



TOWN OF
WEST SENECA
'PROUD PAST - UNLIMITED FUTURE'

Town of West Seneca
Historic Commission
West Seneca Town Hall
1250 Union Road
West Seneca, New York 14224

HISTORIC COMMISSION LOCAL LANDMARK STATUS REVIEW REQUIRED SUBMISSIONS

The Town of West Seneca Historical Commission will review your application for local landmark status at a regularly scheduled public hearing. The Local Landmark designation process is administered by the West Seneca Historical Commission (HC) to protect significant buildings that are in the public's interest to preserve. When the HC determines that a building is significant and should be preserved, Local Landmark status can be granted conveying all rights and protection defined by Chapter 78C of Town Code.

Five copies of the following materials must be submitted to the West Seneca Historical Commission (West Seneca Town Hall, 1250 Union Road West Seneca, NY 14224) in order for the landmark review to proceed, in copies no larger than 11" x 17", by the Additional Information Deadline of the corresponding scheduled public hearing (see attached Meeting Schedule).

PLEASE NOTE: ONE COMPLETE COPY OF YOUR SUBMITTAL MUST BE RECEIVED BY OUR OFFICE ON THE FILING DEADLINE DATE. IF ONE COMPLETE COPY IS NOT RECEIVED YOUR APPLICATION WILL NOT BE HEARD AT THE NEXT PUBLIC HEARING.

- Completion of attached general information and contact form
- A narrative description of the landmark that substantiates its historical, architectural, geographical, cultural and / or archaeological significance. A bibliography of sources is required.
- A summary demonstrating that the landmark meets one or more criteria for designation, per Section 78C-11, Criteria for Designation of Landmarks or Historic Districts, of Town Code. A proposed landmark must meet at least one criterion to be eligible.
- Photographs showing all exterior elevations of the property. Interior photographs may also be submitted if appropriate.
- A map, survey or site plan that indicates in sufficient detail what parcel or part of parcels is being proposed as a landmark. Make note of any non-contributing elements that do not add to the historic integrity or architectural qualities making the landmark site significant.
- Supplemental material, such as articles, pamphlets, maps, historical photographs, and other documentation. *This material is encouraged but not required.*

Scope of Review, Per 78C of the Town Code, The Town Historic Commission will make an advisory recommendation, within 45 days of receipt of a complete application, on any Landmark submission in the Town of West Seneca.



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**HISTORIC COMMISSION LANDMARK APPLICATION
GENERAL INFORMATION & CONTACT FORM**

Assessment Address : 919 Mill Road

Property Owner : Town of West Seneca

Owner Mailing Address : 1250 Union Road, West Seneca, NY 14224

Year(s) of Construction : 1843-1855 Architect / Builder : Unknown / Ebenezer Society

Original / Current Use : Residence Architectural Style : _____

Period of Significance : 1843 -1855 (Moved 1957)

Is the property eligible for or listed on the National Register of Historic Places ?

(Circle One) Undetermined / Not Eligible / Eligible / Listed

Has the property been documented in any historic resource survey ? If yes, include the documentation with this application.

(Circle One) Yes / No / Unknown

Is the property owner aware of this landmark application ? If No or Unknown, please provide evidence of contact / awareness efforts.

(Circle One) Yes / No / Unknown

Is the property owner in favor of this landmark application ? If yes, and applicant isn't owner, please include signed statement of support

(Circle One) Yes / No / Unknown

Application Fee : A \$ 50 application fee is required upon submission. If applicant is proposed landmark owner, this fee does not apply.

Applicant : Town of West Seneca

Mailing Address : 1250 Union Road, West Seneca NY 14224

Phone : 716-558-3215 E-mail : gdickson@twyny.org

Signature : _____ Date: _____

919 Mill Road, West Seneca, NY 14224

Local Landmark Application

On behalf of the Town of West Seneca Historic Preservation Commission, I respectfully submit this nomination for Local Landmark status for the property located at 919 Mill Road, historically known as the Lower Ebenezer Society House and the Community of True Inspiration Residence, and currently home to the West Seneca Historical Society Museum. This nomination includes a description of the site's current condition, documentation of its historical significance, and related supporting materials.

