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**DOCUMENTATION REPORT:**

**EXISTING BUFFALO BILLS STADIUM AND**

**SUNY ERIE SOUTH CAMPUS,**

**TOWNS OF HAMBURG AND ORCHARD PARK,**

**ERIE COUNTY, NEW YORK**

**NYS OPRHP #22PR04875**

**Prepared for:**

**LaBella Associates, PC.**  
**300 Pearl Street**  
**Buffalo, New York 14202**

**Prepared by:**

**COMMONWEALTH HERITAGE GROUP, INC.**  
**NY Regional Office—Buffalo**  
**2390 Clinton Street**  
**Buffalo, New York 14227-1735**  
**(716) 821-1650**

**October 2022**

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**Prepared by:**

**Christine M. Longiaru, M.A., Sr. Architectural Historian**  
**Mark A. Steinback, M.A., Project Director/Senior Historian**

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**October 2022**

# Management Summary

**NYS OPRHP Project Review Number:** #22PR04875

**Involved State and Federal Agencies:** New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYS OPRHP), and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

**Phase of Survey:** Documentation for NYS OPRHP Survey and Evaluation Request

**Location Information:**

**Location:** One Bills Drive and 4041 Southwestern Blvd

**Minor Civil Division:** Towns of Orchard Park (MCD 02921) and Hamburg (MCD 02915)

**County:** Erie

**USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangle Maps:** Orchard Park 1965

**Documentation Study Area:** The study area includes High Mark Stadium Complex and SUNY Erie South Campus.

**Project Summary.** The proposed new Bills Stadium in Orchard Park, NY will be built inside the current stadium complex. It will be located on the west side of Abbott Road in the space currently utilized for stadium parking. The western section of the APE (area of potential effect) consists of portions of the SUNY Erie South Campus. Most of the areas on campus within the Town of Hamburg are not going to be developed at this stage, but rather will be used for construction lay down. The exception being a new entrance off Southwestern Boulevard on the town line.

**Archaeological Survey:** See Commonwealth's archaeological investigation reports for the new Bills Stadium (Whalen et al. 2022)

**Report Author(s):** C. Longiaru, M. Steinback

**Date of Report:** October 2022

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## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Project Description

Commonwealth Heritage Group, Inc. (Commonwealth) was contracted by LaBella Associates, PC., Buffalo, on behalf of OPSTAD, LLC, to prepare this documentation report for the proposed new Buffalo Bills Stadium project in the Towns of Orchard Park and Hamburg, Erie County, New York (Figure 1.1). The New Stadium and facilities will be constructed on existing surface parking areas on the west side of Abbot Road, opposite Highmark Stadium (Existing Stadium), and on the east and south portions of State University of New York (SUNY) Erie South Campus, which is in the Towns of Hamburg and Orchard Park (Figures 1.2 and 1.3). The New Stadium location is bound by SUNY Erie South Campus to the west, Southwestern Boulevard (US Route 20) to the north, Abbott Road to the east, and Big Tree Road to the south. Project plans entail the following:

- Construction of a new 1.35-million-square-foot (ft), 5-6 level stadium facility with minimum seating capacity of 60,000, an approximate ground-level footprint of 15 acres;
- Construction of an approximate 75,000-square-foot Auxiliary Building for the new stadium;
- Use of SUNY ECC South Campus, Town of Hamburg section as construction laydown area;
- The dismantling of the upper stadium seating and the infilling of the 100 Level seating and stadium bowl; and
- Filling, re-grading, and paving of the Highmark Stadium land to incorporate it into surface parking facilities for the new stadium complex.

#### Dimensions of Largest Proposed Structure<sup>1</sup>

- Height: Tallest portion of the New Bills Stadium is approximately +/- 190 ft.
- Width: +/- 730 ft
- Length: +/- 880 ft

The Existing Stadium is part of a 245-acre complex owned by Erie County. For the purposes of this report this larger area will be referred to as the project area. Physical alteration of more than 185 acres of land is proposed in the project area. This smaller subset of the project area will be referred to as the area of potential effect (APE) (see Figure 1-2). Highmark Stadium will be demolished after construction of the new stadium is completed. Existing auxiliary buildings and parking lots on the east side of Abbott Rd will remain within the new stadium complex. The one-story concrete block building on the west side of Abbott Rd in Lot 4 will be demolished. The new stadium, parking lots, and an auxiliary building is proposed on the SUNY Erie South Campus, Town of Orchard Park area only. Community College Drive will be removed to accommodate the new stadium. Other Project plans include construction of new utility lines, new lighting, and changes to road network.

Built in 1972-1973, the Existing Stadium is now 50-years old and requires evaluation for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Per request of the Division for Historic Preservation (DHP) of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), this documentation report includes historical background information and current documentation of Highmark Stadium Complex and SUNY Erie South Campus. Information contained in this report will support the NY SHPO's evaluation of the historic significance of all buildings/structures/districts within or adjacent to the project area.

For the New Bills Stadium project, Commonwealth conducted cultural resource investigations for both aboveground and belowground resources. These investigations were executed in compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act (as amended), the National Environmental Protection Act, the New York State Historic Preservation Act (§14.09 State Regulation), and the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR), as well as all relevant federal and state legislation. Sr. Architectural Historian Ms. Christine M. Longiaru, M.A. served as the Principal Investigator. Mr. Mark Steinbeck, M.A., was the Project Director.

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<sup>1</sup> County of Erie., *New Bills Stadium Full Environmental Assessment Form Part I*, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Project (SEQRA Submission), July 1, 2022 (Exhibit E: D. Project Details, D.1.g).

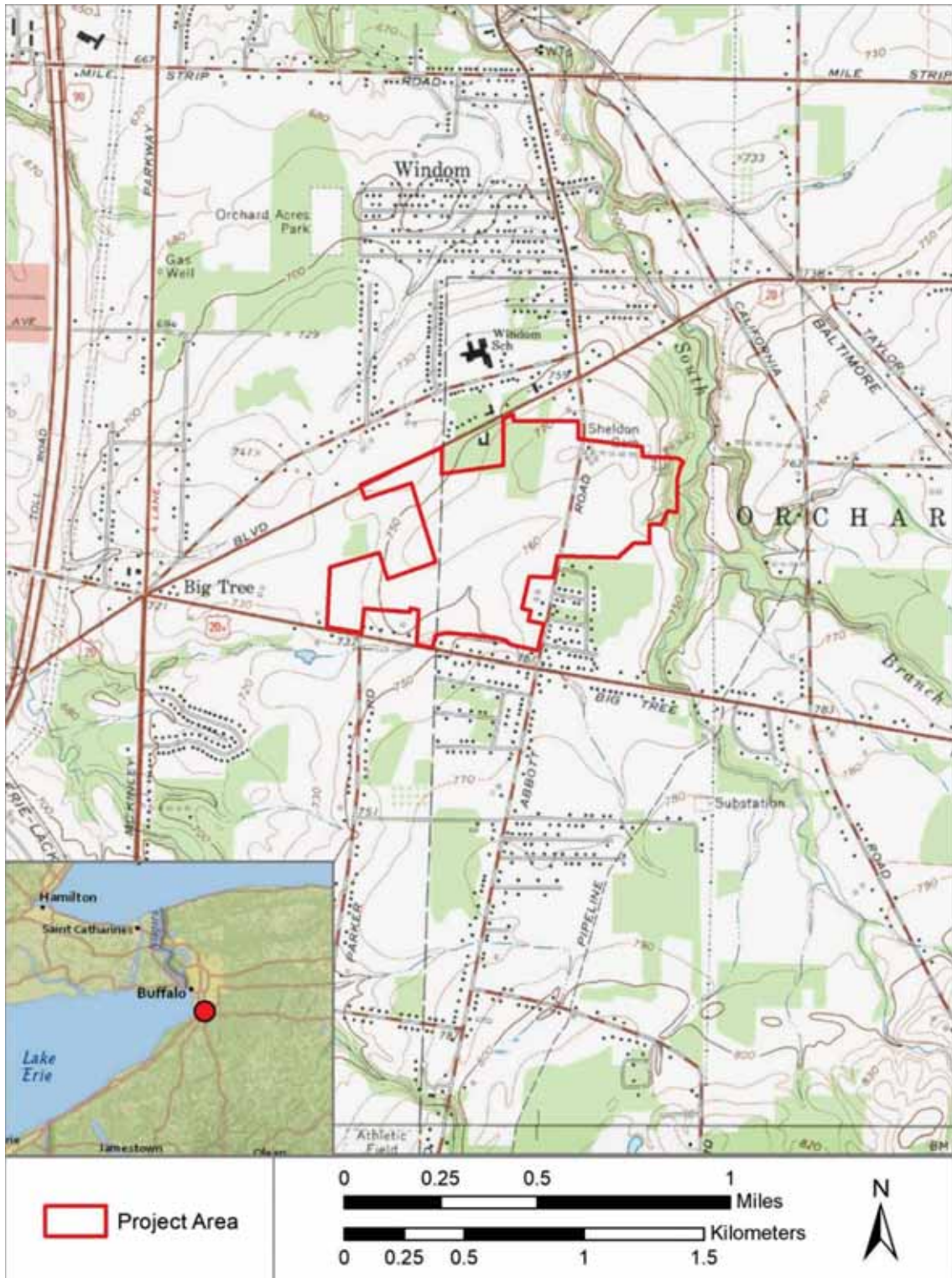


Figure 1.1. Approximate location of the project area prior to construction of Highmark Stadium and SUNY Erie South Campus, Towns of Hamburg and Orchard Park, Erie County, NY (USGS 1965).



**Figure 1.2. Location of project area and area of potential effect for the proposed Bills Stadium (Commonwealth 2022).**





**CONCEPT SITE PLAN**

- A** NEW STADIUM
- B** AUXILIARY BUILDING
- C** NEW PARKING @ HIGHMARK STADIUM
- D** EXISTING PARKING TO REMAIN
- E** EXISTING BUILDING TO REMAIN
- F** EXISTING EDUCATIONAL BUILDING TO REMAIN

Figure 1.3. Concept site plan for the proposed new Buffalo Bills Stadium (SEQRA Submission 2022).

## 1.2 Project Consultation<sup>2</sup>

Empire State Development previously submitted project information for the New Bills Stadium to the DHP of the OPRHP. Upon review of the Project materials, DHP provided comments related only to Historic/Cultural resources. The OPRHP requested additional historical background information and documentation of Highmark Stadium Complex and SUNY Erie South Campus. Highmark Stadium is now 50-years old and necessitates evaluation for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The OPRHP's preliminary research indicated SUNY Erie South Campus was constructed sometime around 1974. To complete their evaluation, the OPRHP requires the following:

### *Request 1:*

- Additional photos showing the exterior and interior of the stadium including views from the playing field and sample photos of interior areas, such as public concourses and concession areas.
- Locations of photograph views keyed to a map, site plan, or floor plan.
- A current aerial image of the stadium.

### *Request 2:*

- A history of the stadium that includes an overview of the events leading to its construction, how this site was selected, construction history, etc.
- Provide additional context, including typical characteristics, of this type of stadium as this complex appears to have been constructed as part of a wave of 1960s/70s stadiums known as "multi-purpose" or "cookie cutter" stadiums.
- A diagram, preferably color-coded, showing those areas that have been added or altered on the stadium and when these alterations occurred.

### *Request 3:*

- Information on the Erie Community College South Campus, which is directly adjacent to the project site.
- A brief history of the development of the campus, a site map identifying all buildings and their dates of construction, and photos showing the campus buildings.

### *Request 4:*

- Information about the maximum anticipated height of the stadium. NY SHPO understands that the design is still in preliminary stages, however, they need to understand if there will be visual impacts.

## 1.3 Documentation Methodology

The project area is located on the historic homelands of several Indigenous Nations, including the Seneca, Erie, and Wenro, and Neutral. A Phase IA Archaeological Investigation prepared by Commonwealth includes historic and documentary review of the project area, which encompasses the Indigenous Period through the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>3</sup> For information on the adjacent Sheldon Family Cemetery consult the Phase IA report. The general summary of land development use in the project area during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries is presented below. Per DHP request, this documentation report focuses on the contemporary development history of the 1973 stadium and SUNY Erie South Campus.

As outlined above, the current study entailed photographic documentation and research for each facility. The Buffalo Bills provided copies of construction photographs and original architectural drawings for Erie County Stadium (Rich Stadium) by Finch-Heery, Architects-Engineers, and James & Howard & Meadow. Drawings were reviewed to identify original design elements, construction materials, and landscape features. Subsequent construction and renovation drawings for the stadium complex and a construction timeline were also supplied by the Buffalo Bills.

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<sup>2</sup> Nancy Herter, *ESD New Buffalo Bills Stadium, 1 Bills Drive, Orchard Park, Erie County, NY 22PR04875*, Letter to Stephen Gawli (Peebles Island: DHP of OPRHP, August 3, 2022).

<sup>3</sup> Refer to Kathryn Whalen, Christine M. Longiaru, and Mark A. Steinback., *Phase IA Archaeological Investigation: Proposed New Buffalo Bills Stadium, One Bills Drive, Town of Orchard Park, Erie county, New York* (Buffalo: Commonwealth Heritage Group, Inc., 2022 [DRAFT]).

Copies of original architectural drawings for Erie Community College South Campus (SUNY Erie South) by Thomas Justin Imbs Associates, Architects were obtained from the County.

Commonwealth conducted research at Buffalo History Museum Research Library, Special Collections Department of the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library (Grosvenor Room, Central Branch), and SUNY Erie College Archives (North Campus). The Buffalo History Museum holds the James, Meadows & Howard's Records for the Erie County Stadium (Rich Stadium) Project, Orchard Park New York (1972-1974 undated). This collection contains project contract and construction records, correspondence, and various investigations of the site and stadium. Online research for additional background information was also completed. Historic maps and aerial photographs were analyzed to understand the development history of the County-owned parcels.

Site visits for the digital photographic documentation of Highmark Stadium and SUNY Erie South Campus were conducted on September 21 and October 3, 2022. For the Existing Stadium, documentation consisted of both exterior and interior views of the stadium structure, inclusive of views of and from the playing field. This documentation report includes only exterior views of SUNY Erie South Campus; interiors of campus buildings were not accessed.

#### **1.4 General Summary of Land Use Development**

Several historical maps and aerial imagery were reviewed to assess the overall land use development of the area and to identify map documented structures (MDS) in and around the APE. The approximate project area limits are overlain on the following maps: Geil 1854 (Figure 1.4); Stone and Stewart 1866 (Figure 1.5); Beers 1880 (Figure 1.6); The Century Map Co. 1909 (Figure 1.7); and historical aerial photographs of Erie County from 1926 and 1951 (ECDPW 1926 [Figure 1.8] and 1951 [Figure 1.9]). Other maps consulted included Niagara Frontier Planning Board town maps (1938a-b, 1948a-b) and USGS topographic maps (USGS 1948, 1965). Table 1 contains a list of MDSs in and around the project area.

By the mid-19th century, three structures associated with farms were in the project area along Abbott Rd in East Hamburg (later Orchard Park) and on Big Tree Rd in Hamburg (Figure 1.4). Other structures were adjacent to the project and had associated land in the project area. This sparsely populated area was situated between two crossroads communities centered on Big Tree Rd at Craigs Corners (later Big Tree Corners) to the west and Potters Corners (later Orchard Park) to the east. In 1854, the two structures in the project area on the west side of Abbott Rd on Lot 39 were identified with D. Abbot [sic] (MDS 1 [north]) and A. Whitmore (MDS 2 [south]). An unidentified structure (MDS 3) was to the northeast of the Abbot [sic] property on the opposite side of the road. A sawmill operated on the creek just north of MDS 3. At the south end of the project area, a structure identified with E. Smith (MDS 4) owned property on the west side of Abbott Rd within and adjacent to the project area; MDS 4 is adjacent to the project area. On the north side of Big Tree Rd on Lot 48 in 1854, west of Abbot Road near Barker Rd: J. Roads (MDS 5) and M.W. Green (MDS 6) had associated property in the project area. The general location of the structure associated with M.W. Green is documented in the southwest section of the project area. Three other structures on Big Tree Rd and Sheldon Rd were in the vicinity of the project area. Sheldon Rd was named after the Sheldon family; a J. Sheldon owned a farm on the south side of the road in the vicinity of the project area to the northwest. The Sheldon Family Cemetery which is adjacent to the project area is not documented on the 1854 map.

