United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form  

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking “x” in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter “N/A” for “not applicable.” For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name __________ BUILDINGS ON NIAGARA STREET AT FOURTH STREET  
other names/site number ______________________________________________  
name of related multiple property listing __ N/A  

2. Location

street & number __________ 308-328 Niagara Street [ ] not for publication  
city or town __________ Niagara Falls [ ] vicinity  
state __________ New York code __ NY county __ Niagara code __ 063 __ zip code __ 14303  

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements as set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [X] locally. ([ ] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:  
[ ] entered in the National Register  
[ ] determined eligible for the National Register  
[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register  
[ ] removed from the National Register  
[ ] other (explain) __________________________________________

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Buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street  
Niagara County, New York

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
Category of Property  
(Number of Resources within Property
(check as many boxes as apply) (Check only one box)
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

[X] private  [ ] building(s)
[ ] public-local  [X] district
[ ] public-State  [ ] site
[ ] public-Federal  [ ] structure
[ ] object

Contributing  Noncontributing
5  1 buildings
5  1 sites
5  1 structures
5  1 objects

TOTAL

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter “N/A” if property is not part of a multiple property listing)
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling (apartment)

COMMERCE/TRADE/business

(specialty store, newspaper, restaurant)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH & EARLY 20TH C AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/

Commercial Style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation  stone

walls  brick/terra cotta/cast stone

roof  membrane

other  cast iron

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)
Buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street  
Niagara County, New York

Applicable National Register Criteria  
(Mark “x” in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

[X] A  Property associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

[ ] B  Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

[X] C  Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

[ ] D  Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance:  
(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE/TRADE

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance:
1893 - 1923

Significant Dates:
1893; 1895; 1904; 1909; 1914; ca. 1916; 1923;

Criteria Considerations  
(Mark “x” in all boxes that apply.)

[ ] A  owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

[ ] B  removed from its original location

[ ] C  a birthplace or grave

[ ] D  a cemetery

[ ] E  a reconstructed building, object, or structure

[ ] F  a commemorative property

[ ] G  less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Cultural Affiliation:
N/A

Architect/Builder:
Chester R. Phelps (310-312 Niagara Street; 320-322 Niagara Street); Block, Barnes & Orchard (324 Niagara Street)

Narrative Statement of Significance  
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography  
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Primary location of additional data:

Previous documentation on file (NPS):
[X] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. NPS # 37828, 37827

[ ] previously listed in the National Register

[ ] previously determined eligible by the National Register

[ ] designated a National Historic Landmark

[ ] recorded by historic American Building Survey

# ____________________________

[ ] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

# ____________________________

[ ] State Historic Preservation Office

[ ] Other State agency

[ ] Federal Agency

[ ] Local Government

[ ] University

[ ] Other repository: ____________________

# ____________________________
Buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street
Name of Property

Niagara County, New York
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.91 acres

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1  | 1 | 7 | 658014 | 4772490 | 3  | 1 | 7 |   |   |   |   |   |   |
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

2  | 1 | 7 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

3  | 1 | 7 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

4  | 1 | 7 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Annie Schentag, Ph.D.; Kerry Traynor, MArch, MS  [Edited by Jennifer Walkowski, NYSHPO]
organization kta preservation specialists date 4/20/2022
street & number 422 Parker Avenue telephone 716.864.0628

Additional Documentation
Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property’s location
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs
Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items
(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name

street & number ____________________________ telephone ____________________________

city or town ____________________________ state _______ zip code _______
The Buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street historic district is a small enclave of mixed-use buildings comprising five individually contributing buildings and one non-contributing building in Niagara Falls, Niagara County, New York. The small district includes four, three-story red-brick storefronts with commercial spaces on the first floor and apartments above constructed between 1893 and 1909 and one three-story terra-cotta storefront with commercial space on the first floor and offices above constructed in 1914. The latter building has a three-story cast-stone addition to the west and north added in 1923 with a non-historic addition facing Third Street from 1986. “The Falls,” the Niagara Gorge, and the Rainbow Bridge, a border crossing over the Niagara River between the United States and Canada are located to the west, less than one-half-mile away. Niagara Falls State Park (Niagara Reservation), a National Historic Landmark and the oldest continuously operating state park in the United States, is located to the west and south, one-half-mile away.\(^1\)

The buildings are located on the north side of Niagara Street between Third Street to the west and Fourth Street to the east. Niagara Street features two lanes of traffic running south and two running north with a grassed median in between. Across Niagara Street to the south is a parking lot for a large hotel and to the southeast is a casino. The surrounding neighborhood to the north on Fourth Street consists of a combination of late nineteenth and early twentieth century residences. Although Third Street was also historically residential, most were demolished in the 1920s and 1930s and replaced with commercial buildings. Many of these buildings have been altered with the addition of contemporary materials and changes to the fenestration or demolished and new buildings constructed.

The historic district is characterized by a row of storefronts, with a uniform set-back, abutting the sidewalk; three-story elevations with embellished pressed metal entablatures, unifying the district visually at the roof line; corner pilasters that distinguish one commercial retail space from the next; pressed-metal cornices above the commercial spaces; recessed entrances into the retail spaces; separate entrances for the apartments, and large window openings at the commercial spaces with transom lights above. The four mixed-use commercial/residential buildings are located to the east, separated from the terra-cotta building to the west by a narrow lane that accesses a parking lot to the north. The north elevations of the commercial/apartment buildings feature doors on the second and third floors that provided secondary entrances for the apartments.

\(^1\) Frederick Law Olmsted advocated for the preservation of the land surround Niagara Falls in the 1960s and 1870s, lobbying New York State to purchase the land for public access. The Niagara Reservation was established in 1885. Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux provided designs for the park, with a focus on preserving the natural elements and vegetation of the site. The Niagara Reservation became a National Historic Landmark in 1963.
The Buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street consists of the following resources:

1.) The Gazette Building, 1914 and Gazette Addition, 1923 (and 1986 warehouse)
310 Niagara Street
Chester R. Phelps (Architect, 1914)
One Contributing Building

The Gazette Building was designed by Chester R. Phelps and constructed in 1914 as the headquarters of the Niagara Gazette newspaper, the primary local newspaper company in Niagara Falls. In 1923, a two-story addition was added to the west of the building, 308 Niagara Street, to accommodate additional office space on the upper floors and retail storefront space on the first floor. Phelps’s design is typical of what historian Richard Longstreth defines as the “enframed window wall” type, “visually unified by enframing the large center section with a wide and often continuous border, which is treated as a single compositional unit.”

The three-story Gazette Building features Neoclassical detailing, with white terra-cotta pilasters giving rise to a shallow segmental arch spanning the elevation. The pilasters are detailed to suggest a pedestal, base, and shaft with a stylized capital extending through the architrave and frieze to support a cornice, embellished with egg and dart molding. The words “Niagara Falls Gazette” are noted in the frieze. Above the cornice is a simple, pale brick segmental parapet, with grey stone coping. The central window bay is set back within the enframement and surrounded by a concave band, horizontally incised to give a stacked linear pattern. A cartouche in the middle of the segmental arch notes “1914,” the date of construction. Terra-cotta spandrel panels demark each floor level. Terra-cotta mullions, which have been covered in brake metal panels divide the window bay into three parts on the second and third floors and define the central entrance. A non-historic sign spans the transom windows at the first floor.

The two-story 1923 addition to the west at 308 Niagara Street echoes the Neoclassical style of the adjacent building, though it is understated, with grey cast stone detailed to suggest terra-cotta panels. Engaged pilasters with a simple capital support an entablature that spans the width of the building. The cornice is articulated as a simple raised band. The entrance is set back within the farthest bay to the west, with windows located to the east. The transoms above have been covered with panels. The second floor features five, fixed-sash windows with engaged precast Doric columns functioning as mullions. The middle window is broader than the two on either side. The columns support an entablature and cornice, which also functions as a belt course across the elevation. Above the second floor is a broad panel with cornice at the parapet. A sunburst motif is centrally located, with circular medallions on either side.

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The three-story, tan-brick elevation to the east faces the lane accessing the rear of the properties. Large window openings on the tan brick elevation have been covered with boards. At two locations the lower portion of the boards has been removed, revealing paired wood window sash, with wood mullions. There is no fenestration on the elevation to the west, since it abutted a building, now demolished.

As part of the construction of the addition in 1923, a two-story addition was also added to the north of the 1914 Gazette Building to house the shipping department and printing press. This addition is not visible from Niagara Street. Four loading bays are located at grade along the east elevation and one, with hoist beam, is located on the second floor at the bay to the south. A stair tower, with access to the roof and fixed metal sash windows, is located at the bay to the north on the east elevation. There is no fenestration on the west or north elevations as buildings have been constructed on the adjacent lots. In 1986, another addition was also constructed at the northwest end of the building, facing Third Street. While these building are functionally related and on the same tax parcel, interconnected internally, the 1986 addition is non-historic.

2.) The Courtney Block, 1893
   316 Niagara Street
   One Contributing Building

The three-story, red brick late nineteenth century commercial style building located at 316 Niagara Street was constructed in 1893 and retains a high level of integrity. The organization of the storefront level remains intact. The entrance into the retail space is set back slightly from the sidewalk at the bay to the west, while to the east is the entrance accessing stairs leading to the upper level apartments. The storefront windows and bulkhead are set on a diagonal between the apartment entrance and the entrance into the retail space. The transom windows and sign board have been covered with panels and vinyl siding. The metal cornice above the storefront remains extant.

Three one-over-one double-hung wooden sash windows are located on the second and third floors, set back slightly within the masonry opening. The windows on both floors have Medina sandstone sills. At the second floor the lintels are Medina sandstone, while at the third floor a segmental arch composed of three stacked rowlock courses is located at the window heads. A pressed tin entablature extends across the elevation. Large brackets are located at either end with curved modillions and smaller brackets inbetween supporting the cornice.

