

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received AUG 19 1983
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic St. Luke's A.M.E. Zion Church
and/or common Durham Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church

2. Location

street & number 174 East Eagle Street not for publication
city, town Buffalo vicinity of congressional district
state New York code 036 county Erie code 029

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>NA</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<u>NA</u> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Durham Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church
street & number 174 East Eagle Street
city, town Buffalo vicinity of _____ state New York

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Erie County Clerk's Office
street & number 25 Delaware Avenue
city, town Buffalo state New York

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N.Y. Statewide Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date August 14, 1981 federal state county local
depository for survey records Division for Historic Preservation
city, town Albany state New York

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <u>NA</u>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Durham Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church is sited on a 3/4 acre parcel of land on the eastern fringe of downtown Buffalo's commercial and industrial district. The neighborhood in which the church is located was originally, in the mid-nineteenth century, a tightly knit residential community of freed blacks; presently, the neighborhood is characterized by modern commercial buildings. Large-scale, modern structures dominate the immediate vicinity: east of the property is a medical facility, south is a multi-story housing project, west is the Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation Building.

Designed in 1920 by the architectural firm of Louis Greenstein and constructed in 1922 by the contractor William A. Walker, the brick building with sandstone trim faces south on Eagle Street. The foundation of the red brick structure is a raised, rusticated sandstone basement, above which is a smooth stone course. The building is rectangular in plan and has a gable roof. The most prominent feature of the front facade is a square bell tower engaged at the southeast corner. The tower is characterized by a crenellated parapet topped with stone trim; below the parapet is a stone course. In the upper portion of the tower is a pair of tall, louvred, Tudor-arched vents. The lintels below the vents extend to create a stone course which encircles the exposed elevations of the tower. Directly below this course is a rectangular window surrounded by stone trim with quoining. Granite stairsteps lead up to the entrance, centrally located in the south facade of the tower. A stone Tudor arch surrounds the double doorway. The original wooden doors have been replaced with steel doors.

A large, stone-trimmed, Tudor-arched stained-glass window characterizes the main block of the front facade. The original panes of stained glass and the tracery were destroyed by severe winds; glass block and plain glass panes have since replaced the original stained glass. Brick buttresses with stone trim flank the window.

The east facade is characterized by six distinct sections which are separated by brick buttresses with stone trim. Each of the four center sections consists of a pair of tall, narrow, Gothic-arched stained-glass windows with oak mullions. Each pair has a flat-arched brick lintel and a stone sill. Basement level fenestration consists of four pairs of 6/6 windows. The south section of the east elevation is defined by the side elevation of the bell tower. Fenestration and architectural detailing is identical to that of the tower's south facade with the exception of a window where the door is located. This window, like the one above it, is surrounded by stone trim with quoining. The northernmost section of the east elevation consists of the church's secondary entrance. The double doorway is surrounded by a stone Tudor arch. A brick parapet with stone trim crowns the one-story projecting entrance porch.

The center four sections of the six-section west elevation are identical to those on the east. The front, southernmost section is identical to the central four. The northern section consists of a 6/6 window with a stone sill, above which is a small, 3/3 window, also with a stone sill.

The rear elevation features a tripartite stained-glass window surrounded by a brick Tudor arch. To the west of the window is a brick chimney. Brick buttresses with stone trim, as seen on the front facade, also characterize the rear elevation.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
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St. Lukes A.M.E. Zion Church

Continuation sheet Buffalo, Erie Co.

Item number 7

Page 2

The modest interior retains a substantial amount of original material. A center aisle leads to the altar, above which is the choir loft. The loft is illuminated from behind by the tripartite stained-glass window of the north elevation. Spanning the south elevation is a large balcony. The plaster walls of the sanctuary are painted off-white. The oak doors and door frames are stained a dark brown to complement the light-colored walls. The pews, balcony, altar rails and altar furnishings are also oak.

With the exception of the loss of the large stained-glass window of the front facade, the church retains its architectural integrity.

In January 1979, the Buffalo Landmark and Preservation Board designated St. Lukes a city landmark.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1920 **Builder/Architect** Louis Greenstein, architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The St. Luke's A.M.E. Zion Church is historically significant as the oldest surviving church associated with Buffalo A.M.E. Zion congregations. Taking responsibility for the spiritual, educational and economic well being of Buffalo's black population since its founding in 1906, the St. Luke's congregation played an important role in the black community as a focal point of the educational, social, political and religious activities of unskilled southern blacks who had migrated north at the turn of the century in search of industrial employment.