By 1866, Lot 39 had been divided into two lots (Lot 39 and Lot 40) (Figure 1.5). The Abbott structure (MDS 1) was not documented in 1866. A.D. Ellis is associated with MDS 2 on Lot 40. The previously unidentified structure (MDS 3) on the 1854 map appears to be in the general location of a structure identified with Mrs. Ferguson on Lot 40. E.G. Smith owned MDS 4 on Lot 39. MDS locations with associated property in the project area on Big Tree Rd on Lot 47 were owned by J. Rhoades (MDS 5) and H. Chandlers (MDS 6). A structure on project area on Sheldon Rd identified with B. Lozelle.

Lot 40 had been further subdivided by 1880 (Figure 1.6). J. Peters owned MDS 2 and 126 acres of land spanning both sides of Abbot Rd which included most of the new and current stadium locations. MDS 3 is not depicted on the map. E.G. Smith still owned MDS 4 and 47 acres of land on Lot 39, as well as a 48-acre tract on the west side of Lot 40 and adjacent to the J. Peters property (MDS 2). The new stadium location is partially on Smith's 48-acre parcel. R.

Rhoades owned the property associated with MDS 5, though a structure is not depicted on the 1880 map. The east portion of the 20-ac lot owned by J. Mann is in the project area, but the structure (MDS 6) is depicted outside of the project area to west. On south side of Sheldon Rd, E. Gold owned a structure on a 26-ac tract of land that was partially in the northwest corner of the project. A portion of the L.L. Crocker’s 59-ac parcel spanning both sides of Sheldon Rd extended south into the project area.

G. Diemer owned a 41-acre parcel on the west side of the road containing MDS 2 and an outbuilding in 1909 (Figure 1.7). Opposite MDS 2, C. Diemer was identified with a new structure (MDS 7) and two outbuildings on 85-acres of land. J. Purdy owned a 100-acre tract of land in the center of the project area containing MDS 4 and an outbuilding; structures are adjacent to the project area. The electric railroad ran along Abott Rd through the project area by this time. On Big Tree Rd, F.L. Kleis owned a 70-acre tract farm spanning both sides of the road that included a structure and three outbuildings. It is unknown if this structure is the MD5 in 1866 or a new structure. Two of the Kleis outbuildings are depicted in the southwest portion of the project area in 1909. E. Schwartz had acquired the parcel containing MDS 6 and one outbuilding. The two properties on Sheldon Rd with land partially in the project area both contained a structure and one outbuilding. F. Gehl is identified with the E. Gold farm and H. Struck owned a 26-ac parcel with a structure on the former L.L Crocker property.

A 1926 aerial photograph shows agricultural fields in the project area (Figure 1.8) The G. Diemer farmhouse (MDS 2) was no longer extant by this time. C. Deimer’s farm (MDS 3) is documented on the existing stadium location. Sheldon Cemetery on the north side of the C. Diemer’s farm path is visible on the photograph. The previously documented farms on Big Tree Road (MDS 5 and MDS 6) and on Sheldon Rd are also depicted.

The 1938 map identifies former East Hamburg as the incorporated Town of Orchard Park (Figure 1.9). This map shows parcels with only the names of property owners and total acreages. E.I Dupont owned tracts of land in the project area previously associated with the Diemer family (MDS 2 and MDS 7). The west parcel contained 40.16 ac and the east parcel consisted of 85.81 ac. Dupont also owned the 32.7-ac parcel on the east side of Abbott Road north of the existing stadium. Willard Piridy had acquired two tracts of land partially in the project area along the Hamburg-Orchard Park municipal line. J. Purdy owned the MDS 4 property (different spelling of surname in 1938). Frank L. Kleis owned the MDS 5 parcel and the Schwartz family retained ownership of the MDS 6 property in 1938. Southwestern Boulevard is depicted for the first time. The road was constructed through the farms fronting Sheldon Rd, from east to west, which were owned by Herman Struck, Henry Struck, and William L and Sofia W. Klens.

Sheldon Cemetery is identified on the 1948 USGS map, which shows the farm on the east side of Abbot Rd with a farmhouse and three barns. A farm path extends east past the cemetery to a small cluster of structures—possibly the “explosive storage bunkers” previously noted by Ewing in 2016 (Ewing 2016:9). Mid-twentieth century residential development occurred on the east side of Abbott Road and the north side of Big Tree Road, adjacent to the project area (Figures 15 and 16). By 1951, farm buildings on Southwestern Boulevard on the future college campus were no longer extant. Twin Oak Motel was constructed in the wooded area bordering the northeast boundary of the ECC South Campus in ca. 1954 (3949 Southwestern Blvd - demolished in 2020).

**Table 1. Map Documented Structures (MDS) and Property Holders in and around the Project Area**

MDS	1854	1866	1880	1909	1938
1	D. Abbott – Lot 39	---	---	---	---
2	A. Whitmore - Lot 39	A.D. Ellis – Lot 40	J. Peters - Lot 40 w/ one outbuilding	G. Diemer – Lot 40 w/ one outbuilding	E.I. Dupont  Note: farmhouse not on 1948 USGS map
3	Unidentified	Mrs. Ferguson	J. Peters - no structure	---	
4	E. Smith	E.G. Smith- Lot 39	E.G. Smith – Lot 39	J. Purdy – Lot 39 w/ one outbuilding	Willard Piridy
5	J. Roads	J. Rhoades	R. Rhodes - no structure	F.L. Kleis	Frank L. Kleis

6	M.W. Green	H. Chandlers	J. Mann	E.Schwartz	CA. Schwartz
7	---	---	---	C. Diemer -Lot 40 w/ 2 outbuildings	E.I. Dupont

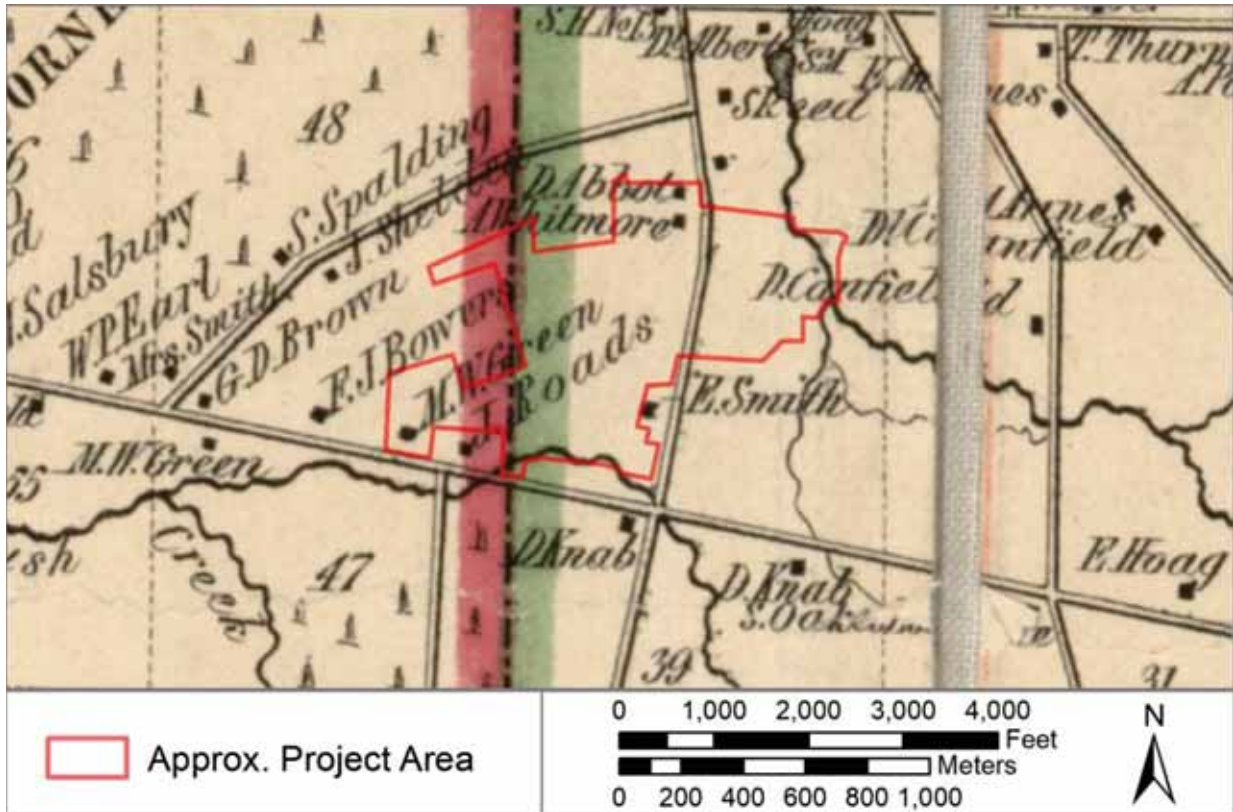


Figure 1.4. The approximate location of the project area in 1854 (Geil 1854).

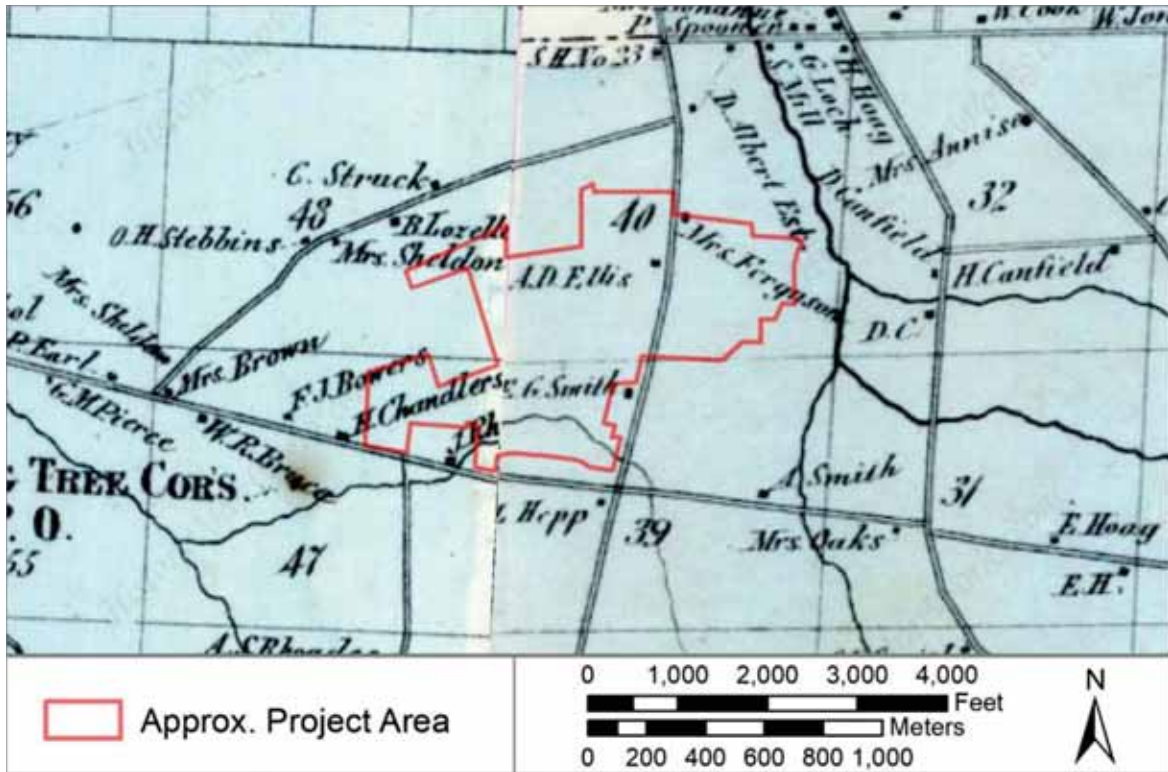


Figure 1.5. The approximate location of the project area in 1866 (Stone and Stewart 1866).

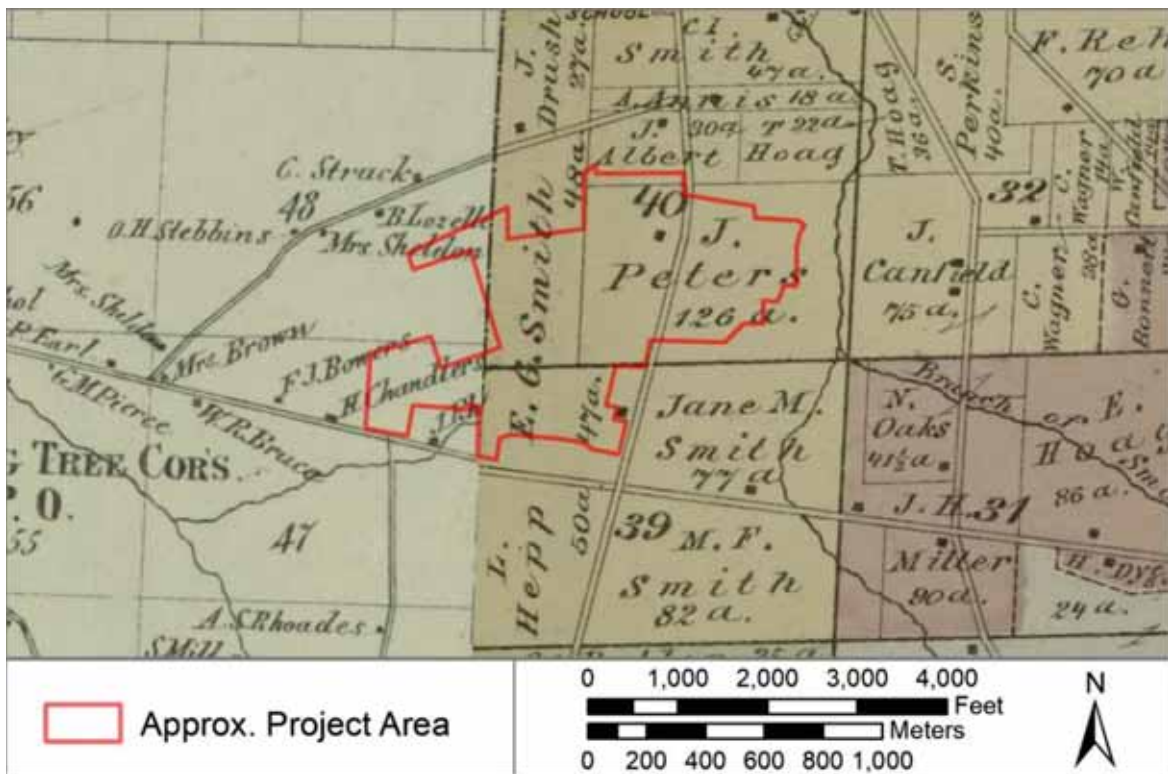


Figure 1.6. The approximate location of the project area in 1880 (Beers 1880).