Windows are located on the second and third floors of the west elevation facing a narrow lane that connects to the rear of the parcels. The windows are one-over-one double-hung wooden sash units, similar to those on the third floor with Medina sandstone sills and segmental arches at the head.
3.) **The Tugby Building, 1909**

320 Niagara Street  
Chester R. Phelps (Architect)  
_In One Contributing Building_

The Tugby Building, located at 320 – 322 Niagara Street, was designed by Chester R. Phelps and constructed for Thomas Tugby in 1909. The three-story, symmetrical, red brick building is broader than the other buildings in the row, with two commercial spaces occupying the first floor and apartments on the second and third floors. Two, two-story bay windows, with decorative brake metal panels are located in the middle bays of the second and third floors, providing light into the apartments. The windows are all one-over-one aluminum-clad wood sash, similar in appearance to the original wood windows. The entrance leading to stairs accessing the apartments on the upper floors is centrally located on the first floor, while commercial spaces, each with its own entrance, are located to the east and west. The single light, paneled stile and rail wood door with transom is original. On either side of the apartment entrance door are brick piers, with inset panel and simple capital. Similar brick piers are located at either end of the building. The piers support a pressed-metal entablature that extends across the elevation above the commercial spaces. At either end, brackets support the cornice and a metal urn holding a sphere. Storefronts are located on either side of the central, apartment entrance. The entrance to each storefront is recessed.

The storefronts retain a high level of integrity. The original decorative pressed-metal frame remains extant at the storefront windows and transoms. The bulkhead consists of wood, hopper windows that extend to grade. The storefront to the west features a tripartite organization, while to the east there are two main expanses of glass.

The second and third floors are detailed similarly. The two-story bay windows feature decorative brake metal panels at the spandrels and parapet, and metal mullions supporting a simple entablature and cornice at each floor. Above the windows at the third floor the window bay is embellished by a modillioned cornice. A single one-over-one aluminum-clad wood window with stone sill is located at the outer bays of each floor. The detailing at the head distinguishes the windows on each floor. At the second floor, the window head consists of alternating dressed limestone voussoirs and brick soldier courses, with a limestone key. The third floor detailing consists of dressed limestone imposts giving rise to a limestone Roman arch. Decorative brickwork in a herringbone pattern is located between the arch and the top of the window. A pressed-tin denticulated entablature with simple cornice extends across the top of the parapet completing the composition.

The north elevation is five bays wide, with original four-light paneled wood stile and rail doors located in the center bay of the second and third floors providing access to a fire escape. A one-over-one aluminum-clad
wood window occupies each bay to the east and west of the center bay. The windows at the outer bays are narrow in comparison to those immediately adjacent to the center bay. The entrance at the first floor is located slightly to the west of center. The window openings have been infilled with brick, but the stone sills remain.

4.) **The Lennon Block, 1904**

324 Niagara Street.

John Lennon (General Contractor)

*One Contributing Building*

The Lennon Block was constructed by John Lennon, a general contractor and real estate developer in 1904. The three-story, red brick building houses retail space on the first floor and apartments on the second and third floors. The organization of the primary elevation, facing south, features an entrance to the west, leading to the apartments, adjacent to a recessed entrance accessing the retail space. The aluminum storefront, with glazed bulkhead and transoms and entrances are defined by decorative cast-iron columns. Three one-over-one aluminum-clad wood windows are located on second and third floors. The windows on the second floor are slightly taller than those on the third. A pressed-metal cornice, with decorative brackets at each end supported by brick piers, extends across the parapet, completing the composition.

Between the masonry piers at the second and third floors a band of Medina sandstone extends across the elevation between dressed limestone sills. Similarly a band of dressed Medina sandstone is continuous across the elevation at the window heads. Above each window on the third floor is a recessed panel and continuous corbelled band.

The north elevation provides a secondary exit from the apartments at the bay to the west on the second and third floors. Hollow metal doors at each floor access a fire escape. The windows at the bays to the east on the second and third floors are one-over-one aluminum-clad wood sash units.

5.) **The Ellenbaum Block, 1895**

326 Niagara Street

Block, Barnes and Orchard (Architects)

*One Contributing Building*

The Ellenbaum Block is a three-story tan brick building designed by architects Block, Barnes and Orchard, and constructed in 1895 to house retail on the first floor and apartments on the second and third floors. The three-bay storefront retains a high level of integrity, with entrances set back on either side of the storefront window bay. The stile and rail wood door with beveled glass panel and transom to the east enters the retail space, while
the paneled door to the west with single beveled glass panel and transom leads to stairs accessing the upper level apartments. The storefront window bay features three windows that sit on top of a brick bulkhead. Each fixed, two-light wood window, with wood surrounds and rail and stone sill, features a decorative leaded-glass transom. The window facing the street is covered with plywood, suggesting that the glass has been broken.

Brick piers, with a simple cushioned capital, enframe the storefront supporting wood framing for a narrow signboard that is no longer extent. The upper floors are two bays wide with replacement picture windows in each bay. Metal siding covers the area that once featured projecting bays, which were visible on historic photos. A heavy, pressed-tin entablature, with egg and dart molding and decorative scrolled brackets supporting the cornice, completes the composition.

Doors providing a secondary means of egress from the apartments on the second and third floors and windows providing light into the apartments are located on the north elevation. The windows feature stone sills, and both the windows and doors are headed by brick segmental arches. An original two-over-two double-hung wooden sash window remains extant at the bay to the east on the third floor. A single-story concrete block addition has been added to the north elevation.

6.) 328 Niagara Street, c. 1916

Non-Contributing Building (due to alteration)

Though constructed in ca. 1916, during the period of significance, the one-story brick commercial building located at 328 Niagara Street has been significantly altered with contemporary modifications to the storefront. The east elevation has been altered by a single story, shed-roofed addition and opening for a garage door cut into the masonry. Further, unlike the other buildings in the district the building was constructed as a commercial venture, with no apartment units on the upper floors.
Statement of Significance:

The Buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street Historic District is significant as a largely intact collection of mixed-use buildings that represents the history of what was once a dense commercial corridor on Niagara Street from 1895-1923, a primary artery through the City of Niagara Falls, Niagara County, New York. While Niagara Street was originally a much larger commercial artery, this small district contains some of the only remaining examples of this important late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century building typology. The district encompasses six contributing buildings on Niagara Street between Third Street and Fourth Street. These buildings embody the mixed-use pattern of commercial-residential development that characterized Niagara Street as it evolved from a quiet working-class residential street into a substantial commercial corridor during the early twentieth century. The significant buildings constructed and occupied during this time include the Courtney Block (316 Niagara Street; 1893), the Ellenbaum Block (326 Niagara Street; 1895), the Lennon Block (324 Niagara Street; 1904), the Tugby Building (320-322 Niagara Street; 1909), the Gazette Building (310-312 Niagara Street; 1914), and the Gazette Addition at 308 Niagara Street (1923). This historic district is a rare remaining collection of commercial-residential buildings that reflects the density, growth and changes that occurred along Niagara Street during this transformative era in the history of Niagara Falls.

The district is significant under Criterion A in the area of Community Development and Commerce for its association with the transformation of urban settlement patterns and commercial activity experienced on Niagara Street in downtown Niagara Falls during the early twentieth century. Due to its close proximity to the Hydraulic Canal, rail lines and the primary thoroughfares of Main and Falls Streets, Niagara Street was a bustling commercial corridor in downtown Niagara Falls during the first half of the twentieth century. While commercial spaces lined Niagara Street for several blocks at this time, many demolitions occurred on other parts of Niagara Street, and throughout Niagara Falls during the second half of the twentieth century. Today, the nominated district represents a relatively rare remaining collection of buildings in the city that still reflects the typical density, architectural styles and mixed commercial-residential uses that characterized the street during the earlier period.

The district is significant under Criterion C in Architecture as a rare collection of buildings exhibiting the typology of late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century commercial-residential buildings. Embodying the urban and social development of Niagara Street as an important commercial corridor during this time, these buildings demonstrate the typical forms of development that took place in terms of both function and design. Serving as a microcosm of the street’s physical and social transformations at large, the Buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street contains examples of this type of commercial-residential architecture as it evolved over time, representing the history of a neighborhood condensed within a single block. The district’s period of significance begins in 1893, when the oldest remaining building, the Courtney Block, was constructed in the
Niagara Falls in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

Niagara Street began to emerge as a commercial district in the late nineteenth century, largely due to the establishment of other businesses, industries, and infrastructure in nearby areas during the preceding decades. The City of Niagara Falls was not incorporated until 1892, and the area resembled a small village through the mid-nineteenth century. In the early 1800s, one settler described the area, stating, “Niagara Street had but few houses...The old Third Street school was moved to allow the N.Y.C.R.R to lay its tracks...My father lived just east of the school house in the woods on what is now Third Street near the canal bridge and I have seen him shoot black squirrels from the door of the house.”

The inherently small-town setting of the early days of Niagara Falls is evident in this description, wherein only a handful of buildings populated a semi-rural area that was later developed with the buildings of the historic district. By 1855, the census reported only 2,976 people in the town of Niagara Falls. That number grew exponentially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as multiple industrial and commercial developments occurred during that time.