The congregation of the St. Luke's A.M.E. Zion Church originated from the first black congregation organized in Buffalo, that of the Bethel A.M.E. church, which was organized in Buffalo in 1831. In 1901 some members of the Bethel A.M.E. Church, dissatisfied with the church's locale and the removal of their pastor, withdrew from that congregation and organized the People's Reformed Methodist Church. Services were held at 149 Clinton Street. In 1906 they united with the A.M.E. Zion Conference and formally changed their name to St. Luke's A.M.E. Zion Church. The organization of an A.M.E. Zion congregation in Buffalo occurred late in the denomination's history.

The African Methodist Episcopal Zion denomination was founded in 1796 when a group of free black members withdrew from New York City's John Street Methodist Church because of discrimination in seating and receiving Communion, as well as a desire to worship together among themselves. The first church building for the young group was constructed in 1800 in New York City, and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was chartered in 1801. Membership increased steadily in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Formal ties with the Methodist Episcopal Church were broken in 1820 and A.M.E. Zion organizations were established in Flushing, New York, New Haven, Connecticut and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The new denomination, an early advocate of abolition, became popular among free northern blacks, and A.M.E. Zion churches were organized throughout the northeast. By 1822, eight churches had been created, and by 1843, there were nineteen in New York State alone.

The early twentieth century activities of St. Luke's were typical of the black churches of the nineteenth century. In a society where blacks were frequently discouraged if not prohibited from public interaction with whites, the church was not only a house of worship but a social and cultural center as well. Valuable public services were also provided by the church. In the years prior to World War I, when southern blacks were migrating to the northern cities and villages, the black church played an important role in the acculturation process. As did other churches, St. Luke's helped rural blacks adapt to urban life. As a social and cultural center it strengthened the sense of community and family amongst the struggling minority. Educational programs, including a particularly noteworthy employment training school for black youth, were organized to meet the community's needs. Classes were taught in domestic duties, the field most accessible to blacks at the turn of the century.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .75

Quadrangle name Buffalo NE

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	7	6	7	4	0	6	0	4	7	4	9	8	4	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

St. Luke's A.M.E. Zion Church is located on a plot of land measuring 329.0 feet long by 100.0 feet wide. See attached survey map.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

NA

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Claire L. Ross, Field Representative

organization N.Y.S. Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

date August 1983

Agency Building #1

street & number Empire State Plaza

telephone 518-474-0479

city or town Albany

state New York

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Alvin Lehman

title Commissioner

date

8/17/83

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Delores Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date

9/15/83

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

St. Luke's A.M.E. Zion Church

Continuation sheet Buffalo, Erie Co.

Item number 8

Page 2

The church building now occupied by St. Luke's was constructed in 1920. (During the years prior to its completion, services were held at 585 Michigan Street. The 149 Clinton Street address was used only during the few early years that the congregation was known as the People's Reformed Methodist Church.) The site chosen for the location of the new edifice was in the heart of Buffalo's active and thriving black community in the Michigan and William Streets area. By 1920 the black population, having increased rapidly with Buffalo's industrial expansion during World War I, exceeded 5,000. It was an era characterized by successful black entertainers and big bands and glamorous nightclubs and cabarets rivaling those of Harlem in New York City. The cornerstone of the new church was laid in 1920 and construction was completed two years later during the service of Reverend Henry Durham. St. Luke's became Buffalo's first black congregation to build its own place of worship; previously, black congregations traditionally occupied existing structures. The cost of construction, \$50,000, was partially subsidized by wealthy Buffalonians, many of whom were the employers of the residents of the community. The rest was financed by a mortgage on which payment was made for the next twenty-two years.

St. Luke's remained an important center of the thriving community during the prosperous "twenties"; during the years of the Great Depression it was a focal point of community support as it administered the social programs funded by the Works Project Administration (W.P.A.). Another successful program organized by St. Luke's was an adult education class which served 16,000 students annually.

An expansion of the congregation in the late 1950s caused the members to relocate to a larger existing structure on Ferry Street. A loyal few chose to remain in the historic structure and permission was granted by the bishop of their conference. In honor of the pastor who oversaw the building program in 1922, St. Luke's was renamed the Durham Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church.

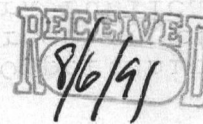
The historically significant Durham Memorial remains a local landmark to the pride and accomplishments of Buffalo's black population, not only as a house of worship but as a social and cultural center as well. Associated with Buffalo's first black congregation, it recalls the historical development and the struggles and achievements of a significant minority group in the city.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Durham Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church
Buffalo, Erie County

Section 9 page 1



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brief History of St. Luke's Church.

