



THE PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

BUFFALO STATE UNIVERSITY



152 Lincoln Parkway





The President's House

Built in 1916, the house at 152 Lincoln Parkway was designed in 1912 by the Buffalo architectural firm of Lansing, Bley & Lyman. A number of examples of their work remain as Buffalo landmarks, including the City of Buffalo Police and Fire Headquarters at the Michael J. Dillon U.S. Courthouse Building at


Niagara Square, the chapel of the former Saint Joseph's Cathedral complex at Delaware Avenue and West Utica Street, the Buffalo Tennis and Squash Club, the Saturn Club, the Country Club of Buffalo, and many of the original buildings on the Main Street Campus of Canisius College. Lansing, Bley & Lyman



THE PRESIDENT'S HOUSE IS BUILT IN THE NEOCLASSICAL
STYLE POPULAR AT THE TURN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

also designed private homes in Derby, Lake View, Wanakah, Eggertsville, and Buffalo, as well as the apartment tower at 800 West Ferry Street.

The house is built in the neoclassical style popular at the turn of the twentieth century, when such dignified architecture was identified with the City

Beautiful Movement. The architects displayed their sophisticated knowledge of classical, Renaissance, and baroque design in handsome round-arched windows, elegant Tuscan columns, sturdy bracketed cornices, and many fine moldings and decorative features. 





The Original Residents

The house continues to reflect the social position of the original residents: Ralph Hochstetter, his sister Bertha, and Bertha's husband, Dr. Henry Clark Buswell. The family was prominent in Buffalo and interacted with a world of industrial leaders. The original neighbors included Mr. and Mrs.

Spencer Kellogg Jr., who lived next door at 128, and whose wealth was derived from the manufacture of linseed oil. Mr. and Mrs. Edward H. Webster lived on the other side at 164. Mr. Webster was the general manager of Webster Citizens Ice Company. The Larkin family, owners of the Larkin Soap Company (for whom



Frank Lloyd Wright designed the famous administration building), owned an enormous section of property on Lincoln Parkway at Forest Avenue, on which they built four grand houses, one of which remains.

Born in Buffalo in 1869, Ralph Hochstetter was a pioneering oil producer who resided in a number of

“oil cities” around the turn of the century, including Marietta, Ohio, and Cushing, Oklahoma. After his return to Buffalo, he became president of Cliff Petroleum Company, a position he held until his death in 1955. Mr. Hochstetter was active in Buffalo society and by 1920, held memberships in the Acacia Club,



BUILT IN 1916, THE HOUSE AT 152 LINCOLN PARKWAY WAS DESIGNED IN 1912 BY THE BUFFALO ARCHITECTURAL FIRM OF LANSING, BLEY & LYMAN



Buffalo Club, Chamber of Commerce, and Ellicott Club. Mr. Hochstetter maintained a downtown office in the Fidelity Building, and before the house on Lincoln Parkway was built, he lived on Jersey Street with business partner David Gunsburg. Mr. Hochstetter and Mr. Gunsburg were partners in banking as well as in the oil business. Mr. Gunsburg married Mr. Hochstetter's sister, Bertha, sometime in the early 1910s. He was never to live in the house on Lincoln Parkway, however, as he fell ill while the mansion was being built and died on October 29, 1915. Bertha then married Dr. Henry Clark Buswell, who had tended her husband during his illness.

Dr. Buswell, a widower, was an eminent Buffalo physician and one of the nation's foremost diagnosticians. Before his marriage to Bertha, he had lived at 76 Lincoln Parkway. After their marriage in 1916, the new Dr. and Mrs. Buswell joined Ralph Hochstetter as residents in the newly completed house at 152 Lincoln Parkway.

Bertha Buswell led a prominent social life in her own right. As Mrs. David Gunsburg, she had become a member of the Country Club of Buffalo and the Twentieth Century Club. Through her marriage to Dr. Buswell, she added memberships at the Niagara Falls Country Club, the Wanakah Country Club, and the Buffalo Club. She used these associations to excellent advantage.

Throughout her adult life, Bertha was well known as a collector of art, linens, lace, china, glass, and silver. When she died, she bequeathed her paintings, carvings, tapestries, porcelains, and many other objects to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City and the Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester. Some of these are still maintained in the museum collections. Her bequest to the Memorial of seventeenth-century Dutch, Flemish, and French works and heraldic glass are especially noteworthy. She had her portrait painted by Lauth,




grandson of George Sand; the painting was later bequeathed to the University of Rochester. As the executor of her estate, her brother, Ralph, retained Parke-Bernet (precursor to Sotheby's) in New York City to auction the rest of her possessions.

