NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018 (Expires 5/31/2012)

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

370

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Tonawanda Municipal Building

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 2919 Delaware Avenue N/A not for publication

city or town Kenmore N/A vicinity

state New York code NY county Erie code 029 zip code 14217

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ **national** ___ **statewide** X **local**

Ruth L Pierpont DSHPO 4/18/13
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

✓ entered in the National Register ___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register ___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:)

for Edson H. Beall 6.12.13
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Tonawanda Municipal Building
Name of Property

Erie County, NY
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

	private
x	public - Local
	public - State
	public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

x	building(s)
	district
	site
	structure
	object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	**Total**

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT/town hall

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT/town hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Art Deco

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: masonry
walls: steel frame with limestone cladding
roof: asphalt
other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Tonawanda Municipal Building is a two-story, limestone-clad building with a ground floor basement, executed in the late Art Deco Style as a design of architects Green & James. Adorned in Art Deco trim, the building's symmetrical massing is representative of the monumental classical architecture identified with 1930s civic architecture. The dimensions of the building are approximately 41 feet in height, 75 feet three-and-one-quarter inches wide along the principal (south) façade, 121 feet seven-and-one-half inches wide on the north elevation and the side elevations measure 108 feet deep. It has steel frame construction with brick walls and reinforced concrete floors. The building's smooth limestone exterior incorporates coursed alternating rows of stone panels measuring eleven inches by twenty-two inches in height consisting of varying shades of buff limestone. A subtle color variation of the stone conveys a banding effect which emphasizes the horizontality of the exterior design. A stone parapet adorns the flat roof. The building has a wide stone water table. Ashlar masonry at the ground floor incorporates three rows of uniform stone panels with deep channel joints between courses that further underscore the horizontal emphasis of the exterior.

Narrative Description

Setting

The Tonawanda Municipal Building is located at 2919 Delaware Avenue (NY Route 384) at the intersection of Delaware Avenue and Delaware Road in the village of Kenmore, town of Tonawanda, Erie County, New York. The polygonal-shaped building occupies the northern portion of a triangular-shaped parcel. The southern portion of the property comprises a landscaped village green. A narrow asphalt parking lot occupies the northern end of the parcel. Located in the historic commercial center of Kenmore, the building is prominently sited on a principal corner, serving as a visual gateway to the village. Commercial blocks on Delaware Avenue surround the building to the west, north and south. As the earliest planned subdivision adjacent to the city of Buffalo, Kenmore's residential buildings occupy large tracts of land on the east side of Delaware Road and to the west of Delaware Avenue. Three churches are located near the municipal building, with the Episcopal Church of the Advent (built 1951; Robert North, architect) occupying the adjacent parcel to the north at 54 Delaware Road. The former Washington Elementary School is on the opposite corner to the southeast at 1 Delaware Road. It was in built 1912 and expanded in 1917 and again in 1940. The school is now a community center.

Exterior

South or Principal Elevation-

The south-facing, five-bay-wide façade is dominated by a tall two-story, projecting central bay with formal entrance and landing. Four recessed two-story window openings with four-over-four, double-hung aluminum sash and decorative cast aluminum spandrels punctuate the façade. The spandrels feature stylized floral ornamentation set within a geometrical

lozenge design on a narrow-fluted background. The central bay encompasses two recessed full-height fluted pilasters topped by stylized Art Deco inspired bas-relief capitals. A decorative wrought aluminum screen consisting of full-height pierced panels and three lozenges with stylized geometric and floral motifs embellish the central entrance window bay. Above the main entrance, the building is identified with the words “MUNICIPAL BUILDING” carved into six limestone panels. A string course, incorporating convex stone panels divided by a stone dog tooth, accent the top of the pavilion below the parapet. The string course continues across the south facade and extends around rest of the building. The façade’s distinctive stepped outline is further enhanced by a central parapet embellished with geometric ornamentation including fluted glyphs and semi-circular scallops. A distinguishing feature of the main elevation is a pair of aluminum Art Deco lamp posts, which are original fixtures mounted on the low cheek walls flanking the main entry steps off the landing. The building’s corner stone, incised “1936,” is located on the left side of the main entrance. Entry doors are later-twentieth century metal and glass. The basement level has four window openings with three-over-three double-hung metal sash.

East (Delaware Road) and West (Delaware Avenue) elevations

The east and west elevations are similar to the façade with central entrances and ten recessed two-story window openings divided by pilasters topped with low-relief stone panels. Side entrances are set in a wide buff stone enframement with decorative carved accents in the upper corners. Each entrance has stone steps and low stone cheek walls. The original double leaf entry doors were replaced with later metal and glass doors. A single fixed light replaced the original metal frame sash transoms above the doors. The side elevations have eight basement windows with sash similar in the south elevation. Alterations to the east elevation at the ground floor include an access ramp and entrance door.

North or Rear Elevation

The end bays of the rear elevation display full-height narrow window openings with decorative aluminum spandrels. Fenestration on the north elevation includes eight window bays consisting of four-over-four double-hung steel sash in the first floor and later replacement sash in the second floor. The north elevation has a central exterior chimney with limestone cladding. At the basement level, the north side includes single entrance doors in the end bays, a basement entrance with double-leaf doors, a stairway to the receiving room in the second bay from the left and a coal chute to the coal room in the basement. Original basement window openings on the north side have been in-filled with block glass.

Interior

As designed, the interior plan consists of offices, a council room and a courtroom organized around a T-shaped configuration formed by a north-south lobby flanked by two east-west corridors. The building encompasses a total of 28,017 square feet. The main lobby on the first floor serves as the building’s central public space. The public corridors divide the interior space into three sections, though interior rooms are arranged in quadrants. Stairways to the second floor are located on the south and north ends of the lobby, while basement stairways are located in the side corridors and off the lobby.