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Buffalo Courier. September 17, 1922.

Buffalo Express. May 20, 1906.

Carpenter, Niles. "Nationality, Color and Economic Opportunity in the City of Buffalo." Published under the direction of the Committee on Publications, by the Rosewell Park Publication fund of the University of Buffalo, 1927.

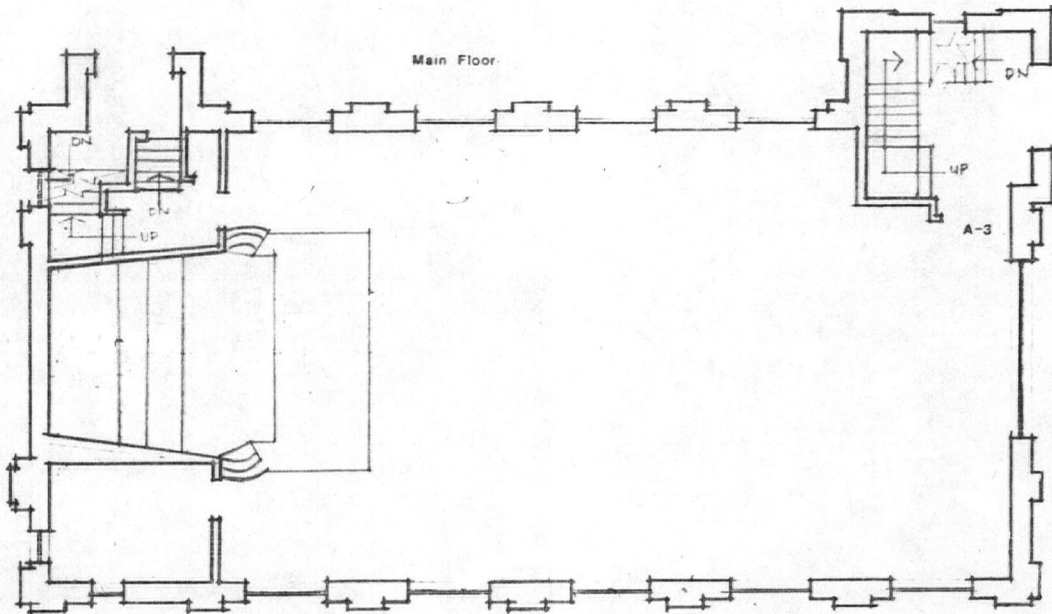
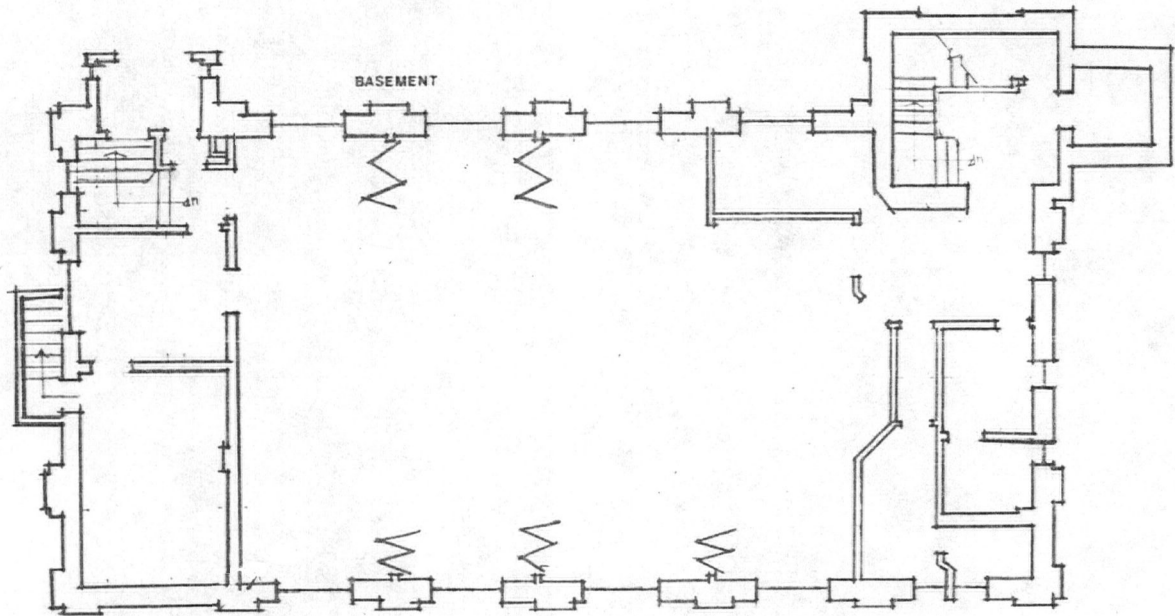
Jackson, E. Franklin. My Church. Official Pamphlet of St. Luke's A.M.E. Zion Church. 1946.