Throughout its history, Niagara Falls has attracted both tourists and industrialists who have been drawn to the dual opportunities provided by the massive waterfall. Tourists have flocked to marvel at Niagara Falls in large numbers since the early nineteenth century, and the town arose partly to service that market. Souvenir stores such as Tugby’s Bazaar were founded in the town in the 1850s to serve the tourist market. Aside from a handful of stands and attractions close to the falls, business activity in the town tended to cluster along Main Street and Falls Street, just blocks away from the district, during the late 1800s, and most commercial spaces, offices and mixed-use commercial-residential buildings were centered along those streets as well. The area near Main Street and Falls Street developed as a commercial corridor during the mid-to-late-nineteenth century, when tourist activity attracted both visitors and new residents to Niagara Falls. Aside from tourism, industrial businesses also established themselves in Niagara Falls in increasing numbers during the 1870s and 1880s. Locating themselves by the Niagara River, Falls and the Hydraulic Canal in order to take advantage of the hydroelectric power these waterways generated, industrial factories and mills attracted workers to settle in the area. Commercial spaces along Main and Falls Streets emerged to serve this residential population, as well as visitors to Niagara Falls, by the late 1870s.

The development of the Hydraulic Canal in the mid-to-late-nineteenth century made a substantial impact on the settlement of the village of Niagara Falls. The idea for the canal, which would utilize water from the falls for

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power by cutting across the mainland through the village of Niagara Falls, was first proposed by the prominent early settlers Augustus Porter. In 1847, Porter proposed the construction of a hydraulic mill canal and offered the land required for anyone willing to build the canal. Although he died before this idea came to fruition, in 1852 Caleb Woodhull formed the Niagara Falls Hydraulic Company and began constructing the canal in 1853. Building the canal proved to be much more difficult than expected, as workers were faced with the task of digging through solid limestone with only rudimentary tools. The company went bankrupt just sixteen months later, and construction was halted until 1856 when Stephen Allen formed the Niagara Falls Water Power Company to complete the project. A part of the canal opened in 1857, but it was still not enough to attract interest, and construction was again halted until 1860, when Horace Day purchased the company. Day’s company completed the canal in 1861, but industrial investments were halted due to the American Civil War. The canal remained idle until 1875, when Charles Gaskill was the first customer to use the water of the canal to power his flourmill. With Gaskill as the only client, Day’s canal company went bankrupt in 1877.

It was not until a prominent businessman, Jacob Schoellkopf, purchased the canal at auction in 1877 that it began to generate more substantial interest amongst industrial agents. Forming the Niagara Falls Hydraulic Power and Manufacturing Company in 1878, Schoellkopf continued excavating the canal in order to accommodate his own power plant, which would generate power from the canal for adjacent industrial mills. By 1895, Schoellkopf’s company maintained two power plants along the canal that supplied power to different factories around Niagara Falls. As these plants supplied power before the advantages of alternating current were favored, Schoellkopf’s plants could deliver direct current electricity to industries located within only two miles of plants. While this model of electrical distribution would be greatly changed in 1896, when the use of alternating current began, Schoellkopf’s purchase of the canal sparked significant industrial development in Niagara Falls during the 1880s and early 1890s. As a result, the areas located around the canal, including the nominated district, became of immediate interest as potential sites of commercial development, where new buildings were soon built to serve canal workers, industrial businesses, and other residents of Niagara Falls.

The City of Niagara Falls experienced a dramatic population increase as industrial activity grew at the end of the nineteenth century. The first application of alternating current at the Adams Powerhouse in 1896 marked a new beginning not only for Niagara Falls, but also for the nation and the world. Using Nikola Tesla’s alternating current system, this powerhouse was able to generate massive amounts of power from the river and the falls and was the first in the world to distribute it to factories located not only two, but dozens of miles away from the plant. Industries flocked to Niagara Falls in order to take advantage of this abundant and relatively inexpensive electricity, and the city grew accordingly.

Railroad lines also crisscrossed the city, serving both tourist passengers and shipping services on several different routes. The Erie Depot served as one of the major points of entry for passengers making their way into
the city. Located directly across the street from the nominated buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street, the Erie Depot brought many people to the area. The canal also crossed directly towards nominated buildings, with a bridge enabling pedestrians and vehicles to cross the water at Niagara Street at Fourth Street. Close proximity to both the canal and the rail depot encouraged growth along Niagara Street, especially where the canal crossed at Third Street. Positioned at the juncture of not only the rail lines, but also the Hydraulic Canal, this small enclave of buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street recalls the prominence of industries and transportation in Niagara Falls.

In 1888, the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map indicates that the block of Niagara Street between Third and Fourth Streets contained several businesses, although none of them remain today. The block contained a hotel, saloon, grocer, and police station, as well as a single two-story dwelling. The Cosmopolitan Hotel and dining room, a large three-story building, occupied the site of the later Gazette Building. The police station was a large three-story building with an attached two-story building that may have served as a holding center. Buildings affiliated with the police station occupied the entire portion of the district from the alley to Fourth Street along Niagara Street. In this sense, the buildings in the nominated district were constructed during a second wave of early development on Niagara Street, marking the growth and prosperity of this particular neighborhood, as well as of downtown Niagara Falls as a whole.

By 1897, the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map reveals a different block. The hotel, saloon and grocer were all gone by this time, and three one-story dwellings and a saloon took their place. The police station was also gone, and two three-story commercial buildings instead occupied the block from the alley to Fourth Street along Niagara Street. These commercial buildings are the earliest first remaining in the district today, the Courtney Block at 316 Niagara Street (1893) and the Ellenbaum Block at 326 Niagara Street (1895). The Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from that year depicts a three-story building and furniture store at 316 Niagara Street [sic 314 Niagara Street] as well as a three-story building and plumbing shop further to the east. Note that the map identifies the plumbing store as 322 Niagara Street, much like many directories at this time, but the numbered address was changed around 1908. The building labeled 322 on this map is today recognized as the parcel at 326 Niagara Street. By 1897, the alley already divided the district at its center, running north-south from Niagara Street to Ferry Street. The site of the Gazette Building was occupied at the time by three one-story dwellings and a small saloon at the corner of Niagara Street at Fourth Street. Prior to 1900, this block contained only a handful of buildings scattered about the district, rather than the dense commercial block it would soon become.

Formerly a small village of less than 3,000, Niagara Falls reported a city population of 19,542 in the census by 1900. This population influx required not only new residential accommodations but also more commercial areas. Development along Niagara Street occurred in response to this growth in the late nineteenth century. With its position between major rail lines and the canal, as well as its proximity to Main and Falls Streets to the
north, Niagara Street emerged as a commercial corridor to accommodate new businesses and residents in the early 1900s. While Niagara Street had a substantial amount of commercial activity for many blocks, this specific area was a hub of activity due to its proximity to the train station and canal. In this sense, the portion of the street contained within the district represents a distinctive and particularly prominent area of the Niagara Street corridor.

To some, the growth of commercial activity on Niagara Street represented the growth of the city overall. The *Niagara Gazette* declared in 1909, “Niagara Falls is no longer a ‘one street town.’ Falls Street and North Main Street are not now the only business thoroughfares in the city...Now there are other streets where business may be carried on with considerable success.”⁴ Pointing to examples such as “the new Tugby Building on Third and Niagara Street,” the article marveled that “up to a few years ago [Niagara Street] was principally a residential street [and] has now become one of the leading business streets in the city.”⁵ By 1909, the newspaper declared, “Niagara Street both east and west of Third street is fast developing into a business thoroughfare.”⁶ Just a few years later, in 1915, the *Niagara Gazette* explained its reasoning for locating in the district: “Niagara Street is one of the oldest streets in the city. There are many business blocks on it. It is one of the longest streets in the city and about the only one that runs to the Niagara River. It is known all over the country, through visitors and by reason of advertising.”⁷ The commercial transformation of Niagara Street was well established by 1928, when the *Niagara Gazette* described

> Niagara Street is one of the oldest and best established thoroughfares. The street has been and is an active business center for a great many of the businessmen who have been unable to obtain business locations in Falls Street, because of the shortness of Falls Street. There are 30 solid blocks of business places on Niagara Street and that there is only one other street, Pine Avenue, where there are more.⁸

The Buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street was one of the first blocks to spark this commercial development at its west end near the canal and rail depot.

**Commercial Architecture, 1893-1923**

With roots stretching back as far as Roman antiquity, the commercial architecture seen in the district exhibits historical patterns of style, function and use that demonstrate this typology today. The shop-house combination

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⁸ “Protest to Council Against Plan to Change Name of Niagara Street,” *Niagara Falls Gazette*, February 7, 1928, 26:1.
building became a common form in Europe by the late Middle Ages, wherein a shop would occupy the ground floor of a building and a small residence would be located above. This continued for centuries, emerging in colonial America as well. Architectural historian Richard Longstreth has observed that “not until the early nineteenth century did the design of strictly commercial buildings emerge as a major component of architecture.”

As cities became increasingly dense due to new transportation networks, infrastructure and industries, these “new patterns and typologies of building became dominant in a markedly expanded realm of commerce that constituted [large groups] of narrow-fronted stores shoudering each other for a foothold of frontage on solidly built-up streets.” Many of the development patterns and architectural typologies that were established by this time “played a central role in defining the character of its settlements, clustered in central districts...Main Street became to America what the piazza was to Italy.” Indicative of a nation where financial prowess and capitalism reigned supreme, the establishment of densely packed commercial corridors along typical ‘Main Streets’ in the nineteenth century was an essential part of American identity during this time. These patterns of commercial development were evident in many American cities and towns by the mid-nineteenth century, and they “remained dominant for another hundred years, despite the spiraling growth of concentrated settlements...and new forms of transportation.”

Even during the first half of the twentieth century, “the initial impact of the automobile was to intensify the primacy of the street.” While the widespread use of the automobile transformed the settlement patterns of cities nationwide, it “generated comparatively few changes in commercial architecture until after World War II.”