The inventory gives us an idea of the luxury afforded by the Hochstetter oil money and the estates of David Gunsberg and Henry Clark Buswell. The Hochstetter-Buswell family lived a luxurious life in their Lincoln Parkway home. They had no children, and their rather demanding needs were met by a minimum of 12 live-in servants, who resided in both the main residence and the carriage house. Additional help was hired seasonally and as entertaining demanded. The total value of Bertha's estate at the time of her death was \$3.2 million, and the estate of her brother, Ralph, who never married, was valued at \$1.5 million at the time of his death.

Dr. Henry Clark Buswell died on March 4, 1940, in Rochester, New York. Mrs. Buswell died in Buffalo on

July 30 of the following year. Ralph Hochstetter died at 152 Lincoln Parkway on May 27, 1955. All three are interred at Forest Lawn Cemetery (Section 23, Lot 17) in a private mausoleum.

With no direct heirs, a large part of the Hochstetter estate went toward research fellowships for the medical schools at the University of Buffalo and the University of Rochester. To settle the estate, the universities sold the home at 152 Lincoln Parkway. It was purchased in 1957 by Raymond D. Stevens, then-vice president of Pierce & Stevens Chemical, and later chairman of the board of Pratt & Lambert paint company. Mr. and Mrs. Stevens raised their family here and added the in-ground pool. They also sold the original greenhouse, which stood against the garden wall adjacent to the carriage house. The structure was dismantled and reconstructed at a site in Connecticut. 





Buffalo State University

In 1963, the State University of New York purchased the home for \$60,000 from the Stevens family. Previous to this, the university presidents had lived in “Campus House,” a relatively small house built on campus next to Rockwell Hall in 1928 as one of the five original buildings. Over the years, Campus House had become less and less appropriate for

the extensive social responsibilities of the university president. Dr. Paul G. Bulger, who had been Buffalo State College president since 1959, began a search for a new residence—larger, but still close to the campus. The home on Lincoln Parkway was officially dedicated in 1964, and the Bulgers took residence in 1965.

Under the supervision of Dr. Bulger and his wife,



Marion, architect Otto J. Teegan adapted the residence to the needs of the university. Because the building was owned by the state of New York, all purchases and work required three bids, which often doubled and tripled the completion time. After their marriage, the Bulger’s daughter, Cindy, and her husband made their first home in the newly remodeled

apartment over the carriage house garage. Until 2018, the apartment was used to house overnight guests of the university. On Christmas Day 1965, during the first year of their residence at 152 Lincoln Parkway, President Bulger placed a plaque in the solarium, commemorating his wife’s contribution to the renovation and decoration. After his death in the winter of



IN 1963, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK PURCHASED THE HOME FOR \$60,000 FROM THE STEVENS FAMILY



2000, then-university president Muriel Howard placed a matching plaque in the room, memorializing President Bulger.

In 1967, Dr. E. K. Fretwell Jr. became the president of Buffalo State College and resided in the home with his wife, Dorrie, until 1978. Here the couple raised four children: Barbara, Peggy, Jim, and Katie.


In 1979, Dr. D. Bruce Johnstone and his wife, Gail, moved into the house with their son, Duncan, and daughter, Cameron. During this time, the home had a moment of fame when it was chosen to be part of a made-for-TV movie, *Vamping*, starring Patrick Duffy.

In 1989, Dr. F. C. Richardson and his wife, Bernice, took occupancy of the home. Dr. Richardson was the first African American president of the university.

Another historic moment for the university and the home occurred in 1996, when Dr. Muriel A. Howard,

the first female president, took residence. Dr. Howard, who was Muriel Moore at the time, was also the first single person to reside in the house as president of the university. On July 3, 1999, she married Albert R. Howard, and the couple lived in the house until 2009, when Dr. Howard stepped down as president to lead a national organization.

Dr. Aaron Podolefsky, the eighth president of the university, occupied the home with his wife, Ronnie, from 2010 until his death in 2013. The current president, Dr. Katherine Conway-Turner, has resided in the home with her husband, Dr. Alvin Turner, since 2014.