Site Description and History:

The residence known today as the Lower Ebenezer Society House was constructed in stages between 1843 and 1855 by the Community of True Inspiration, a communal German religious society more commonly referred to locally as the Ebenezer Society. This building is a rare surviving example of their vernacular residential architecture and communal living practices.

Originally designed to house two families, the Zuber and Burgy households, the structure still retains essential architectural elements associated with the Ebenezer's shared-living ideology: a central hallway, shared entrance, and absence of private kitchens, reflecting a communal food preparation model typical of the society's lifestyle.

In the late 1800s, following the decline of the communal settlement, the building was purchased and modified by the Mayer family, who made adaptations aligned with emerging American domestic expectations, including the addition of a rear kitchen/dining wing in the 1870s. In 1956, the structure was relocated from its original site on Main Street to 919 Mill Road in order to preserve it from demolition amid increasing development pressures. A small museum annex was added at that time to support its evolving public use. The house was formally transferred to public stewardship in 1962, and it has operated ever since as the West Seneca Historical Society Museum.

In 2013, the property was listed on both the State and National Registers of Historic Places due to its architectural and cultural significance.

The building is a 1½-story, wood-frame structure with a gable roof, constructed in a vernacular style that clearly expresses the architectural principles of the Ebenezer communal movement. Key original features remain intact, including: A four-paneled front door (slightly modified with modern materials for safety and weatherproofing), Wide plank wood flooring, particularly visible in the upstairs bedrooms, and the original central hallway and plan that defined its communal purpose.

Later changes, including the rear wing (1870s) and display annex (1956), are visually and materially distinct from the original structure. These additions demonstrate a natural evolution of use and adaptation over time while preserving the building's architectural integrity.

Criteria for Designation Compliance:

78C-11 A. Individual Landmark. The Commission may delineate an individual property as an individual landmark if it:

- 1. Exemplifies or possesses special character, or historic or aesthetic interest of value as part of the political, economic, or social history of the Town:*
 - a. The structure is one of the few remaining, and most intact, examples of Ebenezer Society residential architecture in the Town of West Seneca. It embodies the social values and planning of their unique communal society that played a foundational role in the town's early development. Its survival provides a tangible link to this first phase of settlement, offering rare insight into mid-19th century communal life in Western New York.
- 2. Is identified with persons or events significant in local, state, or national history;*
 - a. The property is directly associated with the Community of True Inspiration, one of the most historically significant utopian communal societies in the United States. This group's ideals and built environment were precursors to their eventual migration to Iowa, where they founded the nationally recognized Amana Colonies. The preservation of this house contributes to the broader understanding of these communities at both state and national levels.
- 3. Embodies the distinguishing characteristics of a type, period or method of construction or design style, or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship or is representative of the work of a designer, architect or builder*
 - a. The design, both in plan and elevation of the residence is a prime example of the communal living philosophy of the Ebenezer's. Continued, accidentally sensitive utilitarian alteration to the building reflective of the changing needs and perceptions of occupants is clearly understood by rear additions making understanding the evolution of the building readily understandable, yet reflective of the evolution of the larger town simultaneously.
- 4. Represents an established and familiar visual feature of the community by virtue of its unique locations or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the community; or*
 - a. *Despite its relocation, the Lower Ebenezer Society Home has gained local recognition in its current 919 Mill St. location, nestled within a predominately residential neighborhood but still in close proximity to other remaining (altered) Ebenezer properties complimenting and anchoring the historic nature of its new, current, historic surrounding.*
- 5. Has yielded or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history*
 - a. N/A While archaeological potential is not the focus of this nomination, the building's documented and layered evolution through oral history, physical fabric, and associated materials continues to provide important educational value to scholars and the public alike.

BUILDING-STRUCTURE INVENTORY FORM

DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
NEW YORK STATE PARKS AND RECREATION
ALBANY, NEW YORK (518) 474-0479

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

UNIQUE SITE NO. 029-25-0057
QUAD _____
SERIES _____
NEG. NO. _____

C.P. 745
30A-31

C.P. 744
32-32A
Lower
EBENEZER

YOUR NAME: Laura Dulinawka DATE: 4-20-81

YOUR ADDRESS: 670 Main Street TELEPHONE: 674-3085

ORGANIZATION (if any): Erie County Historic Resources Survey West Seneca site # contact sheet no 74-745 print no 32-32A

