

THE LANDMARK SOCIETY
PRESENTS THE
2021 INSIDE DOWNTOWN TOUR

HONORARY CHAIR



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A greeting from the tour chairperson

Welcome to the 17th Annual Inside Downtown Tour!

We've learned to be nimble during the yearlong pandemic and discovered that our virtual programs are reaching a whole new audience. Thank you for choosing to purchase an access ticket to the virtual tour. It will be available for your viewing pleasure from Friday night March 19th through Sunday night March 28th.

Our 2020 Inside Downtown tour, highlighting our downtown core, this year showcases the evolution of downtown urban living for more than 100 years. Rochester and its downtown neighborhoods are historically significant through its culture, community as well as its brick and mortar. Each historic structure speaks to cultures and citizens that have passed through - with their accomplishments and setbacks; children who have grown to effect change whether near or far. The remaining gems are structures with good bones...all tell a story; some have new chapters some are waiting to begin anew. We also honor new construction that shows a connection to the environment, sensitively designed. Those that can be saved must be so for in that effort to reconnect, we too, are rehabilitated and reinvigorated. The Landmark Society works tirelessly to ensure this higher purpose.

As community members, we often hear about urban efforts to repurpose, rehabilitate, and create ways to reuse historic buildings. Through this video, you will experience these iconic structures that are now vibrant with life. You will see why developers, residents and businesses have chosen to commit to Rochester's centre city. What's old is new, infused with a sense of community building and purpose.

As always, thank you to the residents, building managers, and businesses who have generously agreed to open their doors for tour goers. Thank you to all the volunteers as well as the tour goers. By attending this tour, you will not only enjoy seeing some great spaces, but you will support The Landmark Society's important work. Finally, thank you to our tour partners and sponsors. It is this team effort that makes such a tour possible.

Randy Morgenstern
Chair, Inside Downtown Tour

Grove Place Neighborhood
Apartment in an historic rowhouse

Theodore Bacon Rowhouses

Gibbs Street, Rochester NY

Year Built: 1880 - 1881

Architect: James Goold Cutler (1848-1927)

Architectural Style: Late-19th century Eclectic: Tudor Revival, Queen Anne, Eastlake details.

Look on the exterior: Unique in Rochester, these row houses are of a type not common in upstate New York, west of the Hudson Valley. Originally built as six, contiguous, four-story, private residences, this block of rowhouses was divided into apartments by the 1930s. Distinguished by their elevated first stories, the rowhouses are highlighted with a wealth of sophisticated details including two-story projecting bays with half-timber cladding, Medina stone trim, wood brackets, stepped brick cornice and decorative terra cotta tiles. The placement of windows provides ample natural lighting to interior spaces.

You'll enjoy knowing: Located in the only surviving, 19th-century, residential neighborhood in downtown, these picturesque row houses were designed by noted architect James Goold Cutler, whose career also included major business, political and real estate endeavors. The row houses were originally built by attorney Theodore Bacon, for members of the extended Ward and Selden families, who developed this neighborhood as a "family enclave." The first generations moved here in the 1830s, when the neighborhood was at the edge of the city and considered a rural location. The neighborhood's name, "Grove Place," originated from a signature grove of trees that graced the front lawn of the original family home (demolished c. 1910), which faced Main Street. Distinguished members of the Ward and Selden families include presidents of Ward's Natural Science Establishment, the attorney who defended Susan B. Anthony during her 1872 trial for voting illegally, and the inventor who held the first American patent for an automobile. In 1955, Melvin and Anne McQuay, early supporters of "downtown living," purchased the Bacon row houses and lived here for the next 43 years. Together, with several other residents, the McQuays established the Grove Place Neighborhood Association and were instrumental in building the new rowhouses along Selden Street, in the 1970s.

What you'll see inside: The elegant, first-floor apartment features lofty ceilings, two fireplaces, decorative 19th-century encaustic tiles, and hardwood floors. The living room is highlighted with an expansive bay window and window seat, that overlook the rear terrace.

Grove Place Neighborhood

Apartment in an historic carriage house

Former carriage house for the Theodore Bacon Rowhouses

Selden Street, Rochester, NY

Year Built: circa 1880 - 1881

Architect: possibly James Goold Cutler (1848-1927)

Architectural Style: Late-19th century Eclectic with gambrel roof

Look on the exterior: This brick, gambrel-roof building features a fieldstone foundation, Medina stone windowsills and a round, oculus window in the north/Selden Street gable. Originally built as a carriage house for the row houses, next door, the building was renovated into two apartment units by the 1960s.

