

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
FOR THE CONVERSION OF A
PORTION OF GENESEE VALLEY PARK
UNDER THE LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND ACT
AS A RESULT OF THE
BROOKS LANDING REVITALIZATION PROJECT**

**Appendix H:
Cultural Resources Report**

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Brooks Landing Urban Renewal District

Rochester, New York

Cultural Resources Report

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Prepared for The City of Rochester

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1. Introduction

The intent of the Brooks Landing Urban Renewal District is to revitalize an important mixed-use neighborhood commercial center within Sector 4 of the city. The project area is located within close proximity to the Genesee River/NYS Erie Canal, Genesee Valley Park, the Rochester International Airport, and the University of Rochester River Campus. This urban renewal district consists of three different sub-areas. The intended uses of these sub-areas include hotel, restaurant, and boat landing; office/retail building; and new mixed use in-fill development

The purpose of this Cultural Resources Report is to document the key features in the landscape that are crucial to the historic integrity of the project area.

The contents of this cultural resources report are organized as follows.

1. History of the site
 - A. Natural History – River and Range
 - B. Pre-History Era - Crossroads
 - C. Settlement Era - Castletown
 - D. Development Era – Rapids to Rochester
2. Time line of significant events specific to the Brooks Landing Urban Renewal District
 3. Inventory and Analysis of Existing and Non-Existing Site Features
 4. Character Defining Features
 5. Cultural Significance/Themes
 6. Cultural Resource Impacts of the Proposed Project
 7. Recommendations for Treatment

2. Natural History – River and Range

Over millions of years, geological activity has shaped the landscape of the Genesee River corridor as it appears today. Approximately a million years ago glacial activity began, and glaciers covered the Rochester area several times with ice up to two miles thick. These glaciers would scrape the soil down to the bedrock in Canada and deposit glacial till throughout the Genesee Valley, with some areas receiving approximately 300 feet of till.

The latest glacier arrived in the area approximately 100,000 years ago and was called the Wisconsinan stage. Over a 40,000 year period the glacier, a sheet of ice approximately 2,000 miles in diameter and 1,000 to 10,000 feet thick, receded and advanced over the Rochester area. Approximately 12,000 years ago, the retreating ice found new strength and advanced toward the south where it stalled and began to melt from the heat of the sun. The melt water along the front edge of the glacier deposited debris that formed the Pinnacle Range, a group of hills extending four miles forming Cobbs Hill, Pinnacle Hill, and the hills of Highland Park, Mt. Hope Cemetery and the University of Rochester campus. The hill at the University of Rochester campus was key in determining the path of the Genesee River and formation of the Brooks Landing site.

The Genesee River originated as a spring in the area of Gold, Pennsylvania, and flowed northward to Irondequoit Bay. With the continued melting of the glaciers, debris was deposited filling the river

channel between Rush and Honeoye Falls, creating Lake Scottsville. The Pinnacle Range dammed the northern exit of the lake, but flow continued north through a depression in the hills at the present-day University of Rochester. The water flowed north over the Niagara Escarpment, which created a series of rapids before joining Lake Dawson. With the continued melting of the ice, a new outlet was created for Lake Dawson causing it to rapidly drop in elevation. This caused Lake Scottsville to drop in elevation as well and moved the mouth of the Genesee River further north. The rapids at the Niagara Escarpment eroded to form 40 feet falls just north of present day High Falls and two new sets of rapids were formed between the escarpment and river mouth.

It is said that if the Pinnacle Range had been 20 feet higher in the area of the present-day University of Rochester, the water would have taken a different course and Rochester would not have formed where it did.

3. Pre-History Era - Crossroads

The earliest people known to arrive in the Rochester area were the Archaic Algonquians from 8000-500 BCE. They came in small hunting and fishing groups and evidence of their existence can be found in the Irondequoit Bay area and the area of the present-day University of Rochester river campus. Over a hundred years ago, George, H. Harris wrote "The Aboriginal History of Rochester," for William F. Peck's *Semi-Centennial History of Rochester*. Harris stated that a prehistoric town covered the surface of Oak Hill, the present day site of the University of Rochester. He went on to say that early settlers to the area found stone relics from this town in the areas between the feeder dam and Red Creek.

Around 1300 AD, Indians from the Ohio valley migrated to the area and in 1495 the league of the Five Nations was founded by Chief Hiawatha. The Five Nations united the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas and Senecas. The nation was said to be representative of a long house, one end being on the Hudson River and the other end extending to the Genesee.

The Genesee River acted as one of the main modes of transportation for the Indians and as a major north/south trading route. Indians traveling north from the Mississippi and Susquehanna Rivers traveled down the Genesee River to the rapids at Red Creek in what is now known as Genesee Valley Park. At this point, the Indians would portage along the route of present day Highland Avenue to Indian Landing on Irondequoit Creek, then out through Irondequoit Bay to Lake Ontario. Many of these trails followed the river edge and converged at the ridge of the lower falls and at the rapids below the mouth of Red Creek. Indians traveling west would cross the Genesee River at this point as well to an east/west trail that follows present-day Brooks Avenue. The rapids at this location made the river shallow enough to be navigable by foot.

4. Settlement Era - Castletown

The beginning of the Settlement Era of the Genesee Region is defined by the arrival of the French Explorer (Robert de) La Salle to the Irondequoit Bay in 1669. Because of the Indian trail crossing at the rapids, La Salle thought that this was a good location for a trading post. Years later in 1800, a tavern and a store were built on the west bank of the rapids. They were managed by Col. Isaac Castle and by 1804 the area named 'Castletown' was established.