The main lobby and corridors retain original features and finishes and are described in the following paragraphs. Interior details of the main lobby and stairways incorporate similar geometric designs as articulated on the exterior. The village of

Kenmore Court Room and Council Chambers occupy the north end of the second floor. The building houses offices for both the village and town. Eleven brick vaults were constructed in municipal offices in the center of the building. An elevator later replaced three vaults in offices located on the south side of the east corridor (i.e. northwest corner of southeast quadrant).

First Floor

The main lobby opens off the southern vestibule via pre-cast terrazzo steps. Decorative floor and wall finishes in the main lobby include a terrazzo floor with three eight-color terrazzo lozenges, marble panels, and marble bases. As designed, the ornate lobby ceiling has geometric and floral motifs, scalloped plaster cornice with two-color stencil borders, plaster ribs with stencil rosettes, acoustical cork panels, and three electric light fixtures. Non-historic lighting fixtures were added to the east and west side walls of the lobby.

One of the municipal building's outstanding interior features is the grand stairway overlooking the main lobby at the southern end of the building. The grand stairway is distinguished by a formal landing, decorative iron rail with wooden hand rails, cast iron newel posts and cast iron rosettes. The tall stairway window reveals the ornate cast aluminum grille on the exterior. Along the base of the window is a section of decorative iron railing, which is visible from the outside of the building. The ceiling over the landing features decorative plaster ceiling grilles arranged around a central light fixture panel. Though less elaborate, the north stairway complements the main stairway in design and materials.

Offices on the east side of the first floor were originally reserved for the village, while the office space on the west side of the first floor was for the town. The first floor offices have been reconfigured with the addition or removal of rooms. In general, most offices in the building have been modified and updated over the years. At present, all offices have drop ceilings and carpeting obscuring original ceilings and floor surfaces. The building retains almost all of its original doors and hardware. In the northwest quadrant, modern sliding glass entrance doors were added to the Tonawanda town clerk's office.

Second Floor

The second floor was designed with a main lobby, public corridors, passageways, four offices, council chamber, court room, committee room, conference room, and a men's toilet. The second floor lobby features a terrazzo floor, marble bases and a plaster cornice with two-color stencils. Sections of decorative iron stair railings flank the north and south ends. Above the north stairway is a large painting of the town of Tonawanda, which depicts a map of the town and village, historical figures, and prominent landmarks. Second floor offices in the southeast and southwest quadrants were originally designed as large open rooms with corner offices. As designed, the office on the east side of the lobby was reserved for the Department of Public Works and the office on the west side was unassigned. Presently, the rooms on the east side include conference rooms for the village and town, a print room and a technical support room.

The judicial centers of the village and town are served by the council and court rooms in the northern end of the second floor. Designed as two distinct rooms with sixteen foot high ceilings, the Tonawanda Council Chamber (west side) and

Kenmore Court Room (east side) are divided by central sliding wood partition doors consisting of four three-feet six-inch wide panels per section. Each room was executed according to the same design, stylistic details and materials. Judicial platforms are located at opposite ends. Main entrances to the council chamber and courtroom are located off their respective halls in the south wall of each room. Each room is four bays-wide. The north walls are punctuated by four tall window bays. The council chamber has a wood platform for the council and two entrance doors on the west wall. In the court room, the east wall features the platform for the judge, witness, and clerk as well as two entrance doors to the judge chambers and court clerk's room.

Historic stylistic embellishments in each room include plaster pilasters topped by rosettes, cornice, cove molding and geometric stencil work and border. Each main entrance door has a set of double-leaf wood doors set in an Art Deco-inspired wood door enframement wall, enclosed by a plaster enframement with narrow molding. Single doorways exhibit the same stylistic treatment. Interior finishes include cork floor tiles, wood wainscoting, marble bases, plaster walls, wood panels, and an acoustical cork ceiling. Wood panels and wainscot are vertical grain. Wainscot detail includes reeded panels and wood molding. The council chamber and courtroom have built up wood platforms with wood rails that feature similar detailing as the wainscoting. Behind the platforms, the end walls feature quarter-matched wood panels, fluted wood pilasters with inlaid wood capitals, and a brass-plated clock. The courtroom has a gateless wood bar. Alterations to the council and court rooms have been limited to replacement windows.

Ground Floor (Basement)

The ground floor originally was designed with one large unassigned office space in the southwest quadrant. The southeast quadrant was divided for offices for the highway department and originally for a doctor's office with a waiting room, nurse's office, dressing room and closet. A janitor's closet is located at the southern end of the main corridor. The basement originally included individual toilet and washrooms designated for both the public and staff. The women's toilet and wash rooms were laid out in the northwest quadrant, while the men's facilities were located in the northeast and northwest quadrants. The northern portion of the basement originally housed a fan room, coal room, boiler room, machine room, transformer room, receiving room, and a storage room. The northern section of the basement also contains the largest of the building's eleven vaults.

Basement office spaces have been retained, although interior finishes have been modified. Presently, the town of Tonawanda assessor and attorney occupy the basement office. The original men's toilet and washroom in the northeast quadrant was converted into a maintenance room. Public restrooms and the staff women's restroom are still located in the northwest quadrant of the basement. One intact toilet room located in the northeast quadrant retains its original fixtures and salt glazed wall tiles. The most significant alteration to the basement floor plan is the addition of an elevator shaft and an entrance/corridor in the northeast quadrant, in the location of the former storage room.

