

# Preservation Buffalo Niagara Honorees

**Category: Rehabilitation/Adaptive Use**  
***Genesee Gateway LLC, Buffalo***  
**Flynn, Battaglia Architects – City View Properties**  
**The Margaret L. Wendt Foundation**

Rare survivors of a 19<sup>th</sup> century era of thriving commerce, eight of the nine buildings comprising the Genesee Gateway—buildings 85 to 125 Genesee—feature works by some of the city’s most prominent architects.

The hiring of Esenwein & Johnson to design the relatively small Baldwin Building at 109 underscores the high profile of this commercial strip in its day. The Werner Photography Building at 101–103, designed to accommodate the thriving photographic industry, remains one of the few examples of Richard Waite’s work extant in Buffalo, and its signature large copper ornamented skylight is immortalized in Charles Burchfield’s “Street Scene” painting (1940–1947). The 1886 Caulkins Building at 85–87, the work of F. W. Caulkins, is another designed for the photography industry and has

itself often been photographed.

In the 1960s when the Kensington Expressway and Oak-Elm arterial, under the aegis of urban renewal, cleared and divided many of Buffalo’s historic neighborhoods, and residents and businesses left for the suburbs, what is now the Genesee Gateway suffered from disinvestment, neglect, urban decay, and blight into the ‘90s. Misguided rehabilitation attempts begun in the ‘80s exacerbated the buildings’ negative issues.

Only the farsighted vision of those we honor today has saved this historic collection of two-to-four story masonry structures. The thorough rehabilitation our honorees have wrought required stabilization of existing buildings, restoration of historic street facades and all elements deemed reusable, and development of



interconnected spaces and floor plates within. A building in mid-block was lost and in its place a new, sympathetically designed one was built that provides an entry lobby to the entire complex.

The result? A threatened and deteriorating block has been transformed for reuse as contemporary offices and retail, while providing a handsome eastern gateway to downtown.

PBN is proud to salute the Genesee Gateway metamorphosis with our award for Rehabilitation/Adaptive Use.