IDENTIFICATION

1. BUILDING NAME(S): Ebenezer Residence
2. COUNTY: Erie TOWN/CITY: West Seneca VILLAGE: _____
3. STREET LOCATION: 919 Mill Rd.
4. OWNERSHIP: a. public ☒ b. private ☐
5. PRESENT OWNER: Town of West Seneca ADDRESS: 1250 Union Road
6. USE: Original: Ebenezer residence Present: museum
7. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: Yes ☒ No ☐
Interior accessible: Explain yes--museum

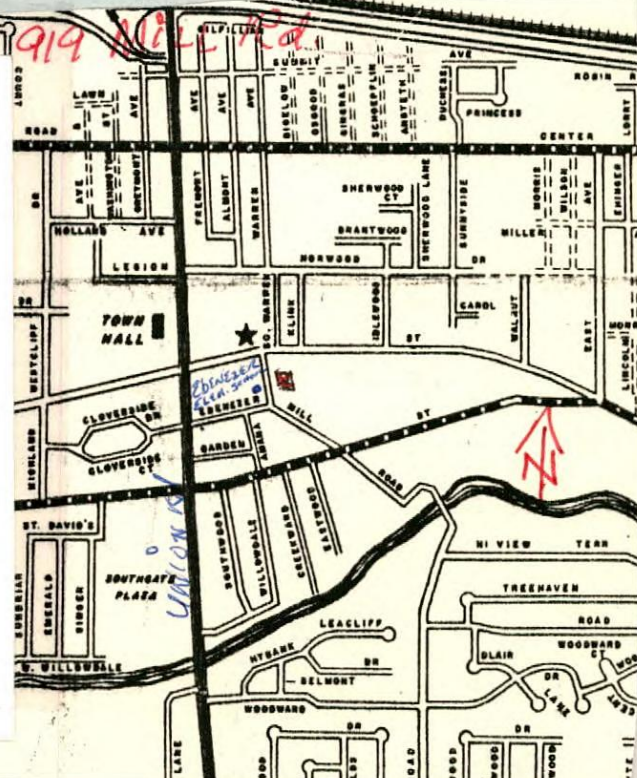
DESCRIPTION

8. BUILDING MATERIAL: a. clapboard ☒ b. stone ☐ c. brick ☐ d. board and batten ☐
e. cobblestone ☐ f. shingles ☐ g. stucco ☐ other: _____
9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: a. wood frame with interlocking joints ☒
(if known) b. wood frame with light members ☐
c. masonry load bearing walls ☐
d. metal (explain) _____
e. other _____
10. CONDITION: a. excellent ☒ b. good ☐ c. fair ☐ d. deteriorated ☐
11. INTEGRITY: a. original site ☐ b. moved ☒ if so, when? 1957--original site
c. list major alterations and dates (if known): _____

623 Main Street

concrete block basement
Portico and addition on rear

12. PHOTO:-



14. THREATS TO BUILDING: a. none known ☒ b. zoning ☐ c. roads ☐
 d. developers ☐ e. deterioration ☐
 f. other: _____
15. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS AND PROPERTY:
 a. barn ☐ b. carriage house ☐ c. garage ☐
 d. privy ☐ e. shed ☐ f. greenhouse ☐
 g. shop ☐ h. gardens ☒
 i. landscape features: white fence in front
 j. other: _____
16. SURROUNDINGS OF THE BUILDING (check more than one if necessary):
 a. open land ☐ b. woodland ☐
 c. scattered buildings ☐
 d. densely built-up ☒ e. commercial ☐
 f. industrial ☐ g. residential ☒
 h. other: across from Ebenezer Elementary School

17. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS:

(Indicate if building or structure is in an historic district)

Located on east side of Mill St., in a residential area of older homes, across from the old Ebenezer Elementary School of the West Seneca Central School District (now closed due to decreased enrollment) and diagonally across from the Masonic Temple.

18. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING AND SITE (including interior features if known):

3 bay, 1½ story center entrance simple vernacular style structure with low pitch gable roof. Original Ebenezer door lock on front door. Historical Museum contains many original Ebenezer artifacts (calico, clothing, furniture, etc.) plus other historical items, and it also houses the Frank Slade Reference Library. Reproduction of Ebenezer stout post and horizontal board fence in front.

