water harbor at Presque Isle facilitated shipping across numerous industries for over two hundred years, and the lake's position within the Great Lakes system brought the city into the heart of transportation networks, both maritime and railroad. Erie became a center of shipping and trade of both raw materials and goods beginning in the mid-17th century, shipbuilding beginning at the turn of the 19th century, and commercial fishing beginning in the early 19th century. Railroad construction boomed in Erie, beginning in the 1870s, facilitating exponential industrial growth.

MANUFACTURING DOMINANCE: IRON AND STEEL AND THE GROWTH OF COMMUNITY (1870-1950)

The United States developed its industrial might bolstered by the completion of the first transcontinental railroad in 1869, ongoing technological advances during the latter half of the 19th century, and an enormous immigration influx beginning in 1870. Erie became a microcosm of these national trends developing its robust foundry and machine shop industries and manufacturing a staggering variety of products. The immigrant labor that fed these industries imprinted Erie with diverse ethnic neighborhoods and cultural traditions that remain evident today.

POST WORLD WAR II AND MODERN REIMAGINING (1950 – TODAY)

Despite the nationwide industrial downturn of the late twentieth century, Erie remained an industrial center with continued manufacturing expansion through the 1970s. Erie has held on to its industrial base though at a smaller scale, challenged by its first-ever registered population decline in 1970. Although population decline continues, Erie maintains a strong commitment to attracting new residents, including immigrants, and transitioning to more diverse employment sectors such as education, healthcare, and tourism. Manufacturing remains one of its four strongest sectors of employment (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).



Erie's Indigenous Period and First Contact (pre-1753)

Erie is part of an expansive southern Great Lakes region composed of the current-day states of New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio where Indigenous people lived from time immemorial. The region is part of the Erie Plain, a lacustrine plain formed from sediment accumulation of past lakes that existed from ca. 25,000 to 12,000 years ago. The Erie Plain surrounds the entirety of Lake Erie. (Cushing, Leverett & Van Horn 1931, p. 4) An important archaeological district located west of Erie and along the southern shore of Lake Erie contains evidence of six distinct archaeological sites demonstrating human occupation from over 10,000 years ago. One might conclude these early people were ancestors of the Erie, or Erietz, people but archaeological artifacts suggest a broad range of cultures. During the Archaic Period (8,000 BCE to 1,000 BCE) people of fishing and hunting cultures left evidence of their tools and houses suggesting seasonal occupation. Additional sites within the district show evidence of people from the Early and Middle Woodland Period (1,000 BCE to 500 CE). American Indian archaeological sites are rare in the southern portion of the Lake Erie Plain, in part explaining our limited knowledge of these early people (Johnson 1986, n.p.).

The Erie people lived along the southern edge of Lake Erie between New York and Ohio prior to 1656. They were an Iroquoian group, sharing a language heritage with other Iroquois-related tribes but with a unique cultural identity and language. The Erie people lived in long houses, cultivated crops of corn, beans, and squash, and hunted and fished. Defensive palisades often enclosed their homes and crops. The Iroquois was a powerful confederation of eastern and upstate New York tribes including the Cayuga, Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, and Seneca peoples. The French, English, and Dutch fur traders that arrived in New York in the early 17th century each aligned themselves with Indigenous tribes to facilitate their access to furs.

The fur trade created fierce competition and eventually warfare among tribes. The Iroquois aligned with the Dutch and English, and the Huron aligned with the French. The powerful Iroquois moved into the Huron region and warfare pushed the Huron people further west. The Erie tribe took in the retreating Huron people which led to warfare with the Iroquois Confederacy. Known as the Beaver Wars, the Iroquois decimated the Erie tribe by 1656. By the time of French arrival in 1753 in Presque Isle, due to the sequence of prior tribal warfare, there is no recorded evidence of any Europeans encountering the Erie people (Sherry 2022, n.p.).

8,000 B.C.



1100s-pre-1657: Erie, or Erietz, people (also known as Nation du Chat, an Iroquoian group) lived in the region, part of an affiliation of neighboring tribes known as the Erie Confederacy.

8,000 BCE to 1,000 BCE (Archaic Period) and 1,000 BCE to 500 CE (Early and Middle Woodland Period) represented in a group of six archaeological sites of the Sommerheim Park Archaeological District, in Millcreek Township, listed in the NRHP.

SOURCE: CRAIG BIRD

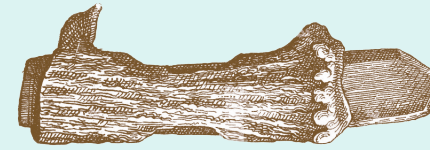




ERIE INDIAN SETTLEMENT - SOURCE: HAGAN HISTORY CENTER

The Archaic Period (8,000 BCE – 1,000 BCE*)

Characteristics of the Archaic Period include nomadic hunter-gatherers and subsistence traditions. There is evidence of trade during this period and in some regions including Mound Building cultures. The emergence of farming practices that eventually ended nomadic traditions defined the end of this period ([nps.gov/articles/archaic-period](https://www.nps.gov/articles/archaic-period)).



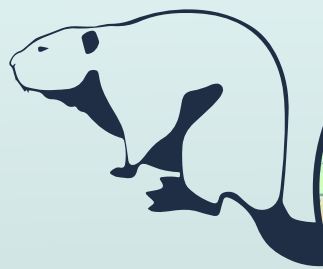
The Woodland Period (1,000 BCE – 1,000 CE*)

Characteristics of the Woodland Period include continuous developmental adaptations in the use of bone and stone tools, leather crafting, plant and food cultivation, textiles, the widespread use of pottery, and the construction of shelter. The development of horticulture and the rise of agricultural practices meant that groups moved less, and in some places lived in permanently occupied villages ([nps.gov/articles/woodland](https://www.nps.gov/articles/woodland)).

*BCE - Before Current Era; CE - Current Era

1640

The fur trade attracted European traders to the region. The resulting decimation of the beaver population intensified conflict for hunting grounds.



1654 - 56

Iroquois attack and destroy the Erie Confederacy, taking control of their territory.



SOURCE: CRAIG BIRD

Maritime Industries and Railroads (1753-1870)

Erie's early epicenter was its waterfront, and logically the plat for the earliest part of the city encompassed the adjacent land. Early transportation routes depended on lakes, rivers, and canals to transport people, and import and export raw materials and finished products to distant regions far more efficiently than overland routes. The Appalachian Mountains were a significant barrier between the east coast and the interior of the country with few crossing spots, making the trip long and arduous. The Erie Canal resolved this barrier. The Erie Canal opened in 1825, the first navigable waterway linking the East Coast to the Great Lakes with dramatically reduced travel times. For example, an overland route between Albany and Buffalo took fourteen days, but on the canal, the trip took five. Erie's other great advantage was its protected deep-water port on Lake Erie, a favorable transport environment attractive to maritime shipping given the Great Lakes' connections to the interior and western reaches of the country.

Maritime industries of shipbuilding and repair, and fishing grew in Erie making the waterfront a center of activity. Piers, lighthouses, warehouses, boatyards, and fish houses were among the buildings and structures to aid both sailors and industries. The abundance of fish including Pike, Whitefish, and Herring drove an expansive industry where at its peak in the 1920s witnessed millions of pounds of fish caught, processed, and shipped (Applegate and Van Meter 1970, p. 10). After World War II, the industry faded due to overfishing, lake pollution, and consumer shifts. Today, there are still commercial fishing companies alongside sports fishing and recreational boating.

Railroad construction proliferated across the country between 1827 and 1915, gradually creating a network of lines that linked the United States from coast to coast and with thousands of cities and small towns between. In Erie, the railroad allowed for an enormous rise of industry because, along with the local port, there was easy access to any needed raw materials and shipping of products from Erie's foundries and factories to any location.

Erie was one of many cities with connections to the Underground Railroad between 1830 and 1865. Abolitionists used homes and churches to shelter enslaved people fleeing across Lake Erie to Canada and freedom.

1780

1753-59

French construct and occupy Fort Presque Isle in present-day Erie.

1753



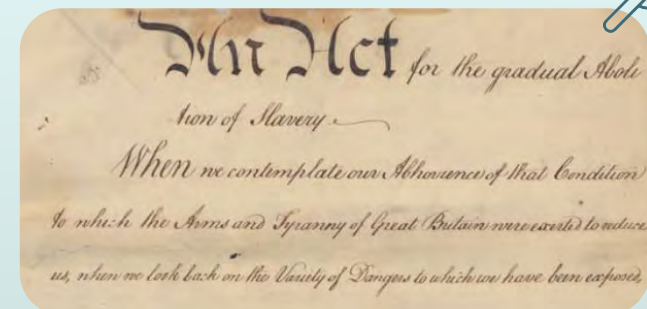
1754

French and Indian War begins, resulting in the French expulsion from the region.

1760

British established a garrison on the site of former Fort Presque Isle and remained until Pontiac's Rebellion of 1763, driving the British out of the territory.

Pennsylvania banned the importation of slaves into the state.



SOURCE: DAVID TRISTAN

1795

City of Erie surveyed and laid out in grids for development by Andrew Ellicott.

Lt. Colonel Rufus Seth Reed and his family are the first Yankee settlers at Fort Presque Isle.

African Americans brought to Erie as enslaved people by white settlers, including Rufus Seth Reed.



SOURCE: ERIE CEMETERY ASSOCIATION



1810
394 ERIEITES

1813



U.S.S. Niagara, a wooden-hulled brig, built in Erie's shipyards. A 1988 reconstruction currently resides along Erie's bayfront.

1815



Dickson Tavern (201 French St) built in the Federal style by builder William Himrod. Greek Revival addition added in 1841.

FEDERAL STYLE
(1795-1840)



Pierre S.V. Hamot House (302 French St) built in the Federal style.

1820
635 ERIEITES

1789

Iroquois signed a deed relinquishing their ownership of the territory to Americans.



1800
81 ERIEITES



1809

Erie to Waterford Turnpike completed.

1812

Erie played a central role in naval operations during the War of 1812 as an important shipbuilding and port city. Erie became an important maritime center.

1813

Commodore Perry defeats a British naval squadron during the Battle of Lake Erie.

African American sailors make up 25 percent of Commodore Perry's crew. Many stayed, helping to establish Erie's African American community.

1825

Erie Canal opens connecting Albany, NY to Buffalo, NY.



ERIE CANAL, SOURCE: JOHNNY MILANO, SMITHSONIAN MAGAZINE

1827

William Himrod establishes the Jerusalem community for free persons of color and destitute whites. The neighborhood is located north of West Sixth Street and west of Sassafras Street.

1830
1,465
ERIEITES

1836

Anti-slavery Society formed in Erie County.

1839



GREEK REVIVAL (1825 - 1860)

The United States Bank, Erie Branch (409 State St), constructed. The building later served as the Customs House for the Port of Erie. Greek Revival style, designed by architect William Kelly of Philadelphia, PA.

1840
3,412
ERIEITES

1844

Erie Extension Canal (Beaver & Erie Canal) opened in Erie. This canal connected Erie to Pittsburgh and onto the Ohio River.

1846

Erie's earliest Jewish cemetery founded, now known as the Anshe Hessed Cemetery, located on West 26th Street between Cherry and Poplar Streets.



ANSHE HESSED CEMETERY,
SOURCE: PNOBLE805

1849



Charles Manning Reed Mansion (524 Peach St, now the Erie Club), designed in the Greek Revival style by architect Edward B. Smith of Buffalo, NY.

1850

1850
5,858
ERIEITES

1850

Irish and Germans arrived in an early wave of immigrant settlement.



1836

John Hill House (230 West 6th St) designed in the Italian Villa style.



1839



The Cashiers House and Coach House (413 State St/11 East Fourth St) constructed in the Greek Revival style with a rare Egyptian Revival style interior.



1851

Erie is incorporated as a City

1851



Schneider/Kessler Chandlery (401-403 State Street) constructed, part of what is now known as Chandlery Corner, including the Rockwell House, (405 State Street, 1832, Federal style) and the Schneider House (1846, 3 East 4th Street, Greek Revival).

INDUSTRIAL LOFT (1850 - 1920)



1303 French St, Lovell Manuf. Co.

PRODUCTION SHED (1850-1960)



1310 East Ave_Erie City Iron Works

1860

Erie rose to dominance in the foundry and machine shop industry, thriving well into the 20th century.

1861 - 65

American Civil War.

1862

Anshe Hased incorporated as one of the oldest Jewish Reform communities in Pennsylvania, constructing their first synagogue in 1882. The congregation moved in 1930 and again in 2018.



1860

9,419
ERIEITES

1860

1855

Railroads arrive in Erie with the opening of the Erie & North East Railroad.



ERIE UNION DEPOT C. 1925, SOURCE: OLDTIMEERIE.BLOGSPOT

TWO-PART COMMERCIAL BLOCK (1850-1960)



1310 East Ave_Erie City Iron Works

1861



Thayer-Thompson House (605 West Eighth St) constructed in the Tuscan Villa-Italianate style.

Manufacturing Dominance: Iron and Steel and the Growth of Community (1870-1950)

Erie's early industries thrived and with the technological advancements of the Industrial Revolution, the city soon achieved manufacturing dominance. Success was due, in part, to product diversification. This same diversification helped Erie weather the Great Depression without the total collapse of its economy. Industries included iron and steel manufacturing, flour mills, brass foundries, leather goods, breweries, furniture, marble works, printers, soap makers, meat packers, lime and cement works, and many others. Forges, foundries, and machine shops manufactured hundreds of products including engines, locomotives and locomotive components, tools, springs, cookware, and machinery components to name only a few (Kidder 1997, Section 8).