From the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, the typology of commercial architecture appeared in American cities in multiple stylistic interpretations that essentially “all constituted variations on the same basic theme.” Typically arranged on a deep, narrow lot intended to maximize the number of lots on a single street, typical commercial architecture from this time reflected a desire to cluster several commercial spaces into a dense area and to provide each one with frontage on the street. Often arranged in a row along a single primary street, “buildings tended to abut the sidewalk and other buildings next door, filling as much available space as possible.” Each vying for street frontage as well as space for their businesses inside the building, typical commercial buildings from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were tall, narrow and deep on the lot. As a result of this density, these buildings frequently included skylights to illuminate these deep, dark spaces.

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11 Longstreth, 13.
12 Longstreth, 13.
13 Longstreth, 15.
14 Longstreth, 13.
15 Longstreth, 14.
that were typically blind along party walls to adjacent buildings. All of the buildings in the district demonstrate this type of footprint and massing that is common to the typology, where “tall narrow facades usually fronted very deep, clear-span spaces meant to flexibly accommodate a range of activities.”16 This flexibility was intended to be “easily adaptable for what would often turn out to be a fairly frequent succession of varied businesses.”17 Evident in the history of the many businesses that each building in the district housed over time, this sense of adaptable commercial space was an essential component of the typology.

The buildings in the district exemplify a type of commercial architecture known as the Two-Part Commercial Block, which is “the most common type used for small and moderate sized commercial buildings throughout the country.”18 A prevalent form of commercial architecture from the 1850s through the 1920s, the Two-Part Commercial Block appears in the district with stylistic variations but with several commonalities in form, massing, and function. The typology is usually two four stories tall and is characterized by a horizontal division into two distinct zones. These zones include a commercial zone at street level and a slightly more private zone on the upper stories that usually accommodates apartments or offices. These zones are distinguished not only by their interior function but are also articulated on the primary street-facing elevation of the building as well. Through ornamentation, material, rhythm, or other design elements, these zones may appear harmonious but differ in character, or they may have little visual relationship at all. Sometimes the zones are distinguished through separate ornamentation for each area, as in the Tugby Building, or they may be designed to integrate to provide a unified façade, as at the Gazette Building. Regardless of their stylistic variations, retailers “recognized the need for their stores to invite entry, to be visibly distinct from private homes.”19 Articulation of the ground floor commercial space addressed this need and therefore is a character-defining feature of the typology.

The Two-Part Commercial Block in this district typically contained residential space on the upper floors. At a time when commercial corridors like Niagara Street were emerging, “a new ‘downtown’ devoted almost exclusively to commerce displaced sites of housing.”20 This need to accommodate not only stores, but also residents, is evidenced in the typical pattern of including apartments in the upper zone of commercial buildings that were constructed during this time. In response to the increased density of the district, residential space became profitable on the upper floors, where stores would not be visible to pedestrians anyway. In larger cities, some larger stores and department stores tended to occupy multiple floors of a commercial building, but in Niagara Falls, where the scale of development was still relatively small compared to Buffalo or Manhattan,

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16 Cohen, 28.
17 Cohen, 29.
18 Longstreth, 23.
19 Cohen, 20.
20 Cohen, 24.
residential space was more likely to appear than commercial space on the upper floors. Office space was also a viable alternative for use on the upper floors, where businesses that did not depend on pedestrian traffic could locate as long as there was public access to these spaces. This occurred in the district at the Gazette addition (308 Niagara Street, 1923), where office space and printing machinery occupied the upper floor. Despite the mixed-use nature of this typology, however, “even when commercial facilities in neighborhoods contained apartments above, the character of the shopping street differed markedly from adjacent ones lined with residences alone.”

While residents lived on the upper floors of the buildings, the district remained primarily commercial in character.

Although the typology persisted in this common form from about 1850-1950, stylistic variations occurred as aesthetic trends changing over time. These variations are evident “not only on the more elaborated, architect-designed commercial buildings, but also the more typical ones that formed the far greater part of this new urban landscape.” For instance, exterior ornamentation became more elaborate in the 1870s and 1880s, when the intention for these buildings transformed from a purely functional approach to “the increasing desire to have the buildings themselves perceived as ornaments to the community.” Coupled with the emerging ability to mass manufacture building products, including ornamentation, the lower cost of materials also enabled these buildings to “attain a distinctive appearance previously reserved for only the costliest edifices.” Elaborate cornices, brackets and medallions appeared on Second Empire and Queen Anne style commercial buildings of this time.

By the 1890s-1920s, however, there emerged among architects a conviction that the classical tradition should provide the basis for the principles of design. These values and methods were applied to the commercial building typology in place of the elaborate ornamentation of the previous decades, and by the turn of the century “a sense of order and unity prevailed in most work.” These principles were applied not only to individual commercial buildings, but often were conceived in relation to the whole street as a cohesive unit. Although buildings were often constructed by different builders at different times, a sense of aesthetic cooperation in terms of massing, stylistic modesty, and function was valued during this time. Commercial buildings were increasingly viewed as “dignified contributors to a coherent urban landscape” that should be analogously more related to creating a “polite conversation rather than strident competition.”

The Buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street exemplify this architectural approach to dense development, where each of

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21 Longstreth, 14.
22 Cohen, 21.
23 Longstreth, 31.
24 Longstreth, 13.
25 Longstreth, 39.
26 Longstreth, 39.
the contributing buildings features distinguishing, individual design elements but also contributes to a complementary row of buildings along a cohesive street. Demonstrating this architectural typology both individually and collectively, the buildings in this district attest to the broader patterns of building design, function, and development occurring during this period.

**The Buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street, 1893-1923**

*The Courtney Block, 316 Niagara Street*

The construction of the Courtney Block at 316 Niagara Street was the first to mark a new stage of real estate development in the district. As the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from 1892 indicates, the building’s foundation was under construction by that time. Completed in 1893, the three-story brick building was designed to anticipate the future growth of the surrounding district. At the time, the area was described as having been “sparsely settled.” The former police station had burned down around 1889, and instead the land was vacant with just a small saloon and a handful of small frame dwellings nearby.

The building was constructed for James and John Courtney, known as the Courtney brothers, who purchased the vacant property for $900 in late 1890. The Courtney brothers were described as a “strangely eccentric” pair, rumored to be “miserly hermits.” Residents of Niagara Falls since the late 1860s, the Courtney brothers owned their own shoe shop on Falls Street prior to constructing the Courtney Block at 316 Niagara Street. The building served as a real estate investment for the brothers. Although the building contained a commercial space, it appears that the brothers never used it for their own store. Instead, they lived off the income that the building generated in the form of rent payments from both the commercial space and the residential tenants and may have also continued making a small number of shoes from their own dwelling.

The Courtney brothers were “noted for their frugal lives...They had plenty of means, but preferred to live the lives of recluses, shut in a dark unhappy hovel in the rear of a splendid brick business block in Niagara Street which they owned.” Rather than occupying valuable apartment space in their own building, they chose instead to “move the building they had on Falls Street to Niagara Street and placed the building in rear of the

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27 The address of this building changed multiple times and has been referred to as 314, 316 and 318 Niagara Street in directories and newspapers during the late 1800s and early 1900s. This document recognizes the building as 316 Niagara Street in accordance with the contemporary tax parcel map.


29 “Real Estate Transactions,” *Niagara Falls Gazette*, November 26, 1890.


present site of their brick block, used as a tenement and store.”32 This building was relatively unremarkable, with various reports describing it as a one-store frame dwelling, a cabin, and even a shed. This dwelling is no longer on the property but appears on property maps through 1950.

With a commercial space on the ground floor and apartments on the two upper floors, the Courtney Block established an architectural typology that would continue to emerge and evolve in the district through the early twentieth century. The upper floor apartments were modest in size and quality, and although they were later described as ‘tenements,’ they were more likely to house single working-class citizens, couples or small families rather than large groups of boarders. The units were advertised in 1895 as “a suite of rooms; modern improvements, suitable for two or three persons. Apply No. 316 Niagara Street.”33 Originally designed as units ranging from one room with housekeeping to three-room suites, the apartments in the Courtney Block were initially aimed at the working class. Offering “furnished front rooms with housekeeping for $1.50” in 1899, the Courtney brothers provided basic amenities for their tenants. As frugal as they were known to be, they “kept pace with the landlords who increased rents as time passed,” and by the time of their deaths in 1920, the Courtney brothers had appropriately scaled the price of these rents to maintain a consistent resident population in their building.34 In general, four to five tenants are listed in the city directories as residents at the Courtney Block during the early twentieth century.

The first recorded business to occupy the commercial space was a doctor’s office run by F. Guilemont, M.D. from 1893-1895. From 1895-1897, P.F. Lanigan opened a furniture store and undertaking business at the Courtney Building. During this time, Lanigan appears to have sold furniture in the commercial space while also conducting his duties as an undertaking, including the preparation of bodies for burial, at this business address. The commercial space served as a liquor store from 1897-1905, first as Mitchell and Company and then as the G.J. Weiler Company. In 1906, a tailor named M.P. O’Brien occupied the commercial space at the Courtney Block. Specializing in hats and custom suits, O’Brien’s tailoring and dry cleaning shop remained in the building for the next three decades. Shortly after the Courtney brothers died in 1920, O’Brien managed to purchase the Courtney Block from their estate. After he purchased the building, he announced he “will continue his business there and will next year improve the two upper floors, which will continue to be used for apartment purposes.”35 O’Brien lived and worked in the building until the late 1930s.

33 Classifieds, Niagara Falls Gazette, July 6, 1895.
34 “One Aged Brother Dies...,” 13.
The Ellenbaum Block, 326 Niagara Street

Designed by architects Block, Barnes and Orchard, the Ellenbaum Block at 326 Niagara Street was completed in 1895. The three-story brick building was constructed for John H. Ellenbaum, a local plumber and hardware dealer who was a descendent of one of Niagara Falls’ early pioneers, Henry Ellenbaum. Ellenbaum and his wife, Louise, also lived in the building, on one of the upper floors, for twenty years. As only the second commercial building on the block at the time of construction, Ellenbaum’s investment anticipated and inspired further development in the Buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street.

