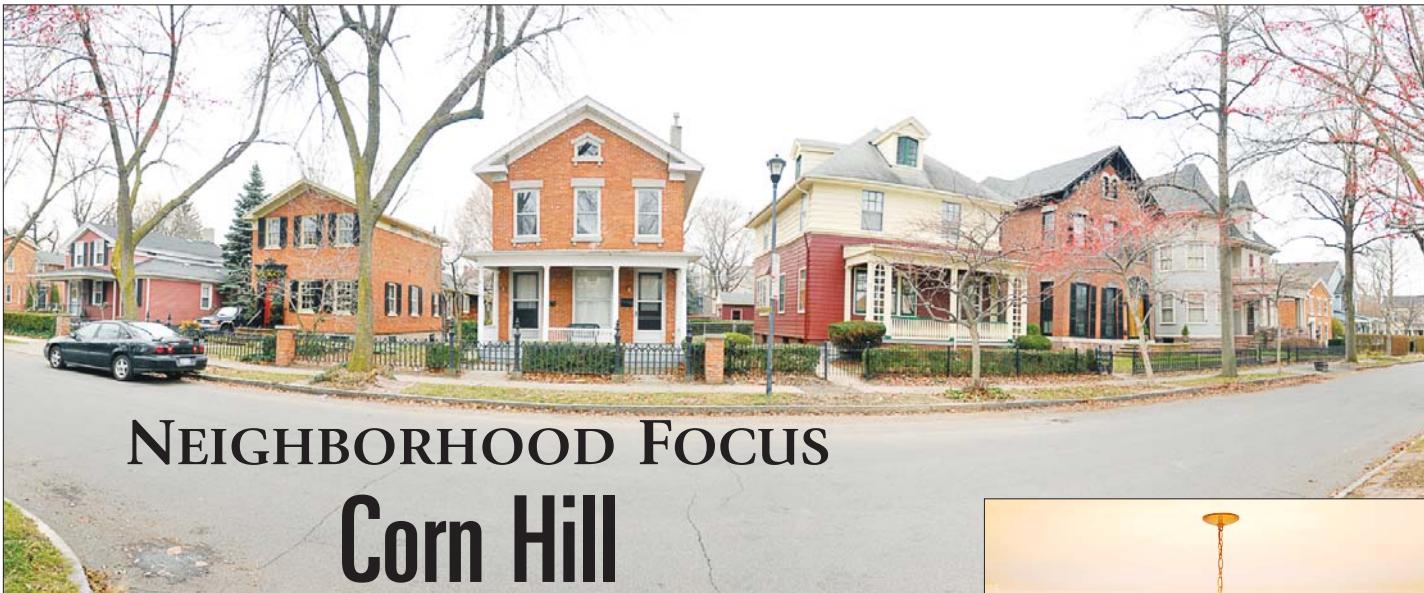


THE DAILY RECORD

WESTERN NEW YORK'S SOURCE FOR LAW, REAL ESTATE, FINANCE AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE SINCE 1908



VASILY BAZIUK

NEIGHBORHOOD FOCUS

Corn Hill

BY COLLEEN M. FARRELL

It's not uncommon for complete strangers to ask Marijoyce Ryan if they can tour her Corn Hill home.

The Eagle Street resident said recently she even welcomes it. She fell in love with the first house she looked at in the neighborhood before finally moving there four years ago, she said, and she understands its appeal.

"Quite sincerely they ask if they can take a peek and we're always happy to say 'yes,'" she said. "The more aware-

ness, the better.”

Corn Hill, the City of Rochester's oldest residential neighborhood, dates to the early 1800s. It's well known for its annual arts festival and holiday tour, which was held over the weekend.

But, as was the case with so many other urban neighborhoods in the 1960s and 1970s, Corn Hill lost some of its luster when urban renewal efforts left old homes and buildings vacant and abandoned. Looking at Corn Hill today, one probably wouldn't think the neighborhood ever looked less pleasing, said Cynthia Howk, architectural research coordinator for the Landmark Society of Western New York Inc.

Residents and groups have spent the past three decades re-making the neighborhood — which has “tremendous real estate,” Howk noted.

"Back in the 1970s, you could buy a house for \$300. That no longer is the case here," she said. "So it's been a wonderful success story and continues to be."

Most of Corn Hill's homes were built between the 1830s and 1880s. Once known as the "Ruffled Shirt District," Corn Hill was built up early and became



(Top) A panoramic view of a section of Atkinson Street, in Rochester's historic Corn Hill neighborhood. (Right) The dining room within the Atkinson Street home of Carrie Cameron, part of Dec. 6 and 7 Corn Hill holiday home tour.

known as urban and sophisticated, Howk said. Those who made it big in flour milling, once Rochester's chief industry, called Corn Hill their home.