The area became a natural stopping point for those travelling east and west along the trail, and for those travelling north along the river. At Castletown, one would either cross the river through the shallow water or unload goods from their boats before reaching the rapids. A school and some houses were built in Castletown between 1800 and 1810. Also during this decade a 2-acre site was set aside for what would eventually be the Rapids Cemetery. Until 1812, when the first permanent settlers, the Scrantoms, built a cabin, the residents in this area were only seasonal. The area progressed for nearly 13 years until 1817 when the region was surveyed and the Erie Canal was planned to run just upstream from Castletown. By this time the population had reached 1,049. In 1821 Castletown was annexed by the newly formed Monroe County.

The annexation into the County, and the construction of a feeder canal that bypassed the rapids in 1822, marked the end of the settlement era for Castletown and the area became known as the Rapids.

5. Development Era – Rapids to Rochester

The Development Era proved to be a time of multiple constructions and deconstruction of various transportation systems. The construction of the Erie Canal created a population increase, a 'canaller' transient and seasonal population of rough-and-tumble laborers, teamsters and boatmen. The Rapids developed a reputation for heavy drinking and barroom brawls. There is record of many hotels on the west bank of the river. In fact, at one time a total of five existed in the neighborhood. Prompted by the perceived decline in morality, in 1845 Otis Turner founded the Baptist Church at the Rapids to mission the residents.

The success of the Erie Canal continued to stimulate growth in Rochester and in 1836 the construction of the Genesee Valley Canal began. This canal was built to facilitate a transportation and commerce route from the southern tier to Rochester. However, before the Canal was ultimately completed, the railroads had superseded the canal system. In 1878 the Genesee Valley Canal closed and by 1883 the Genesee Valley Canal Railroad (not to be confused with the Genesee Valley Railroad) was built upon the former canal bed.

1888 was a turning point for the Rapids area. The Elmwood Avenue Bridge was constructed to facilitate land travel over the river. The Rochester Park Commission acquired land in 1889 for two parks in Rochester. One of them, originally called South Park, was to become Genesee Valley Park. Frederick Law Olmsted selected the site based upon its beauty and the recreational potential of the Genesee River, and developed a schematic plan for the park in 1890. The implemented park plan, subsequently developed by the Olmsted Brothers, was completed in 1912. The west side was devoted to sports of all kinds, while the east side was intended as a restful place for quiet pursuits. At the north end of the park, Ball Grounds and Gymnastic Grounds were developed on the west bank of the Genesee, between the existing boathouses and the Elmwood Avenue Bridge. The Rapids neighborhood began a transformation from a seedy to a sought after place to live. In 1902 the neighborhood was annexed into the City of Rochester. The neighborhood was subdivided, streets were laid out and houses and schools were constructed. The Plymouth trolley, located between the former canal bed and South Plymouth Avenue, provided access into the park south of Elmwood and provided a convenient link to the city. Genesee Valley Park attracted crowds of people seeking summer recreation. In fact, the Erie Railroad ran weekend excursions on the rail lines adjacent to the park (the Erie Railway had a spur that ran north to Rochester on the east river edge of the park).

Around 1910, the Court Street Dam is built and the river elevation is raised upstream. This causes the rapids at Castletown to become submerged, permanently altering one of the major features that influenced the development of the area.

In 1919 the Erie Canal was closed in the city and the new route was opened through Genesee Valley Park south of the Elmwood Avenue Bridge. A retaining wall exists on the west bank that was originally constructed as a dam abutment on the Genesee River. The history of the dam (referred to on plans as the 'Old State Dam') is unknown, and the data of its removal is unknown, but likely occurred around the time of the Court Street Dam construction and subsequent flooding of the river in the area. Around 1920, the Canal Corporation constructed an approximately 200-foot long section of new concrete retaining wall on the river side of the stone masonry retaining wall. At approximately the same period, the City of Rochester raised the top elevation of the wall by approximately 2½ feet through the use of a cast-in-place concrete cap. The new concrete wall section and the raising of the existing wall appear to have been performed as a means to accomplish the raising of the South Plymouth Avenue. Finally, in the last 1990's, the wall received minor modifications to receive a new continuous handrail for the trail system improvements. The top elevation of the retaining wall is approximately 518.5. In 1925 a land swap arrangement was made by George Eastman between the Oak Hill Country Club (located at the tip of the Pinnacle Ridge directly across the river from the neighborhood) and the University of Rochester.

6. Timeline of Events

The following is a timeline of significant events that are specific to the Brooks Landing District area. The timeline has been organized by four periods of significance previously described in this report.

A. Natural History

Million years ago

Four glacial stages begin to cover the area.

100,000 years ago

The start of the Wisconsin ice stage. The last major push of glacier activity.

12,000 years ago

The glacier from the Wisconsin stage begins to melt and deposits debris that will form the Pinnacle Range. The Range consists of hills extending four miles, forming Cobb's Hill, Pinnacle Hill, and the hills of Highland Park, Mt. Hope Cemetery and the University of Rochester River Campus.

10,000 years ago

Plants and animals begin to reappear after the warming of the climate and melting of the glaciers.

B. Pre-History Era (8000 BCE - 1669)

8000-500 BCE

Archaic Algonkins are the earliest people to inhabit the area.



1300-1600's

Indians from the Ohio River valley migrate to the area. The Genesee River becomes one of the major north-south trading routes. Shallow rapids in present-day Brooks/Genesee area provided convenient crossing for river.

C. Settlement Era (1669 - 1821)

1669

French Explorer La Salle sails up the Irondequoit Bay to Ellison Park looking for Indian guides to show him the water route inland.

1687

The French and Indian War. (Resulting in a French victory and strengthened opposition to the French by the Seneca Indians along with stronger ties to the English)
The Indians have two main trail systems in the county, the east-west trails connects several Indian villages and is called the Path of Peace. The north-south trail leads to the lake and the French, and is called the Warpath (along the Irondequoit Creek).

1788

Oliver Phelps and Nathaniel Gorham purchase from Massachusetts the western end of New York State, with the condition that they obtain the rights from the Seneca Indians (the Phelps Gorham Purchase).