Tonawanda Municipal Building
Name of Property

Erie County, NY
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [x] A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [x] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- [ ] A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- [ ] B removed from its original location.
- [ ] C a birthplace or grave.
- [ ] D a cemetery.
- [ ] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- [ ] F a commemorative property.
- [ ] G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

government
architecture

Period of Significance
1936-1962

Significant Dates
1936,1962

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Green & James (architects)
John W. Cowper Company, Inc. (builders)

Period of Significance (justification)

The period begins with the construction of the building and the end date reflects its continued use as a municipal building.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary) N/A

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Tonawanda Municipal Building in the Village of Kenmore, Erie County, New York is significant under Criterion A in the area of government as a centrally located municipal building serving the town of Tonawanda, just north of the city of Buffalo. Construction of the building (1936) reflected the need for improved municipal services in a growing suburban area between the cities of Buffalo and Tonawanda. The village of Kenmore developed as the first late nineteenth century/early twentieth century suburban development in the town of Tonawanda. The site of the building was originally used for the first local school, but as the population grew, a new school was built to the south in 1911. The town used the old school building for offices until 1935, when it was demolished. The extant building was constructed in 1936 as a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project. As a municipal building, it served the community in a centrally located, easily accessible area of the town and quickly became an important component of the active commercial center of the village.

Also significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture, the municipal building is an excellent example of late Art Deco design and of 1930s civic architecture. It also marked the later career of Edward B. Green and his new partner, R. Maxwell James. Educated at Cornell University, Green formed his first partnership, the firm of Green and Wicks, in 1880 and began practicing in Buffalo the following year. The firm designed a number of the city's most prominent extant building's such as the Buffalo Savings Bank (1900), the Market Arcade on Main Street (1892), the Albright Art Gallery (1905), the Twentieth Century Club (1896), and First Presbyterian Church at Symphony Circle (1891). Green's son joined as partner after Wicks retired in 1917 and some of their extant works in the city are Mayfair Lane (1928) and buildings at the University of Buffalo's Main Street Campus (1927-1933).

Developmental history/additional historic context information (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Historical Context: The Town of Tonawanda

Settlement in the Town of Tonawanda began around 1805 after Joseph Ellicott, the principal Land Agent for the Holland Land Company, surveyed, subdivided and began selling the company's lands in Western New York. The first settlers located in the northern part of the town in 1805-06 and the first inn was established by Henry Anguish in 1811. Most of the settlers were farmers and subsequent farming communities emerged along the initial roads cut through the town. These roads are now known as Delaware Road, Military Road (cut between 1802 and 1809), and Englewood Avenue. In 1839, Delaware Road was the main highway between the villages of Tonawanda and Buffalo and was surveyed and improved in 1839.[1] Originally within the town of Buffalo, the town of Tonawanda was formed in 1836 and included what is now the town of Grand Island, which became a separate township in 1852.

[1] Frederick S. Parkhurst, *History of Kenmore, Erie County, New York* (Kenmore, NY: NP, 1926), np.

The area received a tremendous economic boost when the Erie Canal opened in 1825, utilizing the western end of Tonawanda Creek, which paralleled the Niagara River through the town. Local farmers located new farms or expanded existing farms along the canal, which concentrated settlement in the northern part of the town, developing a canal port that became the village and eventually the city of Tonawanda. The village of Tonawanda was incorporated on December 3, 1853. In addition to being a good harbor near the western terminus of the Erie Canal, the village was also a well-developed station on the Buffalo & Niagara Falls Railroad. By the beginning of the Civil War, most of the town land was under cultivation with corn, oats, wheat and vegetables. The expanding village in the extreme northern portion of the town supported a large grain elevator, with a capacity of 250,000 bushels, as well as numerous manufacturing industries, such as three sawmills, three shingle mills, a planing mill, a furnace, and a machine shop.[2] During the middle decades of the nineteenth century a substantial lumber trade developed in the village of Tonawanda as millions of board feet of lumber from the upper Great Lakes were transferred on the Tonawanda docks.[3]

During the early-twentieth century, the town transitioned from a rural farming community with pockets of industry to a more urbanized, industrial economy. Heavy industry coalesced in the western portion of the town along the Niagara River and included the Wickwire-Spencer steel mill (opened in 1908), the Dunlop Tire and Rubber Company plant (1920), DuPont's Fibersilk plant (later DuPont-Yerkes), producing rayon and cellophane in 1926, the Frontier Oil (later Ashland Oil) refinery (ca. 1935) and the General Motors automobile engine plan in 1938. (During World War II, the factory made airplane engines). The Curtiss Aeroplane & Motor Company built a new facility during this period in a vacant field near the intersection of what is now Sheridan Drive and Niagara Falls Boulevard.[4] Buffalo General Electric constructed the Charles R. Huntley Station, a coal-fired steam-generating plant, along the river west of the Erie Barge Canal in 1916.