The home continues to serve as a stately gathering place for university meetings and celebrations. At the beginning of each fall semester, for instance, the president's residence serves as the site of a reception for new faculty and staff members as well as a pool party for student leaders. 





The Junior League Decorators' Show House 1997

The home was entirely redecorated during the winter of 1997, when it was chosen to be the Junior League of Buffalo's Decorators' Show House '97. Buffalo-area interior designers were selected to redecorate the various rooms of the house, and thousands of visitors paid an admission fee to view the result. Proceeds from the biennial event go to charity. The President's House was the first publicly owned building ever chosen by the Junior League of Buffalo as a Decorators' Show House. Fourteen of the participating decorators were Buffalo State University alumni.

Structural changes at the time of the Show House event included the addition of a first-floor powder room in a space that had originally served as a servants' dining room, but had been used as a coatroom since 1965. The downstairs kitchen was substantially remodeled with a mind to improving the facility to meet the university's extensive catering needs.

In addition, white wall-to-wall carpeting was removed from the first floor, and the hardwood floors were restored. The Show House wall treatments, which replaced an entirely white interior, remain, as do the first-floor window treatments, ceiling painting, and selected furnishings.





The Architecture

The house, which has eight bedrooms and nine bathrooms, tells the story of a way of life. The front portion of the house is intended to impress. This section comprises an imposing baroque main entrance on the north, a large terrace with Tuscan columns facing the street to the east, and a brass solarium beneath a balcony with a balustrade on the south.

This block includes the main hall, living room, dining room, library, solarium, front terrace, upstairs family bedrooms and living areas, and the third-floor ballroom. Every detail of the design demonstrates the order, balance, and symmetry characteristic of the neoclassical style.



THE HOUSE, WHICH HAS EIGHT BEDROOMS AND NINE BATHROOMS, TELLS THE STORY OF A WAY OF LIFE

The smaller back portion of the house is more utilitarian. Indeed, from the street, this block is entirely hidden. It includes the breakfast room, kitchen, back bedrooms, and servants' quarters.

In an era when servants were meant to work like “invisible hands,” the home was designed to enable them to complete their chores without disturbing

their employers. A separate “servants’ path” includes separate entrances to the house through the kitchen and a side hall, as well as a separate back stairway.

An elevator, marked in the original blueprint as a “trunk lift,” allows heavy objects to be moved from the cellar to the third floor effortlessly and quietly.

The fine wood used in the main areas of the home





contrasts the humble maple used in the kitchen and servants' areas; doors separating servants' areas from the main house are maple on one side and walnut on the other; the knobs of each door are simple molded glass on the servants' side and elegant brass on the other. Throughout the house, servant call buttons remain from an electric-bell system.

THE MAIN ENTRY HALL

Originally, the main entry hall was richly furnished, paneled in dark walnut, and extended back to the solarium. The dark wood paneling promoted a feeling of coolness in the summertime, but one of warmth during winter. The Stevens family sought to brighten both the foyer and the living room by painting the walls white. They also created the cozy paneled library, adjacent to the solarium, by dividing the foyer into two rooms, and

by using the walnut bookcases that formerly lined the west living-room wall. Behind the shelving, the library retains its unpainted walnut-paneled walls. The Russian circular table of Circassian walnut, the amethyst and gray crystal pendant chandelier, and the starry gold-leaf ceiling now in the hall were added at the time of the Show House.

THE LIVING ROOM

In the living room, French doors spaced along the 30-foot east wall lead to a large front terrace. The easy movement between indoors and outdoors provides the first floor of the house with excellent air circulation, even without air conditioning. The north end of the room is dominated by a large fireplace with a mantel nearly six feet tall. This fireplace, like the one in the dining room, reflects an early twentieth-century fantasy



among wealthy Americans for the noble grandeur of English country homes built 400 years earlier.

THE FORMAL DINING ROOM

The formal dining room is distinguished by flitch-cut red gumwood paneling and a handcrafted mahogany mantelpiece. The dining table was designed for this room. The furniture in this room as well as the ceiling painting, which duplicates the rug pattern, were added at the time of the Show House. The furnishings were a gift of Albert Abgott (class of '47) and his family.

