



Upper West Arts Center

Project Update

February, 2010

Project Goal: To create a multi-use community based arts center in the historically significant and architecturally beautiful former Richmond Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church at Richmond Avenue and West Ferry Street. Upper West Arts Center will feature an acoustically perfect 600 seat concert hall, 99 seat drama theatre, gallery and exhibit hall, community meeting room, rehearsal halls, classrooms, offices, and a 2,300 pipe grand organ. It will highlight the talents of Western New York artists and arts organizations, provide educational programming for children and adults, promote neighborhood stabilization and serve the regional goals of cultural tourism and economic development.

Property purchased by Alleyway Theatre Incorporated: October, 1998.
Property listed on The National Register Of Historic Places: February, 2009.

Total Project Budget: \$2.4 million

Total Raised/Invested To Date: \$1.5 million

Renovations Accomplished To Date: installation of new plumbing, new electrical and heating systems, new doors and windows, new steel staircases, new sidewalks and curbs, new elevator, new fire alarm and security systems and interior and exterior carpentry and masonry repairs. Additionally, many stain glass windows have been fully restored. The project architect is Gerald L. Strickland, Jr., Partner, Hamilton Houston Lownie Architects LLC.

Looking Ahead: A Grant from New York State Environmental Protection Fund will support the replacement of the roof and gutter system. The next phase of work will be the development of final designs and planning leading to the installation of fire prevention systems, masonry repairs, and completion of all interior and exterior finishes to make the building ready to serve the community.

Major Funding Sources: The Margaret L. Wendt Foundation, The Elster Foundation, The Spaulding Foundation, The Fatta Foundation, The Erwin H. Johnson Memorial Fund, Inc., County Of Erie Public Benefit Grant, M&T Bank, NYS Community Enhancement Facilities Program, NYS Strategic Investment Program, NYS Council On The Arts Capital Program and Technical Support Awards, Erie County Legislative Grants, and NYS Environmental Protection Fund.

Expressions Of Support have come from numerous arts organizations as well as, Graycliff Conservancy Inc., Buffalo Olmsted Conservancy, Richmond Neighborhood Community Association, Auburn Crossroads Block Club, The New Millennium Group and hundreds of individuals throughout Western New York. The project has been endorsed by a unanimous resolution of the Buffalo Common Council and numerous area political and business leaders. Executive Director Neal Radice was the 2001 winner of the Preservation Coalition of Erie County's Civic Leadership Award for his role in developing the Upper West Arts Center project.