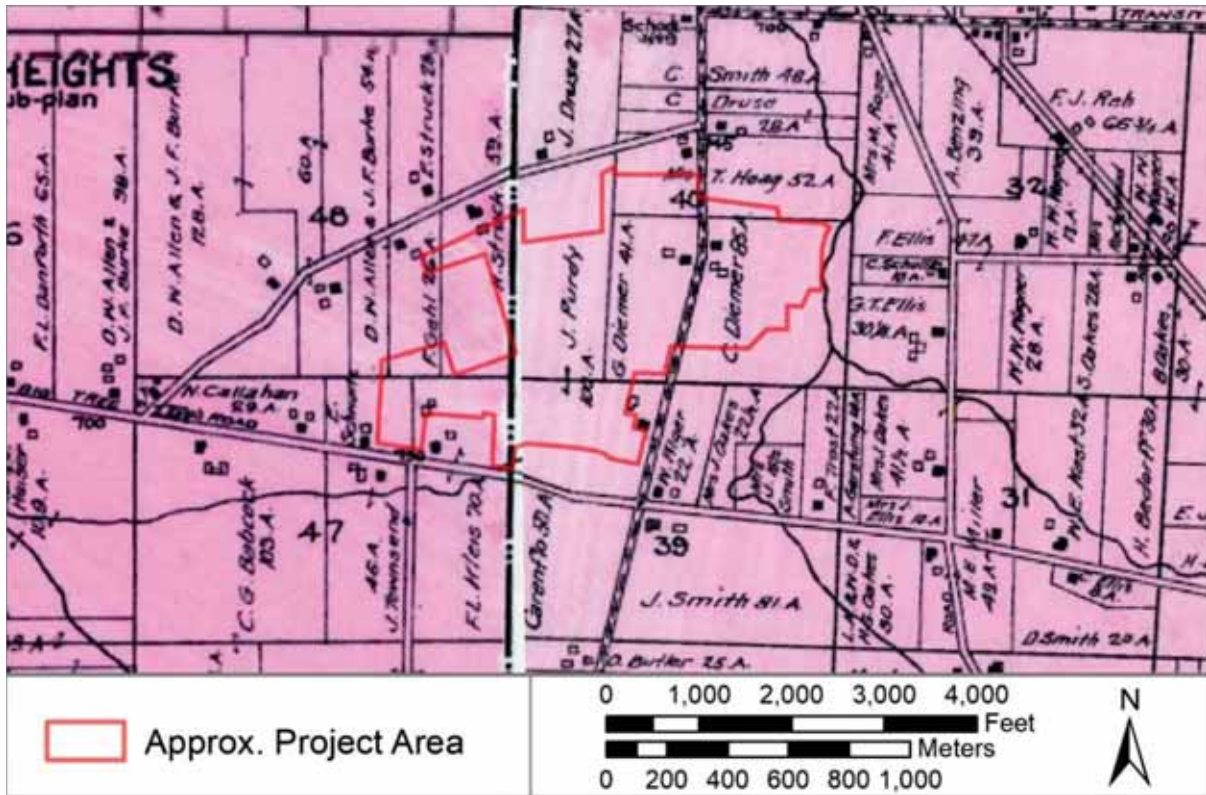


Figure 1.7. The approximate location of the project area in 1909 (*The Century Map Co. 1909*).

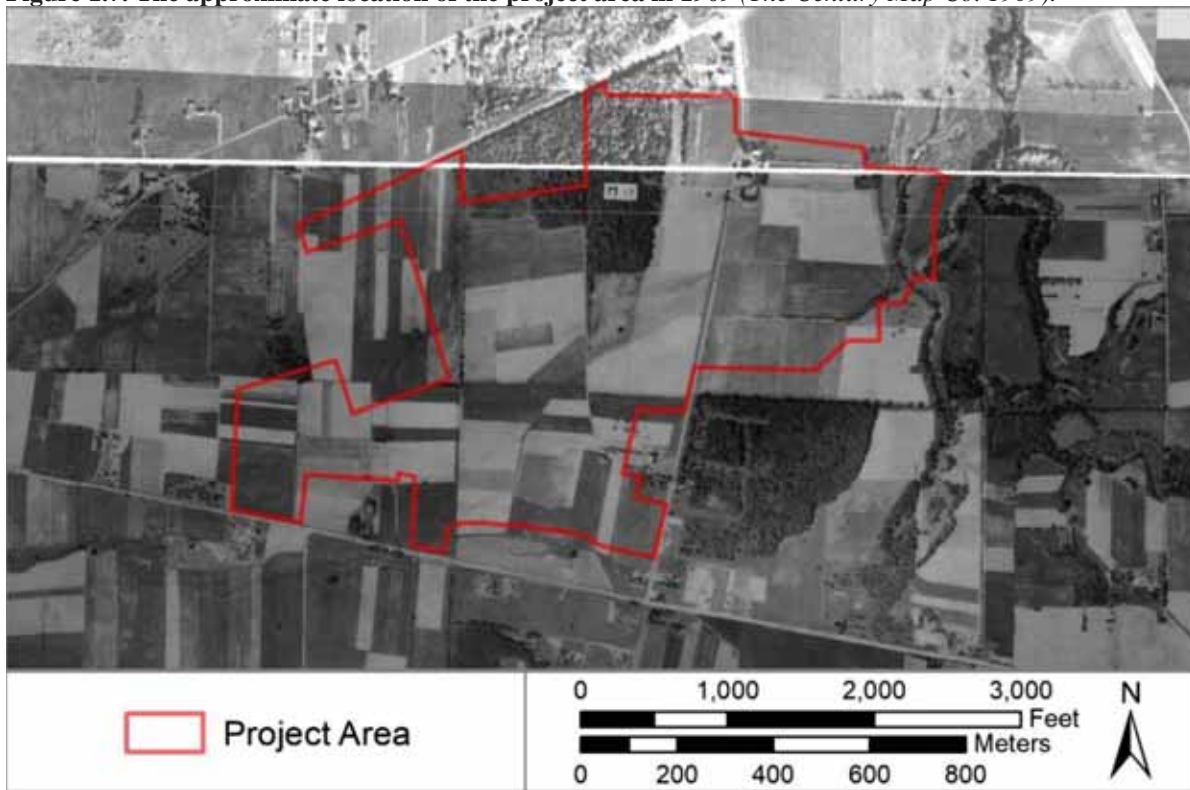


Figure 1.8. The approximate location of the project area in 1926 (*ECDPW 1926*).

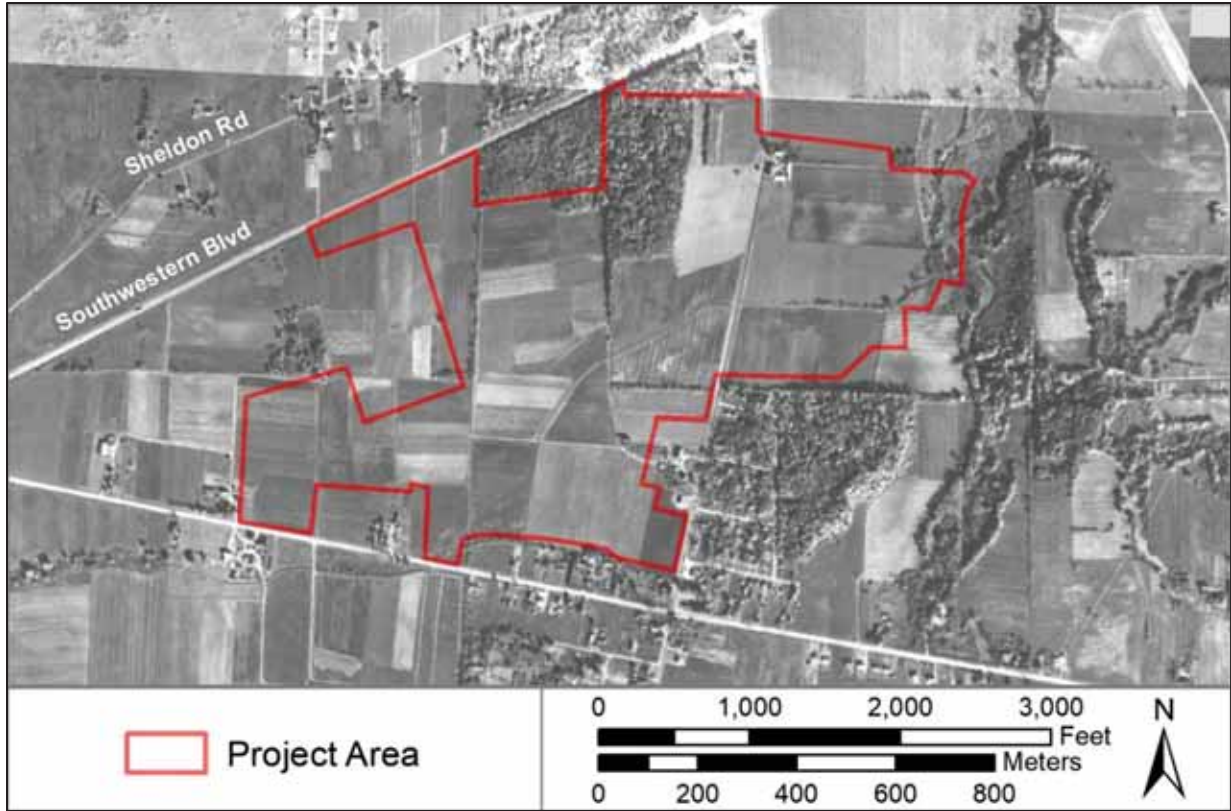


Figure 1.9. The approximate location of the project area in 1951 (*ECDPW 1951*).



## 2.0 Highmark Stadium



**Figure 2.1. Current aerial view of Highmark Stadium Complex** (Courtesy of The Buffalo Bills 2022).

Highmark Stadium has a 71,608 seating capacity at present. Facilities and seating within the stadium, as follows.

- 4.2 acres of concrete slab-on-grade in the bowl with 9,464 aluminum bench type seats and 22,004 armchair seats; 54 dugout suites with a capacity of 984 seats
- 2.0 acres of precast concrete seating panels on the above grade Club level with 7,106 aluminum bench type seats and 6,878 armchair seats
- Goal Line suites level one with 494 seats
- Goal Line Club and Press Box with 1,388 seats
- Executive Suites with 1,711 seats
- Two MegaSuites with 40 seats; each.
- 2.9 acres of precast concrete seating panels on the upper deck with 21,934 aluminum bench type seats.
- Four exterior restroom towers with pedestrian access ramps and promenades.
- Approximately 5,500 SF Diamond Vision Main Scoreboard, 1,800 SF of ribbon boards, and 7,000 SF of additional video display
- 2.4 acres of precast concrete block floor planks within the stadium structure.

Other buildings in the Stadium complex constructed less than 50 years ago include: a two-story 103,00 sq ft Training Facility; 93,00 sq ft Indoor Practice Facility; 12,000 sq ft Operations Facility; 33,000 sq ft commissary;

and the 12,000 sq ft Bills Store. The complex also includes two outdoor practice areas. The Stadium site consists of the following components: 2.1 miles of access roads; 50 acres of paved parking; 50 acres of bituminous treated stone parking; 4 (+/-) miles of paved walkways.

Opened in 1973, Highmark Stadium is currently the fourth oldest stadium currently serving as a home venue for a National Football League (NFL) team. The stadium is one of three active NFL venues built in the 1970s.

- 1924 Soldier Field (Chicago Bears)
- 1957 Lambeau (Green Bay Packers)
- 1972 Arrowhead Stadium (Kansas City Chiefs)
- 1973 Bills Stadium (Buffalo Bills)
- 1975 Mercedes-Benz Superdome (New Orleans Saints)

## 2.1 Erie County Stadium

The Buffalo Bills football team played at War Memorial Stadium on the East Side of the City of Buffalo from 1960 through 1973. Built in the 1930s, the stadium known as the “The Rockpile” had become outmoded and in disrepair prompting the organization’s owner Ralph Wilson to seek a new venue for the team after the merger of the American Football and National Football Leagues in 1966. Though some renovations were made to War Memorial Stadium, the team had threatened to relocate unless a new stadium meeting the National Football League specifications for a minimum 50,000 seating capacity was planned. To keep the franchise in Western New York, Buffalo Chamber of Commerce and Erie County Legislature formed a joint committee for the construction of a new football facility.

**Early Planning for a New Stadium.** In September 1963, the City of Buffalo Division of Planning released one of the earliest studies for a new stadium proposed on Lower Main Street entitled “The Revised Report on a New Civic Stadium” and another early report was prepared in January 1965, “Junior Chamber of Commerce Stadium Report.”<sup>4</sup> The Lower Main Street site (aka Crossroads Site) was bounded by Scott St between Washington and Mississippi streets, and Perry St, between Mississippi St and Michigan Ave on the north, South Park Ave on the South, Michigan Ave on the east, and Washington St on the west. This site included a portion of the Waterfront Redevelopment Project located in the area bound by the former Memorial Auditorium and South Park Ave, Washington St, and the Skyway (NY 5). The City Planning Commission had previously examined the site in July 1958.<sup>5</sup> Publicity generated from these studies prompted the Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce to form a 10-person Stadium Committee in August 1966. Over a period of nine months, the Stadium Committee addressed the following questions.

- 1) What type of stadium is needed for the Niagara Frontier metropolitan area?
- 2) Should a stadium or a multi-purpose unit be planned?
- 3) Shall it be a covered all-purpose arena, or a more economical facility?
- 4) Where should the stadium be located?
- 5) What means are available to finance the project—government, private, or a combination of both?
- 6) How do the Buffalo Bisons baseball team figure in the planning for the new stadium?
- 7) What is to be done with War Memorial Stadium?<sup>6</sup>

The Stadium Committee reviewed reports from numerous cities across the country with major professional football

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<sup>4</sup> Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce, *Report of the Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce Stadium Committee*, Presentation (Buffalo, June 7, 1967, p.4), James, Meadows and Howard, Records: Airport Renovation and County Stadium Projects, 1963-1978 (B80-3), Erie County Stadium Preliminary Investigations (Box-Folder 3.2), in the collection of Buffalo History Museum, Buffalo, New York.

<sup>5</sup> *Revised Report on A New Civic Stadium to Mayor Chester Kowal* (Buffalo: The Division of Planning, September 1963), 1, James, Meadows and Howard, Records: Airport Renovation and County Stadium Projects, 1963-1978 (B80-3), Erie County Stadium Preliminary Investigations (Box-Folder 3.2), in the collection of Buffalo History Museum, Buffalo, New York.

<sup>6</sup> Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce, *Report of the Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce Stadium Committee*, 4. Commonwealth Heritage Group, Inc.

or baseball franchises. Other contributions to the study were obtained from new stadium research files of the Buffalo Evening News and Buffalo Bills Club.<sup>7</sup> The Committee unanimously concluded a new stadium was essential as, in their view, any further renovation of War Memorial Stadium would have squandered taxpayer's money. By this time, War Memorial Stadium's 45,000 seating capacity had become obsolete as a venue for major league football and baseball. The region's other major venue, Memorial Auditorium (demolished 2009) in downtown Buffalo, would accommodate any future needs of hockey and basketball teams. SUNY at Buffalo expressed interest in using any new stadium for college football and baseball. Soccer and lacrosse were the other sports considered to possibly utilize a new stadium. Miscellaneous civic events were also considered for the new venue.

Based on their review of existing stadiums, the Stadium Committee determined two separate facilities were needed in Western New York. A shared facility for football and baseball was not deemed suitable for either sport. They recommended an oval-shaped football stadium with a partial roof and seating capacity of 65,000 which could be expanded to a capacity of 75,000.<sup>8</sup> The oval plan allowed for placement of two-thirds of available seats between the 10-yard lines as well as closer proximity to the playing field. For the baseball facility, the Stadium Committee proposed a "V"-shaped ballpark with a 15,000 seating capacity, expandable to 50,000 if a major league team franchise was obtained. It was anticipated that Buffalo might be considered in the pending expansion plans of major league baseball from 20 to 24 teams.<sup>9</sup> The two stadium concept within a sports complex was initially conceived for the Kansas City sports facility. A dome roof stadium was not recommended by the Stadium Committee due to its high additional cost, which they estimated at a minimum of \$10 million dollars.<sup>10</sup> Buffalo Bills owner Mr. Wilson also opposed a dome stadium.<sup>11</sup>

The new stadium complex's location emerged as the most time consuming and vexing issue of the study. Initial stadium site requirements included a minimum of 80 to 100 acres with parking for 15,000 vehicles. The Stadium Committee's report outlined eight considered locations, five in the City and three in the suburbs: Cross-roads Site; Ellicott District Site; Tiffit Farm Site; Bailey-Thruway Site; Lasalle Park; Airport Site, Cheektowaga; Grand Island Site; and Amherst-Millersport Highway.<sup>12</sup> The City Planning Board and Junior Chamber of Commerce had previously proposed the Cross-roads Site. After considerable review, the Stadium Committee recommended the Amherst-Millersport Highway location.<sup>13</sup> Their decision was based on several factors: center of population rested on SUNY Buffalo and was projected to continue to move northeasterly; proximity of SUNY Buffalo campus; proposed construction of Lockport Expressway (I-190); relatively large tracts of flat land could be purchased for less than a city location; and possible tie-in of stadium site with the planned Marine Parkway Project, a proposed major boat and recreational facility in the Town of Amherst.<sup>14</sup> The Stadium Committee estimated a preliminary cost of \$20 million for a dual stadium complex and site acquisition.<sup>15</sup> They also believed the stadiums should be "Spartan-like" structures without restaurants or private clubrooms which would increase construction costs. Further, the committee recommended be a regional facility supported equally by the State of New York and the County.