THE BREAKFAST ROOM

The breakfast room, with ceramic-tile floor and marble fountain, is lined with a wall of windows. The room is designed to provide a feeling of casual elegance and closeness to the outdoors. The subject of the marble

fountain in this room, which depicts two children wrestling in water, was a mystery for many years. The aquatic motif of the sculpture, which features shells and sea horses, suggests, however, that the scene was taken from Charles Kingsley's 1863 children's classic, *The Water Babies*, in which Tom, a poor, young chimney sweep, falls into the water and seems to die but is instead taken by fairies, who forcibly wash him and transform him into a water baby. The child struggling at the bottom of the scene, indeed, has a fish tail for a body. In Victorian literature, metamorphosis is a popular metaphor or displacement for death. After his adventures under water, Tom becomes a man, ready to take his place in the world as "a great man of science, [who] can plan railroads, and steam-engines, and electric telegraphs, and rifled guns"—a fitting theme for the home of a wealthy industrialist like Ralph Hochstetter.





THE SOLARIUM

The solarium, with its brass-framed windows, was designed by the Tiffany Studio in New York and is surely one of the most charming features of the house. The brass window frames echo the lines of grand doorways, and once again, this room facilitates a feeling of closeness with the outdoors. Originally, the solarium, with its large windows and shimmering brass, provided a startling brightness in contrast to the dark walnut of the downstairs rooms. This effect has been softened, somewhat, by the painting of the original downstairs paneling.

The brass fountain in the center of the room is original to the house. It had been sold as part of the Hochstetter estate but was returned as a gift to Marion Bulger from Mrs. Robert Adam Coulson, who lived on Penhurst Park. Mrs. Coulson was a member of the Adam family of Adam, Meldrum & Anderson department-store

fame. Mrs. Bulger subsequently made a gift of the fountain to the Buffalo State Foundation.

THE KITCHEN

The kitchen is large enough to handle food preparation for more than 100 dinner guests. This room underwent radical transformation for the Show House event. These renovations were a gift of Karen (class of '69) and Richard Penfold. A row of built-in cabinetry was removed to open a larger work area, and institutional-quality kitchen equipment was installed. The remaining maple cabinetry and doors, here and in the adjacent butler's pantry, were painted white.

THE SECOND FLOOR

The private living space on the second floor includes a second kitchen, a master bedroom, a family living room, a private office, and two additional bedrooms.



The upstairs kitchen, installed by the Bulgers in a space that formerly served as a sitting room, was remodeled between Presidents Johnstone and Richardson. It has its own fireplace. The Richardsons had the original master-bathroom fixtures replaced with modern ones.


The third floor contains servants' quarters in the rear and a ballroom with a translucent ceiling in the front of the house. Dr. Bulger used the ballroom for holiday parties for the children and for important meetings.

THE BASEMENT

The basement of the house provides fascinating insight into daily life here during its early years. The large mechanical room houses a huge coal chute, as

well as one of the two original coal furnaces, which has been converted to gas. The other was replaced by a modern furnace.

In addition to several basement storage rooms, including a fruit cellar, there is a modernized laundry room in which a huge early clothes dryer still remains. Clothes were placed on large steel racks and slid between radiator panels to be dried. The basement also houses a wine cellar, where marks from bottles still dot the walls. This room is equipped with a heavy locking steel door. An often-told but apocryphal story has it that the door was installed during Prohibition.

Actually, it is typical in grand houses to keep wine secure from the household staff. A locking safe in the first-floor kitchen, which still remains, similarly secured Mrs. Buswell's silver. 





The Grounds

Situated on a generous 150-foot-wide 1.1-acre lot, the property is fronted by a short brick wall along Lincoln Parkway, and the sloping 90-foot backyard extends to Penhurst Park. Of the original landscaping, the very large and perfectly shaped European copper beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) in the

front yard, planted in 1912, is an extraordinary specimen; the tree is not native to the Americas and is the finest example of European copper beech in this region. The very large specimens of Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum*) at the back south side of the house date from the early 1920s, and the Canadian



hemlock trees surrounding the solarium were planted in the late 1950s.

At the time of the Junior League event, the gardens surrounding the house were redesigned, and a perennial cutting garden was planted in the walled garden (formerly the greenhouse). Several years later,

the greenhouse foundation was replaced with a patio.

The Show House gardens were further enhanced by the university's own Facilities Planning Department with the participation of Buffalo Public Schools students from the horticulture program at McKinley High School. 