Immigrants supplied the labor so critical to the success of Erie's businesses. As flourishing businesses and industries provided jobs, people arrived in Erie to work, including African Americans, Germans, Irish, Russians, Poles, Swedes, Italians, Scots, Finns, and Austrians, among others. (U.S. Census Bureau) The demand for housing grew as neighborhoods proliferated across the city, the variety of housing keeping pace with and reflecting the variety of Erie jobs including worker housing, larger homes for the management and professional middle class, and large homes for wealthy business owners. Immigrants often settled in neighborhoods reflecting their own ethnic identity where a church or synagogue, and social club strengthened new community ties.

Observances of celebrations, festivals, and food and music traditions celebrated in these ethnic neighborhoods deepened cultural roots while simultaneously contributing to a rich tapestry defining Erie as a unique community. Schools constructed throughout Erie educated the growing numbers of children, and social, arts and cultural, and recreational institutions provided enrichment for Erie's citizens.

SECOND EMPIRE (1855-1885)



332-334 West 6th St

1865 - 1957

Griswold Manufacturing founded in Erie, producing cast iron kitchen products.



1866

Harry T. Burleigh born in Erie. An African American, Burleigh rose to become one of America's greatest composers and baritone vocalists.



SOURCE: ERIE READER

The Erie Land Lighthouse constructed as one of the first lighthouses on the Great Lakes.

1867



1870

1870

Russian immigrants arrive and help develop Erie's port and shipbuilding industry.



19,646
ERIETES

Historically, the Russian Town neighborhood extended from Parade to French Streets and Front to Third Streets.



247 EAST FRONT ST, RUSSIAN TOWN MARKER

QUEEN ANNE (1880 - 1910)



510 Parade St

GOTHIC REVIVAL (1840-1880)



134 West 6th St., Cathedral of St Paul



1880

27,737
ERIEITES

Lovell
Manufacturing
Company (1301
French St)
constructed.



1880s: Italians,
Poles, and other
immigrant groups
arrived in Erie.



Erie Public Library (3 South Perry
St) constructed in the Beaux Arts
style, designed by architect Alden
& Harlow, Pittsburgh, PA.

1883



1890

East Erie Turnverein
building constructed
at 829 Parade
Street. German
Turnvereins were
social organizations
promoting athletics
and exercise.

1890

Villa Maria Academy
(819 W 8th St)
designed in the Late
Gothic Revival style by
David K. Dean & Sons
of Erie, PA.

1892



1892

John S. Hicks, African American local
“ice cream king,” built a three-story
building on State Street for his ice
cream manufacturing business, one
of the most successful in the state.

SOURCE: HAGEN HISTORY CENTER



1891

Eagle Brewery
(2131 State
St) highlights
“Germanesque-
Teutonic”
industrial
architecture.

1892



ROMANESQUE REVIVAL (1880 - 1900)

Watson-Curtze
Mansion (356 W
Sixth St) constructed
in the Richardson
Romanesque style,
designed by Green and
Wicks of Buffalo, NY.

1872

The Colored
Masons organized,
now known as Bay
City Lodge #68.

1873

Philharmonia Hall, a German
social club, constructed; later
taken over by the East Erie
Turnverein in 1880.



829 PARADE ST, PHILHARMONIA HALL,
SOURCE: EAST ERIE TURNVEREIN

1884

Electricity
introduced
to the city.



1890

40,634
ERIEITES

1895



Modern Tool Company (333 State Street) constructed as the People's Market House, designed by architect H. R. Dunning.

COLONIAL REVIVAL
(1880 - 1955)



538 West 6th St

CRAFTSMAN BUNGALOW
(1905-1930)



2125 Lakeside Dr

Erie Armory (6th and Parade streets) constructed in the Colonial Revival style, architect Joseph F. Kuntz of the WestG. Wilkins Company, Pittsburgh, PA.

1920



1900

52,733
ERIEITES

1906

Emma Lawrence opens Lawrence Cleaning and Dyeing, the first Erie business owned and operated by an African American woman. She lived at 402 W 3rd St.



1910

1917 - 18

US joins World War I.

1918

Erie Chapter of NAACP founded; Jessie Pope serves as its first president.

1920

1903

Erie County Historical Society formed.



WOOD-MORRISON HOUSE, PART OF HISTORICAL SOCIETY COMPLEX (HAGEN HISTORY CENTER), 356 WEST 6TH ST



1910

66,525
ERIEITES

C. F. Adams Building (101 East Sixth St) constructed with Romanesque Revival and Craftsman influences. Designed by architects Donaldson & Meier of Detroit, MI. Now known as the Erie Insurance Exchange.

1911



CLASSIC REVIVAL / NEO-CLASSICAL (1895 - 1950)



1330 West 8th St, Strong Vincent Middle School



1920

93,372
ERIEITES



1925

Gannon University founded.



1926

Mercyhurst University founded.



TUDOR REVIVAL (1895 - 1930)



324 West 6th St

1928

Hotel Pope, a legendary African American entertainment venue for 50 years, opens at 1318 French Street.



HOTEL POPE, SOURCE: HAGEN HISTORY MUSEUM

1925



Erie Trust Company Building (1001 State St) constructed in the Art Deco style, designed by architect Dennison and Hiron, New York City, NY.

1929

Start of the Great Depression



1930

115,967
ERIEITES

1930

1930



Warner Theatre (811 State St) opens, designed by Rapp and Rapp, of Chicago, IL with French-Renaissance and Art Deco influences.

Boston Store (716-728 State St) opens, designed by Erie architects Shutts & Morrison in the Art Deco style.

1931



1936 - 56

The African American baseball team The Pontiacs play in the Glenwood League, with Bayview Park as their home field.

SOURCE: HAGEN HISTORY CENTER



1934

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission conducts archaeological excavations on East 28th Street under the Federal Works Administration's *Frontier Forts and Trails Survey*.



SOURCE: PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION

ART DECO (1920 - 1940)



St. Mary's Auditorium, 320 East 10th St

Post World War II and Modern Reimagining (1950 – today)

The post-World War II era marked a shift in most American communities, as people adjusted to social and economic changes. In the decades following the war, people moved to the suburbs, suburban shopping malls supplanted traditional downtown shopping districts as the preferred shopping destination, and over time, manufacturing and production industries lost their dominance to a rising service economy.

Erie has had the good fortune to have retained a manufacturing base, which remains one of its four strongest employment sectors while expanding other employment categories such as biofuels, environmental research, education, healthcare, and tourism (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). Societal changes that intensified in the 1960s and 1970s cast an important light on equal rights for African Americans, but societal and political gains have not come without costs. Residential shifts to the suburbs impacted Erie's urban housing, churches, and schools. Retail centers moved away from the traditional downtown and repopulated in car-centric developments away from the city.

While societal changes always bring challenges, they can also bring opportunities, especially as more recent generations assert their ideas about employment, home, and social preferences. Younger people are returning to urban centers, often living in converted commercial and industrial spaces, reinvigorating downtowns with energy and vitality. Small businesses and arts communities are finding opportunities in the historic buildings of downtown, and the waterfront transformation to add tourism, museum, and recreational use is growing. Erie leadership is pursuing initiatives to attract new residents and strengthen the community's economic and social fabric.

RANCH
(1935 - 1975)



2316-2322 East 33rd St

1940

1937



Federal Courthouse and Post Office (17 South Park Row) constructed in the Moderne style, designed by Cleveland architect Rudolph Stanley-Brown, consulting architect of the U.S. Treasury Department.



116,955
ERIEITES

1941 - 45

United States in World War 2.



Erie GE plant begins making Howitzers during WW2.

1950

130,803
ERIEITES

1951

Polish Falcons Club building constructed at 431 East 3rd St.

1970

129,231
ERIEITES

1977

Larry D. Meredith is the first African American elected to the Erie City Council. Harold Shields is the first African American elected to the Erie School Board.

1960

138,440
ERIEITES

1975

Erie Times hires its first Black journalists: Mili Roberts, Fred Rush, Jr., and Bobby Harrison.

1980

119,123
ERIEITES

FRED RUSH, JR. SOURCE: A SHARED HERITAGE

2023

PACA building designated as Erie's first Local Landmark

ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA

41

The background of the page is a photograph of a historic brick building with a prominent tower featuring arched windows. In the foreground, there is a black metal fence. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal color.

ERIE HISTORIC RESOURCES AND ARCHITECTURE

Erie's historic and architectural resources reflect its various historic context periods dating back over two centuries. Previous National Register nominations, local designations, and survey projects help to identify these contexts. For example, the West Park Place Historic District represents Erie's mid-19th century downtown commercial development while also identifying the Italianate style as one prominent in commercial buildings of the period. Resources such as the Pierre S.V. Hamot House (1831, 302 French Street) and the Thayer-Thompson House (c. 1861, 605 West 8th Street), are also significant for their associations with significant people. The following section summarizes historic and architectural resource types found in Erie through information provided by National Register nominations, surveys, the Hagen History Center, Preservation Erie, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, and other sources.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

With over 200 years of development history, and thousands of years of Indigenous history, the City of Erie has the potential to yield important archaeological and cultural resources - both historic and pre-historic. Areas of early development in Erie, such as downtown, along the bayfront, and in early residential and industrial areas, provide the greatest opportunities for archaeological resources. While archaeological excavations within the city are not a common occurrence, there have been several over the last century. As part of the Federal Works Administration's Frontier Forts and Trails Survey of the 1930s, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission excavated a site on East 28th Street in 1934, uncovering Native American objects from the early- to mid-17th century. Excavations on the site of Fort Presque Isle, built by the French in 1753 during the French and Indian War, and the site of later British and American forts – now part of the grounds of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home (560 East 3rd Street) – uncovered one of the American fort's blockhouses. Known as the Wayne Blockhouse, the reconstructed building completed in 1880 sits near the site of the original forts.

In 2002, the City of Erie conducted a rehabilitation and new construction project at the Erie Federal Court House and Post Office (17 South Park Row) which included monitoring of construction activities by archaeologists. The project discovered artifacts, architectural debris, outbuildings, and buried pipes from residential and light industry activities dating between 1800 and 1919 (This Week in Pennsylvania Architecture – Erie County, 2012).



RESIDENTIAL RESOURCES

Erie's oldest residential architecture dates to the early 19th century, centered around downtown and the 1795 original street grid by Andrew Ellicott. These early homes, constructed of brick, represent development styles and construction methods of the period. The Federal Row National Register Historic District at Holland and East 5th Streets consists of five Federal style rowhouses dating from 1823-1842. Other early homes include the Pierre S.V. Hamot House (1827-31, 302 French Street), a vernacular home influenced by the Federal style, and the Joseph Sterrett House (1838, 414 State Street), the Cashier's House (1839, 417 State Street), and the Frederick Schneider House (1846, 3 East 4th Street), all designed in the Greek Revival style. (Sands 1991, Section 8-2)

The latter half of the 19th century witnessed a rise in industrial manufacturing in Erie. Thousands of immigrants moved to Erie seeking work, resulting in a substantial residential building boom. Erie grew to the east and west of State Street in downtown Erie within the originally planned street grid, encompassing the neighborhoods of West Bayfront, East Bayfront, and Pulaski-Lighthouse, with 12th Street as the southern boundary. By the late 19th century, growth south of the industrial corridor along 12th Street encompassed Little Italy (originally South Erie) and Trinity Park. Many of Erie's wealthiest residents built large homes on West 6th Street beginning in the 1840s, known as "Millionaire's Row," including the Watson-Curtze Mansion (1892, 356 West 6th Street), designed in the Romanesque Revival style. The rusticated brownstone mansion features corner turrets and a large brownstone carriage house.

The West 21st Street corridor, in the Little Italy neighborhood, also developed as a wealthy enclave beginning in the 1850s and includes the Liebel House (1882, 139 West 21st Street), designed in brick with Classical and Queen Anne influences, and the Shenk House (209 West 21st Street), designed using brownstone in the Romanesque Revival style. Both areas are now National Register historic districts. Erie homes feature most of the prominent architectural styles popular during this period, including Italianate, Second Empire, Queen Anne, Romanesque Revival, and Classical Revival, constructed of wood or brick.

The early 20th century saw the expansion of the city outwards into neighborhoods such as Frontier, Arbor Heights, Greengarden, Lakeside, Glenwood, Academy-Marvintown, and Fairmount-McClelland. Popular architectural styles during this period include Craftsman Bungalows, Prairie, Art Deco, Colonial Revival, and Tudor Revival. Vernacular housing types are prominent throughout Erie's early residential neighborhoods; the most prominent of them is the Gable Front and the American Foursquare. Multi-family housing types such as the two-story duplex with two-story front porches and larger apartment buildings provided lower-cost housing for many of the city's working class. By the mid-20th century, modest Ranch, Minimal Traditional, and Cape Cod filled out the city's outer edges, including the Mercyhurst and East Grandview neighborhoods. Most neighborhoods in Erie include examples of brick and frame 20th-century architectural styles and vernacular building types.



COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

As the city grew prosperous as a port and shipbuilding center in the early 19th century, its commercial district developed near Lake Erie centered around State and French Streets. One of the earliest remaining commercial buildings is the three-story frame Dickson Tavern (1815/1841, 201 French Street), designed in the Greek Revival style. The Old Customs House (1839, 411 State Street) is an imposing limestone Greek Revival commercial building that served as the customs house for the Port of Erie. As the city grew, the downtown commercial district expanded south centered along State Street where many of the city's most important commercial buildings reside. Chandlery Corner, listed in the National Register, includes the three-story brick Schneider/Kessler Chandlery (1851, 401-405 State Street). The West Park Place National Register Historic District, along North Park Row and State Street, contains an intact collection of brick commercial buildings built from 1857 to 1865.

Downtown Erie experienced significant growth throughout the late 19th century and early 20th century due to a booming industrial economy. Large brick commercial buildings such as the Erie Trust Company Building (1925, 1001 State Street), with Renaissance Revival and Art Deco design influences, and the Boston Store (1931/1950, 716 State Street), designed in the Art Deco style, transformed downtown Erie's skyline and cemented its reputation as a regional shopping center.