You'll enjoy knowing: The only surviving carriage house in the Grove Place neighborhood, this represents a building type for which there were once hundreds of examples in the city. Horse-drawn transportation dominated America's cities well into the 20th century. Private carriage houses on residential properties, large barns for commercial enterprises, stable complexes for the city's horse-drawn streetcar lines are a few examples from this era. To service all these equine establishments, the impressive State St. hay market, near the river, operated until the 1920s. One of the last commercial stables, McGregor Sales and Livery Stable, was in the rear of 81 Stillson Street, one block west of Selden Street. A facility with a large indoor riding ring and stalls for over 70 horses, McGregor's closed in the 1940s (but was not demolished until the 1990s). Today, an important collection of historic carriage houses remains in the city, with a particularly impressive number located in the East/Park/Monroe Avenue area. The former carriage house at 3-5 Selden Street is located adjacent to the site of George Selden's workshop (no longer extant), where he designed an early automobile, for which he received a U.S. patent. In the 1970s, contemporary, brick town houses were built on Selden Street, a striking counterpoint to the historic 1880s carriage house. In the early 2000s, new town houses on the west side of Gibbs Street were named, "Eastman Mews," a reflection of the stables and carriage houses once prevalent in the neighborhood.

What you'll see inside: We'll visit one of the two apartments. Most of the rooms do not have architectural ornamentation, instead offering a streamlined, practical adaption of the space. The tenants do enjoy two of the original arched windows.

The Normandie
Historic Ballroom Dwelling

The Normandie & Normandie Court Apartments

Alexander Street, Rochester, NY

Managing company: Excelsior Communities

Year Built: 1916-1917

Architect: Not yet determined

Architectural Style: Early-20th century Neo-Classical Revival

Look on the exterior: This imposing apartment building is constructed of dark tapestry brick with cast stone trim (keystones over windows & doors). The formal front entrance features a one-story portico with Doric columns and a round-arch doorway with cast stone quoins and moldings. The long apartment windows on the façade originally featured French doors and decorative iron railings (only one survives). The ballroom wing, at the rear, is highlighted by tall, round-arch windows and decorative cast stone trim.

You'll enjoy knowing: One of the city's largest apartment developments at the time, the Normandie was promoted as "exclusive small apartments for particular people who want the best in location, service, equipment, home comforts" in a building located "in the finest residential section, walking distance to shops and theaters." The construction of this large complex signaled Alexander Street's dramatic change from impressive single-family houses to more commercial development in the early 20th century. The Normandie was across the street from the German Theological Seminary and the sprawling campus of Genesee Hospital. Unique in the city, the Normandie included its central apartment building, a ballroom wing and the attached "Normandie Court" apartments, whose larger units were accessed from Buena Place. By the 1930s, the building was advertised as the "Normandie Apartment-Hotel," with rooms available by the day, week, or month. Lectures, concerts, and club meetings were held in the ballroom. Public and private dining was available in the dining room. Residents during the first decades featured a mixture of celebrity, wealth and not a little mystery. Wealthy widows, business executives, single professional women fill the roster. Renowned aviator Blanche Stuart Scott lived here for a time until her death in 1970. In the 1970s and '80s, a dance studio and "The Budapest" Hungarian-American restaurant were tenants in the ballroom.

What you'll see inside: The ballroom apartment is in a spacious gathering area recently adapted to become one of the most unique living spaces in Rochester. A Normandie Court apartment is also featured – unfurnished, since a tenant was about to move in right after we filmed.

933 the U
Neighbors with Benefits

933 The U apartments

933 University Avenue

Managing company: Morgan Properties

Year Built: c. 2017

Architect: Hanlon Architects

Architectural Style: Early 20th-century Neo-Classical Revival

Look on the exterior: Located in a dramatic setting in the East Avenue Preservation District, the U apartments feature an interior courtyard and brick exteriors with traditional design detailing, such as decorative panels, round-headed dormers, and large expanses of glass.

You'll enjoy knowing: The U is a recently built apartment complex that is located on the north end of the original George D.B. Bonbright estate, a property that extends from East Ave., north to University Avenue. For many years, George D.B. Bonbright conducted the most successful investment firm in Rochester. The family of his wife, Isabelle Hart, were officers of the William Kimball Tobacco Company. Raised in Corn Hill, sisters Isabelle Hart Bonbright and Ruth Hart Fitch built substantial homes for their families at #950 and #1010 East Avenue. By the 1930s, a stucco-clad Tudor Revival house at the north end of the Bonbright property, was built for their married daughter, Mrs. John Kitchen and her family. Located at 933 University Ave., that Tudor Revival house (now offices for the U) was acquired by the late 1940s by the Monroe Voiture, Forty-and-Eight Club, a veteran's organization., that continued here until several years ago. The Forty-and-Eight Club sold their property to Morgan Development, who subsequently built the new apartment complex here, while retaining the Kitchen family's residence for their offices.