1790

James and William Wadsworth purchased 6,000 acres of land from Phelps and Gorham.

1800

Wadsworth built a tavern and a store at the rapids and hired Col. Isaac Castle to manage them (it was possibly the first tavern opened in the Genesee country).

1804

Castle and Wadsworth establish Castletown at the rapids that end the navigable section of the river. It was located on the west side of the river where a major Indian trail from Ohio crossed.

1800-1810

A church, a school and some houses were built in Castletown.
Wadsworth set aside a two acre plot of land for the future Rapids Cemetery.

1812

The first permanent settlers, the Scrantoms, built a cabin in Castletown.
The Main Street Bridge was completed.

1817

New York State enacted legislation to construct the Erie Canal.
The population of the settlement had grown to 1,049.

1817-1821

The settlement was annexed into the newly formed Monroe County (Rochester was the county seat).



D. Development Era (1821 - present)

1822

The Feeder Canal was built on the east side of the river (at approximately the site of today's pedestrian bridge) to provide Genesee River water to the Erie Canal. This enabled boats traveling north to Rochester to bypass the rapids.

Castletown lost its identity and was referred to as the Rapids.

1825

Erie Canal formally opens its entire length. Rochester population begins to boom.

1822-1845

'Canallers' dock boats at Castletown.

The neighborhood develops into a rough area populated primarily by laborers, teamsters and boatmen.

At one time five hotels exist in the neighborhood.

1822

Castletown a trade center, with roads connecting north, south and west. But feeder canal built on east side of river to bypass the Rapids, from the site of U.R.'s chapel to the corner of Mt. Hope and South Avenue. Doomed Castletown as a cargo-transport center, which now occurred at the stone warehouse at One Mt. Hope Avenue.

1831

Rochester becomes a city.

1835-1862

Due to the success of the Erie Canal, it was widened to 70'.

Riverboats wintered at the Rapids, north of what is now the Elmwood Avenue bridge. They were lifted out of the water to protect them from ice, and to be repaired.

1836-1838

Feeder canal constructed the two miles from Rapids north to the new Erie Canal, bypassing rapids. Becomes part of the Genesee Valley Canal, which was extended to Dansville by 1841 and to Olean by 1856. The canal failed, and closed in 1878. In 1882, the Genesee Valley Canal Railroad Co. (later the Pennsylvania RR) ran through its bed.

1836

Construction of the Genesee Valley Canal begins.

1840

The Genesee Valley Canal opened.

1842

The first boat traveled to Mt. Morris on the Genesee Valley Canal.

1845

Otis Turner founded the Baptist Church at the Rapids to mission to the residents.

1856

Genesee Valley Canal reaches Olean. Due to the expense of constructing the canal and the advancement of the railroads, the canal system was never completed.

1871

First Regular Baptist Church of the Rapids organized, now Genesee Baptist.

1878

Genesee Valley Canal closes.

1881

The Rapids Cemetery Association was formed.

1883

Elevation of the tracks of the Central-Hudson Railroad and a new station was completed in the city.
The Buffalo, New York & Philadelphia Railroad Company leased the newly completed Genesee Valley Canal Railroad.

1888

The Elmwood Avenue Bridge was constructed.
The Parks Commission acquires the land for two city parks.
Frederick Law Olmsted plants 10,500 shrubs and 70,000 trees in what was originally called South Park and the park was opened.
South Park was renamed Genesee Valley Park.
Upper River Ice, located upriver from the Rapids, provided clean ice from waters upstream from industrial pollution.
The Rapids became a desirable residential neighborhood. It was subdivided, streets were laid out, and houses and schools were constructed.

1891

The Plymouth trolley line enters the park.
Western New York and Pennsylvania Railroads run weekend and holiday excursions to the park.
A golf course is built, baseball fields are laid out, and farm building is moved to the river bank and converted into a boathouse, in the park.
A baseball field is laid out in the park.

1892

Electrified streetcars first reach the park as far south as Elmwood Avenue.

1898

St. Monica Church constructed.

1900s

Larger estates divided.

1900

Plans developed to re-route the Erie Canal around Rochester.

1900-1925

Rochester population doubled from 125,000 to 300,000.

1902

The Neighborhood was annexed by the City of Rochester.
This area annexed by Rochester from Gates.

1905

It was decided that the southern route of the Erie Canal would pass through Genesee Valley Park.
West High School constructed.

1910

The Court Street Dam is built and the river level is raised to 12 feet.
The rapids at Castletown are submerged.

1913

School 37 constructed.

1918

Rapids submerged when river level raised to provide water to the relocated Erie Canal.

1919

The Erie Canal is closed in the city and the new route runs through Genesee Valley Park.
The City buys the abandoned Erie Canal Lands from the State.

1920's

Most land developed in the 19th Ward.

1920

The Canal Corporation installs new 200'± section of concrete river wall in front of old stone river wall. City adds 2½ feet to new wall to accommodate raising of Plymouth Avenue.

1925

George Eastman arranges a land swap between the University of Rochester and Oak Hill Country Club (U of R moves to its current location on the east side of the river at the rapids).

Early 1930's

The private parcels of land (the former hotel sites) just south of the Brooks/South Plymouth intersection become dedicated parkland.

1949

South Plymouth Avenue (as it exists today) is realigned and improved with utilities.

1950

The Rapids Cemetery Association was terminated.

1965

The 19th Ward Community Association was formed.

1981

"Flyover" bridge through Genesee Valley Park completed; completes Outer Loop. Relieves traffic pressure on Elmwood Avenue.