United States Census. 1980.

Walls, William J. The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church - The Reality of the Black Church. Charlotte, N.C.: A.M.E. Zion Publishing House. 1974.

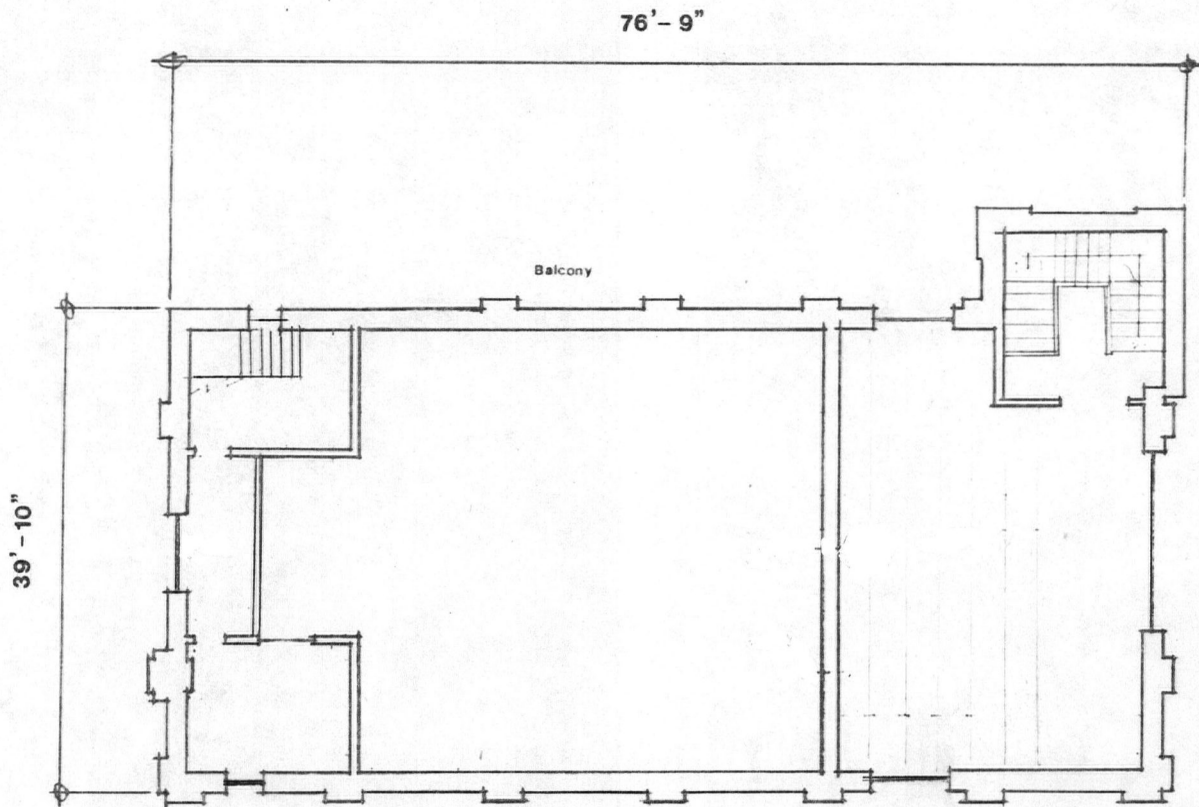
Durham Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church
174 East Eagle Street
Buffalo, Erie County