Why "Neighbors with Benefits?" All tenants in the U receive a complimentary membership to their next-door neighbor, the George Eastman Museum.

What you'll see inside: Two apartments will be visited. While they are beautifully designed, the common spaces for tenant socialization will blow you away, including gathering spots, the gym and the dog wash station.

The Nathaniel
Riverside Living

The Nathaniel apartments

Court Street, on southwest corner of South Avenue, Rochester, NY

Managing company: The Cabot Group

Year Built: 2018-'19

Architect: Hanlon Architects

Architectural Style: Early 21st-century Moderne

Look on the exterior: Located just south of the Rundel Memorial Library and next door to the Dinosaur-Bar-B-Que restaurant (former Lehigh Valley Railroad depot), this new, five-story building is a striking addition to the downtown riverfront. Contemporary design, brick cladding and generously placed windows for maximum visibility of the impressive city and river views characterize the exterior.

You'll enjoy knowing: Named for Colonel Nathaniel Rochester, founder of our city, this signature apartment building provides vistas that include a view, across the Genesee, to the Colonel's original One Hundred Acre Tract, on the west side of the river. The new apartment building, itself, is located on the old Rochester subway bed, which now provides parking space for the apartment residents. Prior to its use as a subway bed, this same site was the location of the original Erie Canal, from the 1820s 'til 1919, when the new Barge Canal was opened, south of the city. This riverfront location is adjacent to several historic resources that date from the city's two centuries of development. The former Johnson & Seymour millrace, built in the early 19th century, is located beneath the Dinosaur-Bar-B-Que restaurant. Although often described as a "subway," the rail line that ran underneath The Nathaniel was an inter-urban trolley, that extended from downtown, eastward past Cobbs Hill and out into Brighton, where it operated into the early 1950s. Much of that rail line was on the former Erie Canal bed, which, today, is the I-490 Expressway.

What you'll see inside: The Nathaniel offers a range of apartment styles, and has become home to young adults, retirees, and business professionals. We'll visit a modest-sized apartment occupied by a college student, and a spacious two-bedroom unit with expansive floor to ceiling windows and views for blocks.

Innovation Square
Former Xerox Tower

Innovation Square

100 Clinton Avenue South

Managing company Gallina Development Corporation

Year Built: 1968

Architect: Weldon, Becket and Associates, Los Angeles, CA

Architectural Style: Mid-Century Modern

Look on the exterior: This 30-story commercial skyscraper is distinguished by the bold, vertical “fins” of dark gray composite masonry. The office tower is set on a city block-size campus that also includes a separate theater, with contrasting white cladding. The spacious urban site features distinctive landscaping, which originally included an outdoor ice-skating rink.

You’ll enjoy knowing: This South Clinton Avenue site has experienced major transitions over the past century. From the late 19th to early 20th century, Rochester’s “theater district” was located along Clinton Avenue South, between East Main and East Broad Streets. Theater and movies were featured at venues such as the Lyceum Theatre and Loew’s Movie Theater, whose 3,500-seat capacity was described as the largest theater of its kind between New York and Chicago. In 1964, as part of the massive Urban Renewal initiative in the city, Loew’s Theater was demolished, in preparation for the construction of Xerox Tower. It was one of several modern office buildings erected downtown, during the city’s most active period of real estate development since the 1920s. The 30-story building served as the international headquarters of Xerox, which eventually moved its headquarters to Stamford, CT. The dramatic tower continued to house Xerox staff until 2013. In 2020, Gallina Development purchased the building, with plans for a \$32 million project, which will include housing for 450 upper level and graduate students from area colleges. This innovative plan will provide students with an alternative to traditional college campus living, in combination with opportunities to engage with local high-tech companies through internships and mentor programs.

What you’ll see inside: We’ll visit the EFPR Group, LLP, which commands two full floors of the building. You’ll discover how the company took full advantage of the windows and remarkable views, while honoring Rochester’s heritage. It’s also the only place in the building that has anew staircase connecting the two floors, complete with a surprise horticultural feature.

The Metropolitan *High Rise Lifestyle*

The Metropolitan

1 South Clinton Avenue

Managing Company: Gallina Development Corporation

Year Built: 1969-1973

Architect: John Graham and Company

Architectural Style: Mid-century Modern / Formalism

Look on the exterior: The Metropolitan was originally known as Lincoln Tower. Its signature white fins elegantly curve from the tower's plaza plinth passing beyond the roof reaching for the sky 392 feet above the street. Note how the center fin on each side is perfectly perpendicular to the tower, with each subsequent fin gradually rotating until forming a miter edge at the four corners of the building. The broad arched hood facing South Clinton Avenue was added as part of the 2015 renovation to provide a more formal and welcoming street-level entrance.