Ellenbaum’s choice of location for the building encouraged further development on Niagara Street, and other buildings soon followed. Upon his announcement of the building in 1894, the Buffalo Courier remarked, “The building boom at Niagara Falls never lets up but grows brighter and better as time progresses. J.H. Ellenbaum, one of our leading hardware dealers, plumbers, etc., will break ground in a few days...for a three-story brick block on Niagara Street, between Third and Fourth Streets.”

The building was completed in September 1895, and the same newspaper described it as a “handsome and substantial three-story brick block. Its front is made of light brick and very ornamental.”

Like many of the subsequent buildings in the district, the Ellenbaum Block was designed as a mixed-use building, intended to contain Ellenbaum’s plumbing business and hardware store on the ground floor with four apartments on the two upper floors. The Buffalo Courier described the building’s original functions in 1895: “The basement will be used as a workshop and storage room and also for the steam heating apparatus. The first floor will be used for the store and tinshop. On the second and third floors are family apartments which are fitted up with all modern improvements.”

While this layout was typical of a late-nineteenth-century commercial corridor, the building was particularly advanced in terms of its use of electricity. Attesting to the abundant electricity in Niagara Falls, the building was “wired for both gas and electricity by the conduit system.” Many cities did not anticipate having electricity in their buildings until the early twentieth century, particularly not for a relatively modest plumber’s shop. Anticipating a more complete conversion to electricity in the coming decades, “the wires were not put in until the building was completed and can be replaced at any time. Electric door openers and speaking tubes have been put in and everything conveniently arranged.” The presence of this dual wiring in the Ellenbaum Block attests to the building’s location and prominence in Niagara Falls, a city with a rapidly growing electrical industry.

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36 “Another New Building,” Buffalo Courier, March 12, 1894, 7.
40 “A Handsome New Block,” Buffalo Courier, September 3, 1895, 3.
The upper floor apartments were relatively modest and were initially rented as furnished units with light housekeeping. Although classified advertisements don’t list the price of these units, they describe spaces ranging from one to three rooms in size during the early 1900s. This suggests that the units were originally intended to house a single person or a couple, although occasionally a small family does appear in the directory. Some may have also used the rooms upstairs as a small business space, as in the case of Nina Nash, a thirty-year-old woman who had a studio where she taught music during the late 1890s. By the 1940s, larger apartments at the Ellenbaum Block begin to appear in advertisements, as five-room apartments are listed.

The commercial space was occupied by John Ellenbaum’s plumbing store, where he also sold hardware, tin and copper, from 1895-1909. Ellenbaum retired at the age of 61 in 1910 and rented out the commercial space for the next several years. From 1910-1915, the National Biscuit Company (now Nabisco) occupied the commercial space at 326 Niagara Street. As an affiliate of the Shredded Wheat Company factory located just blocks away on Buffalo Avenue, it is likely that the National Biscuit Company used the commercial space to sell Shredded Wheat products as well as to provide a satellite office space.

In 1916, Ellenbaum sold the building to Charles Pochel for $20,000. Although the original cost of the building is unknown, Ellenbaum likely received a substantial return on his investment, as by this time Niagara Street had grown into a busy commercial district. Upon purchasing the building, Pochel announced that he “will carry out extensive improvements to the building including the installation of a new store front, and will establish a liquor business on the ground floor.” Ellenbaum moved out of the building and sold his office furniture at this time.

After a liquor store occupied the commercial space for a few years, the space was converted into a restaurant and continued in that function under several different businesses until the present. Sigmond Spitzer, who later purchased the building from Pochel in the 1920s, operated Spitzer’s Restaurant and tavern from 1920-1939.

**The Lennon Block, 324 Niagara Street**

Completed in 1904, the three-story brick building at 324 Niagara Street was “originally erected by the late John Lennon and former known as the Lennon Block.” Lennon, a general contractor and real estate developer who lived in Niagara Falls, likely recognized the burst of activity that was occurring in the area due to its prestigious location near the canal, rail depot and other commercial spaces. He was granted a permit to build a brick building on ‘Niagara near Fourth Street’ in November 1902. As discussions began to appear in the

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41 “Nina Nash,” *Niagara Falls Gazette*, February 17, 1899, 1.
42 *Niagara Falls, New York, City Directory*, 1910; 1915, 632.
Niagara Gazette regarding the expansion of the Third Street Bridge crossing the canal as early as 1901, Lennon’s timing soon proved profitable. Although the bridge, later renamed the Schoellkopf Bridge, was not completed until 1908, the Lennon Block was integral to the Buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street beginning in 1904.

The mixed-use functions of the building encouraged a pattern of similar developments along the block in the years that followed. Like the two buildings that previously existed on the block, the Lennon Block provided commercial space at ground level and four apartments on the upper floors. The three-bay-wide façade includes a modest cornice at the roofline and separate entrances for the residents and the businesses on the ground floor.

While the commercial space was occupied by a grocery or a restaurant for most of the years it was occupied, the first business in the Lennon Block was the C. Kurtzmann and Company piano store. Selling and repairing pianos, organs, and other musical instruments, the Kurtzmann and Company began advertising its location at ‘the Lennon Block at 324 Niagara Street’ in October 1904. The store continued to operate at that location in advertisements until mid-1907. At that time, classified advertisements listed a ‘Store for rent- Lennon Block’ for approximately one year until the John Williams grocery opened in late 1908.

The apartments on the upper floors of the Lennon Block were occupied shortly after the building was completed. By 1906, a classified advertisement reported, “the Lennon Block has for rent a 7 room modern flat, second floor, $20 [a month].” Those interested in renting the flat were directed to contact J.J. Hanrahan, a family friend who managed the building for Lennon, who operated a major contractor business in the city. The size of the flat was relatively modest at seven rooms, as was the price at $20 a month (equivalent to about $500 a month in 2017). This suggests the Lennon Block flats were aimed at the lower-middle class, typically a mix of unskilled and skilled workers as well as craftsman. In 1906, the tenants included a watchmaker, a stationary engineer, and a plumber. Within a few years, advertisements listed similar prices for the Lennon Block apartments: “For rent- 7 room flat at 324 Niagara Street. $20. Enquire John Lennon.” This suggests that J.J. Hanrahan no longer managed the property, but the demography of the tenants remained much the same.

In 1908, John Williams opened a grocery store at the Lennon Block on 324 Niagara Street. Williams did not live in the building but operated the grocery store in the building for several years. Even after the Williams

45 Classifieds, Niagara Falls Gazette, October 6, 1904, 6.
46 Classifieds, Niagara Falls Gazette, October 12, 1906, 11.
47 Niagara Falls, New York, City Directory, 1906, 601.
48 Classifieds, Niagara Falls Gazette, October 12, 1909, 14.
49 Niagara Falls, New York, City Directory, 1908, 458.
store closed in 1914, the commercial space continued to function as a grocery store for Francis Rangatore from 1915 into the early 1920s.\textsuperscript{50}

\textit{The Tugby Building, 320-322 Niagara Street}

The Tugby Building at 320-322 Niagara Street was constructed a few years after the Lennon Block in 1909. The three-story brick building was known as the Tugby Building because it was originally built by Thomas Tugby, an early settler of Niagara Falls and one of its most important businessmen due to his major souvenir store, the Tugby Bazaar. Founded in 1854, the Tugby Bazaar was the first large souvenir store to attract a tourist market in Niagara Falls, setting a precedent for many other businesses in the town. As the owner and operator of this store, Thomas Tugby was a prominent citizen of Niagara Falls for over fifty years. This building was constructed late in his life and was finished just two years before he died in 1911.

Ownership of the building passed to his descendants for the next three decades; first to his only daughter, Florence Tugby Taylor, and then to his granddaughter, Edith Taylor. Florence Tugby Taylor received the bulk of Thomas Tugby’s estate when he died in 1911, including the Tugby Building. While she lived most of the time in St. Augustine, Florida, where her husband A.M. Taylor became a senator, she maintained an interest in the Tugby Building through correspondence with its property manager.\textsuperscript{51} From 1911-1914, W.W. Houston and Company managed the property, and likely managed the building even before Thomas’s death. After 1914, however, Carl E. Tucker managed the building on behalf of Florence and her husband, who visited Niagara Falls at least once each year. Tucker was a prominent attorney and later a city judge who also had an active interest in real estate investments. Tucker and the Taylors maintained regular correspondence regarding the Tugby Building, including its physical condition and tenants, for two decades until Florence’s death in 1932. Shortly thereafter, the property was inherited by her daughter, Thomas Tugby’s granddaughter, Edith Taylor. Tucker continued to manage the Tugby Building, as well as the Lennon Block where he may have also been affiliated with Tucker’s Restaurant, during the 1930s. When Edith sold the Tugby Building in conjunction with the owner of the Lennon Block in 1944, it finally passed out of the hands of the Tugby descendants.\textsuperscript{52}

Chester R. Phelps, a local architect who later designed the Gazette Building on the same block, designed the Tugby Building in 1908, and construction was completed in 1909. The cost of the building was initially, “said to be $15,000, but it is thought that eventually considerably more will be expended for the building.”\textsuperscript{53} The

\textsuperscript{50} Niagara Falls, New York, City Directory, 1915-1923, 146
\textsuperscript{52} “Three Niagara Street Business Blocks are Sold,” 1.
\textsuperscript{53} “Niagara Street to Have a New Block,” Niagara Falls Gazette, May 27, 1908, 1.
mixed-use function of the building was consistent with the developmental pattern of the district, where, as in the Lennon Block, storefront space was located on the ground floor and multiple apartments on the upper floors. The building occupies a wide lot, with twice the street frontage of the Lennon Block. The forty-five-foot long frontage was utilized to accommodate two commercial spaces on the Tugby Building, rather than the single commercial space seen at the other buildings in the district. A separate entrance designates each commercial space at each end, with a central entrance accessing the apartments above. The upper floors feature elegant details on the exterior, including a cornice at the roofline and a set of bay windows on the top two floors mirrored in the central bays. While modest, these details lend grace to the building’s commercial and residential functions befitting a building associated with a prominent local figure.