1984

Genesee River South Corridor Land Use & Development Plan, sponsored by the City of Rochester, Monroe County and UR. Calls for development of retail space at the Genesee-Brooks intersection. Reports blighted conditions here, with several vacant lots, shops in poor condition, and "nuisance" uses along the river (incinerator, junkyard, bars). Says this is a "very poorly defined area". Plan calls for additional parkland further north, along river on the abandoned railroad right-of-way.

7. Inventory and Analysis of Site Features

A. Existing Features

The following is a list of the existing features within the Urban Renewal District and vicinity recorded and categorized based on type.

Circulation

- The Genesee River alignment bend in this area appears to have remained relatively the same through recorded history.
- Brooks Avenue follows the general path of an Indian trail that headed west to Ohio.
- Genesee Street follows the general path of an Indian trail that lead north.
- South Plymouth Avenue follows the general path of an Indian trail that lead northeast.
- South Plymouth Avenue south of Brooks Avenue follows the general path of the Olmsted park path/road from the 1912 plan.
- The Genesee Valley Canal/Railroad is evident as a raised stretch of land that runs along the west side of the river.
- The north park pedestrian path follows the general path of the Olmsted plan (along the west bank of the river).

Natural Systems

- The western tip of the Pinnacle Range is evident and it contains the University of Rochester River Campus buildings.
- Most of the river embankments on both sides of this area are fairly natural except for the rip-rap slope at the west approach of the pedestrian bridge.

Water Features

- The Genesee River alignment in this area has remained relatively the same throughout recorded history.
- The Erie Canal crosses the Genesee River within the park upstream from the Elmwood Avenue Bridge.
- Red Creek feeds into the Erie Canal just east of the canal/river junction.

Surroundings

- There is a dense neighborhood (the 19th Ward) to the west of the project area. The houses range from one story cottages to large stately mansions and are in varying degrees of condition.
- The Rapids Cemetery exists on the north side of Congress Avenue (west of Genesee Street). Most of the headstones are missing or in disrepair. Some have been replaced with new markers. The topography of the cemetery is that of a slight hill with views of the Genesee Baptist Church steeple (formerly the Rapids Baptist Church).
- The Genesee Baptist Church is located just west of the project area on Brooks Avenue. Across the river to the east is the University of Rochester campus. There is a pedestrian bridge where Brooks Avenue and Plymouth Avenue meet that connects to Wilson Boulevard.
- To the north along Genesee Street and Plymouth Avenue are commercial buildings primarily from the mid-twentieth century. Many are empty or in poor condition.
- North of the Brooks/Plymouth intersection there is a large 12-story senior citizen's apartment building called Plymouth Gardens.
- To the south is the Olmsted-designed Genesee Valley Park.

Topography

- Overall the topography is that of a valley that slopes gradually towards the river.
- The predominant land feature is to the east where the point of the Pinnacle Range submerges into the river.
- The project area is comprised of a series of level terraces from Genesee Street down towards the river. The residences along the east side of Genesee Street occur at the highest elevation. At the rear of their properties, the land drops to the second level, the former canal/railroad bed. East of this terrace, the land drops again to the park and South Plymouth Avenue elevation. East of the South Plymouth Avenue sidewalk/river trail is a narrow riverbank that slopes to the river.
- North of South Plymouth Avenue the land gently rises from east to west.
- To the south of the project area within the park, the ground is level and contains baseball fields (the Olmsted plan shows Ball Grounds and Gymnastic Grounds in this area).

Vegetation

- The narrow bank of the Genesee is vegetated with trees and shrubs south of the Brooks Avenue/South Plymouth Avenue intersection. North of the intersection, the bank is clear of mature vegetation and affords views up and down the river corridor.
- The slope at the western edge of the project area is vegetated with trees and large shrubs and provides an effective screen from the residences to the west.
- The slope at the eastern edge of the former canal bed is also vegetated with trees and shrub understory. No vegetation other than lawn area exists within the former canal/railroad bed. The flanking vegetation clearly defines the edges of the canal bed within the proposed Urban Renewal District project area.
- A stand of mature trees with lawn understory occurs on both the north and south sides of Brooks Avenue just east of Genesee Street. The northern grove provides a pleasant buffer/screening of the Plymouth Gardens high rise building to the north. The southern grove marks the northerly entrance into Genesee Valley Park and is an abrupt transition from the developed intersection/South Plymouth Avenue corridor to parkland.

Structures

- There exists one building located within the boundary of Subarea I. It is a recent one-story concrete block commercial building.
- There is an existing retaining wall associated with the 'Old State Dam' and railing (installed as part of the pedestrian bridge project) along the west riverbank in Subarea I.
- In the boundary of Subareas II and III there exists 13 buildings varying in condition. 8 of the buildings are commercial-type buildings with flat roofs and parapet walls. The commercial buildings are primarily masonry construction (block or brick). The remaining 5 buildings are residential-type buildings with gabled and hipped roofs (some are vernacular-type buildings with multiple additions). The residential buildings are primarily stick-framed. All buildings are one to two-stories (some of the residential-type buildings have third story attics).

Site Furnishings

- There are approximately 5 cobra-head style light poles along South Plymouth Avenue within the boundary of Subarea I.
- There exist sidewalks on both sides of South Plymouth Avenue within the boundary of Subarea I. The eastern sidewalk generally follows the alignment of an original Olmsted designed path along the river.
- There are boulders that have been laid out at regular intervals parallel along the path of the Genesee Valley Canal/Railroad.
- The west landing for the pedestrian bridge occurs in the north corner of the urban renewal district.
- The land contains a bench, trash receptacle, pavers, and a painted steel railing, all installed as part of the pedestrian bridge project. The railing also extends southerly along the length of the river wall.

B. Non-Existing Historical Features

The following is a list of the non-existing features within the Urban Renewal District and vicinity recorded and categorized based on type.

Circulation

This area has a rich history of various transportation routes and systems that have come and gone over time. However, little to no evidence of the following features remains.