Development of Buffalo's "First Suburb"

In 1889, Buffalo realtor Louis Phillip Adolph Eberhardt ushered in a new era of suburbanization in Erie County when he established the first suburban community in the town, located on Delaware Avenue just north of the Buffalo city line (i.e., Kenmore Avenue). Purchasing the tract from Charles Ackerman, Eberhardt subdivided it into lots and named his new suburb Kenmore. He built the first house at 2749 Delaware Avenue in 1889, which later became his real-estate office.[5] Prior to Eberhardt's purchase, Delaware Avenue ended at the Buffalo city limits and a new road was proposed north through farmland, much of which remained in agricultural production as late as 1912.[6] In 1890, 318 people lived in Kenmore and by the end of the decade, the community supported three churches, several businesses, a post office, and an elementary school.[7]

[2] John Percy, *The Town of Tonawanda* (Dover, NH: Arcadia Publishing, 1997), np.
[3] John Douglas Stewart, *A History of the Town of Tonawanda*. (Buffalo, New York: Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society, 1972), 2,3; John Percy, "Keystone of the Niagara Frontier" History, online at http://www.buffalohistoryworks.com/tonawanda/tonawand.htm (1996).
[4] Percy, *Town of Tonawanda*, 42-50; Stewart, *A History of the Town of Tonawanda*, 5.
[5] Parkhurst, *History of Kenmore, Erie County, New York;* Robert W. Silsby, *Settlement to Suburb; A History of the Town of Tonawanda, Erie County, New York, 1607-1986* (Tonawanda, NY: Sterling C. Sommer, Incorporated, 1997), 39, and John Percy, "Keystone of the Niagara Frontier" History. http
[6] Parkhurst, *History of Kenmore,*, 72-75.
[7] Silsby, *Settlement to Suburb*, 40.

Further development of Delaware Avenue took place between 1892 and 1894, expanding it in a straight line from the Buffalo city line at Kenmore Avenue to Elmlawn, creating two triangle intersections, one at Elmlawn Cemetery and a second at Delaware Road where the current municipal building is located. With the completion of the avenue in 1894, it became part of the route of the Buffalo, Kenmore, & Tonawanda Electric Railway, which began operation at that time.[8] The street was paved with brick on a concrete base along its route between Kenmore Avenue and the village of Tonawanda and remained one of the few paved roads in the county. During the First World War, heavy truck traffic undermined the integrity of the brick, leaving the road a crumbling mess. Between 1919 and 1922, Delaware Avenue was repaved with concrete and lights were installed along the avenue.[9]

In 1892, a triangular lot at the southern intersection of Delaware Road and Delaware Avenue was purchased from Eberhardt for $1,500 for a Union Free Elementary School, allowing local children to attend school in Kenmore rather than travel to either Tonawanda or Buffalo. The village continued to expand around the new school with the purchase of a portion of an adjacent lot that had been excluded from the original school-building site.[10] The Kenmore Hotel at Delaware Road and Wabash Avenue opened in 1893, north of the triangle. A large frame building was located south of the hotel that was known by a variety of names, including the Rink, the Wigwam, and Convention Hall. It served as the site of "bicycle races, roller skating, dancing, temperance meetings, and political rallies."[11] The building was razed in 1914 for the construction of the Nash Motor Company building.

During the last decade of the nineteenth century, both Kenmore and the town of Tonawanda witnessed an expansion of commerce and an increase in population. This expansion and development taxed the existing infrastructure and increased the demand for municipal services such as water supply, sewage and garbage disposal, and fire and police protection. Since the town of Tonawanda was slow to deal with these issues, the Kenmore community first considered seeking annexation by the city of Buffalo, then its incorporation as a village to address the needs for additional services. The village of Kenmore was incorporated within the town of Tonawanda on September 18, 1899.[12]

In the 1920s, the population of Kenmore exploded from 3,160 in 1920 to 16,482 in 1930. As a result, the demands on the town and village boards and municipal agencies greatly increased, requiring more frequent meetings and adequate space to complete the municipal business at hand. The growing number of families moving into the village created a separate set of demands resulting from overcrowding at the wooden schoolhouse at the triangle. After a new brick school structure was erected farther to the north in 1910, the former Union Free School building became the village hall, solving the village boards meeting and office problems. The town of Tonawanda would also meet in this building after it lost its meeting space with the city of Tonanwanda incorporated in 1903.[13] At some point during the closing of 1904, the town entered into a rental agreement with the village of Kenmore, paying $60 per year for the use the village and fire hall, located on the

[8] Parkhurst, *History of Kenmore, Erie County (1926)*, 10, 15, (1930) 23.
[9] Parkhurst, *History of Kenmore (1926),* 43; Silsby, *Settlement to Suburb*, 47-49.
[10] Parkhurst, *History of Kenmore, (1930)* 35, (1926), 34; Silsby, *Settlement to Suburb*, 53.
[11] Frederick S. Parkhurst, *History of Kenmore* (1930), 75.
[12] Ibid, 40-41, and. Parkhurst, *History of Kenmore,* (1926), 10.
[13] Ibid,53; Percy, *The Town of Tonawanda*, 62; Parkhurst, *History of Kenmore,* (1930), 42.

east side of Delaware Avenue and south of Warren Avenue (no longer extant). According to one account, "The town board meetings and town offices were housed in a vacant store on Delaware Avenue until 1906, when for a rental of $200 per year, they were moved to the Kenmore Village Hall. Thus began collaboration between the village and town that has continued for a great many years."[14]

The Tonawanda Municipal Building History

Although the pace of development slowed in the 1930s, the Great Depression exacerbated the demands on government as numerous federal agencies came into existence to help alleviate the needs of unemployed and underemployed individuals. In 1935, town and villages officials agreed to demolish the former school turned municipal building and erect a new structure on the same site. Part of the plan called for applying for and receiving federal funds from the Public Works Administration (PWA).[15] Plans for the new building were developed by the local architectural firm Green & James. Green & James was a recently formed (1936) partnership of noted Buffalo architect Edward B. Green and R. Maxwell James. This new partnership came late in his career, having designed buildings in Buffalo since the early 1880s, notably as part of a partnership with William Sydney Wicks (Green & Wicks) until 1917 and then with his son as E.B. Green & Sons until 1933. Green & James worked predominantly on public or industrial commissions, including the Buffalo Memorial Auditorium (recently demolished).