Floor plan

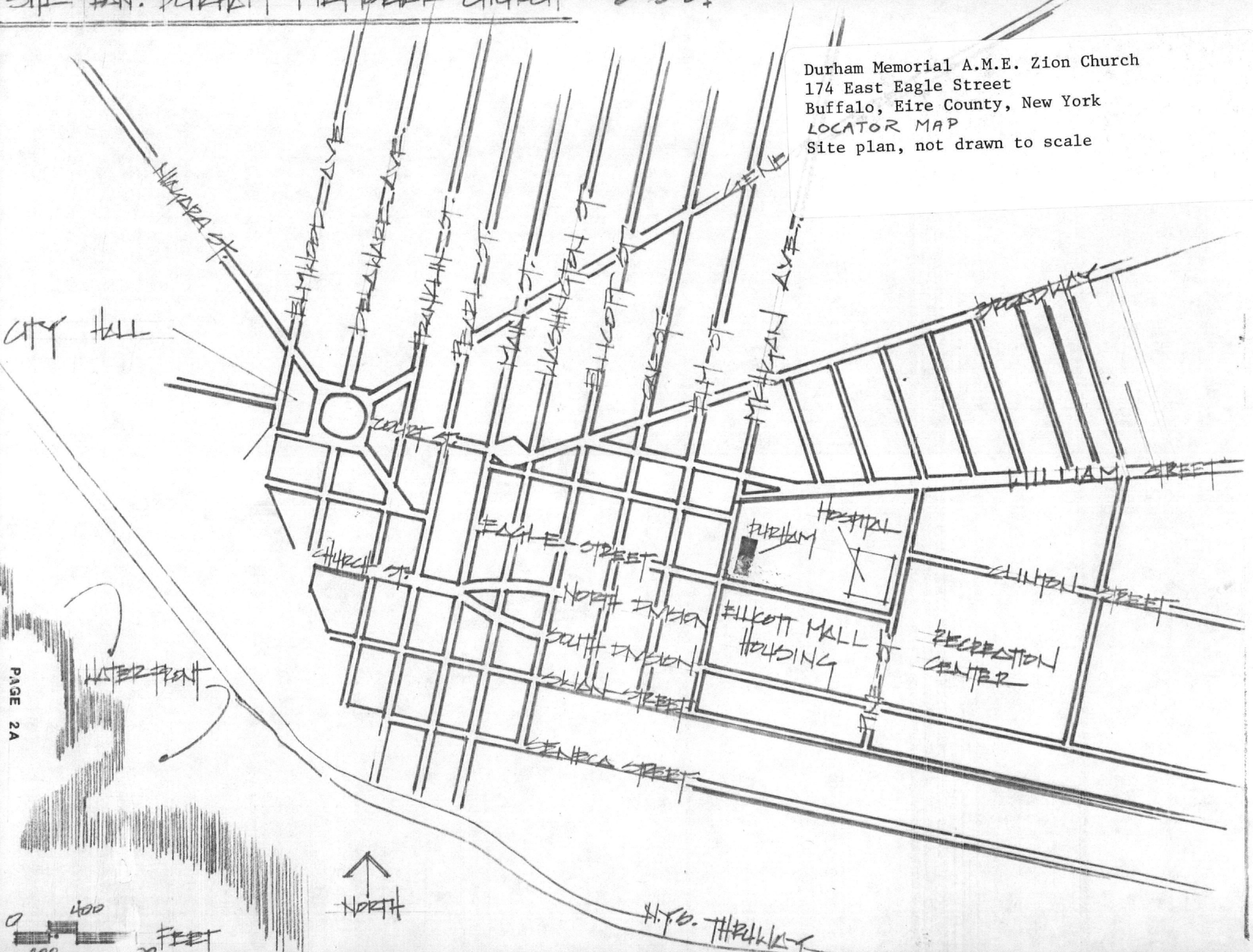


Durham Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church
174 East Eagle Street
Buffalo, Erie County