- There were various Indian trails in the area (most of which are recorded by the street layout).
- There is little evidence of the feeder canal which ran along the east bank.
- Although there is evidence of the Genesee Valley Canal/Railroad bed, there is no evidence of any remaining canal structures or railroad tracks.
- The Olmsted plans of the park south of the project area vicinity show a looped path system. There is no evidence of this path between the river and the railroad.

Natural Systems

- Part of the Pinnacle Range was lowered and leveled during the existence of Oak Hill Country Club.

Water Features

- Although there is evidence of the Genesee Valley Canal alignment, it has been entirely filled in and there is no water present.
- The rapids that once existed, giving the area its name, are no longer evident.

Surroundings

- The Oak Hill Country Club has been replaced by the University of Rochester River Campus.

Structures

- None of the Settlement Era buildings exist (i.e. the Castle tavern and store of 1800).
- The Old State Dam is no longer in existence.
- There were approximately a half-dozen or more boat houses along the river bank in the boundary of Subarea I. These buildings no longer exist.
- There were, at one time during the early 19th Century, a total of five hotels along the river's edge in the area around the Brooks Avenue and Plymouth Avenue intersection.
- No visible remains exist.
- 669 Genesee Street (north just outside of the project area) has been recognized as a station along the Underground Railroad. This house no longer exists.

8. Character Defining Features

A. Character-Defining Features Analysis Methodology

Character-defining features are defined in *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (1996) and provide guidance to cultural landscape owners, stewards and managers during the planning and implementation of treatment projects. The site features listed above (both existing and non-existing) were analyzed for their inherent character-defining attributes. The following is a list of those considered to be character-defining features based on type:

Character-Defining Features

Circulation

- The Genesee River is undoubtedly the most significant feature of this area. The formation of the Pinnacle Range created a large sweeping bend in the river. This bend, in conjunction with the shallow waters in the rapids area, influenced the location of the Indian trail crossing. The trail crossroads also promoted a place for trading and camping. During the Settlement Era the rapids reinforced this area as a place to stop. Those moving goods down the river towards Rochester were forced to unload boats before reaching the treacherous shallow waters. During the Development Era a multitude of transportation routes and means came and went through this area. From canals and railroads, to roads, trolleys lines, bus routes and airports, the constant has been the river. Brooks Avenue, Genesee Street and Plymouth Avenue all have significance in that they follow the general path of historic Indian trails. They define the approach that people have taken to and from the project area since early history.

- Because of Olmsted's reputation for masterfully designed parks, and because of the significant impact that the Genesee Valley Park made (and makes) upon its surroundings, the integrity of the original park plan should be considered as character-defining.
- The most evident existing artifact of the canal and railroad through the project area is the path of the Genesee Valley Canal/Railroad. Although by its completion the aspirations for the canal to be a major north-south transportation route were overshadowed by the progress of railroads, it stands as a record of both historical modes of transportation.
- The Old State Dam and the feeder canal also have historical significance. Neither was located within the boundary of the project area, but there are remains of a retaining wall associated with the dam along the river bank within Subarea I. Previous treatments around this wall have been sensitive to mitigating its disturbance.

Natural Systems

- In addition to the Genesee River, the glacier-formed Pinnacle Range is a land feature that has impacted the project area throughout history. Its peak to the east, at Cobbs Hill, is the highest point in Rochester. Its western end submerges into the Genesee River across the river from the project area. Views of this land feature are character defining. Susan B. Anthony, as a young girl, is documented as describing this view down what is now Brooks Avenue.
- The topography of the project area can also be considered as character-defining. The level terrace areas descending to the river have existing throughout recorded history and have each had an associated use district from each other (the upper level - residences; mid-level - canal and later railroad; lower level - vehicular and pedestrian circulation). In addition, the topography provides a distinct spatial definition for the area.

Water Features

- As noted above, the Genesee River's configuration is a significant character-defining feature.

Surroundings

- Located on Congress Avenue, west of the project area, the Rapids Cemetery has headstones that date back to the early 19th Century. The two-acre plot was set aside by Wadsworth in the early settlement of the Rapids. Placed upon a slight hill, there still exists a nice view of the Genesee Baptist Church steeple on Brooks Avenue. Although many of the headstones are missing or have been destroyed, it marks a significant historic period of the neighborhood. Though not within the project boundary, it is tied to the historical development of the project area.
- The existing Genesee Baptist Church is located just west of the project area on Brooks Avenue. Originally called the Rapids Baptist Church, it was built in 1845 and was founded by Otis Turner. It is documented that this church was established to mission to the "particularly bad" people of the Castletown settlement. This building is significant in its historical and architectural value, and it should be considered a character-defining feature.
- The University of Rochester was established circa 1850. The land of the current campus was obtained from a swap agreement with Oak Hill Country Club arranged by George Eastman in 1925. Located at the tip of the Pinnacle Range, the Genesee River sweeps around the western edge of campus. A handful of buildings existed on the site until the campus plan was implemented in the 1920's. The plan consisted of a formal configuration with buildings flanking a mall. The centerpiece was the Rush Rhees

- Library. Its tower still remains to this day the major focal point of the campus and surrounding area, and the icon of the university. The campus is a character-defining feature for its architecture and its cultural contributions.
- The Olmsted-designed Genesee Valley Park is a major cultural resource to the neighborhood and the city. Since its conception in 1888, this picturesque park has been a popular destination for residents and visitors seeking recreation and relaxation.

Vegetation

- The vegetation and lawn areas immediately adjacent to and within the project area contributes to the park setting and Olmsted character of this section of Genesee Valley Park. Although not original to the early park plans (this part of the park was added in the 1930's), this area blends seamlessly with the original park by virtue of the mature vegetation and maintained lawn areas.