In September 1967, the project team of James & Meadows & Howard Architects of Buffalo and Finch-Heery Architects & Engineers of Atlanta (Architects) was retained to prepare a construction feasibility report evaluating multiple locations and several possible stadium schemes.<sup>16</sup> The Orchard Park location was not included in this initial report. However, a two-stadium scheme and a multi-purpose scheme were considered for a 165.7-ac site in the Southtowns in the Town of Hamburg on the east side of McKinley Parkway and on the south side of Mile Strip Expressway near the NYS Thruway.<sup>17</sup> In May 1968, the legislature made the decision to approve a domed stadium

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<sup>7</sup> Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce, *Report of the Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce Stadium Committee*, 4.

<sup>8</sup> Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce, *Report of the Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce Stadium Committee*, 8.

<sup>9</sup> Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce, *Report of the Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce Stadium Committee*, 10.

<sup>10</sup> Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce, *Report of the Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce Stadium Committee*, 11-12.

<sup>11</sup> Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce, *Report of the Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce Stadium Committee*, 12.

<sup>12</sup> Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce, *Report of the Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce Stadium Committee*, 13-16.

<sup>13</sup> Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce, *Report of the Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce Stadium Committee*, 16.

<sup>14</sup> Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce, *Report of the Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce Stadium Committee*, 16.

<sup>15</sup> Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce, *Report of the Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce Stadium Committee*, 18.

<sup>16</sup> James & Meadows & Howard, Architects, and Finch-Heery, Architects & Engineers. *Construction Feasibility Report Buffalo Stadium: A Report Prepared for the Government of Erie County in Conjunction with the Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce*. Buffalo: James & Meadows & Howard Architects and Finch-Heery Architects & Engineers, 1968.

<sup>17</sup> James & Meadows & Howard, Architects, and Finch-Heery, Architects & Engineers. *Construction Feasibility Report Buffalo Commonwealth Heritage Group, Inc.*

with an expenditure of up to \$50 million to be constructed in Lancaster.<sup>18</sup> This project was contingent upon obtaining a National League baseball franchise. However, by the end of May, the league had granted expansion franchises to San Diego and Montreal. Nonetheless, in 1970 a group known as the Responsible Dome Action Commission prepared a study for a different dome stadium which appraised the economic impact on life in Erie County<sup>19</sup>

The New York State Urban Development Corp. began drafting architectural plans and cost estimates for a proposed Erie County Football stadium in April 1971.<sup>20</sup> The Erie County legislature voted 15-4 to authorize the work on a site in suburban Orchard Park on Abbott Rd, between Southwestern Blvd and Big Tree Rd, which had been slated for development of a county college. County officials determined the site could accommodate both a football complex and college campus. After four years of shifting plans and controversy, a 113-acre tract of land in the Town of Orchard Park was selected as the location for a new state of the art stadium complex for the team (Figure 2.2).



**Figure 2.2.** The new stadium site in Orchard Park prior to 1972 construction, facing south (Courtesy of the Buffalo Bills).

**Stadium Design Contract Details.** Erie County sent the Architects a notice to proceed (NTP) on September 24, 1971, with a desired occupancy date of August 1, 1973.<sup>21</sup> This NTP had been reduced by 3.5 months from the previous NTP

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*Stadium, 27-28.*

<sup>18</sup> "Wrangle over Stadium Enters Third Year" *Buffalo Courier Express*, June 8, 1969 (20).

<sup>19</sup> Responsible Dome Action Commission. *The Economic Impact of the Erie County Domed Stadium*, 1970.

<sup>20</sup> "State Group Drawing Buffalo Stadium Plans." *The News Tribune*, April 21, 1971 (41).

<sup>21</sup> Finch-Hemery/James & Meadows & Howard. Letter to Dale Bossert, Deputy County Executive, Erie County, September 27, 1971, James, Meadows and Howard, Records: Airport Renovation and County Stadium Projects, 1963-1978 (B80-3), Erie County Stadium Preliminary Investigations (Box-Folder 3.5), in the collection of Buffalo History Museum, Buffalo, New York.

which accelerated the planning and construction schedule. The approved budget at this time was \$20.6 million with \$20 million for the Construction Contract and \$600,000 for recommended in-progress construction contingency fund.<sup>22</sup> The initial budget applied to the following: all on-site construction; site development & landscaping; playing field (artificial turf); press club interior finishing; two owners' boxes; graphics. Work items not included in the budget as follows: scoreboards; food service equipment and interior finishing in concession stands and concessions commissary; Stadium Club interior finishing; off-site utilities and street work; private boxes interior finishing; any interior finishings; land; surveys and testing; A/E fees and reimbursable; and financing costs, legal fees, County administrative costs, traffic, construction planning and management, or other special consultants.

The Architects committed to design a facility to be competitive in all respects with professional football stadiums constructed or under construction throughout the nation. The basic form of the structure provided seating related to the desirable locations for viewing of football games. Seating was designed to be as close to the playing field as desirable and offer optimum sightlines unobstructed by the structure.<sup>23</sup> As planned, the grade or entrance level to the stadium was as near the middle of all seating as feasible to minimize the vertical travel distance to upper seating levels. The three level stadium consisted of: 1) Lower Level (100), adjacent to playing field, 2) Intermediate Level (200), club or mezzanine level, 3) Upper Level (300). Initial requirements for the stadium included adequate access and egress to and from the peripheral road system; a separate entrance and road system adjacent to the stadium; illuminated parking lots for 15,000 automobiles and 300 buses; appropriate graphics, safety and control devices and equipment to aid in vehicular and pedestrian movement; adequate storm drainage, irrigation and utilities; stadium sited in an area geologically suitable for footings and foundations with proper orientation for the football playing field in relation to the sun position at normal game times.

Finch-Henry summarized the design approach for the new home of the Buffalo Bills in their first press release.<sup>24</sup> James H. (Bill) Finch described the ultimate extension of their stadium design would be to place the entire stadium below ground.<sup>25</sup> Their design was inspired by the US Pavilion at the 1970 World Exposition in Osaka, Japan. Davis, Brody and Associates designed the US Pavilion in the form of an underground super elliptical with an air-supply supported cable roof large enough to cover two football fields.<sup>26</sup> Its 100,000 square foot interior was created by excavating a shallow hole and building up the edges with excavated soil.<sup>27</sup>

An agreement contract between The County of Erie (the "Owner") and Finch-Heery and James & Meadows & Howard (the "Architects") was signed on November 4, 1971, pursuant to the authority of a Resolution passed by the Erie County Legislature at Meeting #23 Item #3 found in the Minutes at Page 1872, authorizing the execution of this contract on September 23, 1971.<sup>28</sup> The Agreement also included Alexander Barnes Rothschild & Paschal as part of the joint venture of architectural firms. Six project principals included George T. Heery, Louis N. Maoff, James H. Finch, Caraker D. Paschal, and R. Maxwell James (The County of Erie 1971:). The Architects' basic services consisted of five phases: schematic design phase; design development phase; construction documents phase; bidding or negotiation phase; and construction phase – administration of the construction contract. The Project engineers were David M. Berg-Structural Engineer, Heery & Herry- Mechanical Engineers, and Conable, Sampson, Van Kuren, Huffcut & Gertis- Site Engineers.

Construction specifications for the new stadium were made available at the office of James & Meadow & Howard in downtown Buffalo on February 17, 1972.<sup>29</sup> Ninety-seven sets of specifications were sent out or reserved within a

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<sup>22</sup> Finch-Heery/James & Meadows & Howard, Letter to Dale Bossert, September 27, 1971.

<sup>23</sup> Finch-Heery/James & Meadows & Howard, Letter to Dale Bossert, September 27, 1971.

<sup>24</sup> McIlhenney Mathews, Anne, "Underground Plot No Secret," *Buffalo Courier-Express*, April 10, 1972 (27).

<sup>25</sup> McIlhenney Mathews, Anne, "Underground Plot No Secret," *Buffalo Courier-Express*, April 10, 1972 (27).

<sup>26</sup> Davis Brody Bond, "US Pavilion 1970 World Exposition (EXPO '70) Osaka, Japan," 2021; ; Geiger, David. U.S. Pavilion at EXPO 70 Features Air-Supported Cable Roof. *Civil Engineering – ASCE*. March 1970.

<sup>27</sup> Davis Brody Bond, "US Pavilion 1970 World Exposition (EXPO '70) Osaka, Japan," 2021.

<sup>28</sup> The County of Erie. Agreement between The County of Erie and Finch-Heery and James & Meadows & Howard, 1971. Agreement Dated November 4. James, Meadows and Howard, Records: Airport Renovation and County Stadium Projects, 1963 – 1978 (B80-3). Erie County Stadium Agreements H.H, F.A.B.R.&P. & J.M.&H (Box-Folder 3.55). In the collection of Buffalo History Museum, Buffalo, New York.

<sup>29</sup> "County All Out of Stadium Specs," *Buffalo Evening News*, February 26, 1972 (A-11).

week. Additional sets were printed to meet the demand which had reached 130 sets and distributed to more than 70 contractors and suppliers in nearly a month.<sup>30</sup> According to the records of the Erie County comptroller's office, \$600,153 of the authorized \$23.5 million had been expended by that time.<sup>31</sup> Other expenses in addition to the cost of the construction were anticipated to range as low as \$3.5 million or as high as \$5 million.<sup>32</sup> Construction bids for the \$23.5 million, 80,000-seat football stadium were expected to be opened on March 24.<sup>33</sup>

On March 28, 1972, the County Legislature voted 15-4 to approve construction of the 80,000 seat, \$21.3 million stadium by authorizing contracts and other related items.<sup>34</sup> Four construction companies were awarded. For General Construction, John W. Cowper Co. of Buffalo at \$14,777,000; plumbing at \$929,349, George H. Sander Inc. Of Buffalo; Heating and ventilation at \$258,567, Hamberger & Co. Inc. of Buffalo; and Industrial Power & Lighting Corp at \$1,629,000.<sup>35</sup> Also approved were contracts for 6,001 armchair seats and 73,975-bench type seats amounting to \$945,389 to John V. Cowper Co. To expedite construction, contractors started bringing equipment to the project site on the same day with activity beginning on the following day.

Construction of the new stadium was anticipated to boost the area's sagging economy. Initial labor estimates for the project were between 400 and 500 workers.<sup>36</sup> The John W. Cowper Co. Cowper alone would employ at least 300 workers including earthmovers, ironworkers, carpenters, crane operators, and general laborers.<sup>37</sup> In addition to new construction jobs, Cowper Co. purchased 110 tons of steel reinforcing bars from Bethlehem Steel's Lackawanna plant.<sup>38</sup> Bethlehem Steel also provided as much of the 300 tons of structural steel for the four-story facilities building that could be manufactured locally.<sup>39</sup> Buffalo Slag Company's Lackawanna plant supplied large quantities of slag required for the stadium's parking facilities.<sup>40</sup>

## 2.2 Stadium Construction

By April 3, 1972, clearing and grubbing had commenced on the site.<sup>41</sup> Stadium specifications for the four-part construction project called for completion of the facility on June 15, 1973, at least 47 days prior to occupancy by the Buffalo Bills.<sup>42</sup> This tight schedule permitted a cushion of only a month and a half for the County to compensate for unavoidable extensions in construction time. Off-site prefabrication was employed to meet the construction schedule. Road improvements for the new stadium entailed widening Abbott Rd from two to four lanes between Southwestern Blvd and Big Tree Rd and reconstruction and widening of Mile Strip Road from South Park Ave in Hamburg to Salisbury St in Blasdell. Work on the stadium halted on June 2, 1972, after contracts expired between the Construction Industry Employers Association (CIEA) and eight building trades unions.<sup>43</sup> By July 20<sup>th</sup>, the stadium was approximately two months behind schedule. Excavation work had resumed by that time, but other contractors and union workers stayed off the job site until a new contract was accepted.

The site's topography permitted excavation of a bowl 50 feet into the ground to accommodate construction of 37,563 seats on a concrete slab-on-grade. This type of construction was considered the most economical, or lowest cost type, for the new Stadium project. More than 370,000 ft of shale was excavated for the 100 Level and 200 Level seating.

<sup>30</sup> Chidester, Bill, "Big Turnout Expected At Stadium Bid Opening," *Buffalo Evening News*, March 14, 1972 (III-33).

<sup>31</sup> Chidester, Bill, "Big Turnout Expected At Stadium Bid Opening," *Buffalo Evening News*, March 14, 1972.

<sup>32</sup> Chidester, Bill, "Big Turnout Expected At Stadium Bid Opening," *Buffalo Evening News*, March 14, 1972.

<sup>33</sup> "County All Out of Stadium Specs," *Buffalo Evening News*, February 26, 1972.

<sup>34</sup> Chidester, Bill, "Stadium Action to Clear Way for Start This Week," *Buffalo Evening News*, March 29, 1972 (III-41).

<sup>35</sup> Chidester, Bill, "Stadium Action to Clear Way for Start This Week," *Buffalo Evening News*, March 29, 1972.

<sup>36</sup> Gryta, Matt, "Stadium Specifications Call for Its Completion Before Bills Deadline," *Buffalo Evening News*, March 27, 1972(1).

<sup>37</sup> Gryta, Matt, "Stadium to Boost Sagging Economy, Add Jobs, County Officials Say," *Buffalo Evening News*, March 29, 1972 (III-41).

<sup>38</sup> Gryta, Matt, "Stadium to Boost Sagging Economy, Add Jobs, County Officials Say," *Buffalo Evening News*, March 29, 1972.

<sup>39</sup> Gryta, Matt, "Stadium to Boost Sagging Economy, Add Jobs, County Officials Say," *Buffalo Evening News*, March 29, 1972.

<sup>40</sup> Gryta, Matt, "Stadium to Boost Sagging Economy, Add Jobs, County Officials Say," *Buffalo Evening News*, March 29, 1972.

<sup>41</sup> The John W. Cowper Company, Inc., *1972-1973 Engineer's Project Diary/Erie County Stadium Project March 29, 1972-November 20, 1973*, Volume 1, James, Meadows and Howard, Records: Airport Renovation and County Stadium Projects, 1963 – 1978 (B80-3). In the collection of Buffalo History Museum, Buffalo, New York.

<sup>42</sup> Gryta, Matt, "Stadium Specifications Call for Its Completion Before Bills Deadline," *Buffalo Evening News*, March 27, 1972.

<sup>43</sup> "Umiker Says Second Shift at Stadium Isn't Solution," *The Buffalo News*, July 20, 1972, pII-22.

An aerial view from spring 1972 shows early construction of the bowl and the north sideline retaining wall (Figure 2.3). The Club Level (200) had 17,980 seats a press box, private suites, and 7,600 armchair seats which were covered by the overhanging upper deck. A stadium control center served as the electronic center of the facility, operating the 20-ft by 105-ft computerized video scoreboard atop the west endzone, one the first replay scoreboards. Levels were connected by ramps or stairs.

Luxury suites were proposed by the Buffalo Bills in June 1972, The organization would construct at its own expense 29 enclosed private suites each containing 25 seats on the club level<sup>44</sup> As built, there were 42 lavatories, 38 concession stands, 31 drinking fountains, 20 commissary storage areas, and nine gates with 83 turnstiles. An elevator was located on each side line located near an emergency first-aid station. Stadium lighting consisted of 480 fixtures mounted on six 185-ft light standards. The AstroTurf surfaced playing field originally had an 18-inch crown from the sideline to the center of the field and another 6-in grade from sideline to retaining wall. The Buffalo Bills had originally proposed to donate the goal posts from War Memorial Stadium to the County, but they were ultimately unavailable.<sup>45</sup> The official seat count totaled 80,043 inclusive of 748 private box seats, 146 wheelchair accessible seats, and 36 seats in the owner's box.<sup>46</sup> It was originally built with nine detached entrance gatehouses with turnstiles and a ceiling height of 10'-4". The gatehouse rooflines featured insulated metal panels. Construction photographs show aerial views and interior views of the stadium from the field and seating levels near the completion of the stadium (Figures 2.3-2.10).

Built at the west endzone, the four-story Facilities Building (Old Administration Building) cost roughly two million dollars. The first floor of the building originally consisted of three locker rooms, maintenance equipment, two handball courts, gymnasium, and offices for coaches. A Bills Football Hall of Fame, a museum of football, was planned for the building's second floor. Administrative offices occupied the third floor. The fourth floor was unoccupied when the stadium opened. A one-million dollar Stadium Club was planned for the fourth floor in the following year.<sup>47</sup> It was designed with two elevators.