In addition to the central downtown business district, smaller neighborhood commercial districts such as those at West 8th Street and Chestnut and along East Avenue north of East 10th Street, as well as individual corner stores like the one at 702 Poplar Street in the West Bayfront neighborhood, were common in early neighborhood development. Local stores and shopping districts allowed residents to walk for essential goods and to travel downtown for larger shopping and commercial needs.





CIVIC AND RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS

As the county seat, the City of Erie is home to several prominent civic and government buildings, including the imposing Erie County Courthouse (1855/1890, 140 West 6th Street), located in the West 6th Street National Register Historic District. The smooth limestone-clad building features two wings attached at the rear with identical Temple Front facades and two-story Corinthian columns designed in the Classical Revival style. The Old Griswold Post Office (1932, 1314 Griswold Plaza) displays a brick façade with arched openings supported by two-story columns and a clay tile roof designed in the Beaux Arts style. The building, now privately owned, serves as office space. The Erie Federal Court House and Post Office (1937, 17 South Park Row), listed in the National Register and designed in the Art Moderne style, features a smooth limestone façade with decorative stone panels.

The number and variety of religious buildings in Erie are a testament to the importance of religion in the city's heritage. Several congregations trace their origins back to the early 19th century. In many cases, Erie's ethnic immigrant communities raised funds to construct churches to serve their faith needs. St. Mary's Church (1854, 310 East 10th Street), constructed by the German community, features onion dome towers, a stone façade, and a slate roof. Designed in the Gothic Revival style, it now serves as the New Life and Spirit Revival Center. St. Patrick's Church and Rectory (1903, 130 East 4th Street), serving the Irish community, features a stone façade, arched openings and square towers designed in the Romanesque Revival style.

St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church is Erie's oldest African American congregation, founded in 1844. They are now located in a modern building at 236 East 11th Street. Shiloh Baptist Church (1964, 901 East 5th Street), a later African American congregation formed in 1915, now resides in a modest one-story brick church with a central tower. The Cathedral of St. Paul (1866, 133 West 6th Street), designed by Detroit architect William Gordon Lloyd and located in the West 6th Street National Register Historic District, features a Gothic Revival tower, stone façade, and slate roof. Considered the oldest congregation in Erie with its founding in 1808, St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church (1861/1883, 2216 Peach Street) also served Erie's large German community. The brick church features an arched opening, rose windows, and three spires designed in the Gothic Revival style.

CULTURAL AND FRATERNAL BUILDINGS

Erie's strong cultural and ethnic heritage is evident in the historic theaters and social clubs found in downtown Erie and throughout the city's neighborhoods. The Warner Theater (1930, 811 State Street) is an extravagant movie palace designed by famed Chicago theater architects Rapp and Rapp and commissioned by the Pennsylvania Theater Company, a subsidiary of the Warner Brothers Company. The terra cotta façade features a French Renaissance design with Art Deco influences dominated by a four-story "Warner" marquee. Also downtown, the Strand Theater (1948, 13 West 10th Street) opened as a movie theater and now serves as the Erie Playhouse. The two-story brick theater features an Art Deco brick façade and marquee.

Erie's ethnic immigrant groups typically settled near others of their native land, bringing their own culture and language to their neighborhood. Social clubs formed in the heart of each neighborhood to provide a place to gather and socialize, as well as serve as beneficial societies providing insurance and other benefits to its members. Many of these clubs remain in operation, including the Moniuszko Club and Singing Society established in 1891 (Polish, 1209 Reed Street), the Slovak National Club organized in 1936 (1942, Slovakia, 902 Hess Avenue), the Nuova Aurora Society organized in 1907 (1907, Italian, 1518 Walnut Street), the Siebenbuerger Club organized in 1898 (1928, German, 2114 French Street), the National Club (Italian, 1623 Cherry Street), and the Polish Falcon's Nest organized in 1914 (1951, Polish, 431 East 3rd Street) who moved from their earlier building at 602 East 19th Street.

Other social club buildings remain though the organizations no longer exist or operate elsewhere, including the East Erie Turners, originally the Erie Turnverein, organized in 1890 (1890, German, 829 Parade Street), the Old Romanian Club, officially the United Transylvanian Beneficial Society (Romanian, 1133 Pennsylvania Avenue), and the Maennerchor Club organized in 1871 (German, 1607 State Street). Most of the clubs are modest one- and two-story brick buildings, though several, such as the Maennerchor Club and the East Erie Turners building, are larger in scale with Classical Revival stylistic references.





EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Erie has a strong tradition of education dating back to its founding. Many of the city's public schools remain from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, most two-to-three stories and constructed of brick and limestone. including Public School No. 2 – Jones School (1899, 150 East 8th Street), designed by architect Joseph Frank with a brick and limestone façade. It now serves as private offices. Public School No. 7 – Washington School (1875, 128 West 21st Street), designed by architect D. K. Dean, is now part of the West 21st Street National Register Historic District. Public School No. 6 – Irving School (1897, 2310 Plum Street), designed by architect Joseph Frank, features a central pedimented tower and arched opening. One of the most recognizable schools in Erie is Academy High School and Veterans Memorial Stadium (1920, 2825 State Street), a three-story brick and limestone building with a central tower designed in the Collegiate Gothic Revival style. The school now serves as the Northwest Pennsylvania Collegiate Academy. Central Tech High School, created from combining two adjoining schools – Memorial Junior High School (1956) and Technical Memorial High School (1959) – is a sprawling campus comprised of low-rise two-story brick buildings with an open two-story entrance with square columns reinterpreting the common Classical Revival entrance portico. The building now serves as Erie High School. (Old Time Erie, 2012)

Gannon University, established in 1925 as Cathedral College by Archbishop John Mark Gannon, has strong ties to Erie. The private Catholic university owns an impressive collection of historic and modern buildings along the west end of downtown Erie, purchased over the years due to the University's expansion. Their first acquisition was the Strong Mansion (1891, 109 West 6th Street), now known as the University's Old Main and located in the West 6th Street National Register Historic District. The three-and-one-half-story brick and brownstone mansion features an arched entrance, multiple gables and chimneys, and a slate roof, designed in the Romanesque Revival style. Scottino Hall/Schuster Theater (1921, 620 Sassafras Street), originally the Christian Science Church and part of the West 6th Street National Register Historic District, features a large front pediment and two-story Ionic columns designed in the Classical Revival style. Wehrle Hall (1957, 209 West 6th Street) is a Mid-Century Modern brick residence hall with ribbon windows and metal panels.

Mercyhurst University, founded in 1926 as Mercyhurst College, is a private Catholic university located in the Mercyhurst neighborhood. The campus features Old Main (1926, 501 East 38th Street), a two-and-one-half-story brick and limestone building designed in the English Gothic Revival style.

INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS

Erie's industrial economy drove the city's tremendous growth throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, securing the city's reputation as a center for manufacturing. Many of those early brick and steel factories remain – some vacant and some still in use – adding to the industrial character found along 12th Street, the city's main industrial corridor. The Erie City Iron Works (1880/1900, 1310 East Avenue) is a significant example of a production shed and is part of a larger complex of manufacturing buildings at East Avenue and East 12th Street. The Lovell Manufacturing Company (1883-1946, 1301 French Street), located just south of the 12th Street corridor, was a successful manufacturer that expanded its products and facility multiple times through the 1940s. The building was one of many in Erie that switched to war-time production during World War II. Now known as Lovell Place, the mixed-use building, listed in the National Register, houses commercial space, offices, and apartments.

Erie's brewery industry in the late 19th century included numerous lager, ale, and porter plants including the Jackson Koehler Eagle Brewery (1892/1936, 2136 State Street). The brewery, run by the Koehler family, reflects the significant German presence in Erie's immigrant population and later merged with three other breweries to form the Erie Brewing Company, which remained in operation until 1978. The one-story brick brewery features arched windows and brick corbelling.

The Erie Water Works (1913) reflects the city's response to a rapidly expanding population through the construction of a large water pumping and sewer facility. Designed in the Romanesque Revival style, the brick and limestone building features two-story arched windows and a clay tile roof.





PARKS, SQUARES, AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

The original 1795 street grid created by Andrew Ellicott laid out Perry Square, Gridley Park, and Wayne Park at the center of each of three one-square-mile sections. The parks developed separately as the city developed around them. Perry Square, at the heart of downtown Erie, first received improvements in 1808. State Street divides the park into east and west. Buildings, including the original County Courthouse, market houses, and housing, developed in the west park through the first half of the 19th century, though by 1866 the park was clear of buildings. The park received additional improvements in 1846, including the planting of many of the trees that remain today. Also in 1846, the park received the name Perry Square in honor of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, a hero of the Battle of Lake Erie during the War of 1812. The west park includes a Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument erected in 1872. The Edison Electric fountain, installed in the east park in 1929, later received alterations in the 1980s and 2016. The park includes other monuments and markers. (Perry Square Alliance, n.d.)

Gridley Park – originally named Cascade Park – developed after 1900 and includes a monument to Captain Charles Vernon Gridley, erected in 1913. The park later received the name Gridley Park to honor Gridley, who served in the Spanish-American War. Liberty Street divides the park into east and west. (Our West Bayfront, n.d.) Wayne Park, the only one of the three original parks not divided into halves, received its name in honor of General Anthony Wayne, who served in the Revolutionary War.

Erie Cemetery opened in 1851 in the heart of the Little Italy neighborhood and is the burial place for many of Erie's most notable citizens. The cemetery, which covers 75 acres, has a rural landscape design with circular drives and an expansive tree cover. The cemetery includes numerous and elaborate stone mausoleums, tombs, and obelisks, including an 1887 chapel, and the William L. Scott Mausoleum, erected in 1891 with Gothic Revival influences. A wrought iron fence surrounds the cemetery, meeting at a formal entrance gate facing Chestnut Street. Lakeside Cemetery and Gardens, established in 1898 along Lake Erie in the Lakeside neighborhood, has a traditional design with gravesites laid out in rows. It is the final resting place of Captain Charles Vernon Gridley. Four bronze cannons captured in the Battle of Manila Bay during the Spanish-American War flank his gravesite along Lake Erie.

Erie's bayfront was a significant factor in its rapid development. At the beginning of the 19th century, the bayfront served as the site of public docks, shipbuilding facilities, and other maritime uses. As the city developed into an industrial center, the bayfront developed with railroad yards, factories, power and water plants, and other industrial uses. In 1884, the Erie

Extension Canal opened west of downtown, connecting Lake Erie to Pittsburgh. The canal closed in 1871. While most of these early uses are gone, the bayfront redeveloped in 2007 with hotels and a convention center, a public library, restaurants, a marina, a park, and the addition of the Bayfront Parkway. The Port of Erie remains active, as do several light industrial and maritime industries, such as a shipbuilding and repair facility. There are also recreational opportunities and a campground, as well as boating and fishing.

The Erie Land Lighthouse (1867, 1200 Lighthouse Street) is a round brick tower clad in sandstone and is open to the public. Three smokestacks, known as “The Three Sisters,” remain along Lake Erie as remnants of the former Hammermill Paper Company facility, constructed in 1899. The Erie Yacht Club, founded in 1894, moved to its current location in the Frontier neighborhood in 1917. The original temporary clubhouse from 1917, known as the Canoe House, remains in use as a boat rental office and office of the Dockmaster. The existing clubhouse is the second on the site, constructed in 1968 and rehabilitated in 1993 (Erie Yacht Club, Club History, n.d.).

Following a 2015 nomination, the proposed Lake Erie Quadrangle National Marine Sanctuary, under consideration by the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, seeks to preserve and promote Erie’s maritime heritage through the protection of underwater shipwrecks, expand the current campus of maritime museums and environmental organizations, and create strong partnerships with state and federal agencies to expand Erie’s tourism economy.



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register of Historic Places promotes public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and preserve important historic and cultural resources across the country. Listing in the National Register includes individual properties and historic districts.

NATIONAL REGISTER LANDMARKS

As of April 2023, the City of Erie includes 24 properties individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

- **Boston Store** (716-728 State Street, listed 1996, National Register #96001194)
- **C.F.Adams Building** (101 East 6th Street, listed 2015, National Register #14001132)
- **Cashier's House and Coach House** (411 East State Street, 11 East 4th Street, listed 1972, National Register #72001121, Expanded 1983, National Register #83002241)
- **Chandlery Corner** (401-405 State Street, listed 1987, National Register #87000030)
- **Charles Manning Reed Mansion** (524 Peach Street, listed 1982, National Register #82003786)
- **Dickson Tavern** (201 French Street, listed 1990, National Register #89002256)
- **Erie Armory** (350 Parade Street, listed 1989, National Register #89002073)
- **Erie County Public Library** (27 South Park Row, listed 1979, National Register #79002225)
- **Erie Federal Courthouse and Post Office** (17 South Park Row, listed 1993, National Register #92000468)
- **Erie Land Lighthouse** (1200 Lighthouse Street, listed 1978, National Register #78002397)
- **Erie Masonic Temple** (32 West 8th Street, listed 2020, National Register #100005518)
- **Erie Trust Company Building** (1001 State Street, listed 2000, National Register #00000967)
- **John Hill House** (230 West 6th Street, listed 1979, National Register #79002224)
- **Koehler, Jackson, Eagle Brewery** (2109 State Street, listed 1982, National Register #82003785)
- **Lovell Manufacturing Company** (1301 French Street, listed 1997, National Register #96001551)
- **Mayer Building** (1501-09 State Street, listed 2021, National Register #100006881)
- **Modern Tool Company** (333 State Street, listed 1987, National Register #87000382)
- **Old Customs House** (417 State Street, listed 1972, National Register #72001122)
- **Pierre S.V. Hamot House** (302 French Street, listed 1991, National Register #91001707)
- **Thayer-Thompson House** (605 West 8th Street, listed 1985, National Register #85003443)
- **U. S. S. Niagara** (State Street at Lake Erie, listed 1973, National Register #73001628)
- **Villa Maria Academy** (819 West 8th Street, listed 1996, National Register #96001193)
- **Warner Theater** (811 State Street, listed 1982, National Register #82003787)
- **Watson-Curtze Mansion** (356 West 6th Street, listed 1983, National Register #83002244)

FIGURE 1: NATIONAL REGISTER LANDMARKS





NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS

As of April 2023, there are four National Register historic districts in the City of Erie. They include the Federal Row National Register Historic District, the West Park Place National Register Historic District, West 6th Street National Register Historic District, and the West 21st Street National Register Historic District.