"This is where many in the successful

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Continued ...

business community built their impressive homes and it's a very interesting area [that] reflects 19th century character," Howk said.

Elaborate houses stand next to cottages where the service workers lived. Service alleys are tucked behind some houses. Since they were built before automobiles were invented, there were no driveways.

"You are walking in a neighborhood that, for the most part, was developed before the late 19th century," Howk said.

Ryan's home was featured in the Corn Hill Holiday Tour of Homes, sponsored by the

Corn Hill Neighbors Association and the Landmark Society. She lives in a Victorian townhouse on Eagle Street, which was one of the first homes of its kind built there, Ryan said.

Ryan said that, when she was house hunting, she sought an urban setting and was familiar with the neighborhood.

"Just by chance, I stumbled upon this house that was for sale and, as soon as I saw it, I decided to put an offer in for it," she said. "It was the perfect size, perfect everything. Beautiful courtyard. It's like you have this little oasis in the middle of the city."

The unique homes, and the people, are the neighborhood's greatest assets, residents agree.

At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census, Corn Hill was home to 1,426 residents and 670 housing units; the median household income is \$25,244 and the median value of owner-occupied housing units is \$48,800.

"It is truly a [mix of] people from every walk of life — all backgrounds, all denominations — but the heart of it is that they all love the Corn Hill community," Ryan said.

The architecture, and the neighborhood's preservation, unify Corn Hill's residents, she said.

Joe Brown has lived in Corn Hill for



The intersection of Corn Hill's Atkinson and Eagle streets features brick crosswalks.

20 years, served as president of the neighbors' group and as chairman of the arts festival. When he moved in, some of the neighborhood was "just rubble" — some homes had been torn down and many had been turned into boarding rooms for college students.

"The people who were there at that time — some of them are still here — banded together one by one and started rehabilitating the houses with a lot of help from the landlords," he said.

It was a successful endeavor, Brown said.

"Even in the housing downturn, the houses have maintained their prices," he said.

Last summer, townhouses sold within a few days for their asking prices, he said.

Brown attributes the area's success to the arts festival, now in its 41st year. The neighborhood has maintained itself largely due to profits from that festival, which are used for beautification projects, philanthropic gifts and security initiatives.

By far the greatest challenge facing Corn Hill, as in most Rochester neighborhoods, is attracting people to live in



Corn Hill resident Marjjoyce Ryan hosted several visitors Dec. 6 and 7 as part of the neighborhood's holiday home tour. She often allows curious passersby a peek inside as well, she said.

the city, Ryan said. She thinks the redevelopment happening downtown, including the new ESL and PAETEC headquarters, will spark more interest in city living.

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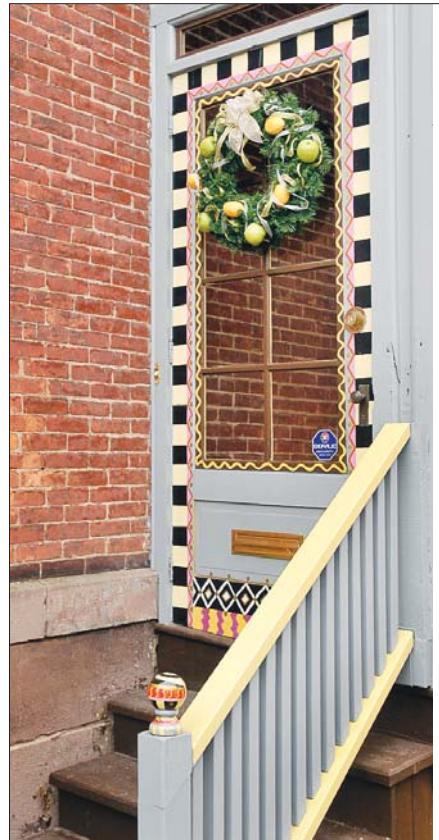
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VASILY BAZUK



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Ascending the staircase to the master bedroom within Carrie Cameron's Atkinson Street home.

The kitchen within Marijoyce Ryan's Eagle Street home.

The front entrance to Marijoyce Ryan's Eagle Street home.

Continued ...

She also said she'd like to see more foot traffic supporting businesses in the Corn Hill area, whose most recent addition arrived a few years ago when Mark IV Construction completed Corn Hill Landing, a mix of retail and residential spaces along Exchange Boulevard and the Genesee River.

Brown said residents "were very concerned over several years about what was going to happen with that piece of land."

The project turned out to be a success, he said, and he's glad he moved in.

"We've got people from [age] 90 to somebody who was born a couple weeks ago," he said. "I've been very happy here. I'll probably stay awhile."

— *colleen.farrell@nydailyrecord.com*



VASILY BAZUK

The living room of Carrie Cameron's Atkinson Street home. The home was featured as part of the neighborhood's Dec. 6 and 7 holiday home tour.