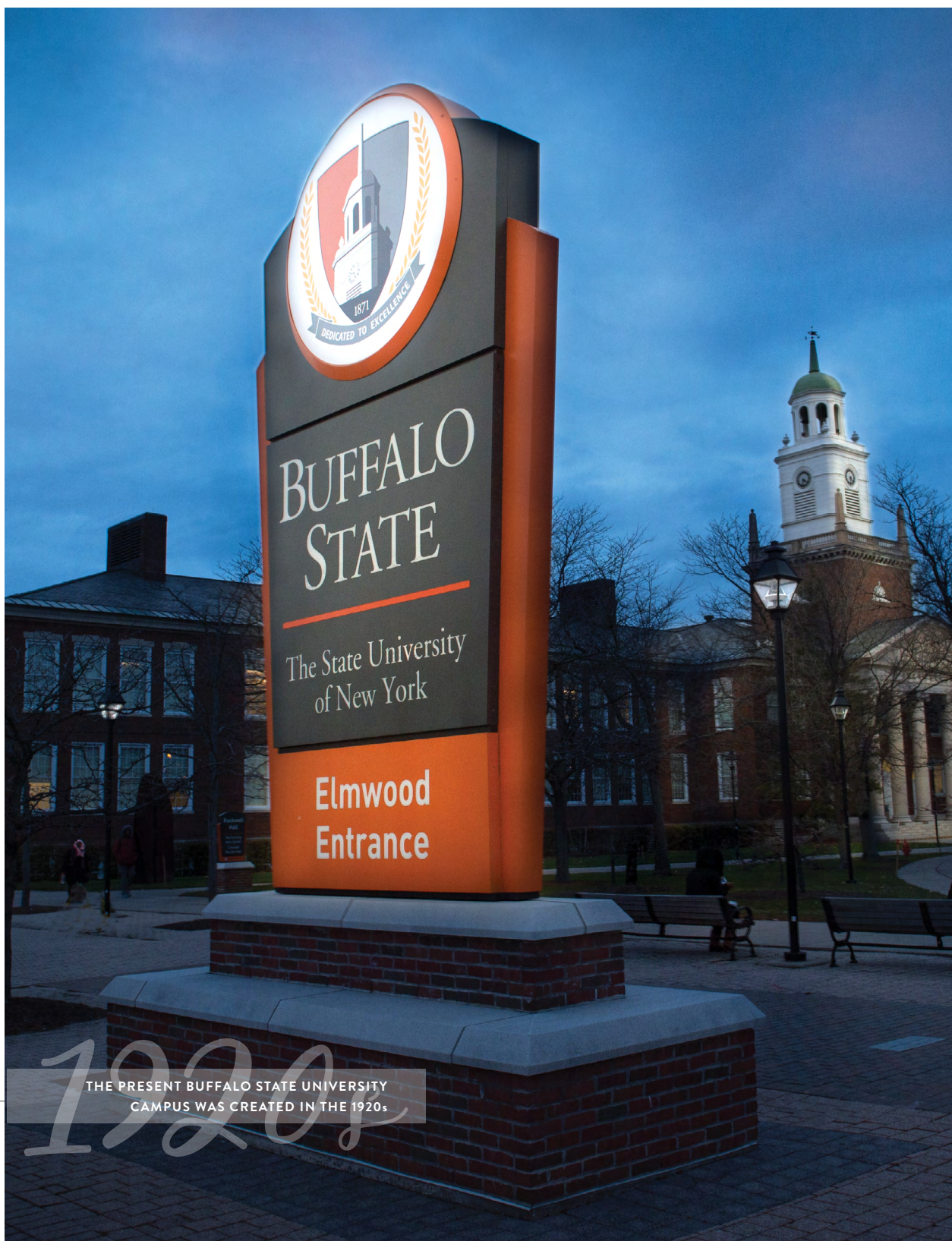
SITUATED ON A GENEROUS 150-FOOT-WIDE 1.1-ACRE LOT, THE PROPERTY IS FRONTED BY A SHORT BRICK WALL ALONG LINCOLN PARKWAY



The Neighborhood


The present Buffalo State University campus was created in the 1920s, when the school outgrew its 1914 building on Normal Avenue (the present site of Grover Cleveland High School). At its new home, the university occupied farmland that had belonged to the Buffalo Psychiatric Center,