Each of the commercial spaces hosted multiple businesses during the period of significance. The store at 320 Niagara Street often functioned as a music store, while the store at 322 Niagara Street was a clothing store for many years. The first store at 320 Niagara Street was Swackhamer Pianos, a piano store that moved from another location on Falls Street where it had been in business since at least 1899. Owned by J.C. Swackhamer, the store at 320 Niagara Street was also used for “A regular meeting of the Niagara Falls Chapter of the American Woman’s League” from 1910-1914.54

In 1914, Swackhamer pianos was replaced by a furniture store, likely due to economic priorities as a result of the onset of World War I. After the War ended, the commercial space again housed a music store at 320 Niagara Street, this time identified as Brett’s Music Store in the city directories.55 Owned by Jerome L. Brett, the store sold pianos, players, and phonographs for the majority of the 1920s.

The commercial space at 322 Niagara Street was occupied by clothing stores for nearly the entire period of significance. The first tenant was A. Goodman’s Woolens, where “cleaning, pressing, dyeing and repairing clothes will be called for and delivered. Full line of cigars and tobaccos.” Goodman moved to the Tugby Building from another location, “having been forced out of the High-rent district.”56 As commercial spaces on the well-established corridors of Main and Falls Streets brought higher rents, businesses increasingly invested instead in Niagara Street as it blossomed into an alternative commercial district.

By 1912, the commercial space at 322 Niagara Street was occupied by Carl J. Johnson, a tailor.58 Specializing in suits and overcoats, Carl Johnson remained at the Tugby Building for the remainder of the period of

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54 “Announcements,” *Niagara Falls Gazette*, June 22, 1910.
55 *Niagara Falls, New York, City Directory*, 1924, 176
56 *Niagara Falls Gazette*, June 1, 1909, 7.
57 *Niagara Falls Gazette*, June 1, 1909, 7.
significance, and into the late 1950s. In 1924, he took on a partner and adjusted to a new market, and the business is henceforth listed as Johnson and Johnson clothing store. The longevity of this business at a single location attests to the commercial fixture it became in the district as the street evolved from the early 1900s into the mid-twentieth century.

The building also contained eight apartments on the upper floors. Each upper floor featured four apartments, divided by a central stairwell accessible from the central entrance on the exterior. This interior plan was relatively typical for early twentieth century apartment buildings, where flats of five to seven rooms were clustered around a central stairwell. The bay windows gave plenty of light to the street-facing apartments on each floor, with simpler windows illuminating the rear apartments.

Notably, the address only appears in directories under the name ‘Tugby Building’ or ‘Tugby Apartments’ after 1915. This also coincided with the insertion of an ‘apartment building’ category in the directory, rather than solely a category for boarding houses. While the building was conceived of with a mixed-use residential and commercial function from its original design, the later application of the term ‘apartment building’ reflects the absorption of this type of residential settlement pattern into early twentieth century urban life, when apartment living became a viable option to the middle classes and distinguished itself from tenements.

The Tugby Building apartments were usually fully occupied, with about eight tenants listed in the building each year. Prices for the apartments varied slightly based on the size of the flat, their location in proximity to the large windows at the front of the building, and proximity to the ground floor, as the apartment did not have an elevator. In general, the prices for the Tugby Building were higher than in the Lennon Block, even though some of the apartments were smaller at five rooms. By 1921, a five-room flat was listed at $31 a month, which was about $8 higher than a seven-room flat in the Lennon Block around the same time. This is likely due to the quality of architectural features in the Tugby Building, including the large bay windows in the front apartments. Some of the apartments also seem to have been furnished at the Tugby Building as well, with one advertisement listing a “5 room flat with a 5 room flat with a piano, living room suite and sewing machine.” Another was a “living room suite and sewing machine.” With these prices and features, the Tugby Building was designed to attract middle class tenants, and it continued to do so until about the 1940s. During the 1910s and 1920s, tenants included a chemist, a reverend, chefs, teachers, and engineers. Directories appear to list many young single men living alone, although it is possible that they only reported the head of family. Married couples lived in the building, although their families rarely list children, suggesting the apartments appealed to the

59 Niagara Falls, New York, City Directory, 1924, 176.
60 Classifieds, Niagara Falls Gazette, August 24, 1928, 25.
61 Classifieds, Niagara Falls Gazette, August 24, 1928, 25.
honeymoon set or more elderly couples. Several tenants lived in the building at least three years, avoiding the quick turnover that was more typically seen in working-class apartments, tenements, or boarding houses.

The Gazette Building, 310-312 Niagara Street

Designed in 1914 by prominent local architect Chester R. Phelps, the Gazette Building, at 310-312 Niagara Street, is a three-story brick building intended to house the headquarters of the *Niagara Gazette*, the primary local newspaper for Niagara Falls. Founded in 1854, the *Niagara Gazette* was a prominent fixture in the community of Niagara Falls as it developed from a small tourist town in the mid-nineteenth century into a bustling industrial and commercial center during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The newspaper company underwent many changes over its lengthy history, and by 1911 Alanson C. Deuel took ownership of the paper and remained at its head until he died in 1954. Shortly after he took on this position, Deuel recognized that the company had outgrown its previous headquarters at the Arcade Building. In order to accommodate offices for the newspaper’s full staff as well as larger, modern printing presses and new equipment, Deuel hired architect Chester Phelps to design the new building, where the company would remain until 2015.

The new Gazette Building was a showpiece for the commercial corridor of Niagara Street. Recognizing that the area had already been established as a prominent commercial artery in downtown Niagara Falls, the construction of the Gazette Building simultaneously attested to the street’s success and ensured that it would continue to be a fixture in the community for decades to come. The three-story brick building featured Neoclassical detailing throughout the exterior, receiving much praise from the local community. Referring to it as “the most handsome business edifice in the city,” the building was celebrated as “an example for other business houses to follow.”[62] Historian Martin Wachaldo identified the building as a major accomplishment for Phelps, stating that it is “his most important surviving building.”[63] Built just five years after he completed the Tugby Building on the same block, the Gazette Building today remains as an important example of Phelps’s architecture in Niagara Falls.

The Gazette Addition, 308 Niagara Street

Built in 1923, the Gazette addition was designed to accommodate additional office space for the *Niagara Falls Gazette* newspaper and its parent company, the Gazette Publishing Company, as well as storefront space for the company to rent on the ground floor. The company continued to grow at a rapid rate during the 1920s and

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required additional space for the composing department less than ten years after the first Gazette Building was completed. This era was also a record-breaking time for construction in the City of Niagara Falls, with over 1,350 building permits issued in 1923 amounting to a total of nearly seven million dollars in new construction, more than ever before in the city’s history. By 1921, a prominent realtor reflected on the progress of the district over time, stating, “Niagara Street’s rise in value has been rapid and solid. It has gone both ways from Third street and is rapidly being improved by business blocks and apartments- and just at the present time there is a very insistent demand for vacant properties on this street to be used for the erection of combined business and residential properties.” When the former property at 308 Niagara Street went up for sale in early 1923, the Gazette Publishing Company jumped at the opportunity to demolish the underutilized one-story furniture repair store and construct a building that maximized the use of the space. Situated within the context of a construction boom occurring more broadly throughout the city, the construction of the Gazette addition in 1923 directly addressed the newspaper’s needs and more broadly demonstrated the prowess of the district as a bustling commercial center during the 1920s.

Constructed over a course of about six months during the summer of 1923, the Gazette addition at 308 Niagara Street was designed to integrate with the adjacent Gazette Building at 310 Niagara Street on the upper floors. While the architect is not known, it is likely that Chester Phelps prepared the plans, as he had also designed the first Gazette Building. The Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from 1925 indicates that the Gazette addition contained the composing room for the newspaper company, as well as a press room to accommodate larger equipment at the rear of the building to the north that adjoined with the older 1914 building. Offices were located at the front of the building towards the south on the upper floors as well.

The Gazette Addition also included a two-story expansion of the building to the north in 1923, which spanned both the original Gazette Building and the Gazette addition. This north addition provided space for the shipping department and printing press and was not visible from the primary elevation on Niagara Street. The addition of this space marked the continued expansion of the newspaper company and was the last significant portion of the building, and the district, to be constructed, therefore ending the period of significance.

While the upstairs offices were occupied by the newspaper company, the commercial space accommodated businesses on the ground floor. While the building was being constructed in July 1923, a classified advertisement stated, “For rent- ground floor space in the new building now being erected by The Gazette Publishing Company at 308 Niagara Street, 34 feet wide, 70 feet deep, suitable for one or two stores. Modern,

sprinkled building two doors from one of the busiest corners of Niagara Falls.”\textsuperscript{66} Able to accommodate two stores, some of the first businesses at the building include the Niagara Radio Store (1923-1925) and the Woodward Agency (1923-1930), an insurance company. The building remained occupied by the Gazette Publishing Company through the period of significance, until 2015.

\textit{The Commercial Building at 328 Niagara Street}

Completed ca.1916, the one-story building at 328 Niagara Street was constructed to capitalize on the bustling commercial corridor that had already been established in the district by that time. Although the architect is unknown, the building was managed by the realty firm of Hays & Morris. With offices located near the district at the corner of Third and Niagara Streets (demolished), the large real estate firm was well acquainted with the commercial opportunities that the lot at the corner of Fourth and Niagara Streets provided, particularly as the new Gazette Building had just been completed a few doors away. The one-story building contained a commercial space facing Niagara Street, as well as two additional, smaller commercial spaces facing Fourth Street. Unlike the other buildings in the district, no residential units were provided on upper floors. Valued instead solely for its commercial value, the building at 328 Niagara Street reflected the commercial success of the district as it had grown over time.

