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Table of Contents

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE	1
LOST UTICA	2-4
MISSION STATEMENT	3
SPECIAL THANKS	3
THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS	3
AWARD OF MERIT WINNERS	4-5
NEWS FROM GREATER UTICA	6-8
WHAT WAS IT?/WHERE WAS IT?	8
THE FULLER HOUSE	9
SCENIC & HISTORIC	10-11

MERCHANDISING

Our Merchandise Committee is at work with plans to increase our Landmarks Society shop. New ideas include mugs, glassware, t-shirts, and so much more are being considered.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE AN EMAIL VERSION OF OUR NEWSLETTERS - CONTACT US AT 315-732-7376.



LOST UTICA

by Michael J. Lehman, AIA



456 (was #106) Columbia Street
Jensen/Kreber brick carriage house
c.1907- 2019

This 112-year-old two story brick carriage house was

recently demolished by the Mohawk Valley Health System (MVHS), despite their claim that "history is important to us", to make way for the proposed downtown regional medical center. It should be noted the destruction of this first building happened while an Article 78 appeal was still underway to determine if the MVHS final SEQRA environmental impact statement (FEIS) was in fact accurate and complete or if the review process needed to be redone and resubmitted. A judge in the NYS Albany Supreme Court heard oral arguments on October 31st, only a day or two after the premature demolition. Rather than dismiss the case, as MVHS

had requested, the judge asked for additional information from MVHS. On that date evidence of the demolition was submitted to the judge by the plaintiffs and he directed MVHS to make an accounting regarding their actions by November 7. MVHS subsequently requested a time extension and their response is now due by November 22nd. The litigation is continuing with a decision by the court anticipated in approximately 60 days.

The building was one of but a handful of irreplaceable historic and cultural assets contributing to Utica's downtown Gateway Historic Canal District (GHCD), the Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor, and the historic CoLa neighborhood. It documented the evolution of residential settlement pattern, transportation methods, and commercial development in the city. It was all that remained of 456 (formerly 106) Columbia Street after the various failed mega block urban renewal projects of decades past had taken their toll. According to the Utica City Directory:

- 1892** : The address was a saloon operated by August Miller. It also served as his residence.
- 1897** : Wilkens & Haley- cigar manufacturers occupied the site
- 1902** : Charles J. Kienzle, a custom tailor, and Fred. C. Kienzle, a druggist, are listed.
- 1907** : Christian Jensen resided there & operated the Dresdner Home Bakery on the 1st floor.
- 1917** : Eugene J. Kreber operated a bakery here for decades. It also served as his residence
- 1947** : Kings Liquor Store and 4 apartments are listed at the address
- 1956** : Frey Liquors and 4 apartments listed. *Also, a note that at the rear carriage house are two apartments- each with its own phone.*



106 (456) Columbia St. c. 1956, now gone - light colored second building from the right and **110-112 Columbia St. the extant National Register eligible Witzberger Building** - second from left - scheduled for demolition by MVHS. *The four-story building on the left corner as St. George's Hall- now gone.*

Chr. Jensen's

Dresdner Home Bakery

Strictly First class Goods.
A Trial will Convince You.
"Bread Like Mother Used to Bake."

106 Columbia Street.

BOTH 'PHONES

#106 ad from 1907 Utica City Directory, note business had two phones

This accessory service building was also of a scale and materials that conformed to the GHCD design standards. It should have served as a model for appropriate new infill mixed use commercial and residential construction. This would also have been in keeping with the goals of the Utica sustainable Master Plan for the neighborhood.

A pile of rubble and bricks now occupies the #456 site. This unfortunate example of poor stewardship- either misguided or uncaring- without any effort being made to repurpose or move the structure (despite the MVHS November 2017 stated campus guiding design principles, developed with public input, which included the reuse of existing buildings where practicable) undermines Utica's authentic and unique community character.