

Preservation Buffalo Niagara Honorees

Category: Planning **Richardson Olmsted Complex Master Plan**

The New York State Lunatic Asylum, designed by H. H. Richardson in 1870 on grounds landscaped by Frederick Law Olmsted, and opened in 1880, introduced the architect's distinctive Richardsonian Romanesque style to the world. Vacant since the 1980s, the National Historic Landmark suffered serious deterioration in spite of increasing recognition of its significance.

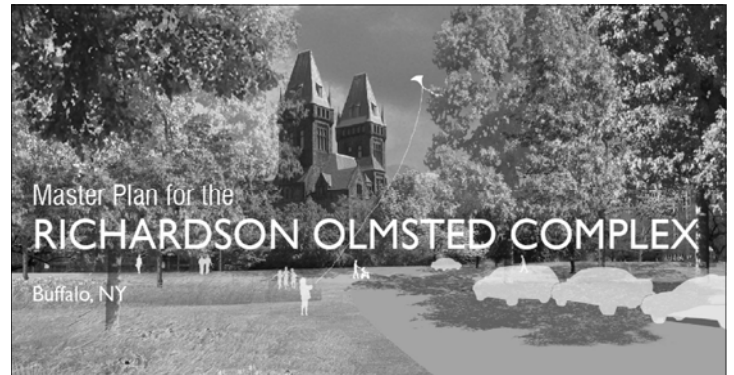
The Preservation Coalition of Erie County, in 2002, filed suit against New York for its failure to maintain the buildings. Eventually, a New York State commitment of \$100 million dollars led to the formation of the Richardson Center Corporation to supervise the restoration process.

The Corporation's planning efforts have been characterized by a high

level of public participation. In addition to establishing a community advisory board comprised of multiple stakeholders, the Corporation has built public meetings and multiple feedback mechanisms into every stage of the process.

Each phase of study and recommendation on the part of outside consultants has been presented to large, engaged audiences, whose comments and observations have been incorporated into the next stage of work.

Collaborative efforts have included preservation groups, businesses, cultural organizations, schools, block



clubs, and residents. The process, now in its third year, has resulted in a Master Plan that proposes phased reuses, including an Architecture Center, the headquarters of the Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau, a hotel, and conference space.

Preservation Buffalo Niagara is pleased to honor the Richardson Center Corporation's Master Plan for preservation and reuse of this major landmark as a model for any agency charged with a large public project.