Structures

- While none of the buildings within the boundary of the project area have any known documented historical significance, there is record of structures in this area from city plat maps. It is noteworthy that at one point in the 19th century there were up to five hotels in the vicinity in and around Subarea I.
- Subarea II and III contains existing commercial buildings on Genesee Street near Brooks Avenue. The history and age of these buildings is undocumented by the local historical society. Most of these buildings are in serious disrepair. The most architecturally significant building within the project area is located on the northwest corner of Genesee Street and Brooks Avenue. It is a two story brick building from in the early 20th century. It is significant primarily because it is a corner location, by its details and because it is part of a continuum of similarly scaled and detailed commercial buildings that flank Genesee Street to the north.
- The existing river wall in the vicinity of the project area is also character-defining. The river wall appears to be a remnant of the Old State Dam and appears in the early (1889-1893) Olmsted plans for the park.

9. Cultural Significance / Themes

In addition to the character defining elements listed above, there are general cultural resources that have influenced the project area and vicinity throughout its history. These resources have cultural significance that may be valuable for consideration as themes for future development.

The River

The Genesee River has been a significant force in this area for thousands of years. Man's relationship with the river, from prehistoric times to the present is undeniable. It has been used to transport goods and people. It has been a conduit and a barrier. It has facilitated settlement and it has flooded the surrounding land. Man has trudged alongside it, through it, floated upon it, bridged over it, and harnessed its power. Regardless of the human reaction through history, the river has always been a constant witness.

Although the history of the Brooks Landing area is not as long-lived as the river, the culture of the neighborhood has also experienced significant ebbs and flows of its own. From the rowdy

settlement days of Castletown and the Rapids, through the coming and going of dams, canals and railroads, to its heightened popularity during the early 20th century, to its recent decline and now with its urban renewal interests, the river has always been a constant witness.

The river is a significant cultural resource and should be considered as such in any future development.

Transportation

Transportation, including the processes of passing through as well as stopping, is also an important cultural theme. This area has a rich transportation history that includes river and canal navigation, the railroad (physical and 'Underground'), the electric trolley, and aviation, from the first mail drop in the park to the Greater Rochester International Airport.

Since the time Native American tribes inhabited the area, Brooks Landing has been a crossroads and a place to stop. The river's rapids, and later the canals, contributed to the emergence of lodging facilities and hotels.

Transportation is a significant cultural theme and should be considered as such in future development.

Recreation

With the creation of Genesee Valley Park, Olmsted's design heightened the interest of the river's natural beauty and its potential as a recreational resource. The park plan included hiking paths, ball grounds, tennis grounds, gymnasium grounds, open meadows and wooded areas, as well as boat landings. Today the park facilities include a golf course, softball, soccer and cricket fields, cross-country ski trails, picnic pavilions, and a recreation center with a gymnasium and ice rink. The river, which winds through the park, is used for boating and fishing. The University of Rochester also utilizes the river for their crew team. One of the largest high school cross-country running events in the country, the McQuaid Invitational, has been held in the park for 39 years. This annual event involves over 5,000 runners from 5 states and Canada.

Recreation, particularly which involves the river, is a significant cultural theme and should be considered as such in future development.

10. Cultural Resource Impacts of the Proposed Project

The project impacts and magnitude for the Brooks Landing Urban Renewal Plan are included in Part 2 of the Environmental Assessment Form. The following are potential cultural impacts to the project area and vicinity from the proposed project. They have been organized by Subarea designation.

A. Subarea I - Cultural Resource Impacts

The development proposed in Subarea I includes a 103-room extended-stay hotel and a 4,900 square foot, 160 seat restaurant. One hundred and eighty parking stalls will be

provided to accommodate the development. Walks, patios, decks, landscaping and waterfront features are also a part of the project.

- Because there is a history of hotels on this site, the proposed land use is not in conflict with the inherent cultural legacy of the area.
- The hotel's scale will make it a significant visual and physical feature within the area. Even though there is precedent of a 12-story senior citizen's apartment building (Plymouth Gardens) directly across the street, the impact of a new hotel is substantial. The view down Brooks Avenue towards the river should be maintained. The impact of the hotel on this site, particularly for the adjacent residents, should be mitigated.
- The proposed entrance and parking lot will be built upon the footprint of the Genesee Valley Canal/Railroad. This will impact the recognition of this historic route in this area. This impact to the Genesee Valley Canal/Railroad footprint should be mitigated.
- The rear of the adjacent residential properties to the west should be considered in developing Subarea I. This adjacency and change in land use should be mitigated.
- The existing riverbank should be considered a cultural resource and disturbance should be mitigated.
- Approximately 2 ½ net acres of park land will be impacted at the north end of Genesee Valley Park. This impact should be mitigated.

B. Subarea II - Cultural Resource Impacts

The development proposed in Subarea II consists of a new 20,000 to 25,000 square feet office/retail building and associated parking.

- The corner of Genesee Street and Brooks Avenue is important for historical, contemporary and iconographical reasons. Any new development in this area should not disrupt the existing fabric of commercial and residential buildings along Genesee Street (particularly towards the north). Some of the buildings in Subarea II, although in a state of substantial disrepair, provide the scale and detail appropriate to the neighborhood. Impact to the established fabric of the neighborhood should be mitigated.
- There are six existing buildings in Subarea II. The most culturally significant is the building located at the northeast corner of Genesee Street and Brooks Avenue (954 Genesee Street). Impact to this corner building should be mitigated.
- The proposed development of Subarea II will encroach upon the footprint of the Genesee Valley Canal/Railroad. This will impact the recognition of this historic route in this area. The impact to the Genesee Valley Canal/Railroad footprint should be mitigated.
- No cultural impact regarding land features is anticipated in this subarea.

C. Subarea III - Cultural Resource Impacts

The development proposed in Subarea III includes a 6,000 square foot renovated mixed-use building with associated parking and exterior dining area. Mixed-use infill development is also proposed for the other four lots within this subarea.