Federal Row National Register Historic District

The Federal Row National Register Historic District comprises five buildings located at the northwest corner of East 5th and Holland Streets. The five buildings, designed in the Federal style of architecture, are all constructed of red brick and are two stories or two-and-a-half stories in height. The buildings include the Charles M. Tibbals House (1842, 146 East 5th Street), the Alexander Brewster House (1852, 156 East 5th Street), the two halves of the Kennedy Row Houses (1836, divided in 1880, 158 East 5th Street), the two halves of the David Kennedy House (1832, divided in 1880, 162 East 5th Street/430 Holland Street), and the Kennedy Double House (1840, 424-426 Holland Street). All five of the buildings contribute to the character of the historic district and are significant as the most intact collection of Erie's early Federal rowhouses.

Properties within the historic district are located within the RLB Residential Limited Business District under the City of Erie Zoning Ordinance, which allows residential uses, home occupations, and limited commercial uses. Under the current zoning the buildings within the historic district meet the use requirements but are non-conforming as the existing zoning requirements allow less building lot coverage, greater building height, and larger setbacks than those found in the existing historic buildings. Amending the existing zoning for the Federal Row Historic District to align the regulations with the existing buildings would be more appropriate to maintain the character of the historic district.

FEDERAL ROW HD		
Building Resources	Contributing	Non-Contributing
Buildings	5	
Sites		
Structures		
Objects		
TOTAL	5	

FIGURE 2: FEDERAL ROW NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT





West Park Place National Register Historic District

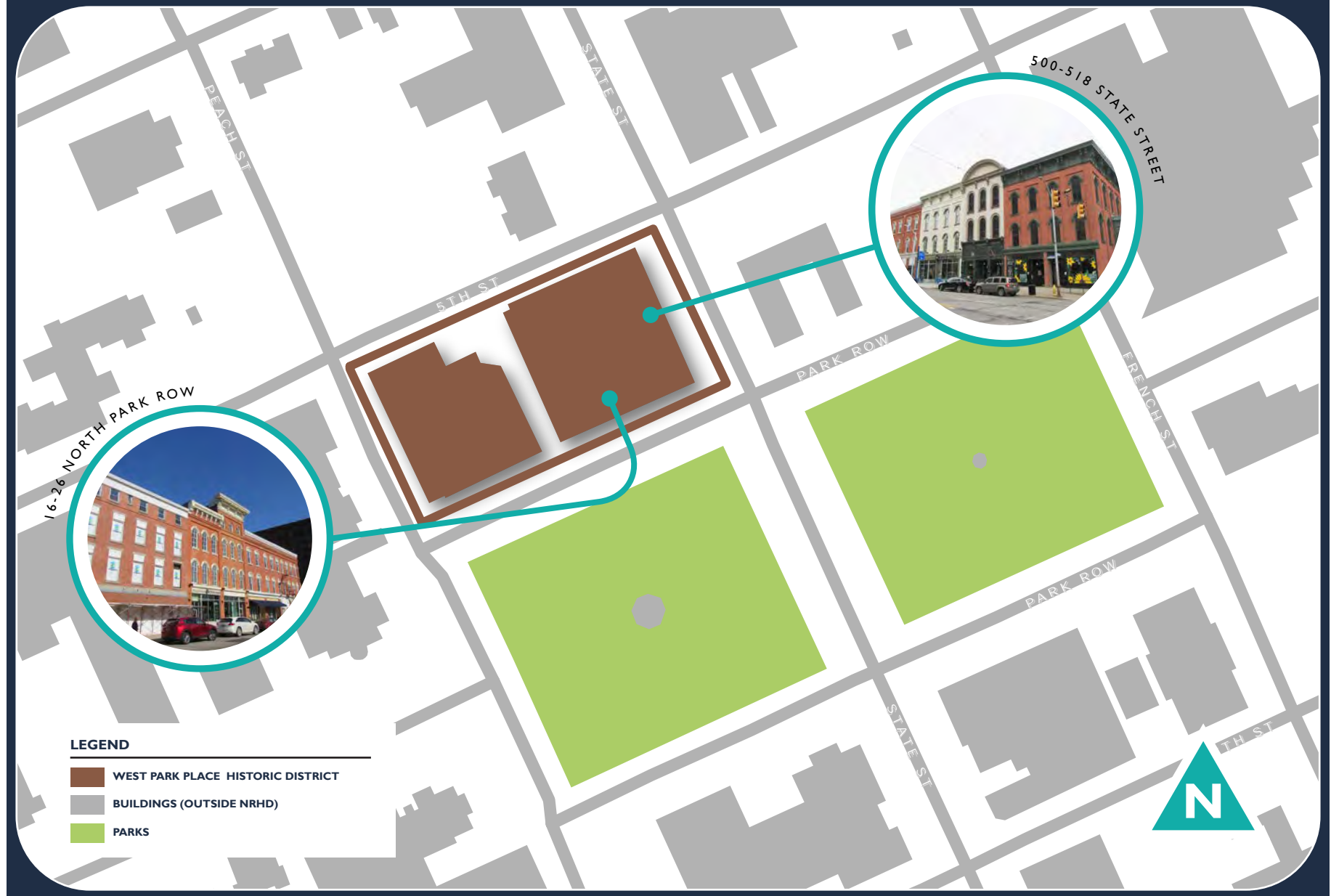
Bounded by North Park Row, West 5th, West 6th, and State Streets, and facing Perry Square to the south, the West Park Place National Register Historic District is a collection of intact mid-19th century commercial buildings in the heart of downtown Erie. The district includes 12 three-story brick buildings wrapping the block, with one vacant lot, representing the early commercial prosperity of the city. All 12 of the buildings contribute to the character of the district and include Italianate design and architectural ornamentation.

Properties within the historic district are located within the C-3 Central Commercial District under the City of Erie Zoning Ordinance, which allows commercial, office, and entertainment facilities and related uses. Zoning regulations within downtown Erie do not require front or side yard setbacks and allow 100 percent building lot coverage, which are appropriate to the historic district. However, maximum height requirements downtown allow much taller buildings than appropriate for the historic district and amending this regulation would help to maintain the character of the district.

WEST PARK PLACE HD

Building Resources	Contributing	Non-Contributing
Buildings	12	
Sites		
Structures		
Objects		
TOTAL	12	

FIGURE 3: WEST PARK PLACE NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT



West 6th Street National Register Historic District

Roughly bounded by West 6th Street and parts of West 7th Street between Peach and Poplar Streets, as well as parts of West 5th Street between Peach and Sassafras Streets, the West 6th Street National Register Historic District comprises both single-family residences and multi-family buildings, as well as institutional and religious buildings. The district's period of significance – 1821-1930 – reflects a variety of architectural styles, including Second Empire, Greek Revival, Federal, Prairie, Tudor Revival, and Craftsman Bungalow. Of the district's 117 building resources, 103 (88 percent) contribute to the character of the district. The majority of buildings in the district utilize brick materials, while other buildings include wood frame, stone, and stucco materials. The district includes several historic secondary buildings, including carriage houses and garages.

Originally known as "Millionaire's Row," the district is significant for its association with Erie's wealthy business and community leaders of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The district also includes three buildings individually listed in the National Register – the John Hill House (230 West 6th Street, listed 1979), the Charles Manning Reed Mansion (524 Peach Street, listed 1982), and the Watson-Curtze Mansion (356 West 6th Street, listed 1983).

Properties within the historic district are located within several zoning districts under the City of Erie Zoning Ordinance, including the following:

- **RLB Residential Limited Business District**, which allows residential uses, home occupations, and limited commercial uses, along West 6th Street between Peach and Walnut Streets and for the property at 558 West 6th Street. Existing zoning requirements allow a greater building height than those found in the majority of existing historic buildings. Amending the existing zoning for the West 6th Street Historic District to align the regulations with the existing buildings would be more appropriate to maintain the character of the historic district.
- **R-2 Medium Density Residential District**, which allows one-to-four-family low-to-moderate density residential developments, along West 6th Street between Walnut and Cherry Streets (except for 558 West 6th Street) and along the north half of the 600 block of West 6th Street. The majority of buildings within this zoning district appear to conform to the zoning regulations.
- **R-1 Low Density Residential District**, which allows low-density single-family residential development, along the south half of the 600 block of West 6th Street. Buildings within this one-block section of the historic district appear to conform to the zoning regulations.

WEST 6TH STREET HD		
Building Resources	Contributing	Non-Contributing
Buildings	103	14
Sites		
Structures		
Objects		
TOTAL	103	14

FIGURE 4: WEST 6TH STREET NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT





West 21st Street National Register Historic District.

Bounded by West 21st Street between Peach and Myrtle Streets, and including part of Sassafra Street, the West 21st Street National Register Historic District comprises late 19th and early 20th century single-family homes, as well as one school and one church. The district's building resources, constructed from 1857-1939, include both wood frame and brick construction that are two- and two-and-a-half stories in height except for the three-story school (Washington Education Center, 1910) and church (Table of Grace Methodist Church, 1893). The buildings reflect a variety of architectural styles including Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Italianate, as well as Gable Front and American Foursquare vernacular forms. All 35 of the buildings contribute to the character of the district which is significant as a collection of intact middle and upper-class homes of prominent Erie residents from the late 19th and early 20th century.

Properties within the historic district are located within several zoning districts under the City of Erie Zoning Ordinance, including the following:

- RLB Residential Limited Business District, which allows residential uses, home occupations, and limited commercial uses, along the 100 block of West 21st Street and for the property at 209 West 21st Street. Properties along the block within this zoning district appear to conform to the zoning regulations.
- R-2 Medium Density Residential District, which allows one-to-four-family low-to-moderate density residential developments, along the 200 block of West 21st Street (except for 209 West 21st Street). Buildings within this one-block section of the historic district appear to conform to the zoning regulations.

WEST 21ST STREET HD		
Building Resources	Contributing	Non-Contributing
Buildings	35	
Sites		
Structures		
Objects		
TOTAL	35	

FIGURE 5: WEST 21ST STREET NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT



ERIE LOCAL LANDMARKS AND DISTRICTS

Under the Historic Preservation Ordinance adopted in 2021, the Historic Review Commission and the Erie City Council can designate Local Landmarks and Districts. Local designation protects significant historic and cultural resources while helping to revitalize commercial and residential neighborhoods and encourage the adaptive use of vacant historic buildings. There is currently one Local Landmark, the Mayer Building (1899), located at 1501-09 State Street, designated on March 1, 2023.





ERIE'S INTANGIBLE HERITAGE

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Erie's population grew as it rose to prominence as an industrial center in the region. Much of this growth is due to an influx of ethnic immigrants seeking work in the city's factories and industrial plants. As a result, Erie's cultural heritage reflects various racial and ethnic groups, including African Americans, Asians, Greeks, Italians, Poles, Russians, Germans, and Irish. Ethnic festivals are a popular method of celebrating that culture. Churches and community organizations, the heart of most ethnic communities, sponsor most cultural festivals. There are over a dozen ethnic festivals held annually or every other year in Erie. Following is a partial list of Erie's ethnic and cultural festivals.

1

St. Paul's Italian Festival

celebrates Italian-American heritage in Erie through food, music, and Italian dancing. St. Paul Roman Catholic Church in Erie's Little Italy neighborhood sponsors and hosts the annual festival.

2

Zabawa Polish Festival

held annually, celebrates Erie's Polish heritage through Polish food and beverages, vendors, games, music, and a Polish Mass held in Holy Trinity Church, which sponsors the festival.

3

St. Patrick's Irish Festival

begun in 1993 to celebrate Celtic culture, features Irish food, music, art, and vendors selling clothing and crafts. St. Patrick's Church sponsors the annual festival held on East 4th Street in front of the church.

4

AmeriMasala

is a multi-cultural festival held in Perry Square celebrating cultures from around the world and includes a parade, art, music, food, and fashion. Erie Arts and Culture, The Erie Community Foundation, Erie Art Company, Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority, Mercyhurst University, and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts sponsored the festival in 2022.

5

Erie World Refugee Day

begun in 2016, honors and celebrates international refugees fleeing conflict and persecution. The annual gathering provides food, music, and crafts. The International Institute of Erie sponsors the event.

6

Multi-Cultural Asia Day

highlights the diversity of Asian Pacific cultures, including Bangladesh, China, India, Japan, Pakistan, and Vietnam, and promotes inclusion. The event includes family activities, arts, and crafts, demonstrations, and performances displaying the different Asian cultures. The Asian Pacific American Forum of General Electric and Wabtec founded the event in 2008. The Erie Asian Pacific American Association currently sponsors the event.

7

Oktoberfest

is a traditional German celebration with food and beverages, music, and activities, held in Erie since 2006. St. Joseph Church/Bread of Life Community sponsors the annual event.

8

St. Patrick's Day Parade

runs along State Street to celebrate St. Patrick's Day and Irish heritage. St. Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland. The parade, which includes floats, bands, and participation from community groups and organizations, institutions, local businesses, and others, ends in front of St. Patrick Catholic Church on East 4th Street. The Knights and Ladies of St. Patrick and the Erie Zoo sponsor the parade which began in 1979.