On March 3, 1936, the town board held its last meeting in the old building. Because he had once attended school there, Councilman Justin Trabert was invited to take the chair to adjourn the meeting. Some village and town offices were moved to the fire hall on Nash Road and others into the First National Bank building. Demolition and construction proceeded rapidly during the year and on February 1, 1937 a brief ceremony was held as the town board met for the first time in the new building, just eleven months after its last meeting in the old.[16]

The Tonawanda Municipal building was constructed with funds from the Public Works Administration (PWA), which was authorized by the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) in June 1933. The agency was set up by President Franklin D. Roosevelt under the administration of his Secretary of the Interior, Harold L. Ickes. The PWA was an expansive, Depression-era federal government spending program that aimed to create jobs while improving the nation's infrastructure. Roosevelt believed that by keeping people employed first and improving U.S. infrastructure second, the PWA could provide much-needed relief to the U.S. economy. The PWA mainly financed state and local projects through grants and loans.

Construction of PWA projects began soon after the NIRA Act in 1933 and continued in various subsequent congressional appropriations from 1935 through 1938. By January 1, 1938, allotments were made by PWA for 15,976 federal and

[14]Silsby, *Settlement to Suburb*, 82.
[15]Ibid,132.
[16] Ibid.

10,498 non-federal projects that totaled 26,474 projects. 8,259 of these projects were for new building construction.[17] Allotments were divided into two classes. One consisted of Federal projects which, with very few exceptions, had been planned and designed by architectural and engineering organizations of the various departments of the Federal Government. The other consisted of non-federal projects, planned and designed by private practices architects and engineers employed by the owners. A review of work done during this period by the PWA determined that the architectural quality of the federal projects of the 1930s as far better than that of the buildings constructed by the federal government during the two previous decades. Additional studies noted that traditional designs predominated in federal work although some trend toward the "modern may be noted particularly in the Mid West where the traditions of the architecture of western Europe are not so deeply rooted."[18]

PWA programs afforded many architects and engineers employed by non-federal public bodies their first opportunity to indirectly do work in which the federal government was interested. By 1939, the approximate number of individual architects and engineers in private practice who were employed on federal projects was 273 and 5,742 on non-federal projects.[19] The number of architectural and engineering offices employed was 210 on federal and 4,380 on non-federal.[20] The preferred type of construction generally adopted was steel framing with reinforced concrete floors and exterior walls faced with brick or stone backed up with hollow tile. The PWA viewed "excessive ornamentation" as unnecessary.[21]

New York State was organized under Region 1of the PWA's seven regional offices.[22] Green & James's Erie County Jail (1938) and the Buffalo Wastewater Treatment Plant (1939) were two PWA projects in Buffalo highlighted in the extensive inventory *Public Buildings A Survey of Architecture of Projects Constructed By Federal and Other Governmental Bodies Between Years 1933 and 1939 with the Assistance of the Public Works Administration*. In this work, the PWA reviewed federal-funded architecture of public buildings across the country and made comparisons of design in style and planning, of the trends in the different sections of the country and the varied developments that were made in construction. According to publication, the most outstanding examples of both traditional and modern architecture were found in Region 1 than in any other region of the country.[23] In 1939, the PWA was assimilated into the Federal Works Agency and was dissolved in 1943 by executive order.

Art Deco Design and the Tonawanda Municipal Building

[17] C.W. Short and R. Stanley Brown, *Public Buildings A Survey of Architecture of Projects Constructed By Federal and Other Governmental Bodies Between Years 1933 and 1939 with the Assistance of the Public Works Administration* (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1939), ii.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid, xi.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid,iii.
[22] Other states included in PWA Region 1: New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland.
[23] Short and Brown, *Public Buildings A Survey of Architecture of Projects*, xi.

Architect-designed buildings constructed in the early-twentieth century were influenced primarily by prevailing late eclectic classicism until the Art Deco style was introduced by the 1925 *Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industrielles Modernes* in Paris. America embraced it as a refreshing change from the previous eclectic and revivalist sensibilities. In the 1930s, it was further refined into what became known as Art Moderne. Buildings had sleek, linear appearances with smooth surfaces, flat roofs and stylized, geometric ornamentation such as chevrons, zigzags, and other geometrical motifs. Low-relief decorative panels were placed at entrances, around windows, along roof edges or as string courses. Exterior features included distinctive smooth finishes and often included a series of setbacks creating a stepped outline. During the Great Depression, most of the public buildings constructed as part of the New Deal used a modest institutional form of the style, often used in government funded construction of post offices, city halls, courthouses, and school buildings.

Both the Art Deco and Art Moderne were used in Western New York in a variety of forms and ornamentation that ranged from single-family residences to multi-story municipal buildings. The City of Buffalo had several notable Art Deco buildings, including the Buffalo City Hall (1929-1931: Dietel & Wade, architects) and the New York Central Terminal (1928-1929: Fellheimer & Wagner, architects). The style extended beyond civic architecture to commercial buildings with the Pierce Arrow automobile showroom (1929, H.E. Plumer and Associates with H.F. Kellog), the Rand Building (offices--1929, Franklyn & William Kidd, architects), and schools, apartment buildings, theaters, and monuments. One notable example of an Art Deco-inspired building in the village of Kenmore stood directly opposite the Tonawanda Municipal Building at 33 Delaware Road. The modest interpretation of Art Deco influence was expressed in the exterior design for the brick-veneered building at 33 Delaware Road and limited to the main façade with its distinguishing setback and parapet. Designed by prominent Buffalo architect Duane Lyman, the residential-scale building was constructed in 1933 as a medical office for Dr. Daniel Stem. Lyman also designed the Niagara Mohawk Building in Syracuse, regarded as an outstanding example of Art Deco design, completed in 1932 (NR listed 2010).