- The corner of Genesee Street and Brooks Avenue is important for historical, contemporary and iconographical reasons. Any new development in this area should not

- disrupt the existing fabric of commercial and residential buildings along Genesee Street (particularly towards the north). Some of the buildings in Subarea II and III, although in a state of substantial disrepair, provide the scale and detail appropriate to the neighborhood. Impact to the established fabric of the neighborhood should be mitigated.
- There are six existing buildings in Subarea III. The most culturally significant is the building located at the northwest corner of Genesee Street and Brooks Avenue (953 Genesee Street). Also of architectural significance is 943 Genesee Street. Impact to these buildings should be mitigated.
- No cultural impact regarding land features is anticipated in this subarea.

11. Recommendations for Treatment

Using the outline provided in *The Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Landscapes*, the following synopsis has been developed relating to changes that have occurred and their effects on the landscape as a whole. The four treatment alternatives listed below for cultural landscapes are defined by the *Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*:

- a. Preservation – to retain and maintain historic features or materials, including repair and replacement in-kind, and removal of negative, contemporary elements such as invasive plants, includes protection or stabilization which secures the historic resources, and prevents further damage or slows deterioration.
- b. Restoration – undertaken to represent the historic landscape of a targeted period rather than the property as evolved; repair and other modest treatments may be used in combination with the addition of lost historic features or removal of later additions to recapture the targeted period, this treatment must be based on a high level of documentation so that conjecture can be avoided.
- c. Reconstruction – new construction undertaken to replicate the exact form, features and details of a landscape or individual elements of a landscape on an original site; documentation must be sufficient to replicate without speculation, for recreating the historic appearance of a landscape using new construction is often related to interpretive goals and visitor experience.
- d. Rehabilitation – undertaken to retain historic character and features while adjusting to suit contemporary use in a manner that is compatible with and distinguishable from culturally valuable resources.

These four treatment approaches are analyzed and considered based upon the following criteria:

- a. The relative historic importance of the site.
- b. The physical condition of the existing features.
- c. The proposed land use.
- d. Mandated code requirements.

Based upon the methodology described, the recommended treatment of this project is Rehabilitation.

“When repair and replacement of deteriorated features are necessary; when alterations or additions to the property are planned for a new or continued use; and when its depiction at a particular period of time is not appropriate, Rehabilitation may be considered as a treatment.”

“Rehabilitation is defined as the act of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.”

The *Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Cultural Landscapes* lists ten general recommendations:

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historical significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

The following are recommendations for treatment of the Brooks Landing Urban Renewal District based upon the *Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties- Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Cultural Landscapes*:

A. Subarea I – Treatment Recommendations

Development in Subarea I has the most potential cultural resource impacts in the proposed Brooks Landing Urban Renewal District. Although many of the impacts may affect the area



positively, some of the impacts will require mitigation. The following is a list of recommendations for the treatment of Subarea I for the purpose of mitigating cultural resource impacts:

- As previously stated, there is a history of hotels on this site, and therefore the land use is not in conflict with the inherent cultural legacy. However, it is important that the new building be appropriate to its environment. Contextually, the proposed hotel will serve as the north termination of Genesee Valley Park, and the south termination of South Plymouth Avenue. It will be a significant element along the west bank of the river, visible from the river corridor and the east bank. In addition there will be 10 residential properties that will about the new development to the west. All of these adjacent agencies should be respected and addressed appropriately. Buildings in a designated rehabilitation area have the dual responsibility of being at once “differentiated from the old” and “compatible with the historic.” This creates the potential for a wide range of interpretations. In regards to the architecture of the hotel development, the following is offered:

- a) The scale, massing and proportions should be contextual to its surrounding buildings (note that the Plymouth Gardens apartment building is out of scale with its environment and it should not be viewed as an appropriate precedent);
- b) The materials and colors should be compatible with materials used on surrounding buildings; (such as the University of Rochester original campus buildings);
- c) Historical homage could be made, in or around the hotel, to the multiple hotels that once existed in this area;
- d) Buffering should be employed between the hotel parking lot and the adjacent residential properties;
- e) The proposed restaurant may provide an opportunity to mitigate/transition the scale of the hotel;
- f) Potential architectural precedents for the restaurant shell and scale could be the corner commercial buildings at Genesee Street and Brooks Avenue (the restaurant building could also serve to ‘bridge’ the aesthetic difference from the neighborhood buildings to the new hotel);
- g) Historical homage could be made, in or around the restaurant, to the history of the Castletown Tavern (a significant building of the Settlement Era that was believed to be the first tavern in the Genesee Region).

- The proposed entrance and parking lot will be built upon the footprint of the Genesee Valley Canal/Railroad. Recognition of this historic route in this area should be treated with respect. Therefore, in regards to the treatment of the Genesee Valley Canal/Railroad footprint, the following is suggested:

- a) Since the new entrance drive curb cut is within the approximate canal footprint, some form of marking in the landscaped areas flanking the drive could serve to recognize the historic boundary (they could doubly serve as a gateway element into the hotel property);
- b) Markings could also be installed across the street in Subarea II and at the south entrance drive to the hotel property to reinforce the historic canal/railroad boundary/alignment.
- c) The linear spatial footprint of the canal/railroad should be preserved by keeping permanent structures (buildings) outside the limits of the former canal bed.

- The proposed docking facilities should minimize disturbance to the riverbank and existing retaining wall. Culturally, there is a history of boat-houses in this vicinity. The following is recommended in regards to the treatment of the docking facilities:

- This area will serve as the north termination, and pedestrian entry point, of Genesee Valley Park and its treatment should be integrated with the park aesthetically and functionally;
- The river walk path and new site furnishings should be of similar materials and aesthetics to those used in Genesee Valley Park (south) (it is recognized that there have been alterations to the park at the north end that do not necessarily reflect the aesthetics of the Olmsted design, however the docking facilities could draw from original features for inspiration, i.e. benches, pavers, stone walls, etc.);
- Homage should be made to the existence of multiple boat-houses and historic docking heritage of this area (perhaps with an interpretive station describing the history of the Brooks Landing area in the new docking location);
- The treatment of the railing and landing to the docking facility is important as an entrance to the park (however it should be noted that Olmsted objected to ornate or monumental entrance gates).

