

Preservation Buffalo Niagara Honorees

Category: *Restoration* **Corpus Christi Church** **Buffalo, New York**

Constructed in Romanesque Revival style by noted Buffalo architects Schmill & Gould and dedicated in 1909 to serve a rapidly growing Polish community, Corpus Christi Roman Catholic Church on Buffalo's east side was scheduled to be closed in 2003, when the Franciscan Fathers, who had nurtured the parish since its inception, moved on.

But in a grassroots effort that received the blessing of then Buffalo Bishop Henry Mansell, concerned parishioners and other volunteers, together with priests of the Pauline Order—taking over from the Franciscans—mobilized to take on the vital work of renewal and preservation.

Through their combined efforts, the church complex has been landmarked, and a one million dollar preservation fund campaign was

completed nearly a year ahead of schedule. A new black slate roof matching the original in quality, shape, and color has been installed; and all deteriorated and damaged copper gutters, downspouts, and flashings were replaced with new copper elements following original detailing and profile. Two large stone chimneys were stabilized, and restoration will begin this spring on the church's south tower. The architect for the roof project was Ted Lownie of Hamilton, Houston, Lownie Architects.

In addition, cherished devotions and cultural observances have been revived, drawing visitors from across the region. Parish enrollment has increased, new gardens and regularly



scheduled clean-ups have improved the streetscape, and a significant connection to Buffalo's immigrant past has been saved for future generations.

Preservation Buffalo Niagara is pleased to honor Corpus Christi's remarkable rebirth, which has benefited the City of Buffalo by helping to reverse the decline of the immediate area and fortifying renewal of the nearby Broadway Market and Central Terminal.