floor plan and building dimensions

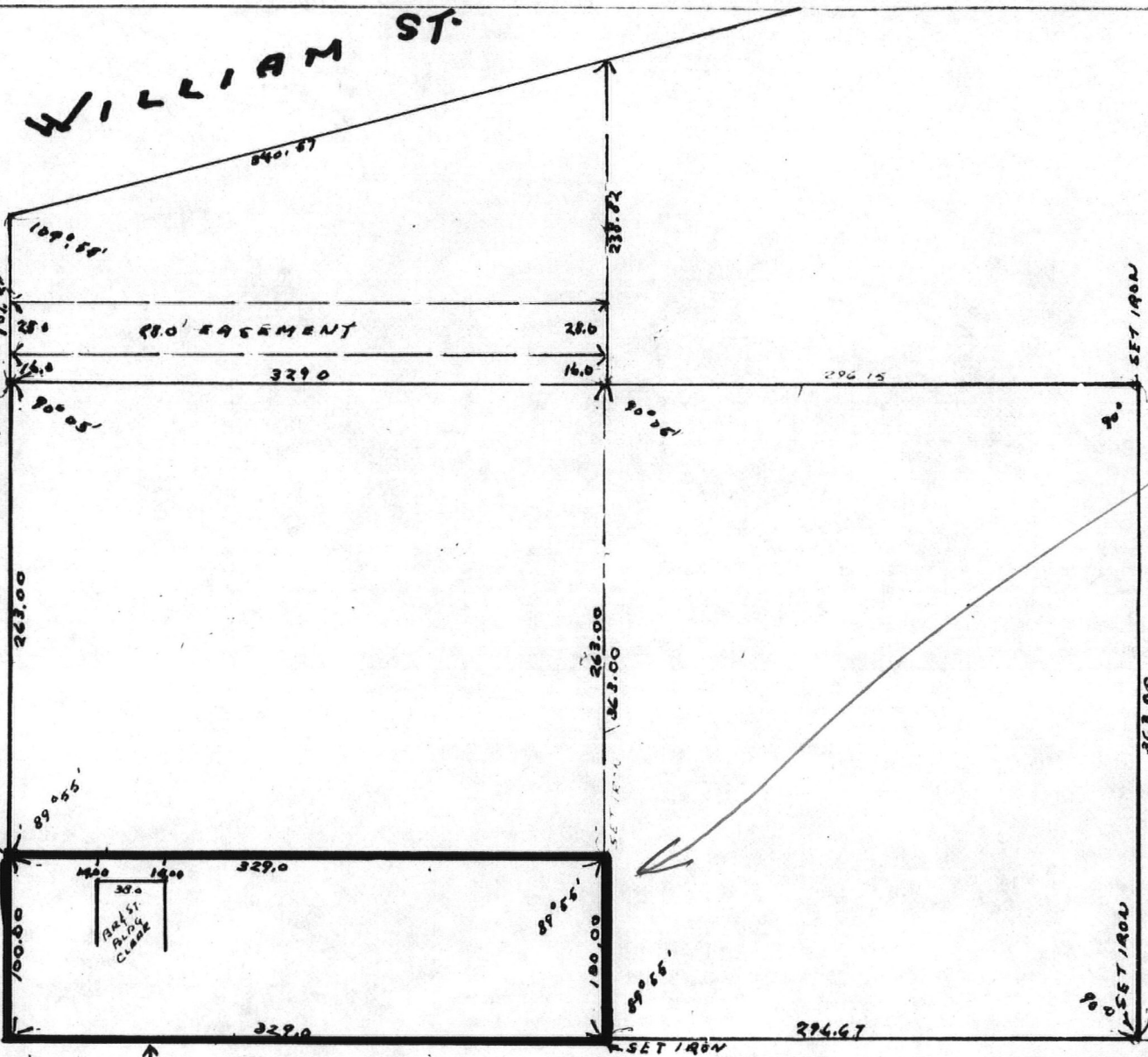


Durham Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church
174 East Eagle Street
Buffalo, Eire County, New York
LOCATOR MAP
Site plan, not drawn to scale



WILLIAM ST.

MICHIGAN (66.0' ROW) AVE.



NORTH

St. Luke's A.M.E. Zion Church
 174 East Eagle Street
 Buffalo, Erie County, New York

Lot plan with property measurements
 May 25, 1976

nomination boundary

EAGLE (66.0' R.O.W.) STREET

SURVEY OF PARCELS 44, 49 BLOCK 1 OF THE URBAN RENEWAL CITY OF BUFFALO, ON LOT 109 COUNTY OF ERIE, STATE OF NEW YORK	
FILE NO.	0-1219
FB NO.	192-73
SCALE	
DATE	MAY 25, 1976
SHEET NO.	
KREMBIEL · GUAY · RUGG · HALL ENGINEERS · SURVEYORS 1808 NIAGARA FALLS BLVD. TONAWANDA, N.Y. 14215	

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Durham Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church
Erie County
NEW YORK

Working No. AUG 19 1983
Fed. Reg. Date: 2-7-84
Date Due: 9/15/83 - 10/3/83
Action: ACCEPT 9/15/83
 RETURN
Entered in the National Register REJECT
Federal Agency: _____

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review: sample request appeal NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____
Reviewer _____
Discipline _____
Date _____
_____ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: _____ technical corrections cited below
_____ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? yes no

7. Description

Condition	Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	date _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	
	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

8. Significance

Period _____ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates _____ Builder/Architect _____
Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

_____ national _____ state _____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _____

title _____ date _____

13. Other

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____



4.

