



**Preservation
League of NYS**

Genesee Valley Park Named One of New York's "Seven to Save"

This biennial list from the Preservation League of NYS highlights the most at-risk historic places across the state

Contacts:

Katy Peace, Preservation League Director of Communications

kpeace@preservenys.org | 518.462.5658 ext. 17

JoAnn Beck, Chairperson of Rochester Olmsted Parks Alliance

jbeck26737@aol.com | 585-281-6591

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

([images](#))

Rochester, NY, 05/16/2022 — Since 1999, the Preservation League has highlighted New York's most endangered historic sites through its Seven to Save program. The League works closely with local advocates over the course of the two-year listing and beyond, raising visibility, assisting with advocacy, and providing extensive technical services. **The League is thrilled to include Genesee Valley Park on the 2022-2023 Seven to Save list.** This listing follows an earlier inclusion of the Olmsted-designed pedestrian bridges of Genesee Valley Park on the 2014 Seven to Save list. The League is eager to continue working with local advocates to protect this important Rochester landmark.

In response to this listing, **JoAnn Beck of the Rochester Olmsted Parks Alliance** said, "We wish to acknowledge the historic designed landscape of Genesee Valley Park as vital to the scenic quality of the river corridor and to celebrate it as part of our Olmsted heritage."

Genesee Valley Park was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted in 1890, and it remains a well-used and defining community landscape. An original aspect of the park's design is a woodland buffer that runs from Elmwood Avenue to the Erie Canal next to the University of Rochester. Genesee Valley Park is publicly owned by the City of Rochester, but this stretch of woodland is privately owned by the University. This intact, mature woodland buffer is integral to the scenic quality of the park. Olmsted's design integrity is under threat by a proposal to clear over an acre and a half to build a warehouse plus another .6-acre paved loading area. The University's project would result in an irremediable loss of scenic quality from key public viewpoints. If this current proposal does not proceed, the site remains zoned for, and subject to development by the university.

Naturalistic designed landscapes like this one are often less valued than their manicured counterparts, leaving them vulnerable to a continuous threat of incremental loss. This Olmsted bicentennial year provides an opportunity to articulate a preservation ethic regarding undervalued historic landscapes, and the League will work with local stakeholders to advocate for proper stewardship of this important piece of Rochester's historic park system.

"Alleviating threats and in some cases outright saving these seven sites from demolition will make for challenging approaches," said **Preservation League Seven to Save Committee**



Preservation League of NYS

Chair Caroline Rob Zaleski. “The Preservation League staff are up to the task, as has been shown with the Seven to Save program’s remarkable 20-year track record in forming partnerships to help save and protect historic resources in New York State. Our selection committee chose to feature a diverse range of sites: a small African American church reflecting optimism and ingenuity; a Frederick Law Olmsted park during Olmsted’s bicentennial year; three urban districts – rife with history and varied important architecture; a recently closed 400-acre State hospital complex on Lake Seneca; and lastly a wooded site in Eastern Long Island, where the extant studios of two important Abstract Expressionist artists wait to be restored for public view.”

“The individual sites included on this year’s Seven to Save list embody key preservation issues affecting places across New York State,” said **Preservation League President Jay DiLorenzo.** “From the negative environmental impact of senseless demolition to bringing little-known, but important, histories to light, the League is excited to work alongside on-the-ground advocates to save each of these seven at-risk places.”

2022-2023 Seven to Save List

- **Thomas Memorial AME Zion Church, Watertown, Jefferson County**
Threat: Deterioration; Demolition
- **Genesee Valley Park, Rochester, Monroe County**
Threat: Demolition; Development Pressure; Lack of Public Awareness; Loss of Visual/Architectural Integrity
- **Proposed South of Union Square Historic District, Manhattan, New York County**
Threat: Demolition; Development Pressure; Loss of Visual/Architectural Integrity
- **Penn Station Neighborhood, Manhattan, New York County**
Threat: Development pressure; Demolition
- **Downtown Oneonta Historic District, Oneonta, Otsego County**
Threat: Demolition; Deterioration; Lack of Public Awareness; Loss of Visual/Architectural Integrity; Vacancy
- **Willard State Hospital, Ovid, Seneca County**
Threat: Demolition; Deterioration; Development Pressure; Lack of Public Awareness; Loss of Visual/Architectural Integrity; Vacancy
- **James Brooks / Charlotte Park Home & Studios, East Hampton, Suffolk County**
Threat: Demolition; Deterioration; Lack of Public Awareness; Vacancy

The League collaborates with property owners, elected officials, and other stakeholders to craft preservation strategies and put these plans into action. Through partnerships with groups and individuals, threats to dozens of at-risk buildings, landscapes, downtowns, and neighborhoods have been reduced, and in many cases, eliminated by the Preservation League’s Seven to Save listing and subsequent actions

For more information about the Seven to Save program and this year’s list, please visit preservenys.org/seven-to-save

Interviews with representatives from the Preservation League and all the Seven to Save sites are available by request.



Preservation League of NYS

About the Preservation League of New York State

Since its founding in 1974, the Preservation League has built a reputation for action and effectiveness. Our goal has been to preserve our historic buildings, districts, and landscapes and to build a better New York, one community at a time. The Preservation League of New York State invests in people and projects that champion the essential role of preservation in community revitalization, sustainable economic growth, and the protection of our historic buildings and landscapes. We lead advocacy, economic development, and education programs across the state.

Connect with us at preservenys.org, facebook.com/preservenys, instagram.com/preservenys, and youtube.com/c/PreservationLeague

About Rochester Olmsted Parks Alliance

An alliance of organizations related to Frederick Law Olmsted-designed parks, squares and landscapes in Rochester, New York, to promote programs and information related to these rich resources.

###