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<sup>44</sup> "Umiker to Mull Luxury Suites for the Stadium, The Buffalo News, June 10, 1972 (A-5).

<sup>45</sup> Lustig, Robert T. Letter to Robert A. Niederpruem, May 20, 1973. James, Meadows and Howard, Records: Airport Renovation and County Stadium Projects, 1963-1978 (B80-3), Erie County Stadium-Erie County (Box-Folder 3.9), in the collection of Buffalo History Museum, Buffalo, New York.

<sup>46</sup> Rich Stadium Seat Count, Erie County Stadium, James, Meadows and Howard, Records: Airport Renovation and County Stadium Projects, 1963-1978 (B80-3), Stadium Sketch Tracing (Box 2 Folder 8). In the collection of Buffalo History Museum, Buffalo, New York.

<sup>47</sup> Argenio, Modesto, "Stadium's Impact Already Upon Us," *Buffalo Evening News*, August 13, 1973 (II-16).



**Figure 2.3.** An aerial view of the new stadium construction in spring 1972, facing west. Note, SUNY Erie South campus site in the background (*Courtesy of the Buffalo Bills*).





Figure 2.4. An aerial view of the new stadium construction on November 29, 1972, facing east. (Courtesy of the Buffalo Bills).



**Figure 2.5.** An aerial view of the stadium construction on March 28, 1973, facing southwest (*Courtesy of the Buffalo Bills*).



**Figure 2.6. View from the 200 Level in the west endzone showing the installation of AstroTurf, facing east (*The Buffalo News Archives*[Brady 2021]).**



**Figure 2.6. An aerial view of the nearly completed stadium with AstroTurf in place, facing southeast (*The Buffalo News Archives*[Brady 2021]).**



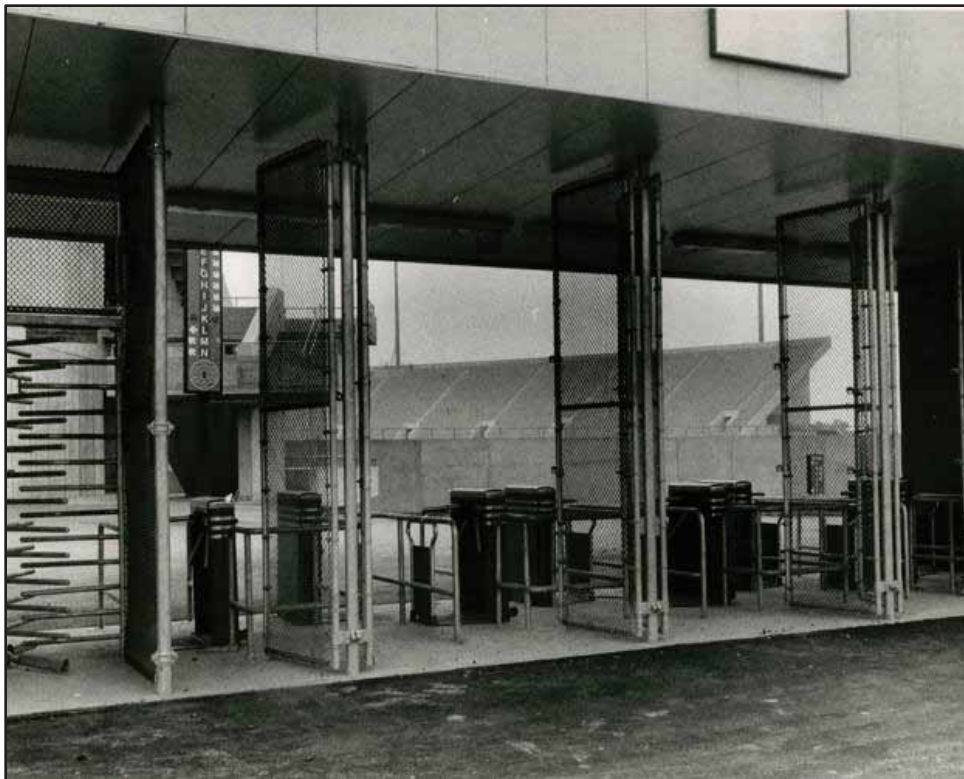
**Figure 2.7.** West endzone seating and tunnel, facing east (*The Buffalo News Archives*[Brady 2021]).



**Figure 2.8.** View from the 200 Level north sideline, facing southwest east (*The Buffalo News Archives*[Brady 2021]).



**Figure 2.9.** Original enclosed Club Level suites (*The Buffalo News Archives*[Brady 2021]).



**Figure 2.10.** Original entrance gate (*The Buffalo News Archives*[Brady 2021]).

## 2.3 Opening of Rich Stadium

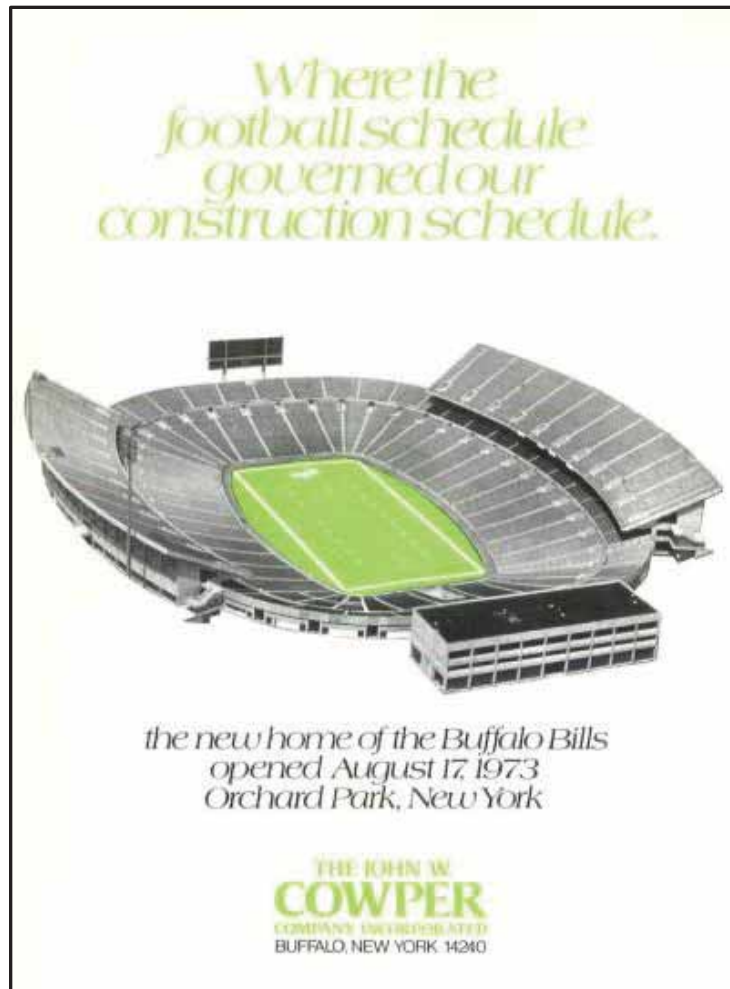
After long debate, the locally based Rich Products Corporation paid \$1.5 million for the right to name the stadium. Rich Stadium opened as the second largest stadium in the NFL. The Buffalo Bills played their first home preseason game in their new venue against the Washington football team on August 17, 1973. With an opening night crowd of 80,020 spectators, the Buffalo Bills set a record for a stadium sporting event in New York State.<sup>48</sup> On September 30, the Buffalo Bills played their first regular season game in the new stadium against the New York Jets. The 1973 Buffalo Bills seating and ticket brochure claimed the facility was “the finest football stadium in the United States with every comfort for the fan given careful consideration from the drawing board to construction” (Figure 2.11).<sup>49</sup> The John W. Cowper Company further promoted its successful expedient construction of the stadium after its opening with an advertisement in the *Empire State Architect* (Figure 2.12).



**Figure 2.11.** A 1973 completion photograph of the new football stadium in Orchard Park (Courtesy of the Buffalo Bills).

<sup>48</sup> Ernst, Dave, “Traffic Snarl Mars Stadium Debut Police Agencies To Make Plans for Improvements,” *Buffalo Evening News*, August 18, 1973 (1).

<sup>49</sup> *The Home of the Buffalo Bills, Orchard Park, New York*, James, Meadows and Howard, Records: Airport Renovation and County Stadium Projects, 1963-1978 (B80-3). Erie County Stadium Ticket & Seating Information (Box 2 Folder 8). In the collection of Buffalo History Museum, Buffalo, New York.



**Figure 2.12.** A 1973 advertisement for the new home of the Buffalo Bills by The John W. Cowper Company, Inc. (*The John W. Cowper Company, Inc. 1973*).

#### 2.4 Sports Architecture: American Football Stadiums.

The origins of sports facilities date to ancient Greece with the “U-shaped” stadium. Some Greek stadiums had stands built of different types of stone or marble to provide spectators a stair-stepped view.<sup>50</sup> By closing off the Greek stadium with a wall at one end, the Romans invented new forms of leisure with amphitheaters and circuses. The amphitheater’s oval shape also provided better views for spectators. The Colosseum (built 80 CE) in Rome is considered as the prototype for modern stadiums with its three level, ellipse-shaped design and 50,000 seat capacity.<sup>51</sup>

In 1895, the University of Pennsylvania opened the first football stadium (Franklin Field, Philadelphia) in the United States. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, football stadiums were beginning to incorporate concrete construction. During the first half of the twentieth century, a combination of materials was used in stadium As football stadiums grew larger, the multi-purpose symmetrical concrete stadiums were built across the country in the 1950s and 1960s. A sportswriter referred to Atlanta Stadium and multi-purpose stadiums of the era as “concrete donuts due to their 360

<sup>50</sup> Newcomb, Tim, “Embracing the horseshoe: A look through centuries of stadium design,” *Sports Illustrated*, February 2, 2015.

<sup>51</sup> Newcomb, Tim, “Embracing the horseshoe: A look through centuries of stadium design,” *Sports Illustrated*, February 2, 2015. *Commonwealth Heritage Group, Inc.*

degree design.”<sup>52</sup> Also called “cookie-cutter stadiums,” these types of stadiums were typically constructed in suburban locations and featured large surface parking lots. Their locations were typically inaccessible by metropolitan transit systems. Examples of multipurpose stadiums included Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium (Washington, D.C), Veterans Stadium (Philadelphia), Three Rivers Stadium (Pittsburgh), Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium; and Jack Murphy Stadium (San Diego).

A new era of American football stadium design emerged in the late 1960s with the Truman Sports Complex (Arrowhead Stadium) in Kansas City which incorporated two sport-specific facilities on the same site.<sup>53</sup> In 1967, Denver-based, modernist architect Charles Deaton (1921-1996) conceived of the two stadium concept. The local Kansas City architectural firm Kivett & Myers executed Deaton’s design. Deaton combined sculpture, architecture, and engineering in his building designs which is evidenced in Arrowhead Stadium (opened in 1972). The football stadium was designed with seats as close as possible to the playing field for unobstructed views. Ron Labinski, the firm’s project architect, worked with Deaton on the football and baseball complex. One of the football stadium’s design achievements was an upper deck tapered on each side to accommodate more seats along the sidelines than end zones.<sup>54</sup> Arrowhead was designed with a ring of skyboxes situated between decks rather than set on the top of the seating bowl. While at Kivett & Myers, Labinski, employed a systems approach for the new stadium design. He initiated an 18-month study to determine sight lines for seats, concourse dimensions, concession placement and the number of toilet fixtures. The Arrowhead design and data would later be applied in developing plans for the new Buffalo Bills stadium, as well as for stadiums in New Jersey and Pontiac, Michigan.

## 2.5 Finch-Heery, James & Meadow & Howard, John W. Cowper Company

**Finch-Heery, Architects & Engineers.** Atlanta-based Finch-Heery, Architects & Engineers collaborated as a joint venture to work on the Erie County Stadium project team. James Harrison “Bill” Finch was one of the founders of Finch Alexander Barnes Rothschild and Paschal, Inc. (FABRAP, est. 1958). George Thomas Heery was the cofounder of Heery & Heery, Architects (est. 1952). Beginning in the mid-1960s, FABRAP and Heery & Herry first teamed on their first sports facility, Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium project (1965, razed 1997 [Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium]). Finch-Heery designed a circular multi-purpose stadium constructed of concrete and steel, which typified stadium design built in the 1960s and 1970s. The three-level Atlanta Stadium seated roughly 52,000 for baseball and about 62,000 for football.<sup>55</sup> A sportswriter referred to Atlanta Stadium and multi-purpose stadiums of the era as “concrete donuts.”<sup>56</sup> Atlanta Stadium garnered additional sports facility commissions for Finch-Herry. The team designed Riverfront Stadium in Cincinnati, Ohio (1970; razed 2002), Erie County Stadium (1971-72), New England Patriots Stadium (1971, razed 2002 [Foxboro]), and Georgia Tech’s Callaway Student Athletic Complex (1975-77), Carrier Dome in Syracuse (1980), and University of North Carolina’s Dean Dome (1985). Riverfront and Foxboro stadiums were similar to other multi-purpose cookie-cutter design of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Finch-Heery also incorporated elements into the Erie County Stadium from their design for stadium in Foxborough, Massachusetts, which is a Spartan-type facility.<sup>57</sup>

James Harrison “Bill” Finch was president of the firm Finch Alexander Barnes Rothschild and Paschal, Inc. (FABRAP [est. 1958]).<sup>58</sup> He attended Georgia Institute of Technology (B.A., Architecture), Princeton University School of Architecture (graduate study), and Georgia State University School of Urban Life. Finch was a veteran of WWII and Korean War, serving the U.S. Marine Corps reserves for 37 years. In 1948 Finch formed the firm Finch and Barnes with fellow Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech) graduate Miller Barnes. Finch showed an early interest in modern design when attending Georgia Tech in the 1930s. Students were influenced by the efficient and functional

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<sup>52</sup> Fenster, Kenneth, "Atlanta–Fulton County Stadium," New Georgia Encyclopedia, September 17, 2020.

<sup>53</sup> Newcomb, Tim, “Kansas City: The Story of the Sports Architecture Capital of the World,” *Forbes*, October 29, 2019.

<sup>54</sup> Morgan, Jon, “On ground floor in stadium game Designs: Ron Labinski set the standard for sports facility architecture. With the competition growing, he's looking for new arenas to enter.; STADIUM WATCH,” *Baltimore Sun*, July 12, 1998, <https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/bs-xpm-1998-07-12-1998193128-story.html>.

<sup>55</sup> Fenster, Kenneth, "Atlanta–Fulton County Stadium," New Georgia Encyclopedia, September 17, 2020.

<sup>56</sup> Fenster, Kenneth, "Atlanta–Fulton County Stadium," New Georgia Encyclopedia, September 17, 2020.

<sup>57</sup> DiDonato Engineering & Architectural Professionals and Buffalo Engineering, P.C., *Highmark Stadium Condition Study* 2020/2021 [Redacted], May 12, 2021, p.1.

<sup>58</sup> Information on FABRAP obtained from Craig, Robert, "FABRAP," New Georgia Encyclopedia, August 21, 2013.



designs of French architect Le Corbusier. In 1938, Paul M. Heffermen joined Georgia Tech's architecture school and further advanced functionalist design (Craig 2013). Caraker Paschal, another Georgia Tech graduate joined the firm in 1948, becoming a partner in 1957 (Finch Barnes and Paschal). In 1958, Cecil Alexander (Yale University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and Bernard Rothschild (University of Pennsylvania) joined to form FABRAP. After the Buffalo Bills Stadium, Finch designed more than 60 sports complexes in the United States and Canada.<sup>59</sup>

George Thomas Heery, Sr., graduated from Georgia Tech in 1950. He worked with several architectural firms during and after his college years: Moskowitz, Willner & Milkey; Finch, Barnes & Pascal (both in Atlanta); and his father's architectural practice in Athens.<sup>60</sup> (Brookwood Equities 2021). In 1951, he became licensed to practice architecture in Georgia (Brookwood Equities 2021). The following year, Heery and his father, architect C. Wilmer Herry, Jr., cofounded Heery & Heery, Architects with offices in Atlanta and Athens. He became the firm's Chief Executive Officer in 1961. Later known as Heery International, Inc., Heery led the design of sports facilities for professional and collegiate teams. By 2007, Herry had worked on 102 sports facilities. In a 2007 interview, Herry regarded the design for Rich Stadium as the "pride and joy" of his career.<sup>61</sup> Herry stated "Make no mistake about it"... "Rich Stadium is the perfect open traditional football stadium."<sup>62</sup> Designed with 80,000 seats, Heery boasted there was an excellent view from every seat.<sup>63</sup> George Heery died at the age of 93 at his home in Atlanta on January 21, 2021.