9

Troika Russian Festival

began in 2000 to celebrate Russian heritage and includes traditional performances, church tours, mass, food, beverages, and merchandise. Church of the Nativity sponsors the annual event.

10

Slavic Festival

celebrates Slavic heritage through Eastern European food, music, and dancing. The Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church has sponsored the festival since 2003.

11

Juneteenth

celebrates the end of slavery, announced on June 19, 1865. Originating in Galveston, Texas, Juneteenth is now a federal holiday. Erie's Juneteenth celebration includes a block party on State Street with live music and vendors. Erie's Juneteenth Celebration, the Booker T. Washington Development and Education Center, and Erie's Black Wall Street sponsor the annual event.

12

Ubhauri Sakela

held in Perry Square, celebrates the traditions of the Kirat Rai people, an ethnic group indigenous to Eastern Nepal and the Sikkim, Kalimpong, and Darjeeling regions of India. The Bhutanese Kirat Rai Organization of America sponsors the festival.

13

Taste of Asia

begun in 2016 and held every other year, features traditional food from various Asian cultures. The Erie Asian Pacific American Association sponsors the event.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

TROIKA FESTIVAL 2023

FRIDAY, MAY 26
4:00PM – 9:00PM

SATURDAY, MAY 27
NOON – 6:00PM

SUNDAY, MAY 28
NOON – 6:00PM

CHURCH

100

AMERIMASALA 2022 (LYNN JOHNSON)

ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA

65

DOCUMENTATION AND SURVEY SUMMARY

The following is a summary of previous survey and documentation efforts conducted within the City of Erie.

Frontier Forts and Trails Survey (1930s)

The Frontier Forts and Trails Survey conducted archaeological excavations of various Native American sites and gathered and documented historical records within the region of northwest Pennsylvania. Sponsored by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the project is part of the Works Project Administration.

Erie County Bicentennial Survey (1976)

The Erie Historical Society initiated an independent survey to identify architecturally significant sites within Erie County constructed before 1865 to commemorate the U.S. Bicentennial. The survey identified close to 400 sites of which 48 were located within the City of Erie, including seven properties currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places and the Kennedy Row Houses, now part of the Federal Row National Register Historic District.

Erie County Historical and Architectural Preservation Plan – Historic Sites Inventory (1976)

As part of a countywide preservation plan prepared by the Erie County Metropolitan Planning Department, a survey of 110 individual sites within the county identified properties thought to have historical or architectural significance. The sites were categorized into nine classifications, including agriculture, arts and literature, commercial and industrial development, education, government, military history, religion, and transportation. All other properties were included under the classification of architectural dwelling. The inventory included public and private properties in a variety of architectural styles.

The survey identified 41 sites within the City of Erie under the following classifications:

- Architectural Dwellings – 27
- Commercial and Industrial Development – 3
- Military History - 3
- Religion – 3
- Transportation – 2
- Arts and Literature – 1
- Education – 1
- Government – 1

City of Erie Historic Sites Survey (1982)

On behalf of the City of Erie, the Northwest Institute of Research conducted a survey to identify historically and architecturally significant buildings, sites, and historic districts within the central portion of the City of Erie. The survey boundary consisted of Cranberry Street on the west, 26th Street on the south, East and Hess Avenues on the east, and Lake Erie on the north. Divided into 13 zones, a reconnaissance-level survey provided a general description of each zone and identified individual properties for an intensive-level survey. A total of 830 properties received intensive-level documentation. The City of Erie used Community Development Block Grant funds to underwrite the survey initiative.

The survey identified 215 individual properties and sites as well as five historic districts as potentially eligible for listing in the National Register. The five potential historic districts include:

- **Lower State Street Historic District** includes the area between 3rd Street, French Street, North Park Row, and Peach Street, and is a collection of commercial and residential buildings dating from the early 19th to the early 20th centuries. Several properties within the district are eligible for National Register listing.
- **West 6th Street Historic District** includes West 6th Street between Perry Square on the east and Gridley Park on the west. The district comprises residential and institutional buildings including what is known as Erie's "Millionaire's RoWest" Several residences within the district are listed in the National Register.
- **Upper State Street Historic District** centers on the east side of State Street between 10th Street on the north and 16th Street to the south. The commercial buildings within the district range from the mid-19th century through the 1930s.
- **West 12th Street Industrial Historic District** spans West 12th Street between Myrtle Street on the east and Weschler Avenue on the west and includes a concentration of industrial buildings dating back to the mid-19th century.
- **West 21st Street Historic District** includes a variety of residential and institutional buildings along West 21st Street between Peach and Myrtle Streets. The district includes a variety of architectural styles from the late 19th century.

Historic Resources Protection Plan for the Lake Erie Coastal Zone (1983)

Conducted by the Northwest Research Institute on behalf of the Erie County Department of Planning, the purpose of the survey was to identify historically and architecturally significant buildings, structures, sites, objects, and historic districts within the Lake Erie Coastal Zone study area, which includes sections of the City of Erie between Lake Erie and South Shore Drive, 2nd Street, 3rd Street, 6th Street, and East Lake Road. The survey project relied on previous surveys for existing identified properties and conducted an original windshield survey of the east-eastern one-third of the coastal zone study area. The survey project received funding from the National Coastal Zone Management Program, administered by the Office for Coastal Management, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The survey identified over 494 properties at least 50 years old and three historic districts within the coastal zone study area as potentially eligible for listing in the National Register, including 78 properties and two historic districts within Erie. The two potential historic districts include:

- **Lower State Street Historic District** - a collection of approximately 50 commercial properties ranging from the early 19th century to the early 20th century.
- **West 6th Street Historic District** - over 100 residential and institutional buildings known historically as “Millionaire’s RoWest” The district includes a variety of architectural styles.



Erie County Historic Resource Survey – Phase II (1987)

The second phase of the Erie County Historic Resource Survey, prepared for the Erie County Planning Department by the Erie County Historical Society, included seven townships, the Borough of Wesleyville, and portions of the City of Erie not previously surveyed (east of East Avenue, south of 26th Street, and west of Cranberry Street). The project received funding from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and the Erie County Planning Department.

The survey identified 101 properties as potentially eligible for individual listing in the National Register and two potential National Register historic districts:

- **Glenwood Historic District** - consisting of historic single-family and multi-family residential resources of early 20th-century styles and building types (number of properties not indicated).
- **Frontier Place Historic District** - consisting of historic single-family residential resources including early 20th-century Revival styles (number of properties not indicated).



Erie County Industrial Resources Survey, Phase I: City of Erie Foundries and Machine Shops (1993)

The Erie County Planning Department and the Erie County Historical Society conducted a survey to identify, document, and evaluate extant historic resources within Erie County associated with the foundry and machine shop industry, including those still in operation and those vacant or adapted for a new use. The project received funding from the National Park Service, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the Erie County Planning Department, and the Erie County Historical Society. The final survey report is not currently available for review.

The survey identified 51 historic foundries and machine shops within the City of Erie; five received reconnaissance-level documentation and 45 received intensive-level documentation. The Modern Tool Company (1895, 333 State Street), listed in the National Register in 1987, was not re-surveyed. The survey identified 19 properties as potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, the survey identified three potential National Register Historic Districts:

- **East 16th Street Industrial Historic District**, incorporating four foundry and machine shop complexes dating from the 1880s to the 1930s, including the individually listed Lovell Manufacturing Company (listed 1996), and three additional contributing industrial buildings.
- **East 12th Street Industrial Historic District**, consisting of six foundry and machine shop complexes dating from the 1880s to the 1990s
- **West 12th Street Industrial Historic District**, including 25 foundry and machine shop complexes dating from the 1860s to the 1990s.

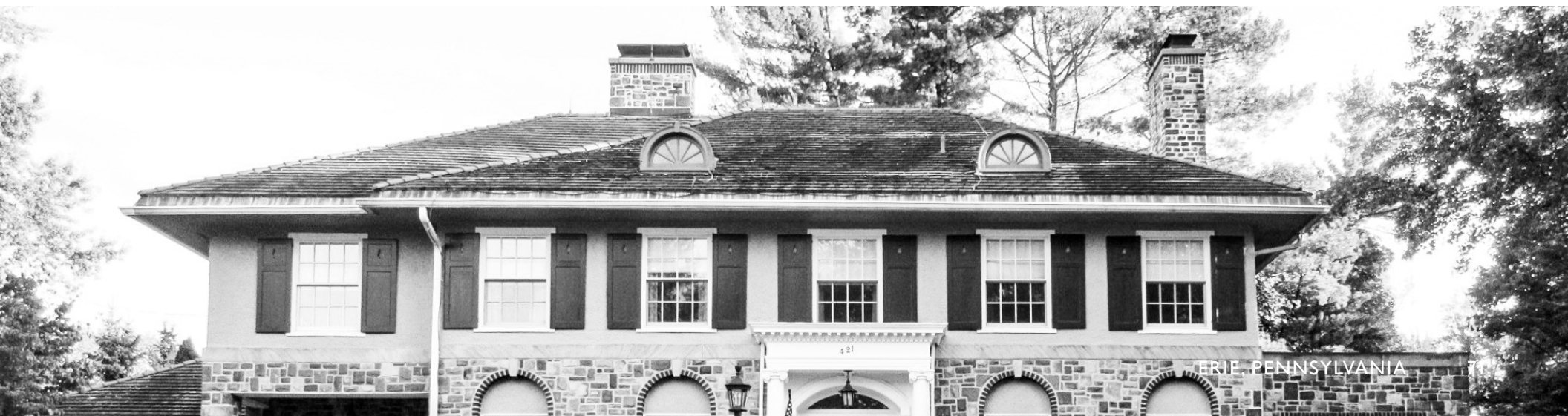


Erie County Historic Resources Survey (2013-2015)

Seeing the need for comprehensive documentation of Erie County's historic resources, Preservation Erie conducted a reconnaissance-level survey that included two phases: a survey of the cities of Erie and Corry in Phase I and a survey of the remaining county in Phase II. The purpose of the survey was to identify, document, and evaluate properties constructed before 1940. The survey did not examine bridges, structures, objects, and known archaeological sites. The project received funding from the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority, the Perry 200 Bicentennial Committee, Preservation Erie, and individual donors.

In total, the survey documented 31,471 properties in Erie County municipalities. The survey included individual properties and historic districts listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Within the City of Erie, the survey identified 51 properties and four historic districts as potentially eligible for listing in the National Register. The survey information is available to the public on a website hosted by Preservation Erie. The four potential historic districts include:

- **East 12th Street Industrial Historic District** consisting of six foundry and machine shop complexes dating from 1880 to 1930.
- **Adamstown Historic District** incorporating 76 residential properties built between 1910 and 1945 including bungalows, American Foursquares, and Queen Anne and Colonial Revival styles.
- **Lakeside Historic District** is a subdivision developed between 1910 and 1945 with 280 single-family homes consisting of Bungalows, American Foursquares, Cape Cods, and Colonial Revival and Tudor Revival styles.
- **Glenwood Hills Historic District** includes a development platted in 1919 by real estate developer Truman O. Andrews with continuous development through the 1960s consisting of Bungalows, Ranches, and Prairie, Craftsman, Colonial and Tudor Revival, and Minimal Traditional styles.



Additional Surveys

The following survey reports were not available for review:

- **West Erie County Historic Sites Survey (1979).** The Erie County Department of Recreation and Cultural Affairs engaged the Erie County Historical Society to identify historically and architecturally significant buildings and sites on the west side of Erie County, which included portions of the west side of the City of Erie.
- **Urban Development Action Grant Survey (1979).** The City of Erie obtained a federal Urban Development Action Grant for improvements within the East Bayfront neighborhood, which required a survey to identify historically and architecturally significant buildings and sites. The Urban Development Action Grant also provided the funding for the survey project.

3016 STATE ST







Chapter 3

Trends Impacting Preservation

POPULATION CHANGE

HOUSING PROFILE AND HOME OWNERSHIP

AGE AND GENERATIONAL ATTITUDES

DEMOGRAPHICS IN ERIE'S NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS

RACE, ETHNICITY, AND EQUITY

BUILDING INVESTMENTS, ALTERATIONS, AND DEMOLITION

1300 GRISWOLD PLAZA, OLD POST OFFICE

TRENDS IMPACTING PRESERVATION

The most important story impacting preservation in Erie is one of demographics, not buildings. It is well known that Erie's population has been shrinking from its peak of 138,000 in 1960 to about 94,000 today, a loss of about 32 percent over 60 years. The rate of population loss has varied from decade to decade but averages around 0.6 percent per year.

Population changes - whether upward or downward - often impact preservation at a local level. In rapidly growing cities, new residents place pressure on housing markets, causing land values to rise. Higher land values can create development pressures on historic neighborhoods, where homebuyers often want to maximize the square footage on a given parcel. (These situations lead to teardowns of historic homes which are replaced by new, larger homes.) When there is a population decline, on the other hand, it creates a situation where there is more housing inventory than can be occupied. This housing surplus can happen in any neighborhood – not just historic neighborhoods. With more inventory than potential occupants, values decline, making it harder to justify investment in upkeep and repairs.





“

**Homeownership
tends to increase
the occupant's
commitment to
maintenance and
preservation.**

”



The soft market means homeowners and landlords will not recoup their investments, at least in the foreseeable future. Low home values, combined with low incomes, lead to declining home maintenance.

It is impossible to know how Erie's population will change in the future. A 60-year linear trend could reverse itself for any number of reasons – even absent a new, large employer moving to the city. With the changing nature of office work, many knowledge workers can move further from large cities. Small and midsize cities, with their lower cost of living and high quality of life, have been the beneficiaries as this trend accelerated during the pandemic. With many jobs now more portable, making a city a great place to live can, in itself, draw new residents.