The Tonawanda Municipal Building is an excellent example of the transition from Art Deco to Art Moderne design, marking the later career of renowned Buffalo architect Edward B. Green and his effort to embrace modern architectural styles. Adorned in with geometric motifs, the building is symmetrical in massing and uses coursed alternating rows of stone consisting of varying shades of buff limestone. Subtle color variation in the stone conveys a banding-like effect which emphasizes the horizontality of the exterior. The primary distinguishing feature of the building's exterior is the tall, two-story, projecting central bay with formal entrance on the south elevation that overlooks a triangular-shaped village green.

Stylistic details of the central bay includes two recessed, full-height, fluted pilasters topped by stylized bas-relief capitals and a decorative wrought-aluminum screen consisting of full-height pierced panels with stylized geometric and floral motifs. Above the main entrance, the building is identified with the words "MUNICIPAL BUILDING" carved into six limestone panels. The distinctive stepped outline is further enhanced by a central parapet embellished with fluted glyphs and semi-circular scallops. The identical east and west elevations of the building contain a similar rhythmic design with

central entrances and ten recessed, two-story window openings divided by pilasters topped with low-relief stone panels. Side entrances are set in a wide buff stone enframement with decorative carved accents in the upper corners.

Many of these geometric details are repeated in the interior. The municipal building's grand stairway overlooks the main lobby and features decorative wrought-iron curved balusters with wooden hand rails, cast-iron newel posts, and cast-iron rosettes. The tall stairway window highlights the ornate cast-aluminum grille on the exterior. The ceiling over the landing includes decorative plaster ceiling grilles arranged around a central light-fixture panel. The courtrooms have geometric stencil work and borders, along with plaster pilasters topped by plaster rosettes.

CONCLUSION

Like other area suburbs, Tonawanda saw rapid population growth after World War II and the need for housing was met with residential development complexes and supporting commercial operations (shopping plazas, grocery stores, etc). The population of the town of Tonawanda was 55,270 in 1950, which almost doubled by reaching a size of 105,032 in 1960. The population of the village of Kenmore also reached its highest level in 1960 with 21,261 people enumerated. In the 1970s, numerous shopping plazas were built. These commercial outlets attracted residents, other suburban shoppers and new employees to the area, increasing traffic the amount of traffic on the roads.[24] Trends of development and sprawl pushed suburbanization farther out to the north and east of Tonawanda. As development expanded into Wheatfield and Pendleton (in Niagara County) and Clarence and Lancaster (in Erie County), population in Tonawanda declined as industry shut down or relocated. The population of the own of Tonawanda (including Kenmore) decreased steadily as evidences by the population statistics: 82,464 in 1990, 78,155 in 2000, and 73,567 in 2010. The population of the village of Kenmore also declined, falling from 17,180 in 1990 to 16,426 in 2000 and to 15,423 in 2010. Regardless of the loss of population, the Tonawanda Municipal Building continues to serve as a town/village municipal building, which the town owns. The village of Kenmore owns the land and leases it to the town (99-years).

E.B. Green's restrained design for the Tonawanda Municipal Building conveys the social and economic influences of the Great Depression with elements and conventions of the period's architectural style aesthetic potential. The building effectively conforms to the residential and commercial scale of a village setting and represents a different application in scale in designs for 1930s municipal buildings constructed in larger urban contexts. The nominated building continues to serve as a visual anchor in the central business district of Kenmore as well as an important civic landmark for the town and village.

[24] John Douglas Stewart, *A History of the Town of Tonawanda*. (Buffalo, New York: Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society, 1972), np.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
____previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark
____recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

____State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
____Local government
____University
__x__Other
Name of repository: **PanAmerican Consultants, Inc.**

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18N	184381	4764026	3			
2				4			

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed map with scale.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The property boundary is the same as for the period of significance.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christine M. Longiaru, Architectural Historian; Mark A. Steinback, Historian, & Frank Schieppati, Preservation Planner
organization PanAmerican Consultants, Inc date
street & number 2390 Clinton St telephone (716) 821-1650
city or town Buffalo state NY zip code 14227
e-mail buffalo@panamconsultants.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

  A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Tonawanda Municipal Building

City or Vicinity: Kenmore

County: Erie State: NY

Photographer: Christine Longiaru

Date Photographed: November 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

0001 of 0018. View looking north along Delaware Road showing municipal building on the left (west).
0002 of 0018. Tonawanda Municipal Building, setting/principal façade, view looking north.
0003 of 0018. Municipal Building, east elevation viewed looking west from Delaware Road.
0004 of 0018. Tonawanda Municipal Building, west elevation viewed looking east from Delaware Avenue.
0005 of 0018. North elevation of building, viewed looking southwest from parking lot.
0006 of 0018. Detail view of main entrance (south façade).
0007 of 0018. Interior view, first floor lobby.
0008 of 0018. Detail view of first floor north end stairs.
0009 of 0018. First floor south end stairs.
0010 of 0018. Second floor corridor with painting of town history.
0011 of 0018. Second floor showing entrance to court room and other historic doors.
0012 of 0018. Detail view of second floor landing showing exterior window aluminum work.
0013 of 0018. Interior view, second floor Council Chamber.
0014 of 0018. Interior view, second floor Court Room.
0015 of 0018. Dividing wall between Council Chamber and Court Room.
0016 of 0018. Detail view of decoration in Council/Court Room.
0017 of 0018. Stair to ground level (Delaware Avenue side of building).
0018 of 0018. Offices in ground (basement) level.

