



By Mark Sommer  
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## **Repairs underway at H.H. Richardson complex**

The two most severely damaged buildings in the Richardson Olmsted Complex are getting overdue attention.

Gaping holes in the slate roof of Building 39, a former women's ward designed by H.H. Richardson, are being patched. Late this month, work is expected to get under way on a support structure to stabilize the smaller Building 43, designed by E.B. Green. The roof of the structure, a former kitchen, also will be repaired.

"The stabilization work is moving steadily along, with the more straightforward work like roof patching, fencing and added security taking priority," said Eva Hassett, a Richardson Center Corp. board member.

The 13-member Richardson board, headed by Buffalo News Publisher Stanford Lipsey, was established in July 2006 by then-Gov. George E. Pataki to determine a reuse of the architectural landmark and to renovate it using \$76.5 million in state funds.

Except for the twin-towered Administration Building, which closed in 1994, the sprawling stone and brick structures Richardson designed for the 19th century National Historic Landmark have gone unused for 34 years.

Other work includes roof repairs on Buildings 10 and 45, a security fence erected last October around Building 43 and an electrical survey to determine cost-effective methods to provide electricity, install a fire alarm system and boost security at the historic buildings.

The engineering firm Superstructures also is evaluating all the connector links and producing a plan to stabilize the collapsing corridor between Buildings 39 and 40. Work is expected to begin next month and take two months.

Planning for the Richardson Olmsted Complex's Architecture and Visitor Center also is said to be progressing.

Stabilization work by the State Dormitory Authority was made possible through a \$2.1 million Empire State Development grant, continuing the work it began in 2004 and 2005. A prioritized list of needs was developed by the design firm Goody Clancy and the engineering firm Simpson Gumpertz and Heger.

Both companies are on schedule to complete a comprehensive study by June. It is expected to provide a thorough evaluation of each building and of the grounds, designed by landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted.

The study will help guide the complex-wide master plan expected to get under way soon. Consultants are to be chosen before a public meeting at 6 p.m. April 16 in the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society auditorium.

The master plan is expected to adhere to many of the ideas posited last May by the Washington, D.C.-based Urban Land Institute.

The panel of experts — including architects, urban planners, land developers and economic development specialists — spent a week in Buffalo before developing recommendations for restoring the buildings and grounds.