Durham Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church

174 East Eagle Street

Buffalo, Erie County, New York

Photo by: Gregory Barber, 8/82

Neg. at: Division for Historic Preservation

View: Facade, Eagle Street

1 of 5



Durham Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church
174 East Eagle Street
Buffalo, Erie County, New York
Photo by: Gregory Barber, 8/82
Neg. at: Division for Historic Preservation
View: East elevation

2 of 5



Durham Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church
174 East Eagle Street
Buffalo, ~~ERIE~~ County, New York
Photo by: Gregory Barber, 8/82
Neg. at: Division for Historic Preservation
View: West elevation

3 of 5



Durham Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church

174 East Eagle Street

Buffalo, Erie County, New York

Photo by: Gregory Barber, 8/82

Neg. at: Division for Historic Preservation

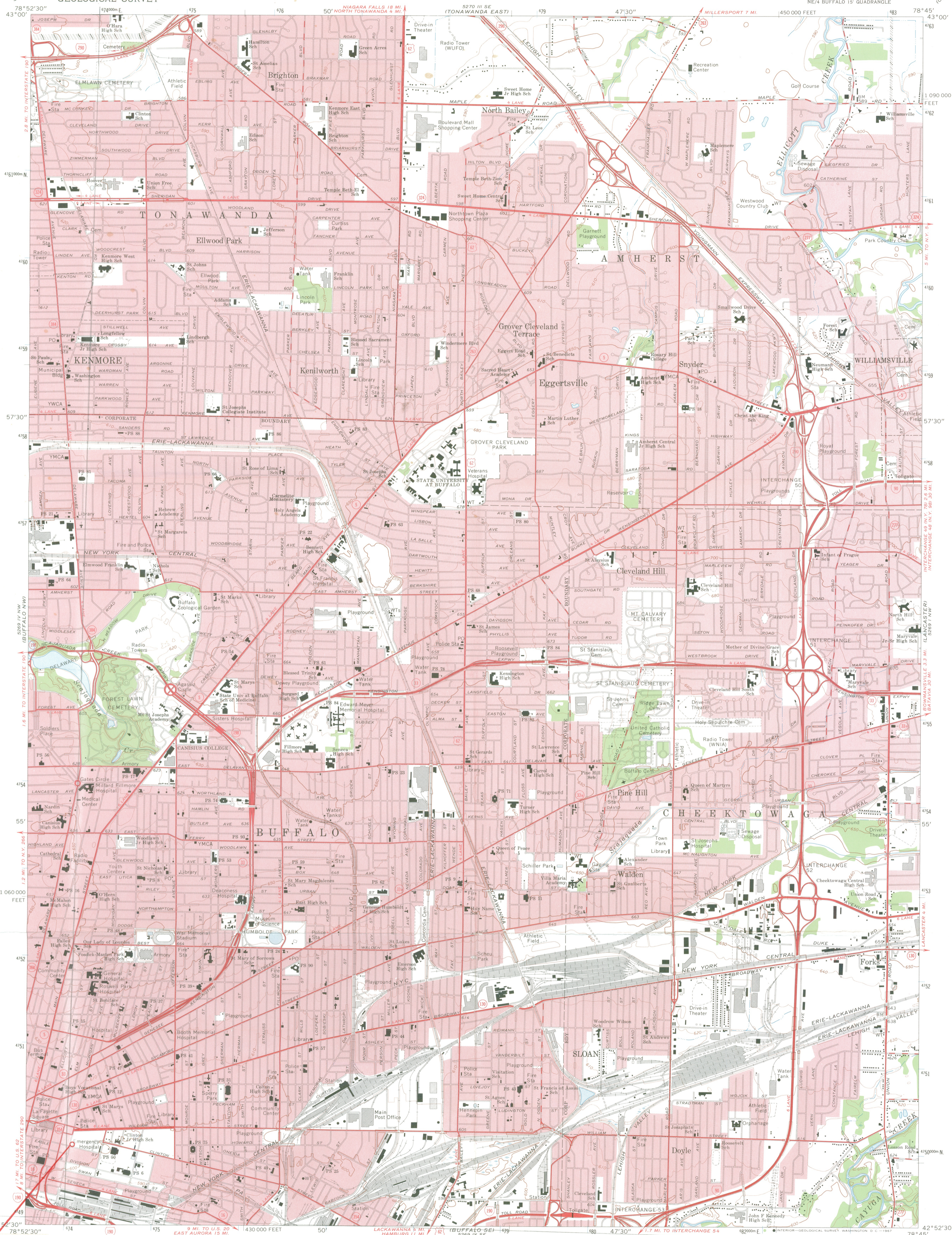
View: South elevation

40f5



Durham Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church
174 East Eagle Street
Buffalo, Erie County, New York
Photo by: Gregory Barber, 8/82
Neg. at: Division for Historic Preservation
View: Interior feature

50f5



Durham Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church
174 East Eagle Street
Buffalo, Erie County
UTM References (zone 17)
Easting 674060 Northing 4749840