In 1916, B.J. O’Reilly’s store was the first to occupy the building. Selling “a complete line of cigars, smoking supplies, candy and soda fountain drinks,” the store remained in the building for seven years until late 1923.\textsuperscript{67} The commercial space became a drug store in the 1920s and was run by J.P. Gorman for a number of years into the 1950s.

While the building’s function as a commercial storefront is in keeping with the historic character of the district, the material fabric has been substantially altered and therefore the building is no longer contributing. The commercial storefront has, in particular, been replaced with historically insensitive materials and design, thereby disrupting its ability to convey the building’s overall significance in the context of the district today.

\textbf{Notable Figures}

\textit{Chester Phelps, Architect}

\textsuperscript{66} \textit{Niagara Falls Gazette}, July 25, 1923, 17.

\textsuperscript{67} “O’Reilly’s Shoppe Opens Tomorrow,” \textit{Niagara Falls Gazette}, June 29, 1923, 2.
Chester Phelps was born in St. Catherine’s, Ontario, Canada, during the mid-nineteenth century and worked for architects in Hamilton, Detroit, and Buffalo before establishing his firm in Niagara Falls in 1895. Phelps designed at least eleven buildings in Niagara Falls, two of which are located in the district: the Gazette Building and the Tugby Building. The Gazette Building at 310-312 Niagara Street is one of his most important remaining works, a three-story neoclassical commercial building completed in 1914. His design for the Tugby Building in 1908-1909 is a slightly earlier example of design for other apartment buildings that followed. Due to his work on the Tugby Building, he received commissions for at least two other apartment buildings in Niagara Falls, the Knack Apartments (1925, extant) and the Yates Apartments (1925, extant). He also designed several large residences for wealthy families in Niagara Falls, including the John Jenney House (1914, extant), the Everett Ramsdell House (1912, extant) and the Bingheimer House (1912, extant).

In addition to his numerous residential commissions, Phelps also received the commission to design the three-story addition to the Carrere and Hastings-designed Bank of Niagara at 225 Falls Street (addition 1930, extant). In Lockport, he designed an addition to the Niagara County Courthouse and County Clerk’s office (1915-1917, extant) a large governmental institution. Phelps also worked as a consulting architect to Simon Larke in designing the new St. Paul’s Church on Seventh Street in Niagara Falls in 1917.

Block, Barnes and Orchard, Architects

The architecture firm of Block, Barnes & Orchard was located in the Gluck Building, a major office building in downtown Niagara Falls, during the 1890s. The firm designed several buildings throughout Niagara Falls, including the Ellenbaum Block in the district. Other commissions in Niagara Falls include the residences of Dr. G.C. Clarke on Jefferson Avenue (1895), V.M. Porter on Buffalo Avenue (1896) John Abstein on Fifth Avenue (1897), brick hotels for the Schoellkopf Brothers (1896), and the Park Theatre Company (1895). The firm also designed twenty-five houses at Echota, a suburb of Niagara Falls (1896; muddled/demolished). The partnership was dissolved in 1897, when Orchard left to start his own firm, with offices also in the Gluck Building. Block & Barnes continued their partnership in the Gluck Building for several more years.

John and James Courtney

John and James Courtney, also known as the Courtney brothers, were eccentric local figures in the city of Niagara Falls from the 1860s-1920. As natives of England who lived in Toronto before arriving in Niagara Falls in the late 1860s, the Courtney brothers were known in the community of other early settlers “as hermits in that they rarely consented to enter into conversation with their neighbors or others about the city.”*68 Their exact

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*68 “One Aged Brother Dies...,” 13.
ages were unknown, as “neither one was positive about his age,” but it was rumored that John was five years older than James. They ran a shoe shop on Falls Street from the late 1860s until they constructed and managed the Courtney Block beginning in 1893, where they lived together in a small, humble frame dwelling at the back of the property. They were often noted for their frugal lives, as they lived quite simply despite significant financial success with the Courtney Building and their own shoe business. Rumors abounded that “the so-called hermits had treasure in their domicile,” and policemen guarded the small dwelling when the brothers were both hospitalized in 1920. As the *Niagara Gazette* reflected upon their death in 1920, “Their devotion, one to the other was often the subject of comment. They wanted no other companionship and cultivated no friendships.”

They died of pneumonia just one day apart from one another, on March 29 and March 30, 1920.

**John H. Ellenbaum**

Born in Lewiston, NY in 1849, John H. Ellenbaum moved to Niagara Falls with his parents in 1850 when he was one year old. His father, Henry Ellenbaum Sr., was from Germany and is recognized as “one of the pioneers of Niagara Falls.” He operated a coal business in Niagara Falls from 1850 until his death in 1891 at the age of 70. John H. Ellenbaum married Louis Stricker Ellenbaum around that time. He was known as a “pioneer businessman” and ran a plumbing business for about thirty years, the last fifteen of which were at his own building, the Ellenbaum Block. He acted as the “city plumbing inspector temporarily to the appointment of another” and was a director of the Niagara County Savings Bank during the last years of his life until he died in 1924. John also had an interest in real estate and owned properties on Sixth Street and Fourth Street in addition to the Ellenbaum Block.

**John Lennon**

Born in Rome, NY in 1853, John Lennon moved to Lockport in 1855 and was educated there. His father was a builder, and by “the age of fifteen he began his business career by learning the trade of mason and building with his father.” By 1876, he established his own business as a contractor and builder in Lockport, and he moved the business to South Street in Niagara Falls in 1891, presumably to take advantage of the construction boom occurring in the city at that time. From 1902-1915, his business was listed as John Lennon and Son, and he received many contracts through Western New York. Receiving major commissions to build the New York State Armory in Niagara Falls (1895, extant), St. John’s Protectors in Buffalo, and several factories in Batavia, Lennon was “well known throughout the northern section of New York State and has erected many imposing

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buildings in the principal cities.” He constructed, and likely designed, the building at 324 Niagara Street in 1904 as a real estate investment in the area as it was rapidly developing at the time.

**Thomas Tugby**

Born in England in 1826, Thomas Tugby moved to Niagara Falls in 1852 with the goal of going into business in the city. In 1854 Thomas opened his own souvenir business, Tugby Bazaar, and ran it with his sister, Bessie Walker. The store was reputedly the first major souvenir business in Niagara Falls, establishing an important legacy in the tourist industry for the town. The first store was located “at the entrance to the Goat Island bridge when the [future] State Reservation property was still owned by the Porter family.” Within just one year, he opened a second location at the corner of Falls and Prospect Streets, which he gave to his much younger brother, William Tugby to manage. By the early 1880s, the store reportedly sold an average of $30,000 in souvenir goods annually, and the Tugby family had amassed a large fortune by this time.

In 1885, the plan to develop the Porter land into the Niagara Falls Reservation State Park led to the state’s purchase of the original Tugby Bazaar building at the Goat Island Bridge. After the purchase occurred, the building was torn down to create the Reservation and Prospect Park. Thomas retired from the souvenir business at this point, and William Tugby continued to run the store from the second location on Falls Street for several more decades. William Tugby sold the Tugby Bazaar in 1907, but the store stayed open and remained much the same until it closed in 1935. The store was a major tourist attraction in Niagara Falls for over seventy years. Thomas Tugby, as its original founder, was viewed as “one of the best known and most respected citizens of Niagara Falls.”

Thomas married a Niagara Falls resident, Jennie Shepard, in the 1850s and they had one daughter, Florence Tugby (later Taylor). His wife died in 1906. Thomas spent a substantial amount of time in St. Augustine, Florida, during the winters for the last twenty years of his life. It was there that his daughter, Florence, met her husband, A.M. Taylor, who later became a state senator there. After his real estate investment at the Tugby Building came to fruition in 1909, Thomas Tugby died in 1911. The property remained in his family until 1944.

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73 Pool, 7.
After the Period of Significance, 1923-Present

Retail businesses continued to occupy the commercial spaces in the district in the years immediately following the period of significance. By 1924, the commercial space functioned as the Massis Grocery Company, continuing in the same type of market as previous stores in the Lennon Block. In the late 1920s, a Calaty and LaBarber shop advertised itself both as a barber shop and a cigar merchant, replacing the music store at 320 Niagara Street from 1928-1930. By 1930, John O’Rorke took over the commercial space, running a cigar shop there into the 1940s. In 1940, O’Rorke Cigars shared the space with the Rowe Barber Shop, continuing the tradition of this combination of barbers and cigars once again. By 1943, O’Rorke’s role was replaced by Mrs. Anna Klino, who sold cigars in the Klino Cigar and Rowe Barber shop. They continued to operate the cigar store and barbershop in the commercial space for another decade.

By the time the Great Depression took hold, the types of businesses began to change in the district, as retail businesses were replaced by some restaurants. Several restaurants occupied the ground floor of the Lennon Block, including Tucker’s Restaurant, presumably affiliated with the property manager Carl E. Tucker, from 1930-1933. In 1934, local restaurateur Peter Nielsen opened The Dutch Plate, which opened shortly after the repeal of Prohibition. Offering, “wine, liquors and beer” as well as “regular dinner and chop suey for 25c,” The Dutch Plate remained a restaurant in the Lennon Block into the early 1940s. Even after this time, the commercial space remained as restaurants and, later, taverns, such as Camp Myron’s, Camp’s Red Bar, and the Press Box Tavern.