SIGNIFICANCE

19. DATE OF INITIAL CONSTRUCTION: 1843-1855

ARCHITECT: unknown

BUILDER: Ebenezer Society

20. HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:

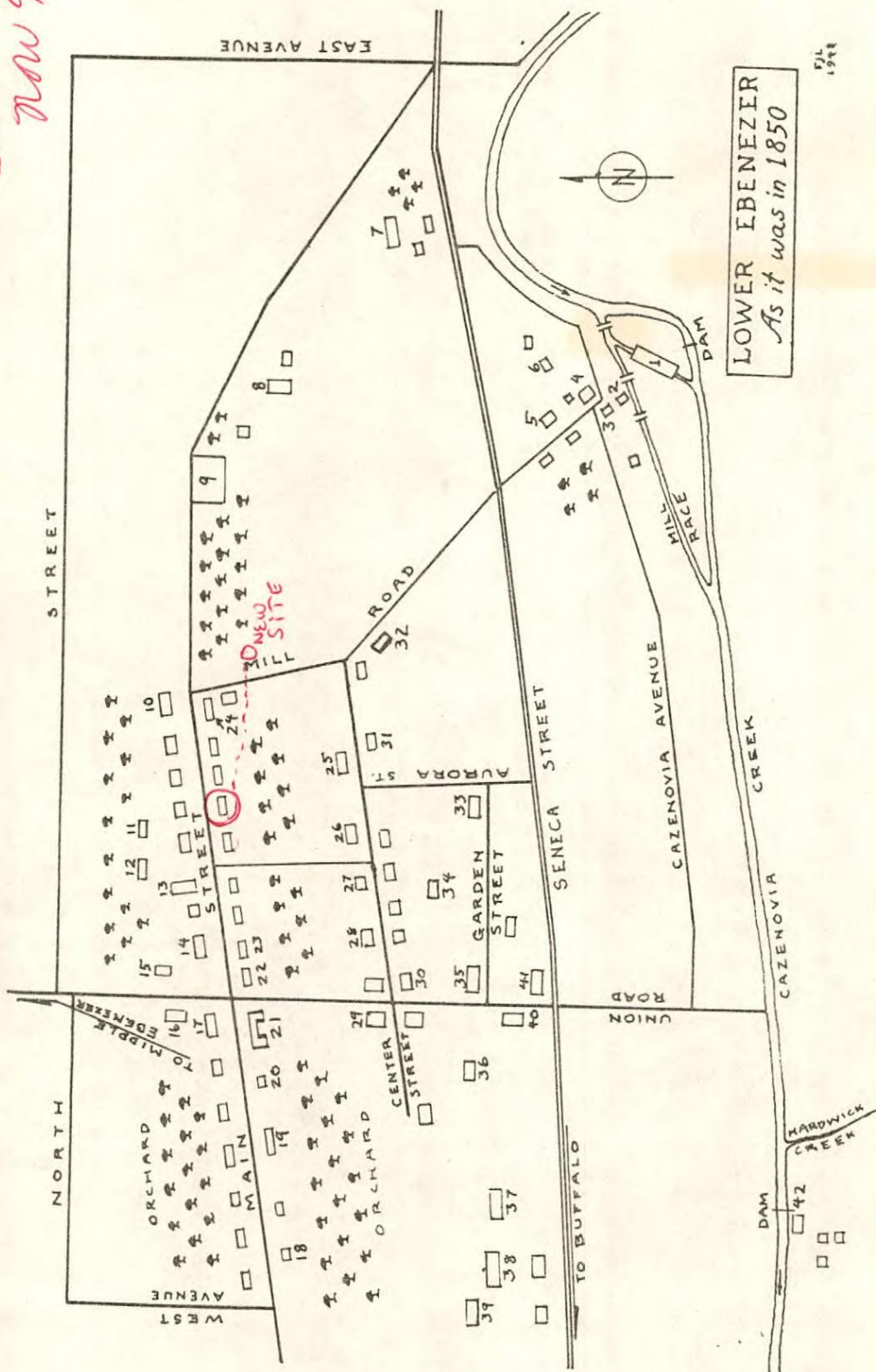
---The Ebenezer Society was a utopian religious group from Germany which first settled in West Seneca in 1846. Although it remained here only ten years, it constructed a large number of buildings which can still be identified. The Society moved to Amana, Iowa and became one of the rare utopian societies to survive to this day in the United States. The buildings, although extremely altered in most cases, are important to the history of the society and to the history of utopian societies in the United States in general.