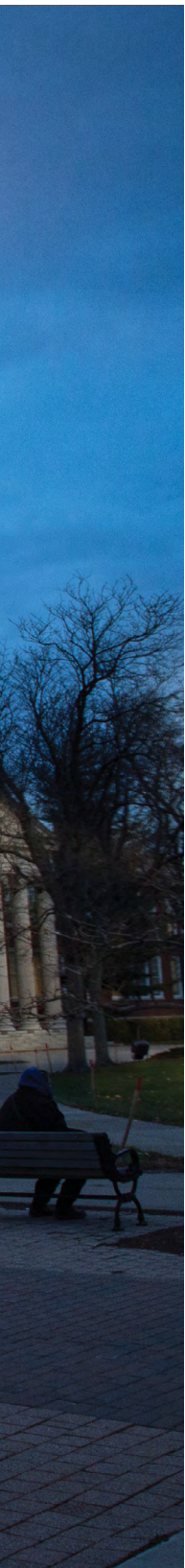
an institution created in the 1870s by the state of New York. The farm comprised the rear portion of the grounds that were planned by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux to surround the hospital buildings designed by a young H. H. Richardson. (These structures are now designated a National



THE PRESENT BUFFALO STATE UNIVERSITY
CAMPUS WAS CREATED IN THE 1920s

Historic Landmark.) The new location placed the university in proximity to the Albright-Knox Art Gallery and the Buffalo History Museum. This grouping has led some to call the district “Athens on the Scajaquada.” By the 1920s, grand residential streets existed east of the campus, with more modest neighborhoods to the

south and west. Today, with the development of commerce along Elmwood Avenue, the university area is a diverse and vital urban neighborhood. 





The Buffalo Park and Parkway System

Buffalo was the first American city to create a system of public parks connected by wide, tree-lined residential streets called parkways. Designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, the foremost landscape architects of the nineteenth century, the Buffalo park and parkway system, including Lincoln Parkway, has long been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Olmsted, who had the greater hand in the work here, regarded Buffalo as “the best-planned city, as to its streets, public places, and grounds, in the United States.” He and Vaux had made their fame in 1857 with the design for New York City’s Central Park. Their plan for Buffalo was first conceived in 1868 and completed by 1876. (The partners returned to Western New York in the 1880s to lay out the Niagara Reservation at Niagara Falls, New York.) When the original owners of the President’s House chose the site for their new

dwelling, they did so with the knowledge that Lincoln Parkway was the most prestigious of all the city’s parkways. Only Delaware Avenue, a street famous throughout the country for its elegant homes, was a more prominent local address. A sort of linear park itself, 200-foot-wide Lincoln Parkway had spacious lawns separating distinct lanes for vehicles, horseback riders, and pedestrians. Summertime users moved along the parkway beneath an overarching canopy of green formed by multiple rows of American elms. The President’s House enjoyed an especially good location on the street, for it faced the main carriage entrance to Delaware Park, the largest of Olmsted and Vaux’s six Buffalo parks.

Olmsted had originally chosen the site for the 350-acre Delaware Park in 1868. It was to be the sort of extensive landscape that he and Vaux believed all urban dwellers needed to have access to, a place



where one might enjoy quiet recreation amid pastoral surroundings. A boating and skating lake (present Hoyt Lake), a large meadow, and stretches of woodland made up this lovely park, which today, in effect, serves as an eastward extension of the Buffalo State campus.

In 1901, Delaware Park became part of the grounds of the Pan-American Exhibition. At the time (and over the objections of Olmsted’s son John C. Olmsted), two neoclassical buildings were added to the park landscape. They were the New York State Pavilion (designed by Buffalo native George Cary, the first local architect to study at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris; the building now houses the Buffalo History Museum) and the Albright Art Gallery (designed by Green and Wicks, the leading architectural firm in Buffalo at the turn of the century; the gallery is now known as the Albright-Knox Art Gallery). Today, these institutions, together with the Burchfield Penney Art

Center, have become central to the cultural life of the city. The Albright-Knox Art Gallery possesses internationally famous examples of nineteenth- and twentieth-century painting, and the Burchfield Penney Art Center has the foremost collection of works by American watercolorist Charles Burchfield. And nearby, on the eastern edge of the park, the original deer paddock has grown into the Buffalo Zoo, a place where a worldwide variety of animals can be seen.

Over the years, the President’s House neighborhood has maintained its stature as a prime residential district. The area’s beautiful parkland, renowned museums, gracious streets, and historic buildings are valuable cultural resources that enhance the educational experience of Buffalo State’s diverse student population. 🏡





The President's House
152 Lincoln Parkway
Buffalo, New York 14222



Buffalo State University
1300 Elmwood Avenue
Buffalo, New York 14222