Other factors can mitigate the adverse effects on historic housing stock in a period of negative population growth:

- Homeownership tends to increase the occupant's commitment to maintenance and preservation. Homeowners generally take better care of their homes than renters, since they have a strong interest in maintaining the value of their assets.
- Smaller household sizes effectively translate into higher occupancy of available housing units. The household size in the US has been declining for more than 60 years. In 1960, the average household size was 3.3 persons; today, it is 2.5 persons. Erie's household size is also shrinking, from 2.36 in 2010 to 2.28 in 2022. In a hypothetical situation where the population remains stable and household size decreases, the same population will occupy more housing units. Today, there are almost 40 million single-person households in the US – more than at any other time in history.

The second large influence on preservation in Erie is very much a positive one and unrelated to demographics or population trends but to the preservation and rehabilitation work occurring along the West 6th Street neighborhood near downtown spurred by the investments of the Historic Erie Preservation Trust in partnership with Gannon University. The Trust has recently expanded its work to include additional buildings within the West 6th Street area, as well as significant residential properties in other Erie neighborhoods. Most of these have been or will be, put back into use and operated as commercial properties. Most will be donated to the Trust, which was established to provide for their ongoing maintenance.

The Trust's work is unusual in any city but particularly in a city of Erie's size. The projects set an example of high standards, a dedication to preservation, and a belief that historic buildings have an important place in Erie's fabric. At the same time, the Trust and the University's accomplishments in this area set another unusual precedent as many of the most visible preservation projects in Erie would not otherwise be economically viable in the local market. The work has been heavily subsidized as a result of one organization's commitment to Erie's architectural heritage.

POPULATION CHANGE

Negative population growth has remained a challenge for Erie’s economy for 60 years – an entire lifetime for many of Erie’s current residents – since the decline of the manufacturing industries, starting in the mid-20th century.

1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
119,123	108,718	103,717	101,786	94,831

SOURCE: US CENSUS, VIA ESRI

The 2022 population was estimated to be 93,527 (ESRI).

Cities with shrinking populations face many challenges, most significantly a loss of tax revenues without a proportional drop in expenses. (Roads, water and sewer, and other infrastructure systems, along with city services, must still cover the same land area.) In addition to being an economic challenge for City government, it can be argued that population loss is Erie’s biggest preservation challenge, too: decreased demand for housing affects all residential districts, but the impacts can be even more significant among older housing stock, which may need more investment in maintenance than newer housing stock. The overall availability of housing choices may lead buyers to options where less maintenance is needed.

“Population loss is Erie’s biggest preservation challenge.”

HOUSING PROFILE AND HOMEOWNERSHIP

Homeownership in Erie is relatively low at 46 percent of occupied units. While Erie County is at 60 percent and the US at 65 percent, cities generally have lower rates of homeownership than small or rural communities. Erie's housing vacancy rate of 11 percent is of greater concern than its homeownership rate, but boosting the ownership rate in Erie (e.g., through incentives and first-time buyer assistance programs) would almost certainly have a positive impact on the preservation of historic homes and neighborhoods.

Housing Units by Occupancy Status and Tenure (Erie City)

Total housing units	43,543	
Occupied	38,713	89%
Owner-occupied	19,838	46%
Renter-occupied	18,875	43%
Vacant	4,830	11%

SOURCE: ESRI

The weak housing market in Erie—largely a function of population in relation to housing inventory—means home prices are also low, having a median value of \$98,974 in 2022. With a median household income of \$40,007 (2022) in Erie, homeownership is surprisingly attainable. A \$90,000, 30-year mortgage at a fixed rate of 7 percent yields a monthly payment of \$600—only 18 percent of the median monthly gross income.



AGE AND GENERATIONAL ATTITUDES

Erie's population is relatively young for a legacy city, with a median age of 35.6 (2022). This compares favorably to 40.6 for the county and 38.1 for the US. A younger median age suggests that many in Erie are still in their household formation years, which include lifecycle events like marrying, having children, and buying homes.

Erie Generations			
	Born between	Ages in 2022	% of Population
Gen Z	1995-2012	10-27	24.6%
Millennials	1980-1994	28-42	21.3%
Gen X	1965-1979	43-57	15.4%
Baby Boomers	1946-1964	58-76	19.1%
Silent Generation	1925-1945	77-97	6.5%

Some preservation attitudes correlate with certain generational attributes. Nationally and in Erie, Millennials are currently the largest living adult population. (Gen Z, though a larger cohort, are not all adults yet.) Among their notable characteristics, Millennials are the first generation to grow up with the Internet and they tend to take less (or later) interest in some of the goals of previous generations, like marrying, having children, buying a house, or owning a car.

In 2017, Millennials were the subject of an unusual study by the National Trust for Historic Preservation examining generational attitudes toward historic preservation. According to this research, Millennials:

- Highly value historic preservation and living in older neighborhoods
- Highly value authentic experiences and places
- Prefer historic downtowns to malls and shopping centers
- Want to support businesses in historic buildings and places

Gen Xers have had financially less-secure lives than the Boomers that preceded them and the Millennials who followed, and their early career years were particularly adversely affected by the housing bubble and the Great Recession. This has had lingering effects and impacted the ability of some Gen Xers to own a home. However, Gen Xers are also credited with being early movers from the suburbs back to cities.



Boomers, once the largest generation, are now largely retired and their numbers are shrinking, making them a less influential cohort for preservation trends.

DEMOGRAPHICS IN ERIE'S NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICTS

Erie's four National Register districts (three are residential) house a higher proportion of the population by land area because of their naturally dense development form. By area, the four National Register districts comprise a tiny fraction of the city. In aggregate, they account for just one-tenth of a square mile or 0.005 (0.05 percent) of the city's 19.5 square miles. The total population in National Register districts makes up 1.4 percent of the city's population. While still a tiny proportion of the population, it is 28 times what would be predicted by land area. The explanation is that the National Register districts are denser than many other parts of the city.

RACE, ETHNICITY, AND EQUITY

Erie's National Register Districts are also inherently diverse – or, almost as diverse as the city as a whole. Their population makeup, in the aggregate, is about 15 percent Black compared to 18 percent for the city. The proportion of non-white residents in National Register districts is almost the same as in the city overall: 34 percent in both cases. The Hispanic population in the districts is slightly lower at 6 percent, compared to 9 percent for the city overall.

	Erie City	National Register Districts (in aggregate)
White Alone	66%	66%
Black Alone	18%	15%
American Indian Alone	0%	0%
Asian Alone	4%	3%
Pacific Islander Alone	0%	0%
Some Other Race Alone	4%	3%
Two or More Races	9%	6%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	9%	6%

SOURCE: ESRI; THE LAKOTA GROUP





BUILDING INVESTMENTS, ALTERATIONS, AND DEMOLITION

Building permit data supplied by the City of Erie provides insight into the investment and losses of buildings in National Register districts compared to the city as a whole. The data available covers the period from 2011 to 2022. Permits cover a specific alteration type, such as electrical, plumbing, roofing, furnace, demolition, etc., along with the cost of the alteration.

Within the four National Register districts are about 250 properties; 150 of those properties, or 60 percent, pulled at least one building permit during the 12 years.

- **Demolition.** During the 12 years, the City issued 1,143 demolition permits citywide including 19 demolition permits issued in National Register districts. Demolitions in these districts represent 1.7 percent of all demolitions permitted during the period. However, as a reference point, buildings in National Register districts account for only 0.5 percent of all buildings in Erie, meaning demolitions in National Register districts outpace demolitions in other parts of the city by more than three-fold. Overall, the annual number of demolition permits issued citywide has been fairly consistent at around 100, with a slight dip in 2020 and 2021, presumably due to the pandemic (City of Erie; ESRI ArcGIS; Lakota).
- **Investments.** All permits, other than those for demolition, are tangible signs of investments in properties. In Erie overall, building improvements account for about \$1.4 billion in building improvements over the 12 years, while about \$3.1 million of building improvement investments occurred (about 0.2 percent of the citywide total) in National Register districts (City of Erie; Lakota).



Chapter 4

Historic Preservation In Erie

HOW DOES HISTORIC
PRESERVATION HAPPEN?

PLANNING EFFORTS

PRESERVATION
ADMINISTRATION

INCENTIVE PROGRAMS AND
BENEFITS

AGENCIES, COMMISSIONS, AND
PRESERVATION PARTNERS

HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN ERIE

Historic preservation in Erie is a relatively new venture and undertaking. Time and opportunity going forward will allow the City of Erie to consider and implement new policies, tools, and initiatives - several recommended in this Preservation Plan that will form essential elements of an effective local historic preservation program. Such elements and initiatives may include the active surveying and documentation of important heritage resources, providing assistance and information in different capacities to property owners and community groups, and managing new systems and mechanisms that support long-term heritage stewardship. In the meantime, the City of Erie has already established a program operating framework, including a Historic Preservation Ordinance and professional preservation planning staff in place to administer and guide daily activities and future initiatives.





“ Building
rehabilitation
won’t occur
until the building
has a use. ”



This chapter describes the various preservation policies that enable historic preservation in Erie. These include state and local level legislation as well as federal programs, such as the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, the chapter also outlines local planning efforts and financial incentives that support the preservation and reuse of historic buildings. It concludes by summarizing existing and potential partners and entities in local preservation.

HOW DOES HISTORIC PRESERVATION HAPPEN?

Different enabling legislation and adopted planning and preservation policies at the federal, state, and local levels enable both public and private historic preservation efforts. Policies and legislation at the local level provide a higher level of protection and management for historic and cultural resources than do state and federal laws and policies.

FEDERAL-LEVEL PRESERVATION LEGISLATION

Tenth Amendment, U. S. Constitution—While the U.S. Constitution makes no specific reference to historic preservation, the Tenth Amendment delegates the “police power”—the right to enact laws that protect the health, safety, and general welfare in communities—to the states, and in turn, to local communities. The enactment of local zoning and historic preservation regulations is a valid exercise of a state’s police power.

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the National Register of Historic Places—Passed by the U.S. Congress in 1966, the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) established one of the more identifiable preservation programs in the country, the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register recognizes properties and cultural resources significant to local communities, states, and the country. Listing in the National Register, whether individually or as part of a historic district, is honorary only.

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the Section 106 Review Process—In addition to the National Register of Historic Places, Section 106 of the NHPA mandates that all federal agency-sponsored or permitted projects identify and assess the potential impacts of such projects on National Register-listed or eligible properties or resources. Section 106 also requires that the federal agency involved consult with the SHPO and the public when making final project decisions.

National Historic Preservation Act Amendments of 1980 and the Certified Local Government Program—In 1980, the U.S. Congress amended the NHPA to add the Certified Local Government (CLG) Program, a partnership between the National Park Service and the Pennsylvania SHPO to provide technical assistance and federal pass-through monies in support of local preservation efforts. To become a CLG in Pennsylvania, a local community must adopt and establish a local historic preservation ordinance and preservation commission. Erie is one of 50 CLGs in Pennsylvania.

National Environmental Policy Act of 1970—The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) serves as the primary national policy regarding federal efforts to eliminate adverse impacts on the natural environment. Managed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (Pennsylvania DEP), NEPA provisions encourage federal agencies to consider the impacts on historic resources as well as the environment from federally funded or licensed projects.

Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972—Ratified by the U.S. Congress to provide direction on the management of the country's coastal areas, including the Great Lakes, the Coastal Zone Management Act, provides funding to states and local governments for the planning and protection of coastal and estuarine lands. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) administers the program in partnership with the Pennsylvania DEP. The identification and documentation of historic and cultural resources within coastal areas is an eligible grant-funded activity.

STATE-LEVEL PRESERVATION LEGISLATION

Article I, Constitution of Pennsylvania—Section 27, Article I of the Pennsylvania Constitution declares that the people of the state have a “*right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment.*”

Title 37, Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, Pennsylvania History Code—Title 37, the Pennsylvania History Code, formally establishes the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, which serves as the Pennsylvania SHPO. Its core duties as the Pennsylvania SHPO—mandated by the NHPA—include maintaining a statewide inventory of historic resources, nominating properties to the National Register of Historic Places, managing the CLG program, preparing a statewide preservation plan, and reviewing federal and state undertakings for adverse impacts on National Register-listed or eligible properties.



JOSEPH STERRETT HOUSE, 414 STATE ST (1838)



Local Historic District Act of 1961—Passed by the Pennsylvania Legislature, the Local Historic District Act of 1961 authorizes local counties, towns, and cities to establish historic preservation commissions with the express purpose of identifying, creating, and managing historic districts. The Act also permits local commissions to issue permits or Certificates of Appropriateness (COAs) for any alterations or demolitions to properties located inside designated historic districts.

Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code of 1968—The Pennsylvania Municipalities Code enables local governments to prepare comprehensive plans and preservation plans that address the preservation of important historic and cultural resources. Article VI of the Planning Code authorizes the adoption and implementation of local zoning ordinances that also incorporate the “...*protection of places having unique historical, architectural or patriotic interest or value.*”

LOCAL-LEVEL PRESERVATION LEGISLATION

Article 7, Historic Resource Protection, City of Erie Zoning Ordinance—Adopted by the Erie City Council in 2021, Article 7 of the City of Erie Zoning Ordinance permits the City to implement zoning overlays, as allowed under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Code, in the “...*preservation of this heritage [as] essential to the promotion of the health, prosperity, and general welfare of the people.*” The Ordinance also establishes the Historic Review Commission (HRC) with the authority to undertake a survey and inventory of historic resources and to manage alterations and demolitions to landmarks and properties located within historic districts.

409 STATE ST. OLD CUSTOMS HOUSE



PLANNING EFFORTS

In addition to legislation, both state and local planning efforts can outline policies and initiatives that can help advance preservation efforts for cities, neighborhoods, downtowns, and cultural landscapes. The following section summarizes existing plans that guide and impact Erie's preservation planning program.