21. SOURCES: West Seneca Centennial Book, 1951
The Ebenezer Society, Frank J. Lankes, 1963
The Ebenezer Community of True Inspiration, Frank J. Lankes, 1949

22. THEME:

Ebenezer Community Buildings

23 main → moved →
now 919 Mill Rd.



This Indenture

Made the 3rd day of December Nineteen Hundred and Fifty-seven

Between FRANK A. SLADE, as Trustee, residing at No. 1859 Union Road in the Town of West Seneca, County of Erie, and State of New York,

part of the first part, and
WEST SENECA HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM, a corporation chartered under the provisions of Section 216 of the New York Education Law, with its principal office at No. 919 Mill Road in the Town of West Seneca, County of Erie and State of New York,

part of the second part.

Witnesseth, that the said part of the first part, in consideration of ONE AND NO MORE Dollars.
(\$1.00 & no) lawful money of the United States,
more paid by the party of the second part, does hereby grant and release unto the party of the second part, its successors, and assigns forever.

All that Tract or Parcel of Land, situate in the Town of West Seneca, County of Erie and State of New York, being parts of Village Lots Nos. 66 and 67 of the Village of Lower Ebenezer, described as follows:

BEGINNING at a point in the east line of Mill Road Two hundred ninety-one and sixty-two hundredths (291.62) feet south of the south line of Main Street; thence east and at right angles to the east line of Mill Road Two hundred (200) feet; thence north and at right angles Forty (40) feet; thence west and at right angles Fifty-five and sixty-eight hundredths (55.68) feet; thence northeast at an exterior angle of 76° 28' to the southeast corner of lands deeded to Harry F. Blanck and wife by deed recorded in the Erie County Clerk's Office in Liber 5596 of Deeds at page 25 on September 3, 1954; thence west at right angles to the east line of Mill Road and along the south line of lands deeded to said Harry F. Blanck as aforesaid and the south line of lands deeded to Leroy H. Tepe, Jr., and wife, by deed recorded in Erie County Clerk's Office in Liber 5596 of Deeds at page 16 on September 3, 1954, a distance of Sixty-four and seventy-four hundredths (64.74) feet to the southwest corner of said Tepe's land; thence north on and along the west line of said Tepe's land to a point which would be intersected by a line drawn easterly and at right angles to the east line of Mill Road through a point in the east line of Mill Road Seventy (70) feet north of the point of beginning; thence west on and along said line to the east line of Mill Road; thence south on and along the east line of Mill Road Seventy (70) feet to the point of beginning.

Subject to a certain mortgage held by the Manufacturers and Traders Trust Company, recorded in the Erie County Clerk's Office in Liber 5632 of Mortgages at Page 479 on which the principal balance is Fifteen thousand (\$15,000.00) dollars, with interest at the rate of Five and one-half (5½) per cent per annum from August 29, 1957.

This conveyance is made for the purpose of vesting title in the grantee, which title has been held by the grantor in trust for the grantee pending the incorporation of the latter.

Together with the appurtenances and all the estate and rights of the party of the first part in and to the said premises.

To have and to hold, the above granted premises unto the said party of the second part, its successors and assigns forever.

And the said party of the first part do es, covenant with said party of the second part as follows:

First.— That the party of the second part shall quietly enjoy the said premises.

Second.— That the said party of the first part will forever warrant the title to said premises.

Third.— Subject to the trust fund provisions of section thirteen of the lien law.

In Witness Whereof, The said party of the first part has hereunto set his hand and seal the day and year first above written.

In Presence of

Frank A. Slade
AS TRUSTEE

State of New York } On this 3rd day of December
County of Erie } Nineteen Hundred and Fifty-seven
before me, the subscriber, personally appeared FRANK A. SLADE, as Trustee,

to me personally known and known to me to be the same person described in and who executed the within instrument, and he acknowledged to me that he executed the same.

William J. Dactap Jr.