Tonawanda Municipal Building
Name of Property

Erie County, NY
County and State

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Town of Tonawanda

street & number 2919 Delaware Ave telephone (716) 877-8800

city or town Kenmore state NY zip code 14217

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

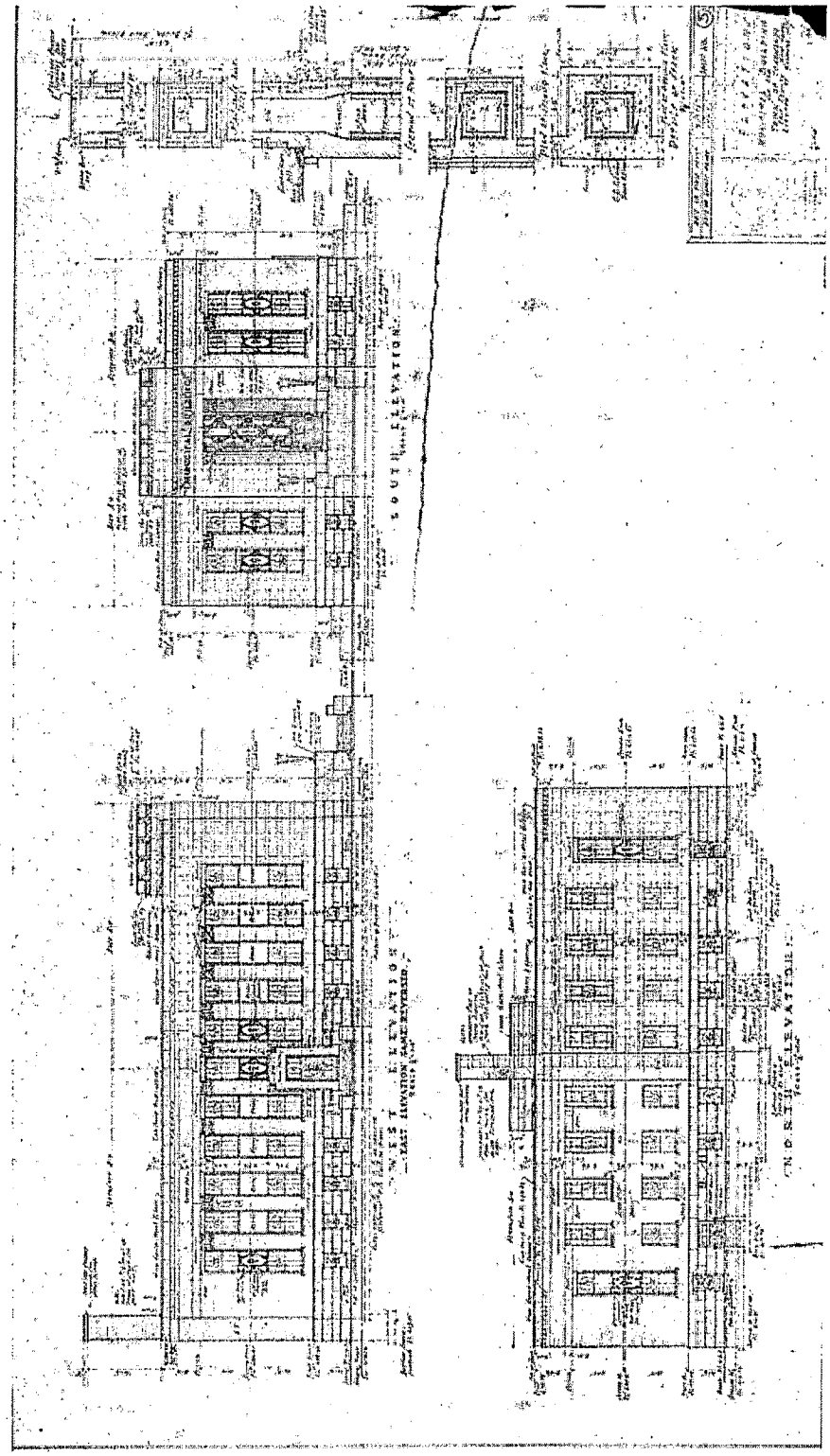
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Tonawanda Municipal Building
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 11 Page 1