**James and Meadows and Howard.** The Buffalo architectural firm James and Meadows and Howard buffalo architectural firm was founded in ca. 1953. James and Meadows and Howard began as the local prominent firm of Green & Wicks in 1884. The firm became Edward B. Green & Son in 1917 and, upon the death of his son in 1933, the name changed to Edward B. Green. Robert Maxwell James joined the firm in 1930 as a designer and became a partner in Green & James in 1936. Rufus Watson Meadows, who joined the firm as a designer in 1936, became a partner in Green, James & Meadows in 1945. When Mr. Green died in 1950, the partners continued under the name James & Meadows. Lewis Edward Howard, a former associate, rejoined Green, James & Meadows in 1946. In 1952, he became a partner in James and Meadows and Howard. The firm dissolved in 1974.<sup>64</sup>

James and Meadows and Howard practiced during the post-World War II era, which is typically associated with Mid-Century Modern aesthetic which spanned into the 1960s. James and Meadows and Howard's commissions in Buffalo were for commercial, educational, health, and public facilities: included the Federal Reserve Bank on South Elmwood Avenue, buildings in the Buffalo General Hospital and Children's Hospital complexes, Erie County Medical Center, and The Broadway Market (1956). Their works at the University of Buffalo South Campus include Cary-Farber-Sherman complex (Sherman Hall), 1955, academic/research building; Kimball Tower (Kimball Hall), 1957, originally designed as a high-rise dormitory residence hall; and Clement Hall, 1964, a high-rise dormitory.<sup>65</sup>

**John W. Cowper Company, Inc.** Established in 1915, the Buffalo-based John W. Cowper Company, Engineers-Contractors specialized in building construction reviving contracts for industrial, institutional, commercial, and monumental projects.<sup>66</sup> It was one of the largest firms of engineers in the early 20th century. The company constructed numerous buildings in Western New York: Buffalo plant of the National Aniline & Chemical Company, University of Buffalo's Foster Hall, Buffalo Athletic Club, National Aniline and Chemical Works manufacturing facilities; Marine Trust Bank, Rand Building, Buffalo City Hall, and Curtiss-Wright Corp. airplane factory in Cheektowaga. During World War II, the company was engaged in wartime construction for government and specific agencies in

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<sup>59</sup> James Finch Obituary." *The Atlanta Journal Constitution*, July 29, 2003.

<sup>60</sup> "In Memoriam: George Thomas Heery, Sr.," Brookwood Equities, 2021, <https://www.brookwoodequities.com/memoriam-george-t-heery>.

<sup>61</sup> Asher, Gene, "Making His Mark," *Georgia Trend*, May 1, 2007, <https://www.georgiatrend.com/2007/05/01/making-his-mark/>.

<sup>62</sup> Asher, Gene, "Making His Mark," *Georgia Trend*, May 1, 2007.

<sup>63</sup> Asher, Gene, "Making His Mark," *Georgia Trend*, May 1, 2007.

<sup>64</sup> Van Ness, Cynthia. "Edward Brodhead Green and Associates in Buffalo, NY," Buffalo as an Architectural Museum (La Chiusa), <https://buffaloah.com/a/archs/ebg/assoc/index.html>.

<sup>65</sup> "Planning, Designing and Construction." Building Profiles. University at Buffalo Administrative Services Gateway.

<sup>66</sup> Information on John W. Cowper Co. obtained from La Chiusa, Chuck, "Biography of John Whitfield Cowper," Buffalo Architecture and History, <https://buffaloah.com/a/oakland/126/cowper.html>.

defense production. based John W. Cowper Company constructed the tallest building in Buffalo, Seneca One Tower (Marine Midland Center, 1972).

## 2.6 Stadium Renovations and Expansion



Figure 2. . 2013 improvements to the current stadium locale (Courtesy of Legends, Inc.).

The Buffalo Bills generated a color-coded aerial image of the stadium identifying the locations of each construction and renovation project, as requested by OPRHP (See Appendix A).<sup>67</sup> Stadium renovation projects began in the mid-1980s. Other construction projects followed in the 1990s and 2000s. The most extensive renovations occurred with the 2013 Lease Improvement Project. This project entailed many upgrades throughout the Stadium including new video displays, additional concessions stands and restrooms. and various elements to improve circulation and provide ADA access in and around the facility. Three new buildings on site; the Commissary, Operations Building and the Bills Store. A timeline of Stadium projects follows below.

The Stadium's name has changed over the last 50 years: Erie County Stadium, Rich Stadium (1973-1998), Ralph Wilson Stadium (1998-2015), New Era Field (2016-2019), Bills Stadium (2020) and Highmark Stadium (2021-present).

### Highmark Stadium Construction/Renovation Timeline

#### A. 1972 – 1973: Original Construction

- 050 Tunnel Level (Locker Rooms, Staff Spaces, and Field)
- 100 Level (Concourse, Concessions, Restrooms, & Seating Bowl)
- 200 Level (Seating Ring & Press Box)
- 300 Level (Sideline Seating)
- 34 Sideline Suites
- Administration Building (East Endzone)
- Scoreboard (West Endzone)

<sup>67</sup> The Buffalo Bills, Highmark Stadium Construction Diagram, 2022.  
Commonwealth Heritage Group, Inc.

- Entry Gates (9) & Fencing
- B. 1984 – 1985: Renovation**
- Renovated attic space on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor of the Administration Building adding sixteen (16) Luxury Suites in the East Endzone.
- C. 1993: New Construction**
- Construction of the West Endzone Suites adding twelve (12) Luxury Suites to the north of the Scoreboard and twelve (12) Luxury Suites to the south of the Scoreboard.
- D. 1994**  
New Construction
- Construction of the Center West Endzone Suites adding fourteen (14) Luxury Suites under the Scoreboard.
  - Construction of four (4) Berm Restroom Buildings at the 100 Level Concourse corners.
  - Construction of East Endzone Clubs:
    - Redzone Club on the north side of the Administration Building.
    - Goal Line Club on the south side of the Administration Building.
  - Construction of shared restrooms between the 34 sideline suites.
  - Expansion of Scoreboard Structure and installation of 41.5x31.5 ft Jumbotron (largest in US at the time).
- E. 1999: New Construction / Upgrades**
- Construction of four (4) Sideline Clubs at the 200 Level.
  - Construction of four Signature Restrooms Towers.
  - Construction of second level to each East Endzone Club.
  - Construction of seventy-six (76) Dugout Suites at the cusp of the 100 and 200 Level accessed via the 200 Level Sideline Clubs.
  - Replacement of 36,000 Stadium Seats.
  - Replaced 6,800 Stadium Seats at Sideline Club sections with contoured heated seats (first of their kind).
  - Upgraded the scoreboard and its control room.
  - Field Lighting upgrade.
  - Stadium Sound System upgrade.
  - Stadium water service upgrade.
- F. 2002: Playing Field**
- Original style AstroTurf Field replaced with newer AstroPlay GameDay Grass.
- G. 2007: Scoreboard & Ribbon Board Upgrades**
- New Mitsubishi LED board measuring 88.8x32.5 ft installed to replace Jumbotron.
  - 1,000 feet of Mitsubishi Diamond Vision LED ribbon boards installed at 200 Level.
- H. 2011: Playing Field**
- AstroPlay GameDay Grass Field replaced with A-Turf Titan Field.
- I. 2013 – 2014: Lease Renovations – Day 1**
- Construction of Flagship Team Store.
  - Construction of seven (7) new Entry Gates & six (6) Entry Pylons/Plazas.
  - Site Improvements and Landscaping:
    - Anti-Scaling Perimeter Fence.
    - West End Entry Ramps from grade to 100 Level Concourse.

- 50 Yard Line Plazas & Monumental Stairs (2) from grade to 100 Level Concourse.
- Construction of Commissary Building & Broadcast Compound.
- Construction of Operations Building.
- Construction of New 300 Level Concessions/Restrooms (4).
- Expanded/Upgraded Concessions & Restrooms at 100 and 300 Level.
- Expanded/Upgraded Broadcast Booths at existing 200 Level Press Box.
  - Addition of two (2) Super Suites.
- Addition/Renovation of 1<sup>st</sup> Floor of the Administration Building to New Brew Pub Bar / Concessions & Restrooms.
- Relocated Writing Press to Second Level of Southeast Endzone Club.
- Installation of two (2) 33.6x59.84 ft HS Video Boards above East Endzone Clubs.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Administration Building Suite conversion to Score Board Control and Central Command.

**J. 2015:** Lease Renovations – Day 2

- Established “Founder’s Plaza” to the north of Team Store including new landscaping features, monumental sign feature, and life size statue of Team Founder Ralph C. Wilson Jr.

**K. 2016:** Renovation

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Administration Building Office Renovation.

**L. 2017 – 2018:** Renovation

- Modernization of Sideline Clubs, addition of Grab-N-Go style café, Goal Line Club, and Redzone Club.

**M. 2019:** Playing Field

- A-Turf Titan Field replacement including sub-pad.

### 3.0 SUNY Erie South Campus

#### 3.1 State University of New York (SUNY) Erie

New York State's community college system was created after World War II when the New York Board of Regents envisioned a two-year technical community college system. The original plan involved establishing twenty-two, tuition-free institutions across the state with eleven in New York City and eleven in upstate New York.<sup>68</sup> In 1946, the Board's final plan allowed for only five colleges to be founded as Institutes of Applied Arts and Sciences in New York City, White Plains, Binghamton, Utica, and Buffalo.<sup>69</sup> The New York State Institute of Applied Arts and Sciences at Buffalo set up a temporary location at the former office building of the Pierce-Arrow Motor Car Company (1685 Elmwood Ave) in North Buffalo.<sup>70</sup> Operating under the control of the State Education Department, the Institute of Buffalo opened in September 1947 with a class of approximately 450 students.<sup>71</sup>

The Board of Regents and the State Education Department initially controlled public higher education in the State of New York (i.e., State Teachers Colleges, Agricultural and Technical Institutes, and Institutes of Applied Arts and Sciences). In 1948, Governor Thomas E. Dewey formed a new higher education system known as the State University of New York (SUNY). The Institute at Buffalo became one of the units of the SUNY. A separate board of trustees was established for the new SUNY program. By fall 1953 semester, Erie County assumed sponsorship of the college and it was renamed Erie County Technical Institute (ECTI).<sup>72</sup> A \$250 annual tuition was also instituted for the first time.

By the mid-1950s, the college outgrew its temporary location in Buffalo. Several sites were considered for a new expanded campus in the City such as Grover Cleveland Golf Course at Main St and Bailey Ave and a location on Rees St adjacent to Buffalo State College. According to Shenton, there were few large parcels available in the City of Buffalo.<sup>73</sup> A suburban location was ultimately selected for a new permanent campus in the Town of Amherst, following general mid-twentieth century suburban development trends of the region. In February 1957, the Board of Trustees passed a resolution to purchase a 120-acre tract on Main St at Youngs Rd for the new campus (now SUNY Erie North Campus).<sup>74</sup> The new campus opened three years later to the designs of the prominent local architectural firm of Duane S. Lyman and Duane Lyman Associates (1958-60).

ECTI's student enrollment increased rapidly in the early 1960s. During the expansion of North Campus in the late 1960s, plans were generated for the development of two new campuses: one in the Southtowns and the other in the City of Buffalo.<sup>75</sup> The Trustees and County officials inspected ten sites in the Southtowns (in Hamburg and Orchard Park), one of which was the DuPont Site on the east side of Abbott Rd at Southwestern Blvd, the location of Highmark Stadium. Two locations in Hamburg were selected for final consideration, the Big Tree Site and the Howard Road Site.<sup>76</sup> Erie County Legislators Seth A. Abbott (Hamburg) and William E. Doering (West Sneca) were reported as instrumental in the selection of the Big Tree Site for the new campus on July 11, 1967.<sup>77</sup> This approximately 200-acre tract of land occupied the triangular-shaped area bounded by Southwestern Blvd, Big Tree Rd, and Abbott Rd. The undeveloped parcel consisted of gently rolling land and a large, wooded area located in the municipal boundaries of both Hamburg and Orchard Park.<sup>78</sup> In 1969, the towns lacked a current master plan for the area surrounding the campus

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<sup>68</sup> Shenton, James E, *A History of Erie Community College: 1946-1974, corrected transcript* (Buffalo: Erie Community College, 1982), 1.

<sup>69</sup> Shenton, *A History of Erie Community College*, 1.

<sup>70</sup> Shenton, *A History of Erie Community College*, 2-3.

<sup>71</sup> Shenton, *A History of Erie Community College*, 6.

<sup>72</sup> Shenton, *A History of Erie Community College*, 23.

<sup>73</sup> Shenton, *A History of Erie Community College*, 31.

<sup>74</sup> Shenton, *A History of Erie Community College*, 31.

<sup>75</sup> Shenton, *A History of Erie Community College*, 52-53.

<sup>76</sup> Shenton, *A History of Erie Community College*, 53.

<sup>77</sup> "'71 Ground Breaking For Southtowns College,'" *PhotoNews*, March 10, 1971.

<sup>78</sup> Imbs/Doemland Associates, *Erie County Community College Southtowns Campus Master Plan*. Buffalo: Imbs/Doemland Associates, 1969, 8.

site, which complicated construction of large facilities such as a college campus.<sup>79</sup> Some 40 acres on Abbott Rd, in the project area, were subsequently sold back to The County for stadium parking.<sup>80</sup> A college-owned right-of way would be laid out from the campus through the middle of the stadium parking area to Abbott Rd (Community College Drive).

### 3.2 Design and Construction of ECC South Campus

By July 1969, Imbs/Doemland Associates submitted a master plan presenting conclusions and recommendations for the Southtowns Campus of Erie County Community College site. Their master plan established a framework for future campus architectural development. Imbs/Doemland Associates incorporated the planning approach goals identified in an earlier plan, *Academic Plan for the Southtowns Community* (February 1969), which included the following categories: economy, flexibility, expansion, accessibility, climate, land planning, and architectural character.<sup>81</sup> During this period, there was a trend toward megastructure conceptualizations for education facilities which Imbs/Doemland Associates believed often minimized the importance of relating physical structures to exterior spaces of a “campus quality” and a human scale.<sup>82</sup> The firm believed megastructures were urban conceptions that were difficult to justify in suburban environments.<sup>83</sup> They also contended the traditional campus plan with numerous buildings separated by vast landscaped area had distinct drawbacks for the Buffalo metropolitan area.

To remain consistent with rigid economic constraints and the ideals outlined in the 1968 Master Plan for the SUNY, Imbs/Doemland Associates advanced a “facilities cluster” plan based around an enclosed pedestrian circulation spine.<sup>84</sup> The cluster plan laid out in the middle zone of the campus parcel would serve as the core for all future expansion. IMBS/Doemland Associates master plan for the campus included an instructional core consisting of six primary buildings: library and media resource center, 400-seat auditorium, gymnasium, student center, administration building and a service building.<sup>85</sup> Compactness was an overriding consideration in the firm’s design of a low profile complex not to exceed three stories in any single building.<sup>86</sup> The firm’s schematic studies accounted for regional climatic conditions, focusing on creating some type of a physical barrier to the prevailing westerly winds. A proposed planning concept utilized the academic and administrative buildings as a linear element on the west side of the plan to block wind from major parking areas, public drop-offs, and all primary access to campus buildings. Placing approximately 50% of the college’s gross area (classroom, lecture, lab area, and administration spaces) on land with a slight slope would allow economies in facilities’ design and construction. Imbs/Doemland Associates asserted this layout would maximize the scheme’s architectural design potential.<sup>87</sup> Further, exterior campus spaces in a lateral north-south alignment permitted an approximately uniform distribution of natural light for the classrooms and labs.<sup>88</sup> Athletic fields and court games were planned for the east portion of the campus.