- Approximately 2 ½ net acres of park land will be impacted at the north end of Genesee Valley Park. This end of the park has been significantly impacted previously by the extension of South Plymouth Avenue through to Elmwood Avenue. The following are recommendations for treatment at the north end of Genesee Valley Park:

- Olmsted designed a path at this end of the park to loop back to the south. The north end of the park should have a path that loops back to the south to Elmwood Avenue (perhaps in the footprint of the Genesee Valley Canal;
- If a path is developed on the canal footprint, it is recommended that feeder trails connect to the residential streets to provide local pedestrian access to the park (it is recommended that such a path connection be created from Grandview Terrace per original park plans);

B. Subarea II – Treatment Recommendations

Development in Subarea II has potential cultural resource impacts in the proposed Brooks Landing Urban Renewal District. Although many of the impacts may affect the area positively, some of the impacts will require mitigation. The following is a list of recommendations for the treatment of Subarea II for the purpose of mitigating cultural resource impacts:

- The corner of Genesee Street and Brooks Avenue is important for historical, contemporary and iconographical reasons. The following are suggestions for treatment at the corner:

- The existing two-story brick commercial building (954 Genesee Street), although not historically listed, is a good example of the typology of the urban fabric along the Genesee Street corridor, and if possible, it should be rehabilitated and integrated into any new development within this subarea (this building has the potential to be a cornerstone element for new constructions to its north);
- If this building is beyond repair, and requires replacement, any building in its location should be designed as a defining corner element that is treated so that the scale, massing, proportions, materials and details are contextual to the Genesee Street corridor. The

building should also follow the established setbacks of the street wall and parking should be oriented to the back lot of the property.

- The proposed development should not appear to be one single 25,000 square foot building. This scale is inconsistent with the Genesee Street corridor fabric. The following are recommendations for the treatment of a single building of this magnitude:

- Initially the salvage of 954 Genesee Street should be considered;
- The front facade (facing Genesee Street) of any new building should be treated so that it follows the established rhythm and bay spacing of the Genesee Street corridor (primarily to the north). The development should appear as a string of separate attached buildings as opposed to one large building;
- The scale, massing, proportions, materials and details should be contextual to the Genesee Street corridor.

- The proposed development of Subarea II will encroach upon the footprint of the Genesee Valley Canal (Railroad). The following is recommended for treatment:

- Markings that define the canal footprint that, when integrated with similar treatments in Subarea I, could serve to recognize the historic boundary.
- If a pedestrian path is established along the canal footprint, a path connection (or connections) should be made to link the development of Subarea II to Subarea I and to the park (this would benefit the local residents as well as those using the hotel by providing a clear link).

C. Subarea III – Treatment Recommendations

Development in Subarea III has potential cultural resource impacts in the proposed Brooks Landing Urban Renewal District. Although many of the impacts may affect the area positively, some of the impacts will require mitigation. The following is a list of suggestions for the treatment of Subarea III for the purpose of mitigating cultural resource impacts:

- The corner of Genesee Street and Brooks Avenue is important for historical, contemporary and iconographical reasons. The following are recommendations for treatment at this corner:
 - The existing two story brick commercial building (953 Genesee Street), although not historically listed, is probably the best example within the project area of the typology of the urban fabric along the Genesee Street corridor. It should be rehabilitated and integrated into any new development within this subarea;
 - Alterations to the buildings facade have negatively impacted its character and future renovations should serve to bring it back to its original integrity;
 - This building has distinctive details that should be repaired and restored;
 - 943 Genesee Street should also be treated as an asset to the urban fabric of the Genesee Street corridor.

- New development in this area should not disrupt the existing fabric of commercial and residential buildings along Genesee Street. The following are recommendations for treatment of new and renovated buildings within Subarea III:

- a) If a building is beyond repair and requires replacement, any building in its location should be treated so that the scale, massing, proportions, materials and details are contextual to the Genesee Street corridor. The building should also follow the established setbacks of the street wall and parking should be oriented to the back lot of the property;
- b) Any new infill building should be treated so that the scale, massing, proportions, materials and details are contextual to the Genesee Street corridor. The building should also follow the established setbacks of the street wall and parking should be oriented to the back lot of the property.

D. Overall District Recommendations

- Because the District will be constructed in phases over time by potentially different developers it is important that there are established guiding principles that ensure that what is constructed does not negatively impact the cultural resources of the environment. The following are recommendations to help establish a continuity of appropriate and respectful treatment:
 - a) The River
 - b) Transportation
 - c) Recreation

- Design guidelines, particularly for Subareas II and III, should be developed and followed that provide a flexible framework for developers to use in the design of new and renovated buildings. These guidelines should serve to enhance the established urban fabric of the Genesee Street corridor while allowing for new, innovative, and contemporary techniques, materials and approaches to be employed.
- A pedestrian circulation plan that integrates all three subareas with the local neighborhood, the hotel development and the park would help to strengthen the linkage of local amenities for residents and visitors. Physical treatment should be consistent to solidify the Brooks Landing District aesthetically. Such a plan should be developed and referred during the design of any future development.

- Ideally, the stakeholders of the Brooks Landing District project should understand and respect the area's cultural heritage, and apply this knowledge towards its revitalization. This type of thinking can provide a necessary infusion of richness and character into the environment that will ultimately strengthen the success of the District as a whole and ensure its longevity.

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