1. edited, and published by the Geological Survey
2. in cooperation with New York Department of Public Works
3. by USGS, USC&GS, USCE, and U.S. Lake Survey
4. topography compiled by U.S. Corps of Engineers from
5. photostereograms taken 1942. Topography by
6. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1948. Revised 1965
7. projection. 1927 North American datum
8. foot grid based on New York coordinate system, west zone
9. of the Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
10. zone 17, shown in blue
11. Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

SCALE 1:24,000
CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL
ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———
Interstate Route ——— U.S. Route ——— State Route ———
QUADRANGLE LOCATION
NEW YORK
1965
AMS 5269 IV NE-SERIES V821

BUFFALO NE, N. Y.
NE/4 BUFFALO 15' QUADRANGLE
N4252.5—W7845/7.5
1965
AMS 5269 IV NE-SERIES V821

HENRY J. NOWAK
37TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

COMMITTEES:
PUBLIC WORKS AND
TRANSPORTATION
SMALL BUSINESS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

January 8, 1982

ROOM 1514
LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
TELEPHONE: (202) 225-3306

HOME OFFICE:
U.S. COURTHOUSE
BUFFALO, N.Y. 14202
TELEPHONE: (716) 853-4131



Ms. Claire Ross
Division for Historic Preservation
Agency Building #1
Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12238

Dear Ms. Ross:

It gives me great pleasure to write this letter on behalf of the Durham Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, 174 Eagle Street, Buffalo, New York, and its congregation.

Reverend Michael E. Ellis wrote early in 1981 to advise me of the church's desire to apply for historic designation through your good offices. I have monitored the progress of their application throughout the initial submission phase and am very pleased with the courtesy and support your office has given.

Durham Memorial AME Zion Church building has been the center of religious and social activities within the minority community of Buffalo since the church was built. As you may be aware, it has served as a sentinel of hope and inspiration during those difficult years in the early 1900's.

I am certainly pleased to add my support of Durham Memorial AME Zion Church's application for designation as an historic landmark in the City of Buffalo.

With thanks for your consideration, I am

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Henry J. Nowak". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

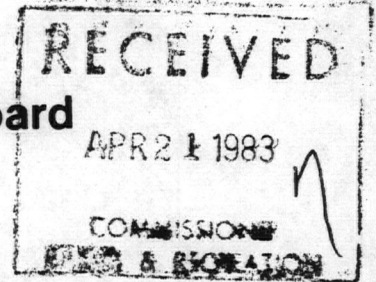
HENRY J. NOWAK
Member of Congress



*Acc
Hawke
OL*

Buffalo Landmark and Preservation Board

April 19, 1983



Orin Lehman, Commissioner
N.Y.S. Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
Agency Building 1, Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12238

re: Durham Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church
174 E. Eagle St., Buffalo, Erie County

Dear Sir:

The Buffalo Landmark & Preservation Board at its regular meeting on April 14, 1983 voted unanimously to support the nomination of the above-referenced property to the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

The Board designated this building a local landmark on January 11, 1979 in recognition of its long and significant contributions to Buffalo's history.

Yours very truly,

BUFFALO LANDMARK & PRESERVATION BOARD

Olaf W. Shelgren Jr.

by Olaf W. Shelgren, Jr.
chairman

OWS,Jr:j

cc: Claire Ross
Secretary BLPB

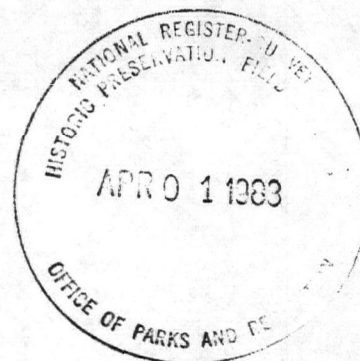
Durham Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
174 EAST EAGLE STREET
BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14204
Phones

ROBERT E. LINDER, Minister
141 Chatham Avenue

Office: (716) 856-4943
Residence: (716) 877-4278

May 17, 1982

Mrs. Clarie L. Ross
NYS Office of Parks & Recreation
Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller
Empire State Plaza



Dear Mrs. Ross:

Enclosed are all of the necessary documents for designation as an Historical Landmark based on the social and cultural value to this community.

We request that the designation be given in the common name of Durham Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, rather than the historical name of St. Luke A.M.E. Zion Church.

Thank you for your assistance in this historic event for Durham.

Retha Barber
Retha Barber
Coordinator-Historic Preservation

Sincerely,
Robert E. Linder
Robert E. Linder
Pastor

REL/mas