2018-2023 PENNSYLVANIA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

The NHPA of 1966 and the Pennsylvania History Code mandate that the Pennsylvania SHPO prepares a statewide historic preservation plan every five to 10 years to address a range of historic and cultural resource preservation issues in the state. The 2018-2023 Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Plan proposes a framework of four planning goals related to using the Statewide Plan as a resource for creating local preservation solutions, incorporating preservation as an essential element to maintaining vibrant and diverse communities, undertaking active local programs in preservation planning and education, and investing in the protection and celebration of historic places.

Among several action items recommended in the Statewide Plan with relevance to the preservation issues facing Erie, include:

- Encourage local preservation advocacy and planning groups to consider hazard planning as a natural and integral part of preservation.
- Support the preparation and use of local design guidelines for rehabilitation (consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards) allowing for new, innovative design that is contextually sympathetic to the surrounding historic districts.
- Provide owners of buildings individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places with information packets and technical assistance on maintenance and restoration best practices.
- Encourage grant-funded projects that develop youth-based local heritage education programs in a variety of settings, including museums, libraries, parks, historic sites, environmental centers, historical marker locations, etc.
- Identify and engage in "lighter, quicker, cheaper" projects to show immediate solutions and





impacts. Use these projects to support arguments for increased funding.

- Encourage public and non-profit property owners through incentives like grants or recognition to have preservation plans or historic structures reports prepared for their properties, addressing all historic and archaeological resources on the property, including archaeological sites, landscapes, and viewsheds.

2020 ACADEMY-MARVINTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

Carrying forward the healthy neighborhood planning goals and objectives from Erie Refocused, the 2020 Academy-Marvintown Neighborhood Plan outlines several high-priority implementation initiatives, including proactive code enforcement, lot clean up and debris removal, and the demolition of properties considered and rated as unsound by the City of Erie's Blighted Property Review Committee. The Neighborhood Plan also maps and identifies properties suitable for rehabilitation — principally along the 26th, 28th, and Ash Street corridors — and potentially funded through the City of Erie's HOME Investment Partnership (HOME) Program.

2020 EAST BAYFRONT NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

Similar to the Academy-Marvintown Neighborhood Plan, the plan for the East Bayfront neighborhood focuses on both blight removal, code enforcement, and targeted housing rehabilitation along with enhancing the Parade Street business corridor. A central proposal in the plan is a more extensive neighborhood park and trail network, made feasible through the demolition of distressed and blighted properties.

2018 FEDERAL HILL STRATEGIC PLAN FOR DEVELOPMENT

Prepared by the Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network in collaboration with the Independence Hill Collaborative of Erie, d.b.a. Federal Hill, the plan area includes the commercial district along Peach Street between Hill Road and West 22nd Street. The plan's purpose is to provide goals and strategies to revitalize the Federal Hill commercial district, which serves as a gateway to downtown Erie. The plan provides key recommendations for addressing streetscape improvements, investing in placemaking elements such as murals and gateways, the rehabilitation of building façades and storefronts, as well as signage and upper floor window treatments. The plan encourages partnerships to implement the short-, medium- and long-term strategies. Preparation of the plan was made possible through funding from the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority.

2017 ERIE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA CULTURAL HERITAGE PLAN

As an element of the Erie County Comprehensive Plan, the Cultural Heritage Plan seeks to ***“...ensure that the assets targeted for preservation in Erie County are being considered equitably and with an eye to the future”*** Heritage Plan, p. ES-I. The Cultural Heritage Plan describes key resources located in the City of Erie, such as its maritime and manufacturing complexes, and those related to the Erie Extension Canal and the coming of the railroads. The Plan also focuses its planning strategies on county-level efforts and partnerships in facilitating local community preservation action, including providing technical assistance for nominating historic districts and for assisting owners and developers in the rehabilitation and reuse of historic buildings. Other planning strategies include raising public awareness of preservation's benefits, promoting heritage tourism, and recognizing legacy businesses in the county.



ERIE REFOCUSED: 2016 CITY OF ERIE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND COMMUNITY DECISION-MAKING GUIDE

Underwritten with funds from a Federal Coastal Zone Management Grant provided by the Pennsylvania DEP, Erie Refocused serves as the overarching policy plan for the City of Erie regarding its long-term growth and regeneration. The plan emphasizes both historic preservation efforts for key anchor landmark buildings and targeted demolition strategies for blighted properties in several distinct Erie planning areas. Specifically, the planning area strategies include:

- **Downtown Erie**— establishing a National Register Historic District to take advantage of the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits for income-producing properties.
- **12th Street Corridor**— encouraging the reuse of historic industrial complexes as makerspaces or “innovation nodes” and “flex” spaces for research, commercial, or new manufacturing and technology uses.
- **West Bayfront**—facilitating homeowner property improvements through matching grants and other forms of financial assistance.
- **Academy-Marvintown, Arbor-Heights, Frontier, Greengarden, Glenwood, Mercyhurst, East Grandview, Fairmont-McClelland, and Lakeside**— implementing different dimensions of a “healthy neighborhoods” program entailing demolition of distressed properties, proactive code enforcement, and the rehabilitation of homes in stable clusters and blocks.
- **Little Italy, Pulaski-Lighthouse, and Trinity Park**—undertaking more aggressive efforts at stabilizing neighborhood blocks through the demolition of vacant buildings and consolidation of vacant lots while investing in key landmarks.

Erie Refocused also includes an inventory of Erie’s historic resources.



2016 EASTSIDE MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PLAN

Prepared and funded by the Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network and through additional funding from the United Way of Erie County, the purpose of the plan is to provide a framework for the long-term revitalization of the neighborhood. Key planning initiatives include the removal of blighted properties and the reuse of vacant lots, streetscape improvements, placemaking initiatives, improving affordable housing opportunities, business retention and expansion, improving parks and green space, and promoting neighborhood history and ethnic and cultural diversity.

2016 OUR WEST BAYFRONT COMMUNITY PLAN

Created through extensive community engagement by the Our West Bayfront organization, the purpose of the plan is to spur neighborhood revitalization and investment to create an attractive and sustainable community. The plan identifies ten focus areas within the neighborhood and provides implementation initiatives for each focus area within six overall strategies – Residential, Parks and Open Space, Infrastructure, Social/Programming, Local Business, and Public Art. Key initiatives – defined as short, medium, and long-term – encourage the rehabilitation of existing historic housing, storefronts, and commercial facades, as well as interpreting local heritage through placemaking efforts, including murals and markers.

2015 ERIE DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

Commissioned by the Erie Downtown Partnership, the Erie Downtown Master Plan seeks to make Downtown Erie a “...thriving center of civic, government, finance, arts and culture, history, retail, health care, education, entrepreneurship, dining and entertainment for the Erie region” (Master Plan, 2). Of its major planning goals, the Master Plan proposes new housing for the upper floors of existing downtown buildings, building and façade improvements in the Renaissance District between 8th and 12th Streets, and adaptive use efforts in the Union Square District. Such preservation efforts aid in adding new housing and diversifying the business and entertainment mix in the downtown district.



J4004 TRASK AVE



2012 HISTORIC LITTLE ITALY REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

Funded through a Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, as well as grants from the Erie Community Foundation and the Saint Vincent Health System, the Erie Redevelopment Authority, the City of Erie, and the Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network worked with the community to prepare a revitalization strategy that seeks to prioritize affordable housing strategies including rehabilitation and new construction, streetscape improvements, business development, and new commercial construction.



11 EAST 4TH ST. COACH HOUSE FOR CASHIERS HOUSE

PRESERVATION ADMINISTRATION

Legislation and planning policies establish the operating framework for local preservation, including, most importantly, the work and daily activities of Erie's Historic Review Commission, its supporting staff, and other departments and agencies of the City of Erie.

HISTORIC REVIEW COMMISSION

As noted previously, Article 7 of the City of Erie Zoning Ordinance, otherwise referred to as the Erie Historic Preservation Ordinance creates the Historic Review Commission, authorized to protect and manage the inventory of Erie's important historic and cultural resources. The HRC consists of seven Erie resident members, three at-large commissioners appointed by the Erie City Council, and two commissioners and two ex-officio members selected by the Mayor of Erie. In addition, three commissioners must have professional credentials in historic preservation or related fields, including architectural history, architecture, archaeology, or real estate, while others must have a demonstrated interest in historic preservation. The HRC's primary responsibilities include designating buildings and places as Local Landmarks or Local Historic Districts and reviewing Certificates of Appropriateness for building alterations and demolitions. Other important duties of the HRC include:

- Refer to municipal staff for the administrative review of certain COAs for routine property maintenance, masonry repointing, and in-kind replacement of certain building materials.
- Maintain a historic resources inventory.
- Implement a process for reviewing economic hardship claims in the event of a COA denial.
- Mandate penalties in the event of COA permit violations.
- Create and adopt design guidelines and standards for designated Local Historic Districts.
- Seek recommendations from community groups on decisions involving COA applications.
- Organize and produce educational programs that promote and describe the various benefits of historic preservation and Local Landmark and Historic District designations.
- Serve in an advisory capacity on preservation matters to City departments and agencies.

While the Historic Preservation Ordinance outlines the parameters of authority and responsibility for the HRC, the By-Laws and Rules of Procedure for the HRC, adopted in 2022, provide additional guidance on HRC operations, including the conduct of meetings, the review of COAs, and the process for nominating Local Landmarks and Districts.





DESIGN MANAGEMENT

A key motivation for local historic preservation programs is to encourage private sector investment and stewardship in historic properties. Alongside that aim is promoting the sensitive preservation and rehabilitation of properties to retain their integrity and historic appearances as landmarks and contributing buildings within historic districts. To achieve that aim, historic preservation commissions adopt several tools among them, a set of design guidelines for reviewing the architectural qualities of proposed alterations to historic buildings according to their appropriateness to the surrounding historic setting and context. Such guidelines also review the architectural and urban design attributes of new construction. Commissions may base their design guidelines on commonly accepted preservation standards described in the *U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. Other design management tools include special zoning overlays and sign ordinances.

The City of Erie and the Historic Review Commission have yet to create and adopt a set of design guidelines for its COA review process, although it is a high priority going forward. Such a set would likely apply to future designated Local Landmarks and properties within Local Historic Districts while serving more as an educational and advisory tool for National Register-listed buildings and districts not locally designated. An effective set of design guidelines would include information on building material maintenance and repair, preserving existing architectural features, and designing additions and new construction. In addition, design guidelines can also offer guidance on making buildings more energy efficient and sustainable.

While there are no municipally adopted historic preservation design guidelines, the *Bayfront Plan Development Plan*, prepared in 2017 for the Erie County Convention Authority, outlines design guidelines related to new development within the area, including building façade design, height, and form, as well as storefront level treatments, such as awnings, signs, and lighting. The Erie Downtown Partnership is currently creating a set of voluntary design guidelines for commercial buildings.

Commissioned by the Erie Downtown Partnership in 2022, the Downtown Erie Design Guidelines are an important educational tool for business and property owners, the Erie Downtown Partnership, and the City of Erie to encourage the preservation of downtown Erie's historic character. Based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, the design guidelines focus on the appropriate methods for maintaining and repairing historic buildings, including storefronts and exterior facades, as well as direction on exterior change, code compliance, accessibility, new construction, and demolition. Funding for the guidelines included a Keystone Historic Preservation Planning grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and a grant from the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority.

BUILDING CODES

Zoning and historic preservation ordinances can shape the physical dimensions, qualities, and authenticity of the built environment. Building codes, in turn, make buildings safe from fire and other hazards while helping to provide adequate ventilation, light, and basic facilities for heating and sanitation. Currently, the City of Erie administers various building codes under its Unified Construction Code, including the International Building Code and the International Existing Building Code 2018 editions. Both codes include provisions applicable to historic buildings, providing flexibility for preserving architectural and historical features while also meeting code requirements. In addition, the Erie Uniformed Construction Code also permits local building inspectors to waive compliance from certain code requirements if the property is a designated historic resource or if the preservation or rehabilitation of historic building features does not compromise health and safety.

INCENTIVE PROGRAMS AND BENEFITS

Incentive programs are a critical element to successful local preservation programs as they stimulate and make more feasible investments in historic properties. Incentives can provide direct financial benefits and technical assistance, or offer relief from local regulatory requirements, such as building and zoning codes. A truly effective incentive program can offer a range of assistance initiatives that meet local needs.

The following summarizes current incentives available to local property owners, developers, and investors:

TAX CREDIT PROGRAMS

State and federal tax credit programs offer a dollar-to-dollar deduction in income tax liability, making them effective tools in attracting investors for rehabilitation and adaptive projects designated as landmarks or located within historic districts.

20 Percent Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program—Authorized by the U.S. Congress under the Tax Reform Act of 1976 and administered by the National Park Service and the Pennsylvania SHPO, the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program (Federal HPTC) provides a 20 percent tax credit to owners and developers of income-producing buildings listed in the National Register of Historic Places or considered contributing buildings in a National Register or state or local historic district certified by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior.

333 STATE ST., MODERN TOOL COMPANY



350 PARADE ST., ERIE ARMORY



Low-Income Housing Tax Credit—Ratified by the U.S. Congress as part of the U.S. Tax Reform Act of 1986, the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (Federal LIHTC) provides a dollar-for-dollar tax credit for investors for attainable housing projects. The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency oversees the Federal LIHTC program as part of the annual allocation of credits from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Developers may use the program solely or in combination with the Federal HPTC for rehabilitating certified historic residential buildings or buildings adapted for housing.