Elevation drawings by Greene and James

Tonawanda Municipal Building
Kenmore, Erie Co., NY

2919 Delaware Ave.
Kenmore, NY 14217

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter

Feet
0 750 1,500 3,000

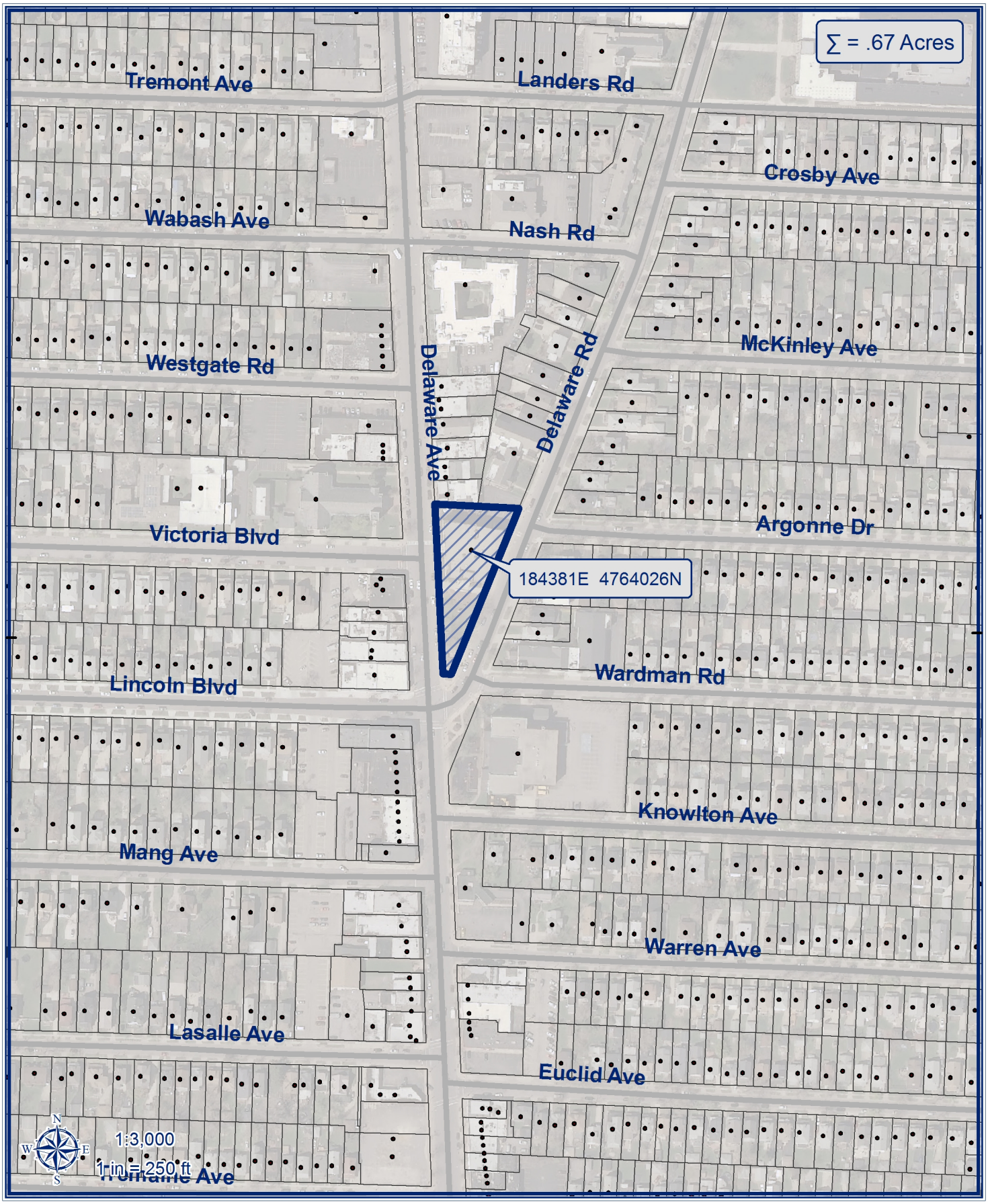
Municipal Building
USGS quad index

Tax Parcel Data:
Erie Co. RPS
http://gis1.erie.gov/GC/

OFFICE OF PARKS · RECREATION · HISTORIC PRESERVATION
NEW YORK STATE

Tonawanda Municipal Building
Kenmore, Erie Co., NY

2919 Delaware Ave.
Kenmore, NY 14217



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter

0 95 190 380 Feet

Municipal Building

Tax Parcel Data:
Erie Co. RPS
http://gis1.erie.gov/GC/

OFFICE OF PARKS · RECREATION · HISTORIC PRESERVATION
NEW YORK STATE

NORTH
384
FOR SALE
OPEN HOUSE
WAS. WAN

MUNICIPAL BUILDING
KOREA
VIET-NAM

DO NOT
ENTER

MUNICIPAL BUILDING
1936

15
Mayor
Patrick Maug
KENMORE JUSTICE COURT
SMALL CLAIMS MAY BE FILED
FRIDAYS ONLY 9:00AM TO 1:00PM
FIRE EXTINGUISHER
HERE
16
COMPTROLLER
WATER BILLING

KENMORE JUSTICE COURT
ROOM 26
SECOND FLOOR
MON WED THUR FRI 9:00 AM TO 4:00 PM
TUESDAY 3:00 PM TO 10:00 PM
SMALL CLAIMS MAY BE FILED
FRIDAYS ONLY 9:00AM TO 1:00PM
PAY PARKING TICKETS AT 2395 ELMWOOD AVE
UNIFORM TRAFFIC TICKETS PAY ROOM 26

EXIT
KENMORE JUSTICE
SMALL CLAIMS MAY BE
FRIDAYS ONLY 9:00AM TO

COURT ROOM
RULES OF THE COURTROOM
1. ALL CELL PHONES AND PAGERS MUST BE TURNED OFF.
2. NO HATS, EATING OR DRINKING.
3. NO READING, STANDING OR SLEEPING WHILE COURT IS IN SESSION.
4. NO COMMUNICATING WITH PRISONERS.
5. HANDS MUST BE OUT OF POCKETS WHEN IN FRONT OF THE JUDGE.
6. RESPECTFUL BEHAVIOR IS REQUIRED AT ALL TIMES.
7. PROPER DRESS REQUIRED.
NO CELL PHONES
26
Scott F. Riordan
Village Justice
Andrew O. Miller
Acting Village Justice
WALK IN
EVERYONE MUST BE SEATED IN COURT ROOM
FIRE EXTINGUISHER HERE

NO
CELL PHONES
NO
CELL PHONES

DELAWARE AVE

3
Town Of Tonawanda
DAVID C. MARRANO,SCA
ASSESSOR
HOURS
8 AM - 4 PM
WALK IN