During World War II, the commercial space at the Courtney Block contained several appliance companies, including the Superior Electric Appliance Company from 1938-1940. Selling a “complete line of refrigerators, ranges, radios, and washers,” these companies reflected the shift in consumer trends away from handcrafted goods towards streamlined, mass-produced, time-saving devices. The apartments upstairs had also included modern appliances by this time, as one advertisement described in 1939, “2 new 3-room front apartments at 316 Niagara Street: heated, hardwood floors, tile bath and shower, modern kitchenette including electric stoves and refrigerators.” The commercial space continued to serve as an appliance store into the 1940s until 1944, when the building was sold. It continued to serve as commercial space after that time as well.

During and after World War II, prices for the apartments in the Tugby Building dropped to $20 a month, a significant decrease. Directories also reveal a greater vacancy rate in the apartments in the mid-1940s into the

76 *Niagara Falls, New York, City Directory*, 1924, 176.
78 Classifieds, *Niagara Falls Gazette*, December 1, 1934.
1950s and 1960s, with at least half of the apartments vacant for many of those years. This change in price and demand reflects broader changes in residential trends and settlement patterns in the nation in the years following World War II. Like many apartment buildings targeted at the middle class, the Tugby Building was forced to lower its rates and cater to new types of tenants who remained in the city during a time of mass suburbanization nationwide.

In 1944, three of the buildings in the district were sold simultaneously. The Lennon Block was sold by Frank Colucci to Stephen Meyo, the Ellenbaum Block was sold by Albert Trapasso to Lawrence P. Brew, and Anna Klino and Joseph Rowe purchased the Tugby Building from Edith Taylor.80

During the postwar period, businesses and residents began to locate away from downtown Niagara Falls and instead reestablish themselves in nearby suburbs, following a pattern of development common throughout the nation at this time. After the Ellenbaum Block, the Lennon Block and the Tugby Building were sold in 1944, they continued to operate as commercial spaces on the ground floor. Rowe Barber and Klino Cigars maintained their commercial space at the Tugby Building (320-322 Niagara Street) until 1959, as they had purchased the building in 1944. The Johnson and Johnson Clothing store also remained in the Tugby Building until 1960, having operated at that location for over forty years. The Courtney Block (316 Niagara Street) served as a photography studio from 1945 into the late 1960s, first as the Hart Studio and then as the Crogan Studio a decade later. By 1969, the space functioned as a billiard parlor, and then as the Victory Lunch restaurant in 1972. The Ellenbaum Block (326 Niagara Street) continued to have a restaurant on the ground floor, with Top’s Restaurant, a luncheonette, occupying space for over twenty years, beginning in 1949. The commercial building at 328 Niagara Street became a restaurant in the mid-1950s and has retained that function under different businesses to the present day.

The apartments also suffered from vacancy and low rents during this time and, by the 1960s the buildings were more than half vacant on the upper floors. Crime also appears to have been a problem in the district at the time, as reports of an illegal booking-making establishment and crime are affiliated with some of the buildings in 1949 and 1972, respectively. As residents continued to move to the suburbs in the 1960s, the emergence of the shopping mall and large stores encouraged consumers to abandon the density of downtown Niagara Falls for outlet malls and strip plazas that provided plenty of parking. As a result, the Tugby Building suffered a blow, in that its commercial spaces experienced substantial turnover and vacancy from the 1960s onward. The ground floor of the Lennon Block remained a restaurant/tavern rather than a commercial space, and therefore struggled to maintain a different type of consumer group than the Tugby Building stores. The Lennon Block ground floor operated under a number of restaurant names, including the Dutch Plate, Camp’s Tavern, Red Bar, and the

80 “Three Niagara Street Business Blocks are Sold,” 1.
Press Box Tavern into at least the late 1970s. By the 1970s, the space seems to have functioned primarily as a bar rather than a restaurant.

Downtown Niagara Falls, and Niagara Street in particular, experienced building demolitions during urban renewal efforts after the period of significance ended in the late twentieth century. The Hydraulic Canal was slowly filled in from 1958-1974; the portion of the canal under the Schoellkopf Bridge just outside the district was not filled in until 1974. Much of the historic fabric of the city was demolished during the 1960s-1980s in order to make way for the construction of new streets, casinos and tourist attractions. According to the Phase I Intensive Level Survey of Historic Resources in Downtown Niagara Falls conducted in 2004, “The demolition process leveled all buildings in the area bounded by Niagara Street on the north, the Erie Railroad on the east, and the Niagara Reservation and Niagara River on the west and south. Today, other than from historic photographs, one can gain an idea of the former streetscapes of this area from the group of three-story historic buildings that survive on the north side of the 300 block of Niagara Street.”

Directly referring to the location that is part of this proposed historic district, the Buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street, this attests to the importance of maintaining this rare collection of remaining buildings that documents this important aspect of the city’s history today.

In 1986, an addition was constructed at the northwest corner of the Gazette addition and Gazette Building property. Facing Third Street rather than Niagara Street, this portion of the building was constructed long after the period of significance and although it is functionally related to the Gazette Building, it is a non-historic addition.

**Summary**

As one of the only remaining enclaves illustrating the dense mixed-use commercial-residential environment that characterized Niagara Street during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street significantly contributes to the history of community development and architecture in downtown Niagara Falls. Six buildings constructed at different times from 1893-1923 are contributing to the district: the Courtney Block at 316 Niagara Street (1893), the Ellenbaum Block at 326 Niagara Street (1895), the Lennon Block at 324 Niagara Street (1904), the Tugby Building at 320-322 Niagara Street (1909), the Niagara Gazette Building at 310-312 Niagara Street (1915) and its addition at 308 Niagara Street (1923). Designed by prominent local architects, including Chester R. Phelps and Barnes, Block and Orchard, the buildings in the district embody the mixed-use development of the district during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The architectural styles, interior plans, and history of retail and residential tenants of these

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buildings demonstrate the typological forms that commercial-residential buildings embodied in the district over the thirty-year period from 1893-1923. Significant from the dates of their construction beginning in 1893 until 1923, when the Gazette addition at 308 Niagara Street was completed, the Buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street represent an important contribution to the history of late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century urban architecture, commercial history, and community development within downtown Niagara Falls, NY.
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Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

The boundary has been drawn to include the largest intact enclave and strongest collection of historic commercial buildings along Niagara Street between Third and Fourth Street in Niagara Falls constructed between 1893 and 1923 that illustrate the themes of architecture, commerce, and social history. The significant demolition and land clearance surrounding these buildings to the east, west, and south has isolated this small portion of what was once a larger bustling commercial corridor along Niagara Street; however, this cohesive group of buildings with similar massing, materials, and designs, complementary styles, and comparable histories retains sufficient integrity to tell the story of Niagara Falls’ development in this period.
Buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street
City of Niagara Falls, Niagara County, New York

308-328 Niagara Street
Niagara Falls, NY 14303

Niagara County, New York
Buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street
City of Niagara Falls, Niagara County, New York

Area: 0.91 ac

E 658014  N 4772490

308–328 Niagara Street
Niagara Falls, NY 14303

Coordinate System:
NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N
Coordinate Units: Meter
Parcel Year: 2021

Nomination Boundary
Tax Parcels
Buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street
City of Niagara Falls, Niagara County, New York

Area: 0.91 ac

Coordinate System:
NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N
Coordinate Units: Meter
Orthoimagery Year: 2021

Nomination Boundary
Buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street
City of Niagara Falls, Niagara County, New York
Parcel Status Map
See building list for details
### Buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street

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Additional Information

Photo Log:
Historic Photographs

View looking northeast at the district c. 1925. Note that all the contributing buildings have been constructed by this time, including the Gazette Building and Gazette Addition in the foreground.
View looking east on Niagara Street from Third Street in the 1940s. The Tugby Building, Lennon Block and Ellenbaum Block are partially visible on the north side of Niagara Street (at left). All the buildings on the south side of Niagara Street have been demolished and replaced with a casino.
Historic Maps

*Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1892. Sheet 7.*

The district boundaries are outlined in red, there are not yet any contributing buildings on this map. Note that only the foundation of the Courtney Block appears on the map, and was under construction at this time. Erie Railroad depot visible to the west along the Hydraulic Canal past the Third Street Bridge.

The district boundaries are outlined in red; the contributing buildings are outlined in blue. The Courtney Block at 316 Niagara Street (labeled as 314 Niagara) and the Ellenbaum Block at 326 Niagara Street (labeled as 322 Niagara) are the only remaining buildings in the district today from this map.
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street

Name of Property
Niagara County, New York

County and State

Map of Niagara Falls, Century Map Co., 1908. Note the district’s proximity to the canal and transit lines.
The district boundaries are outlined in red. The remaining contributing buildings are outlined in blue. Note that the Gazette Addition at 308 Niagara Street and the commercial building at 328 Niagara Street have not yet been constructed. The buildings at 302-306 have been demolished and replaced with a parking lot in the present day.
The district boundaries are outlined in red. Note the construction of the Gazette Addition has occurred, including the press room at the north end of the property.
Note that all buildings remaining in the district today have been constructed by this point.
The district boundaries are outlined in red.
The number ‘3’ marks the west boundary of the district and partially obscures the contributing building at 308 Niagara Street. The building to the west has been demolished and is now a parking lot and the non-historic warehouse portion that has been added to 310 Niagara Street.
Note that the convention center has replaced nearly all of the buildings south of the district, and the hydraulic canal, is no longer present.
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street
Name of Property
Niagara County, New York
County and State

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Google Streetview, Oct 2018
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street
Name of Property
Niagara County, New York
County and State

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Google streetview, Oct 2018
Buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street
Name of Property
Niagara County, New York
County and State

310 Niagara
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
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Buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street  
County and State: Niagara County, New York  

Name of Property: Buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street  

310 Niagara
Looking northeast with 316 Niagara in the foreground
Buildings on Niagara Street at Fourth Street
Name of Property
Niagara County, New York
County and State

320-322 Niagara
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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322, 324 and 326 Niagara