69

FILED

1957 DEC 3 PM 4 10

ERIE COUNTY
CLERK'S OFFICE

249 Recd
ERIE COUNTY Board
DEC 3 - 1957

Box 66

Dead

FRANK A. SLADE

186

Q

WEST SENECA HISTORICAL
SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

Dated December 3rd 19 57

STATE OF NEW YORK

ERIE COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE

Recorded in Liber 6247 Page 289

on the 3 day of Dec

A. D. 1957 at 4:10 o'clock P. M.

and examined

Edward A. Roach

Clerk

1 - 300 - 6

**Public Hearing
Local Landmark Designation – 919 Mill Road**

Whereas, the West Seneca Historical Commission has received a request for a local landmark designation for the following property described as:

Parcel Description: 919 Mill Road

All that tract or parcel of land situate in the Town of West Seneca County of Erie and State of New York, being parts of Village Lots Nos. 66 and 67 of the Village of Lower Ebenezer, described as follows:

Beginning at a point in the east line of Mill Road two hundred ninety-one and sixty-two hundredths (291.62) feet south of the south line of Main Street; thence east and at right angles to the east line of Mill Road two hundred (200) feet; thence north and at right angles forty (40) feet; thence west and at right angles fifty-five and sixty-eight hundredths (55.68); thence northeast at an exterior angle of 76 degrees 28 feet to the southeast corner of lands deeded to Harry F. Blanck and wife by deed recorded in the Erie County Clerk's Office in Liber 5596 of Deeds at page 25 on September 3, 1954; thence west at right angles to the east line of Mill Road and along the south line of lands deeded to said Harry F. Blanck as aforesaid and the south line of lands deeded to Leroy H. Tepe, Jr., and wife, by deed recorded in Erie County Clerk's Office in Liber 5596 of Deeds at page 16 on September 3, 1954, a distance of sixty-four and seventy-four hundredths (64.74) feet to the southwest corner of said Tepe's land to a point which would be intersected by a line drawn easterly and at right angles to the east line of Mill Road through a point in the east line of Mill Road seventy (70) feet north of the point of beginning; thence west on and along said line to the east line of Mill Road; thence south on and along the east line of Mill Road seventy (70) feet to the point of beginning.

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This conveyance is made for the purpose of vesting title in the grantee, which title has been held by the grantor in trust for the grantee pending the incorporation of the latter.

Now, therefore, a public hearing will be held on the **1st day of April, 2026, at 6:30 pm** in the Small Conference Room at the West Seneca Community Center Building, 1300 Union Road, West Seneca, at which time and place the Commission will meet to hear all persons interested in the subject matter thereof concerning the same.

Kate Newton, Town Clerk



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- Completion of attached general information and contact form
- A narrative description of the landmark that substantiates its historical, architectural, geographical, cultural and / or archaeological significance. A bibliography of sources is required.
- A summary demonstrating that the proposed landmark is a minimum of 50 years old and meets one or more criteria for designation, per Section 78C-11, Criteria for Designation of Landmarks or Historic Districts, of Town Code. A proposed landmark must meet at least one criterion to be eligible.
- Photographs showing all exterior elevations of the property. Interior photographs may also be submitted if appropriate.
- A map, survey or site plan that indicates in sufficient detail what parcel or part of parcels is being proposed as a landmark. Make note of any non-contributing elements that do not add to the historic integrity or architectural qualities making the landmark site significant. Please include Legal Description of proposed parcel for appropriate public notice.
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**HISTORIC COMMISSION DEMOLITION REVIEW
GENERAL INFORMATION & CONTACT FORM**

Assessment Address : _____

Property Owner : _____

Owner Mailing Address : _____

Year(s) of Construction : _____ Architect / Builder : _____

Original / Current Use : _____ Architectural Style : _____

Period of Significance : _____

Is the property eligible for or listed on the National Register of Historic Places ?

(Circle One) Undetermined / Not Eligible / Eligible / Listed

Has the property been documented in any historic resource survey ? If yes, include the documentation with this application.

(Circle One) Yes / No / Unknown

Is the property owner aware of this landmark application ? If No or Unknown, please provide evidence of contact / awareness efforts.

(Circle One) Yes / No / Unknown

Is the property owner in favor of this landmark application ? If yes, and applicant isn't owner, please include signed statement of support

(Circle One) Yes / No / Unknown

Application Fee : A \$50 application fee is required upon submission. If applicant is proposed landmark owner, this fee does not apply.

Applicant : _____

Mailing Address : _____

Phone : _____ E-mail : _____

Signature : _____ Date: _____