



# Northampton Street

## Artspace Buffalo

### Parcel Inventory

| Address         | Type   | Condition | Comments                               | Recommendations             |
|-----------------|--------|-----------|--|-----------------------------|
| 29 Northampton  | Garage | Good      | City of Buffalo, character brickwork   | possibly retain in Artspace |
| 38 Northampton  | Double | Fair/Good | brilliant Victorian details            |                             |
| 43 Northampton  | Double | Good      | Beyond Childcare                       |                             |
| 51 Northampton  | Single | Excellent | maintains lots on 45-49 Northampton    |                             |
| 61 Northampton  | Single | Excellent | 1993 suburban home, inappropriate      |                             |
| 69 Northampton  | Single | Excellent | palatial home                          |                             |
| 73 Northampton  | Single | Good      |  |                             |
| 74 Northampton  | Single | Good/Exc  |  |                             |
| 77 Northampton  | Single | Excellent |  |                             |
| 78 Northampton  | Single | Good/Exc  |  |                             |
| 80 Northampton  | Single | Good/Exc  |  |                             |
| 82 Northampton  | Single | Good/Exc  | palatial home                          |                             |
| 85 Northampton  | Single | Good      | vinyl siding inappropriate             |                             |
| 87 Northampton  | VACANT | Good      | City of Buffalo, maintained by 85      | sell to 85 Northampton      |
| 91 Northampton  | Single | Poor      | ABANDONED, looks like unfinished rehab | code enforcement/rehab      |
| 94 Northampton  | Single | Poor/Fair | ABANDONED                              | code enforcement/rehab      |
| 95 Northampton  | VACANT | Poor      | City of Buffalo                        | sell, perhaps to 97 and 91  |
| 96 Northampton  | VACANT | Good      | private lawn for 102 Northampton       |                             |
| 97 Northampton  | Double | Fair/Good |  |                             |
| 99 Northampton  | Double | Good      |  |                             |
| 102 Northampton | Single | Good      | vinyl siding inappropriate             |                             |
| 103 Northampton | Double | Good      | good maint but unsympathetic updates   |                             |
| 104 Northampton | Single | Good      | stained glass windows                  |                             |
| 106 Northampton | Double | Fair      | stained glass, quality craftsmanship   |                             |
| 107 Northampton | Double | Good      | beautiful stained glass                |                             |
| 108 Northampton | VACANT | Fair      | City of Buffalo                        | sell to 106 Northampton     |
| 109 Northampton | Double | Fair/Good |  |                             |
| 110 Northampton | VACANT | Fair      | private, aligns vacant 1260 Michigan   |                             |
| 115 Northampton | Double | Fair      | ABANDONED, Owner to Vacate notice      | code enforcement/rehab      |
| 117 Northampton | VACANT | Poor      | City of Buffalo                        | retail/residential infill   |

## Northampton Street

### Observations, Conditions, Opportunities

Northampton Street was the most prestigious address of the old German neighborhood, attracting its upwardly mobile middle class and many of its wealthiest business families as residents. The intersection of Ellicott and Northampton streets is the architectural focus of its often-palatial late nineteenth century homes, many recently renovated. The intersection is also the visual (though not actual) terminus of Ellicott Street viewed from the rolling hills of the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus. In the process of being "rediscovered," this node in the Midtown district is already on the receiving end of private reinvestment activity that will certainly be enlarged as the Artspace project moves forward.

Northampton Street will be the site of the primary vehicular entrance into the Artspace project area, where a sloping entryway already leads from Northampton into the rear area where a series of artist rowhouse-type units are planned. Nearby, an architectural milieu, including the gorgeously renovated house 51 Northampton, will lure investment further inward toward the East Side. It is precisely this area east of Ellicott Street where investment activity is most needed.

As soon as Northampton crosses east of Holland Place, the integrity of the original housing declines rapidly. In what should be a showcase of a stabilized East Side neighborhood strengthened by its unique character, Northampton ebbs in the stretches beyond the focus of its largest and most elaborately detailed homes. Houses like 91 and 94 Northampton sit abandoned, awaiting rescue. Vacant lots have already begun their intrusion onto the street, although in most instances have been revived as well-maintained gardens and side yards. In one



*Northampton Street contains Midtown's most opulent homes.*

particular instance, it's obvious that several homes were demolished to make way for a "plain Jane" suburban-style home on a nearly half-acre lot at 61 Northampton, right in the mix on the corner with Ellicott, intruding upon an architecturally sensitive environment. It will be crucial to stabilize at-risk properties on the block to prevent its further degradation or replacement by ahistoric development.

The pedestrian right-of-way of Northampton is, in a word, unspectacular. The lack of a consistent tree canopy, the street's unhappy marriage with wooden utility poles and cobrahead lamps, and the lack of "something" useful as a centering devise for the street, is all the more noticeable in a place like Northampton Street with its amazing landscape of landmark structures. Nothing about the street trumpets its one-of-a-kind position in an East Side that desperately needs places in which to take pride. This unspectacular, nondescript public realm only underlines the need for investment, public and private, in parts of the street that have yet to be reclaimed.

### **Recommendations, Strategies, Suggested Improvements**

#### *Install mini-traffic circle at the corner of Northampton and Ellicott streets*

The intersection of Northampton and Ellicott streets is really a center of gravity for Midtown. It is a terminating vista for Ellicott Street that could be enhanced by:

- The installation of a landscaped traffic circle, the corner could act as a centering device for the block. It would also calm traffic at an intersection where very few drivers come to a full stop anyway. In what would be the first traffic circle to be installed in the city in recent memory, it would beautify the area and set it apart.



*The houses of Northampton, closer to Michigan Avenue, remain at risk of demolition or further degradation. They are important to save.*

Bury utility lines, install new Olmstedian street lamps

Northampton Street was always viewed as a parkway, a residential reserve connecting Main Street to Humboldt Park, now Martin Luther King Park. Highlighting the nineteenth century character of the blocks between Main and Michigan would take:

- Burying the wooden utility poles that do little to exemplify its new Olmstedian street lamps that should be installed in their place

Reinstall tree canopy

The City should strongly consider:

- Planting a consistent row of disease-resistant Elm trees along the stretch between Main and Michigan streets since no other tree fully embodies the characteristics of Buffalo's historic streetscapes, and no other could do more to embolden Northampton Street as part of that historic milieu.



*It's easy to foresee a mini-traffic circle being installed at this intersection.*