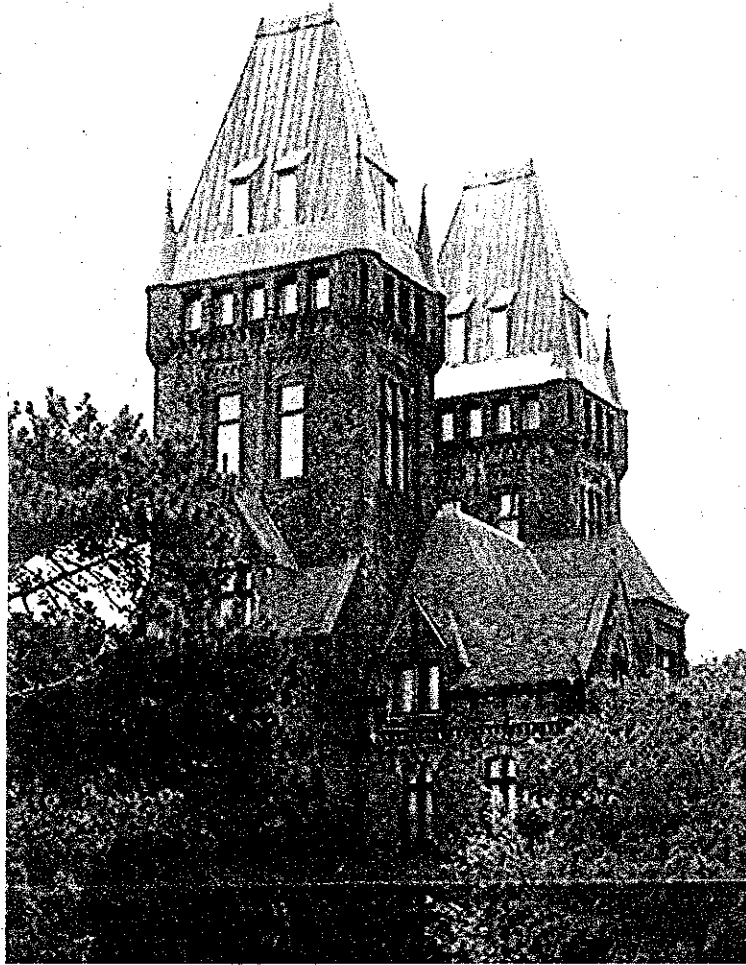


# The Richardson Olmsted Complex – Rehabilitation of An Architectural Jewel



phases of the stabilization process of the Master Plan.

The Richardson Olmsted Complex is presently working on the rehabilitation of the buildings designed by H.H. Richardson as well as the surrounding landscape designed by Frederick Law Olmsted in 1871 by implementing the Master Plan. Many architectural historians consider Richardson one of America's greatest architects because of his revival of the Romanesque style of architecture, which included his own variations. Richardson's Romanesque features round arches framing window and door openings, a heaviness in style, stone construction, cavernous door openings and bands of windows. Towers characterized about 75 percent of Richardson's buildings as seen in the two towers of the Buffalo State Hospital, which were used as the administration buildings for the facility. The two enormous towers, each 185 feet tall, were never intended to house any functions, and to this day are unfinished. The identical towers are the main focal point for the complex because of their unique architectural design. The landscape of the original 91 acre ground designed by Olmsted is also included in the rehabilitation plan.

The complete Master Plan is an amazing, innovative, comprehensive concept which involves transforming the area into the ROC, which will encompass a Boutique Hotel, an Architectural Center, a Visitors Center, and an Event and Conference Space. The goals of the Master Plan are to benefit the people in



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adjacent areas, revitalize and complement the surrounding community, and allow the site to be publicly accessible. They plan to implement this plan by rehabilitating the south lawn, refocusing on building 45, or the two towers building, extending the Olmsted Parks System, and investing in the north quadrant. The Visitor's and Architecture Center concept features a visitor's center to orient the public to the complex, the Museum district, and related attractions to the Buffalo Niagara region. The Center will focus on three stories: our city, our architecture, and the building. The ROC would have educational programming, community programming, possible light/sound shows, and outside temporary art exhibits. The possibility of the complex for academic purposes such as classroom settings

and administration sites is also included in the plan.

Phase One of the stabilization process includes the sealing of roofs on four buildings, fencing around building 43, October storm tree removal, and the stabilization of building 43 – all of which are complete; lighting and smoke detection and electrical power projects which are underway; and ongoing security. In addition, the next steps of the stabilization process, which have already begun, include the elimination of water infiltration in order to prevent further deterioration.

The rehabilitation of this important architectural building and complex symbolizes an awakening and a healing for Buffalo. Buffalo and its people are ready to embrace their identities and begin anew.

**By Kathleen Johnson**

Buffalo's Renaissance is underway, and one of the most significant projects in the works is the rehabilitation of the Richardson Olmsted Complex into

one of the city's foremost tourist attractions in the cultural district of the Elmwood Strip. Formerly the Buffalo State Hospital, the Richardson Olmsted Complex has already begun the

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