You'll enjoy knowing: The architecture firm, John Graham and Company, was also responsible for the design of Seattle's Space Needle. The elegant fins on the exterior of the building also serve a functional purpose with every other one containing a curved structural column or mechanical and electrical equipment. Perhaps the most well-known anecdote regarding the tower is the replacement of its white cladding. When completed in 1973, all of the vertical fins were clad in one-inch-thick slabs of Carrara marble. In 1980 one of the slabs was found lying on the roof. Inspection revealed the majority of the marble slabs had begun to bow and were at risk of falling. By 1984, and at a cost of \$18 million (70% of the original construction cost), the marble was removed and replaced with white enameled aluminum. Gallina Development Corporation purchased The Metropolitan in March of 2015. They currently have 87 apartments on 7 floors in the building and 16 floors of commercial office space with Bar Bantam in the lobby. Floors 24 - 26 are still in development.

What you'll see inside: We will explore apartments on the 21st and 23rd floor - recommended for those who do not have a fear of heights. The dramatic three-story lobby was originally crisscrossed by escalators which have been removed to open up the space. A 40 feet by 16 feet resin sculpture was created by LightArt, a Seattle-based art installation firm.

In the Rochester area? You are welcome to visit the lobby to see some of the features in person, especially when Bar Bantam reopens later this year. www.barbantam.com

The Mercantile on Main and The Commissary *Meet me Under the Clock*

The Mercantile on Main (former Sibley Department Store)

240 East Main Street

Year Built: 1904 – original department store. 1911; 1924 – office tower building

Architects J. Foster Warner

Architectural Style: Chicago School of Architecture

Look on the exterior: You're looking at two buildings: the 6-story Sibley, Lindsay & Curr Company department store and the 12-story office tower on the corner. The first six stories of the tower were completed in 1911, when it was called the "Mercantile Building," which expanded the department store to North St. and created a full 13 acres of floor space. The optimism of the 1920s resulted in a further enlargement of the store and six additional stories were added to the 1911 building, resulting in the current 12-story office tower. When completed in 1924, this was the largest office building in the city and dominated central downtown. Note the windows above ground level. The "Chicago window," which is a three-part window consisting of a large, fixed center panel flanked by two smaller, double-hung sash windows. This combines the functions of light-gathering and natural ventilation; the single central pane was fixed, while the two surrounding panes were operable.

You'll enjoy knowing: On the Main Street side, be sure to check out the small concrete plaque, just above the fifth floor. It's not easy to see that the building is named after the Filon family. Why the Filon family? When a disastrous fire destroyed the original department store down the street, Sibley's wanted to rebuild at this site. They were able to acquire all of the land except one parcel – owned by Michael Filon. Negotiations finally settled on the sale, with the stipulation of naming the building after the landowner. We're not sure how the family felt about the plaque, visible from only a few spots. But if you visit Mt. Hope Cemetery, you will discover that the Filon family monument cannot be missed – it's one of the largest and most expensive on the grounds.

A major project for architect J. Foster Warner, Sibley's was one of the most prominent department stores in the U.S. and a meeting place for generations. Today, Sibley Square is a 1,100,000-square foot mixed-use property. In the last five years, Winn Companies has invested over \$100,000,000 in renovations, including all new energy efficient windows, a new central HVAC system, state of the art elevators, mechanicals and high-tech security with class-A office finishes. It's home to offices, 104 luxury apartments and 72 55+ living apartments.

What you'll see inside: This year the tour is focusing on the building's newest developments: The Mercantile on Main and The Commissary.

Mercantile on Main: "Meet me Under the Clock" is a phrase familiar to many Rochesterians. The clock inside Sibley Department Store, was an easy to find gathering spot. The Mercantile on Main is a curated collection of some of the best food and drink this town has to offer. It features seven kitchen vendors, offers a cashless environment, and was created with social distancing in the forefront of our design. There's a gaming area, and rooms for pop up events and retail. Today you can once again meet under the clock – eat under, it in fact as the original clock is suspended over the dining area. Visit their website for hours, and to order in advance if you like: <https://www.sibleysquareroc.com/sibley-square-rochester-ny/mercantile>

The Commissary: This is the region's first kitchen incubator and the only shared kitchen permitted in Monroe County. It's a social entrepreneurship enterprise aimed at facilitating the creation of new food business ownership opportunities. The Rochester Downtown Development Corporation (RDDC) is the project lead. Membership in The Commissary provides aspiring entrepreneurs with shared kitchens, food industry specific business assistance and more. The goal is to help build great food companies, create jobs, and strengthen our regional food economy. Their website provides all the details, including a list of current members - you may wish to patronize these up-and-coming food businesses. <https://www.rochestercommissary.org/>

The Landmark Society 2021 (Virtual) Inside Downtown Tour – March 2021

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