The Board of Trustees, State University Office Facilities, and Erie County approved Thomas Justin Imbs Associates, Architects plans in November 1969.<sup>89</sup> However, the State Board of Regents initial refusal to approve the Southtowns College led to a major delay in planning and land acquisition. In 1970, Doering and Abbot, along with State Assemblymen Ronald T. Hills (representing Hamburg and Orchard Park) were prominent in the struggle to obtain the Regent’s approval.<sup>90</sup> The Erie County Legislature ultimately approved the preliminary plans in March 1971.<sup>91</sup> By that time, nearly the entire Big Tree Site had been acquired except for two small parcels that were under condemnation

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<sup>79</sup> Imbs/Doemland Associates, *Erie County Community College Southtowns Campus Master Plan*, 1969, 8.

<sup>80</sup> Shenton, *A History of Erie Community College*, 53.

<sup>81</sup> Imbs/Doemland Associates, *Erie County Community College Southtowns Campus Master Plan*, 1969, 1.

<sup>82</sup> Imbs/Doemland Associates, *Erie County Community College Southtowns Campus Master Plan*, 1969, 46.

<sup>83</sup> Imbs/Doemland Associates, *Erie County Community College Southtowns Campus Master Plan*, 1969, 46.

<sup>84</sup> Imbs/Doemland Associates, *Erie County Community College Southtowns Campus Master Plan*, 1969, 47.

<sup>85</sup> Imbs/Doemland Associates, *Erie County Community College Southtowns Campus Master Plan*, 1969, 66.

<sup>86</sup> Imbs/Doemland Associates, *Erie County Community College Southtowns Campus Master Plan*, 1969, 53.

<sup>87</sup> Imbs/Doemland Associates, *Erie County Community College Southtowns Campus Master Plan*, 1969, 55.

<sup>88</sup> Imbs/Doemland Associates, *Erie County Community College Southtowns Campus Master Plan*, 1969, 55.

<sup>89</sup> Shenton, *A History of Erie Community College*, 62.

<sup>90</sup> “71 Ground Breaking For Southtowns College,” *Hamburg Photo News*, March 10, 1971.

<sup>91</sup> “71 Ground Breaking For Southtowns College,” *Hamburg Photo News*, March 10, 1971.

proceedings.<sup>92</sup> A model for the new campus was released in Spring of the same year revealing a compact design with five window-lined bridges, overhead passages, connecting the campus buildings (Figure 3.1). The bridges were intended to offer greater comfort for students and faculty during the region's seasonal weather. According to former ECC president James E. Shenton, the college had learned from experience with the open traditional plan of the North Campus and expressed concern over South Campus' proximity to Western New York's so-called "snowbelt".<sup>93</sup>



**Figure 3.1.** Thomas Justin Imbs Associates, Architects 1971 model for ECC Southtowns Campus (*Hammersley 1971 [BEN]*).

In 1971, a \$1.2 million contract was awarded for site preparation which involved rough grading, roadways, the underground utilities, etc.<sup>94</sup> A six-month New York State freeze on all capital construction delayed construction of the college.<sup>95</sup> The State had committed to sponsoring 50% percent of the construction cost of South Campus. The original date to have South Campus open for 2,000-student occupancy was 1973 Fall semester, but later extended to January 1974. After six months delay, a decision was made to use the State Dormitory Authority to provide the State's share of the funding to start construction of the college. A groundbreaking ceremony for the new campus was held on October 28, 1971. Erie County Department of Public Works and Thomas Justin Imbs Associates, Architects released an advertisement for bids for building construction and related work on August 23, 1972.<sup>96</sup> For landscaping and

<sup>92</sup> "71 Ground Breaking For Southtowns College," *Hamburg Photo News*, March 10, 1971.

<sup>93</sup> Margaret Hammersley, "Come Rain or Shine, They'll Cross Southtown Campus in Comfort," *Buffalo Evening News*, April 2, 1971.

<sup>94</sup> Shenton, *A History of Erie Community College*, 43, 63.

<sup>95</sup> Shenton, *A History of Erie Community College*, 63.

<sup>96</sup> Erie County Department of Public Works and Thomas Imbs Associates, Architects, *Project Manual Erie Community College South Campus, Town of Hamburg & Orchard County, Erie County, New York* (August 1, 1972).

construction of athletic facilities, an announcement for bids was posted on June 27, 1973.<sup>97</sup> John W. Cowper Co., Inc was awarded the general construction work for South Campus.

As designed, the cluster of six interconnected campus buildings were arranged around a main court (Figure 3.2). Buildings were initially assigned letter designations: A/1 Administration Building; B/2 Technology & Vocational Studies; C/3) Math, Engineering & Natural Science Building; D/4) Humanities, Social Sciences & Business; E/5) Media Center, Library & Lecture Halls; F/6 Physical Education Building; and G/7 Service Building, a detached building in the southeast corner of the campus core. Exterior walls feature brick and split faced concrete block. Bridge exteriors consist of precast concrete panels. Brick-faced, concrete screen walls enclose the north area of Building 2/B and the west area of the Service Building (G/7). The John W. Cowper Construction Company documented construction of campus in April and June of 1974 (Figures 3.3-3.6).

The site location plan shows the original layout of athletic facilities on the east side of the campus which consisted of soccer fields, hand ball courts, basketball courts, touch football fields baseball and softball diamonds and a ¼ mile track with portable bleachers (Figure 3.2). The campus road network was designed with a primary entrance road on Southwestern Blvd, connecting to a ring road, and continuing south to the Administration Building (A/1) parking area. Two entrances drives were laid out off Big Tree Rd. Original parking areas include current Lots A-D on the west side of the campus, Lot E to the south, and Lot F to the northeast. Long walkways extending through deep lawns connect the parking areas to the campus core. A bus/vehicular drop off area was placed on the east entrance of Building 6/F.

The new \$16.8 million South Campus opened in the fall of 1974 (Gryta 1972; Shenton 1974:43). The dedication for ECC South Campus and the James E. Shenton Administration Building (Building 1) occurred on September 9, 1977.<sup>98</sup> A few noted attendees included US Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Congressman Jack Kemp, Erie County Executive Edward V. Regan, Erie County Legislature Chairman Raymond F. Gallagher, and other local officials. Improvements to the campus since its opening have included construction of new athletic facilities beginning in the late 1990s. The original running track and field moved from the north side of Team Members Drive to its current location at West Herr Stadium (formerly Jim Ball Field). A new parking lot was constructed on former playing fields on the northwest side of the stadium.

### 3.3 SUNY Erie South Campus-2022.

SUNY Erie South Campus retains its original core of attached academic buildings. Information on alterations or renovations to campus buildings was not available for this documentation report. Below is a current list of the original campus buildings.

- Building 1 Administration (20,110 GSF)
- Building 2 Technical/Vocational (72,910 GSF);
- Building 3 Math/Science (56,200 GSF)
- Building 4 Business/Humanities 49,340 GSF
- Building 5 Library (86,760 GSF)
- Building 6 Physical Education (43,590 GSF)
- Building 7 Facilities Maintenance/Plant (16,330 GSF)

South Campus has not been expanded since its original construction except for the acquisition of a non-contiguous parcel to the east on Abbott Rd (Green Building Technology Center). Changes to the campus have occurred in the athletic and recreational facilities area The campus presently consists of natural grass athletic fields, a track and field complex (West Herr Stadium), and five parking areas (Campus Lots C, D, E, F, and G).

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<sup>97</sup> Erie County Department of Public Works and Thomas Justin Imbs Associates, Architects, *Project Manual for Landscaping & Construction of Athletic Facilities, Erie Community College South Campus, Town of Hamburg & Orchard County, Erie County, New York* (June 27, 1973).

<sup>98</sup> *Erie Community College, Dedication of the Erie Community College South Campus and James E. Shenton Administration Building September 9, 1977* (Buffalo: Erie Community College, 1977).





Figure 3.2. 1972 SUNY Erie South Campus site location plan (Thomas Justin Imbs Associates, Architects 1972).

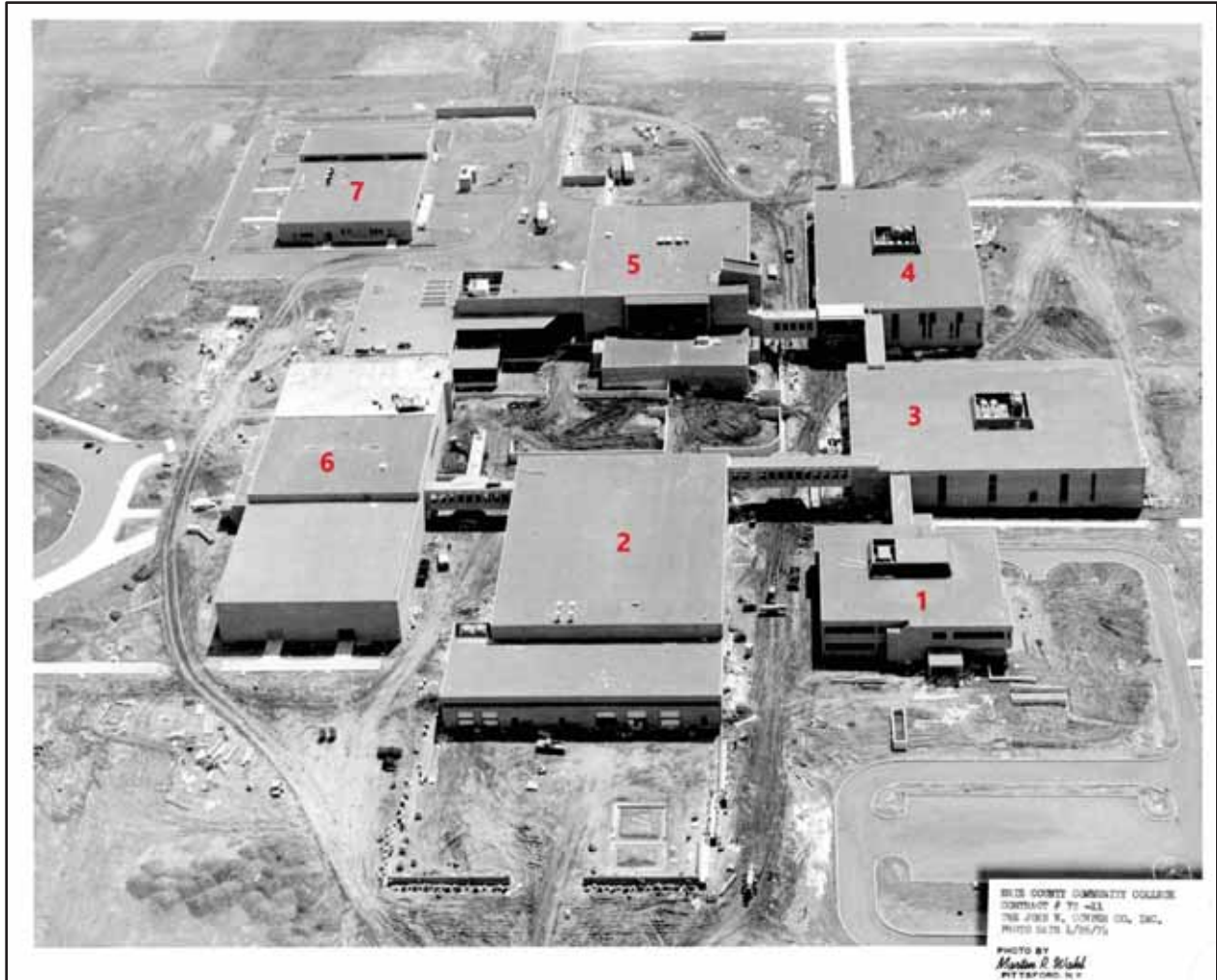


Figure 3.3. An aerial view of SUNY Erie South Campus under construction on April, 4, 1974 by Martin R. Wahl for The John W. Cowper Co, Inc. (Reproduced courtesy of SUNY Erie College Archives).

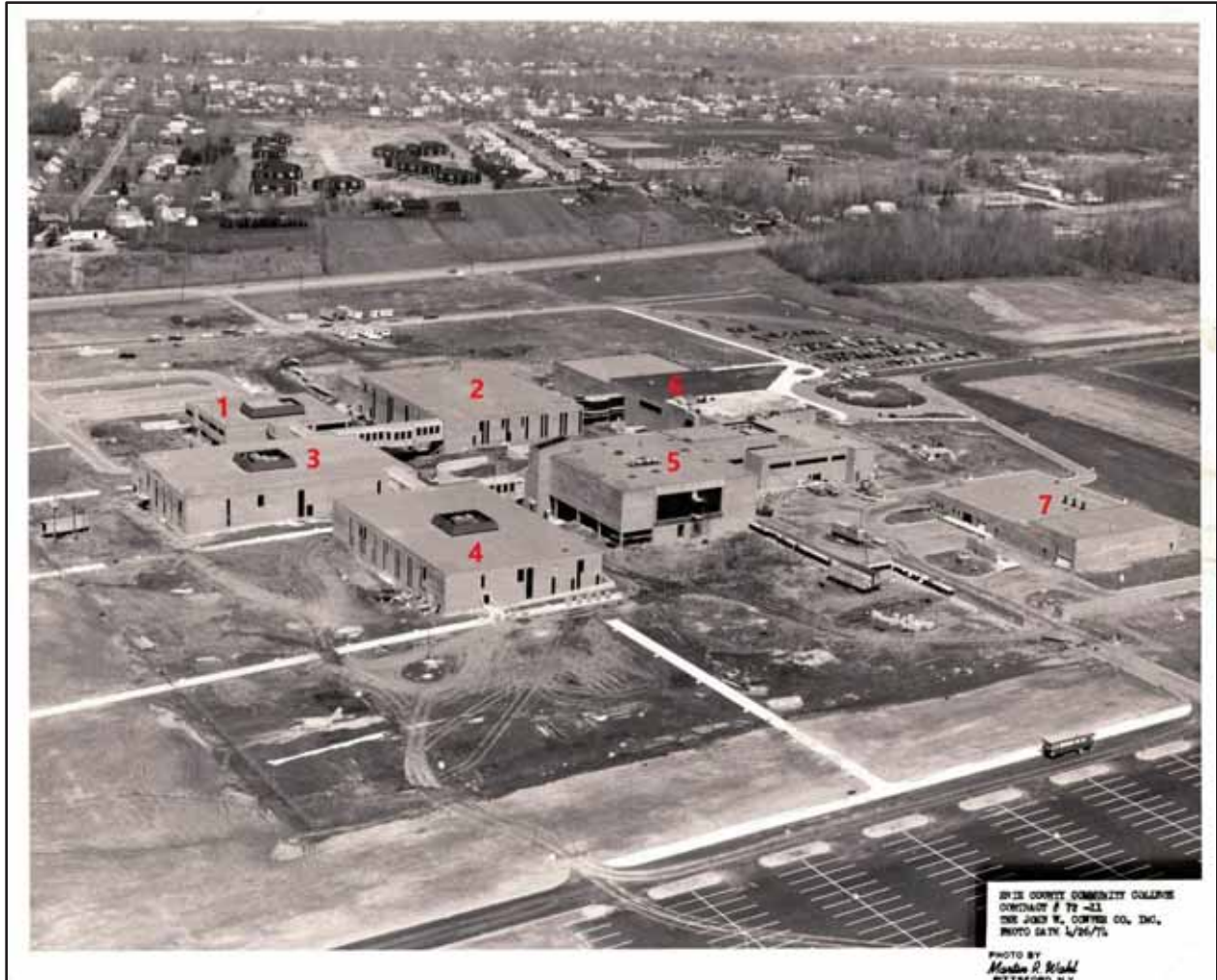


Figure 3.4. An aerial view of SUNY Erie South Campus under construction on April, 4, 1974 by Martin R. Wahl for The John W. Cowper Co, Inc. (Reproduced courtesy of SUNY Erie College Archives).