New Markets Tax Credit Program—Established under the Community Renewal Tax Relief Act of 2000, the New Markets Tax Credit Program (Federal NMTC) offers a tax credit of 39 percent paid out over a seven-year period for job creation and business investment projects located in underresourced communities. The program can also invest in historic building rehabilitation as part of local community development initiatives. The U.S. Treasury allocates NMTCs to qualified community development entities serving as financial intermediaries to developers and investors.

Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program—Administered jointly by the Pennsylvania SHPO and the Department of Commerce and Economic Development (Pennsylvania DCED), the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program (Pennsylvania HPTC) offers a 25 percent credit not to exceed \$500,000 in any given year for qualified building rehabilitation expenditures approved by the SHPO. Only \$5 million in tax credits are available from the State of Pennsylvania on a yearly basis.

Neighborhood Assistance Program Enterprise Zone Tax Credit—Like the Pennsylvania HPTC Program, the Neighborhood Assistance Program Enterprise Zone Tax Credit, managed by Pennsylvania DCED provides a tax credit of up to 25 percent of state income taxes for rehabilitating buildings located in the Erie Enterprise Zone, bounded by Pittsburgh Avenue on the west, Water Street to the east, and the bayfront north to East 24th Street on the south. The maximum tax credit per project is \$500,000.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION TAX CREDITS

HAS LEVERAGED

\$117,633,687

IN BUILDING
REHABILITATION
PROJECTS IN

ERIE

SINCE 1984

500 BLOCK STATE STREET, WEST PARK PLACE NR DISTRICT



TAX ABATEMENT PROGRAMS

Unlike tax credits programs that reduce income tax liability, property tax abatements decrease the amount of property taxes owed for a specified period of time.

Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance —Created in partnership between the City of Erie, the Erie Public Schools, and other Erie County taxing districts, the Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance Program (LERTA) offers a ten-year abatement of any increases in future taxes due to the rehabilitation of commercial, industrial, and residential properties in Erie. Approved plans and a building permit must accompany an application to the LERA program.

Low-Income Housing Tax Credit—Ratified by the U.S. Congress as part of the U.S. Tax Reform Act of 1986, the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (Federal LIHTC) provides a dollar-for-dollar tax credit for investors for attainable housing projects. The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency oversees the Federal LIHTC program as part of the annual allocation of credits from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Developers may use the program solely or in combination with the Federal HPTC for rehabilitating certified historic residential buildings or buildings adapted for housing.

GRANTS AND LOAN PROGRAMS

Grants help to defray a portion of building rehabilitation expenses, sometimes offered on a matching or rebate basis while low or no-interest loans require repayment to the loan originator, agency, or institution.

City of Erie Enterprise Development Zone Revolving Loan Fund — Although principally focused on projects related to business and industrial expansion projects, including the purchase of machinery and equipment, applicants may use loan proceeds for building acquisition and rehabilitation initiatives. The Loan Fund fulfills a gap financing role between bank financing and a company's or investor's existing equity of up to 50 percent of the total project cost with a maximum of \$500,000.

Erie County Renaissance Block Grant Program — The matching grant program, funded and administered by the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority, focuses on reversing blight and improving deteriorated residential and mixed-use properties in Erie County. Local governments, municipal authorities, and non-profit organizations are eligible to apply for up to \$100,000 for distribution to local property owners up to \$5,000. Eligible activities include exterior rehabilitation or replacement of doors, windows, soffits, gutters, downspouts, porches, siding, chimneys, lighting, sidewalks, and landscaping. Municipal streetscape improvements are also eligible.



456 KAHKWA BLVD



426 EAST 6TH ST



Mission Main Street Grant Program — Focused on the revitalization of commercial Main Street corridors, the matching grant program provides annual planning grants up to \$10,000, including planning studies, design, and engineering services, and three-year implementation grants up to \$250,000, including marketing and social media, storefront and façade improvements, streetscape improvements, development of design guidelines, and special events. Eligible grant recipients include non-profit organizations, municipal authorities, and local governments. The Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority funds and administers the program.

Anchor Building Grant Program — The matching grant program provides funding to local governments, municipal authorities, and non-profit organizations up to \$100,000, with a minimum required application of \$25,000, to rehabilitate and reuse existing vacant or underutilized historic buildings to strengthen the tax base and serve as a catalyst for future commercial investment. The Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority funds and administers the program.

Community Development Block Grant Housing Rehabilitation Program — Funded through Erie County's Federal Community Development Block Grant allocation and managed by the Erie Redevelopment Authority, the Housing Rehabilitation Program focuses on repairing and rehabilitating residential dwellings for health and safety, weatherization, and mechanical issues concerning plumbing, electrical, and other structural systems.

Historic Building Improvement Grant Program—Funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP Act) and managed by the Erie Redevelopment Authority in partnership with the Historic Review Commission, the Historic Building Improvement Grant Program provides grants up to \$15,000 with a ten percent cash match for exterior improvements to historic commercial and residential buildings. While this program will end in 2026 with the expenditure of all ARP Act funding, all projects funded by the grant must be under contract by December 31, 2024

Keystone Historic Preservation Construction Grants— The Pennsylvania SHPO manages the Keystone Historic Preservation Construction Grant Program to underwrite preservation-related construction activities for National Register-listed or eligible property sponsored by local governments and non-profit organizations. Grants amounts range from \$5,000 to \$100,000 on a 50 to 50 matching basis.

National Park Service Grants— The National Park Service administers several grant programs related to disaster recovery, underrepresented communities, and brick-and-mortar projects. Such programs received their funding from the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF), first created by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1996, and underwritten by federal oil and gas lease revenues.

REGULATORY PROGRAMS

While there are avenues to providing regulatory relief through the Erie Construction Code, the City of Erie does not have a formalized program of regulatory incentives to facilitate preservation and adaptive use.

OTHER INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

In addition to grants, loan programs, and tax credits, a preservation easement is a legal agreement between a property owner and an easement-holding organization assigning the right to review exterior façade changes and alterations to that organization. In return, the property owner receives a one-time charitable federal income tax deduction equal to the appraised value of the easement.

AGENCIES, COMMISSIONS, AND PRESERVATION PARTNERS

The Historic Review Commission has the vested responsibility for managing the municipal historic preservation program. However, other City of Erie departments, volunteer commissions, and boards, along with private and non-profit agencies and organizations, also serve important roles in facilitating preservation efforts. The following section describes key preservation partners.

MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES, BOARDS, COMMISSIONS

Blighted Properties Review Committee— Established in 2006, the Blighted Properties Review Committee reviews the condition of derelict, vacant, or abandoned properties for rehabilitation or for disposition, as prescribed by state law, to the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Erie. The Committee consists of five members appointed by the Mayor of Erie.

Building Code Board of Appeals—Comprising nine members and two alternates appointed by the Erie City Council, the Building Code of Appeals reviews and conducts hearings related to appeals and time extension requests for building code violations.

13 WEST 10TH ST. STRAND THEATER (ERIE PLAYHOUSE), 1947



City Planning Commission— Erie’s City Planning Commission prepares and adopts urban plans for Erie’s long-term revitalization as well as zoning and land use regulatory tools to ensure the city’s proper and efficient development and enhancement. It also holds public hearings for planned developments, rezonings, and special uses. The Planning Commission also reviews HRC recommendations for establishing Local Historic Districts under the Historic Preservation Ordinance zoning overlay provision.

Design Review Committee—Consisting of five members, the Design Review Committee, reviews the design of new residential, commercial, and recreational uses in addition to alterations to existing historic buildings located within the Waterfront Commercial District.

Erie Land Bank—Established in 2016, the Erie Land Bank acquires, manages, and sells, in a streamlined, expedited process, vacant or tax-delinquent properties located within the City of Erie. A five-member board of directors appointed by the Mayor of Erie governs the Land Bank’s operations.

Housing Authority of the City of Erie— First created in 1938, the Erie Housing Authority maintains and provides attainable housing units, rental assistance, and other social services for low to moderate-income households, seniors, and people with disabilities. The Authority has a five-member board of directors appointed by the Mayor of Erie.

Redevelopment Authority of the City of Erie— The Redevelopment Authority manages several programs related to housing rehabilitation, lead hazard control, and blight mitigation, funded by CDBG monies and other sources. The Authority has a five-member mayor-appointed board of directors.

Visit Erie— Formerly known as the Erie Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, Visit Erie is the official tourism entity for Erie County. In addition to its marketing and promotion programs, such as publishing a regular visitors guide and maintaining its digital trip planner, Visit Erie also operates and staffs three visitor centers and the Erie Sports Commission, charged with attracting and supporting sporting events in Erie.

Urban Forest Committee— Created in 2005, the seven-member Urban Forest Committee’s key responsibility is to maintain and protect trees located on public streets and property within Erie.





MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENTS

Code Enforcement Department—The Code Enforcement Department ensures that property owners and businesses comply with the Erie Construction Code, the Zoning Ordinance, signage provisions, and other relevant regulations.

Planning and Neighborhood Resources Department—The Planning and Neighborhood Resources Department oversees the implementation of the Erie Refocused Comprehensive Plan, administers the municipal Zoning Ordinance and its provisions, and staffs and supports the Planning and Historic Review Commissions and other City of Erie entities.

Department of Public Works—Among its responsibilities, the Public Works operates and maintains public infrastructure systems and plans and implements various capital improvements.

PRESERVATION PARTNERS

Erie Downtown Development Corporation—A private, non-profit real estate and business development entity, the Downtown Development Corporation focuses on facilitating catalytic investments in downtown Erie, including adaptive use and building rehabilitation projects.

Erie Downtown Partnership—Created in 2004, the Erie Downtown Partnership, governed by an 11-member board of directors, serves as an independent downtown revitalization organization with programs focused on business promotions and development, advocacy, and downtown design and placemaking enhancements.

Our West Bayfront — Our West Bayfront formed in 2014 to promote revitalization and community pride in Erie's West Bayfront neighborhoods. The focus of the organization, governed by a 14-member board, includes improving housing conditions and community spaces, fostering partnerships, empowering residents, and promoting economic development opportunities to create jobs for neighborhood residents.

Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network — Established by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania in 2000, the organization initially focused on providing services, advocacy, and promoting neighborhood revitalization in the Little Italy neighborhood, expanding in 2014 to serve all of Erie's neighborhoods.



Bayfront East Side Task Force — Organized in 1978 to oversee the restoration of the historic Federal Row House development, now a National Register historic district, the organization was inactive until its reorganization in 2000. Known as B.E.S.T., the organization's 15-member board focuses on creating affordable housing opportunities for homeowners and renters, commercial revitalization, and neighborhood beautification within the area from Front to East 6th Streets between Holland Street and East Bayfront Parkway.

Hagen History Center — Formerly known as the Erie County Historical Society, the Hagen History Center, located in a four-building campus within the West Sixth Street National Register Historic District and the Gannon University campus, maintains archival collections and sponsors various educational programming on Erie County history. The Center also offers facility rentals, organizes exhibits, and sponsors books, a speakers series, and community events.

Erie Maritime Museum and U. S. Brig Niagara — Owned and operated by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the museum opened in 1998 in the former Pennsylvania Electric Station, built in 1917. The museum showcases Erie's significant maritime heritage including the 1990 reconstruction of the U. S. Brig Niagara located adjacent to the museum in Presque Isle Bay.

Heritage Room of the Raymond M. Blasco, M.D. Memorial Library — The Heritage Room houses a significant collection of local and regional history as well as numerous genealogical resources, including family histories, obituaries, and local high school yearbooks.

Preservation Erie — Preservation Erie is a private, non-profit preservation advocacy organization serving to educate Erie County stakeholders on historic preservation's various contributions to community quality of life. The organization's advocacy efforts have led to the establishment of the City of Erie's historic preservation program, including the adoption of the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Preservation Pennsylvania — Preservation Pennsylvania serves as the only statewide non-profit preservation advocacy organization, established by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1982 as the Preservation Fund of Pennsylvania. The organization serves its members through a variety of educational and advocacy programs including the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Awards, Pennsylvania At Risk, webinars and workshops, publications, access to preservation and funding resources, and advocacy with state legislators.

Pennsylvania Route 6 Alliance — Representing local governments, chambers of commerce, local visitors' bureaus, and property owners within the 11-county Pennsylvania Route 6 Heritage Corridor, including all of Erie County, the Alliance promotes marketing, community development,

planning, and preservation efforts through its 2016 Management Action Plan. Established in 2003, the Alliance encourages efforts to preserve and promote the area's historic and cultural heritage through education, recreation, culture, economic development, and tourism.

Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA-SHPO), Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission — The PA-SHPO, housed within the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, administers the state's historic preservation programs including state and federal grants and tax credits, Certified Local Governments, the National Register of Historic Places, historic resource surveys, Community Preservation programs, historical markers, education and outreach, and environmental review of projects utilizing state or federal funding. The PA-SHPO also hosts Pennsylvania's State Historical and Archaeological Resource Exchange (PA-SHARE), a GIS-based online database of the state's historic and cultural resources.

National Scenic Byway Foundation — The mission of the national non-profit foundation is to promote, strengthen, and sustain national byways through education, advocacy, and providing a connection for local and regional partners. The Great Lakes Seaway Trail National Scenic Byway, which traverses the shore of Lake Erie, the Niagara River, Lake Ontario, and the St. Lawrence River in New York and Pennsylvania, includes a variety of important environmental, historic, and cultural resources, including those within the City of Erie.

Historic Route 20 Association — The non-profit organization, founded in 2012, promotes the preservation and continued use of the highway through education and outreach highlighting the local communities, sites of interest, and historic and cultural heritage along U. S. Route 20, considered the longest highway in the country since its creation in 1926. In Erie, U. S. Route 20 runs along 26th Street and Buffalo Road.

Arts and Culture Entities—There are a number of public agencies and private organizations in Erie, such as the Performing Artists Collective Alliance (PACA), that could participate in a variety of cultural preservation activities.





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