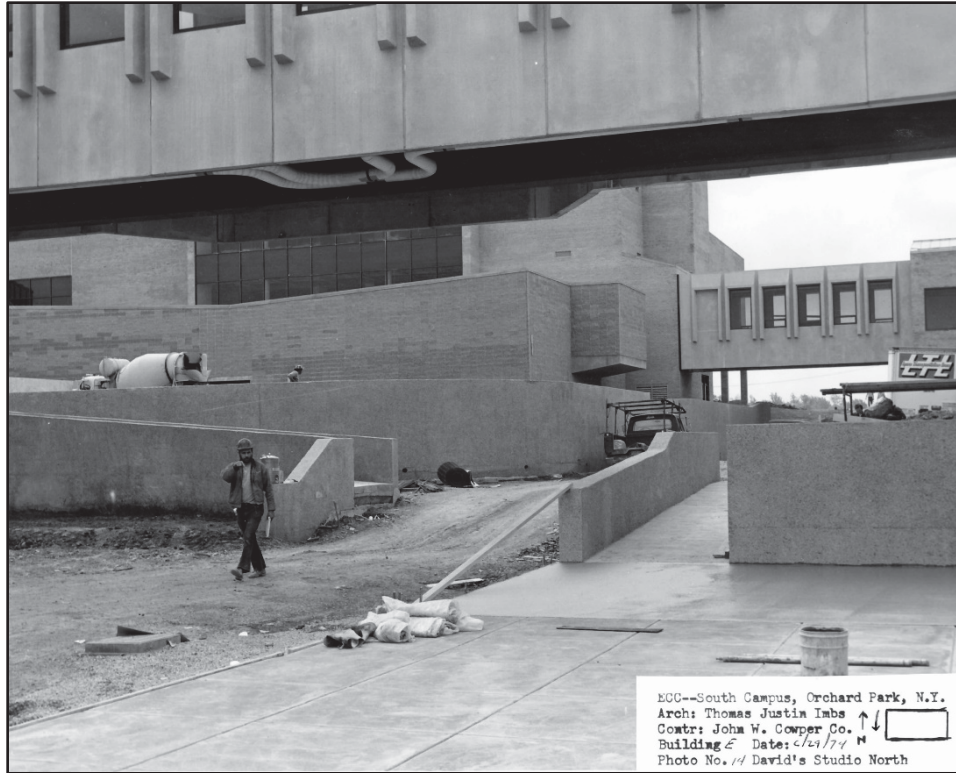


Figure 3.5. A June 29, 1974 view of the west side of the main court area looking southeast from Bridge 2-3 (Reproduced courtesy of SUNY Erie College Archives)

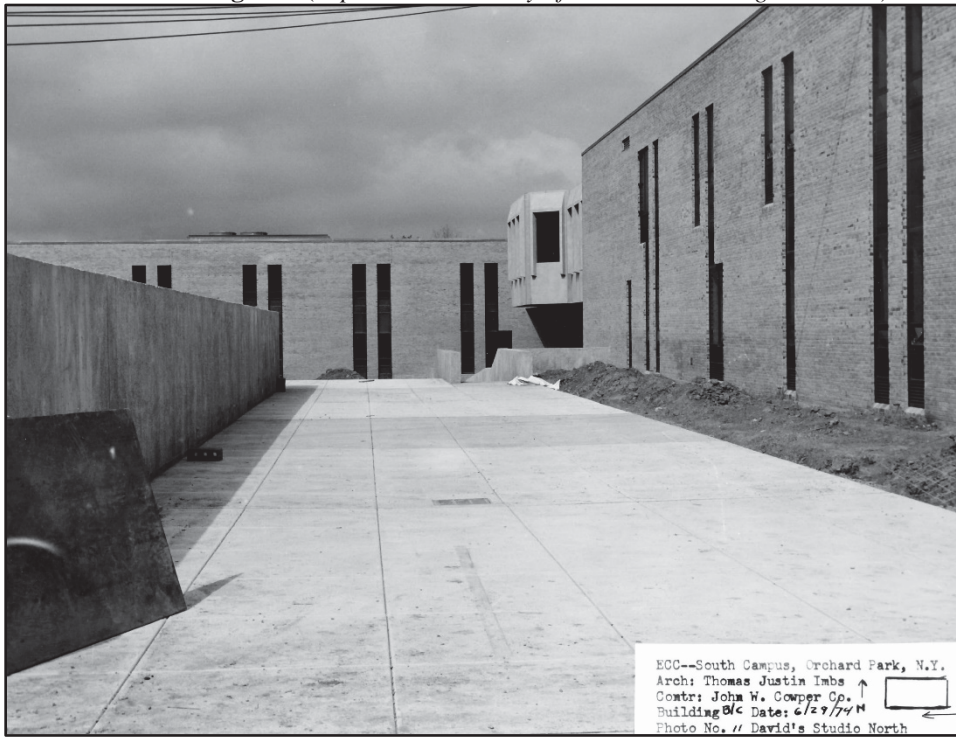


Figure 3.6. A June 29, 1974 view of the north side of the main court area under construction looking west toward Building 3 (Reproduced courtesy of SUNY Erie College Archives).

### 3.4 Thomas Justin Imbs Associates, Architects

Thomas Justin Imbs (1915-2006) operated his architectural firm in the City of Buffalo for 25 years until 1970 when he relocated its headquarters to Scottsdale, Arizona.<sup>99</sup> A native of St. Louis, Missouri, Imbs received a B.A. in Architectural Engineering from the University of Illinois in 1937 and awarded the Plym Fellowship for postgraduate study in Europe and the American Academy in Rome.<sup>100</sup> He later earned advanced degree from Yale University.<sup>101</sup> In 1947, Imbs joined the American Institute of Architects (AIA).<sup>102</sup> Thomas Justin Imbs Associates, Architects received commissions for a variety of buildings and facilities in Western New York in the following categories: commercial, industrial, religious, educational, and health facilities. The firm designed buildings incorporating popular Modernist stylistic design elements and construction materials of the mid-twentieth century.

In 1951, Imbs won first prize in the industrial division of the NYS AIA's competition for his design of the new foundry at Tonawanda Electric Steel Casting Company (ca. 1952).<sup>103</sup> He received honorable mention by the Catholic Property Administration in 1960 for his design for Madonna High School in Niagara Falls.<sup>104</sup> For the \$1.5 million dollar Canisius College Student Center (1963) in Buffalo, Imbs incorporated a Mondrian-type geometric design in a simple rectangular form featuring wall panels supported by a framework of 550 tons of structural steel which was fabricated and erected by Bethlehem Steel's Lackawanna Plant.<sup>105</sup> The rear corner of the building has an exposed staircase encased in a projecting metal glass rectangular tower. Below is a selected list of works in Western New York by Thomas Justin Imbs Associates, Architects.

- Foundry, Tonawanda Electric Steel Casting Company (ca. 1952), Island St, North Tonawanda, NY.
- Quality Materials Co. Addition (1955-56), 1914 Colvin Blvd, Tonawanda, NY
- St. Amelia School (1955), Tonawanda, NY
- Madonna High School (1959), Niagara Falls, NY
- Enos and Sanderson Co. Plant (1960), 2080 Military Rd, Tonawanda, NY
- Canisius College Student Center (1963), Buffalo, NY
- St. Luke's Home for Chronically Ill (1964), Batavia, NY
- Sherman Hall Annex (1970) at University of Buffalo, South Campus; James, Meadows & Howard designed Sherman Hall (1958), Buffalo, NY
- St. Lawrence Roman Catholic Church (1961), 1520 East Delavan Avenue at Wright Avenue, Buffalo.
- Parking Ramp at Roswell Park (1974), Carlton & Michigan Ave, Buffalo, NY
- Brothers of Mercy Health Care Facility (1974), Clarence, NY
- Erie Community College South Campus (1974), Hamburg/Orchard Park, NY

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<sup>99</sup> "Thomas Justin Imbs Obituary," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Nov. 6-12, 2006.

<sup>100</sup> University of Illinois, *University of Illinois Sixty-first Commencement Nineteen Hundred Thirty Seven* (University at Urbana-Champaign, 1937), 28, 71; "Thomas Justin Imbs Obituary," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Nov. 6-12, 2006.

<sup>101</sup> "Thomas Justin Imbs Obituary," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Nov. 6-12, 2006.

<sup>102</sup> American Institute of Architects, *American Architects Directory Second Edition* (New York: R.R. Bowker Company, 1962), 339.

<sup>103</sup> "Sketch of the New North Tonawanda Foundry," *The News of the Tonawandas, NY*, November 6, 1951.

<sup>104</sup> Wisconsin Chapter, American Institute of Architects, 1960 Chapter Notes, *The Wisconsin Architect*, Volume 28, Number 4 (April 1960), p.5.

<sup>105</sup> "Geometry With Steel," *Frontier Herald* [Blasdell, NY], August 22, 1963, p.3.

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**APPENDIX A: Highmark Stadium**

**Current Photographs**

**&**

**Construction Diagram**



**Photograph 1. Setting view of Highmark Stadium, facing northeast** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 2. South side of Highmark Stadium, facing north** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 3. South side of Highmark Stadium, facing northeast** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 4. West side of Highmark Stadium at Gate 5 with Bills Store at right, facing southeast** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 5. West side of Highmark Stadium at Gate 4, facing west** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 6. West side of Highmark Stadium, facing southwest** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



Photograph 7. Northwest entrance ramp, facing east (Commonwealth 2022).



Photograph 8. North side of Highmark Stadium, facing southeast (Commonwealth 2022).



**Photograph 9.** Northwest tower area of Highmark Stadium, facing southwest (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 10.** Construction detail of 300 Level north, facing southeast (*Commonwealth 2022*).





**Photograph 11. 50 Yard Line North Plaza, facing south** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 12. Northeast section of Highmark Stadium, facing west** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 13. East side of Old Administration (Facilities) Building at East End Zone, facing west** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 14. East and north sides of Old Administration (Facilities) Building, facing southwest** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 15. East side of Old Administration (Facilities) Building, facing northwest** *(Commonwealth 2022).*



**Photograph 16. East entrance to Tunnel at East End Zone, facing west** *(Commonwealth 2022).*



**Photograph 17. East side of M&T Club at East End Zone, facing west-northwest (Commonwealth 2022).**



**Photograph 18. 50 Yard Line South Plaza, facing north (Commonwealth 2022).**



**Photograph 19.** View of the field from the Tunnel (East End Zone, 100 Level), facing west (Commonwealth 2022).



**Photograph 20.** Tunnel to field, facing west (Commonwealth 2022).



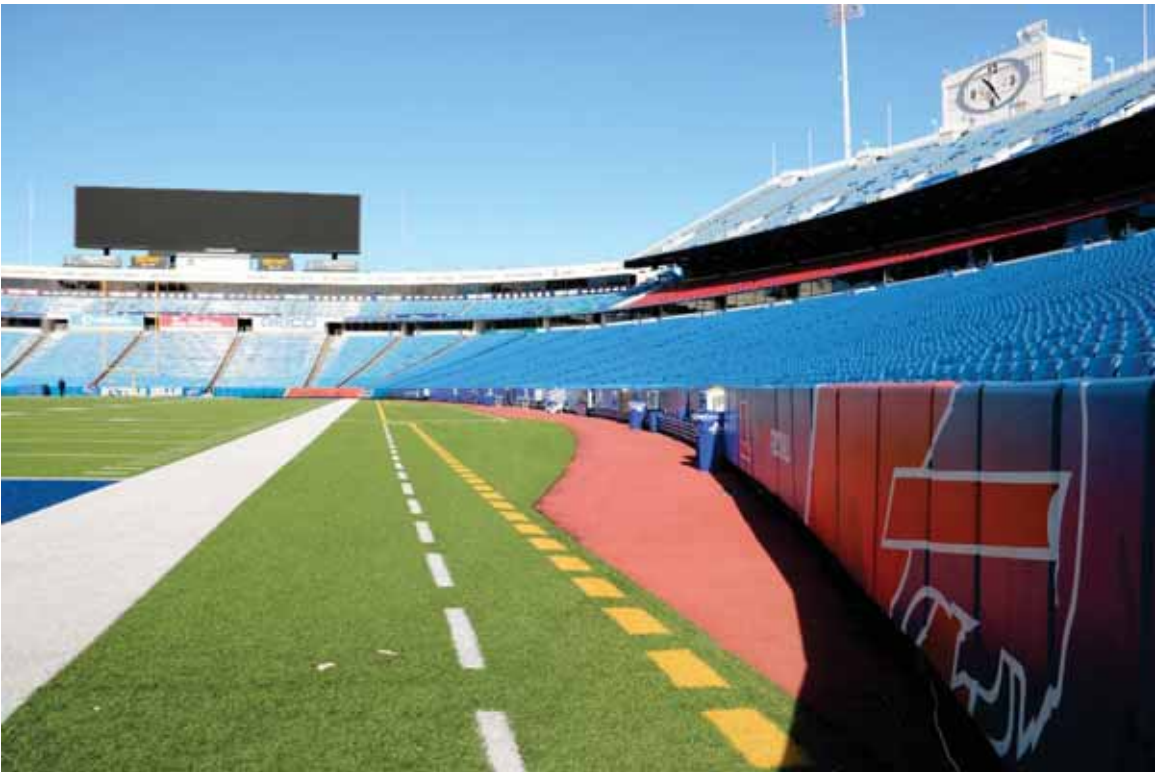
Photograph 21. Tunnel to field, facing east (Commonwealth 2022).



Photograph 22. View of field from East End Zone, facing west (Commonwealth 2022).



**Photograph 23.** View from northwest corner of field, facing southeast (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 24.** North sideline (visitor's side), facing west (*Commonwealth 2022*).



Photograph 25. East half of field from 50 yard line, facing east (Commonwealth 2022).

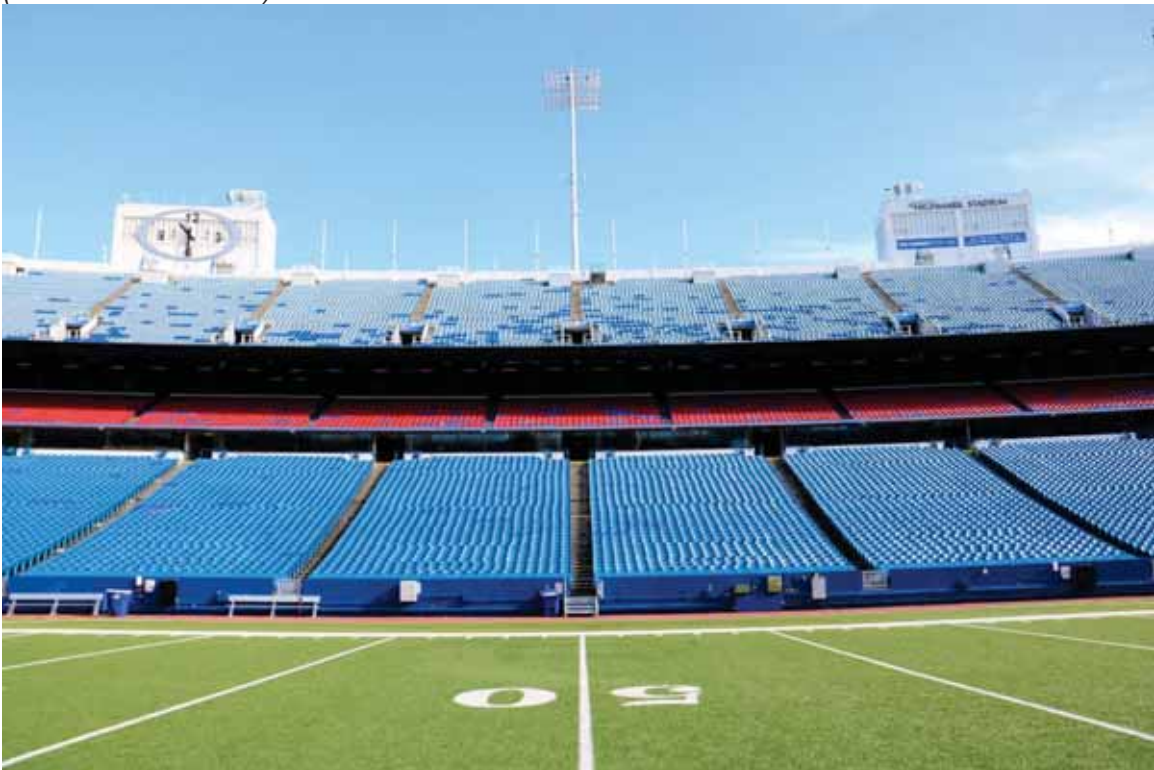


Photograph 26. West half of field from 50 yard line, facing west (Commonwealth 2022).





**Photograph 27. South sideline (Buffalo Bills side) from 50 yard line, facing south** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 28. North sideline (visitor's side) from 50 yard line, facing north** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 29.** South sideline (Buffalo Bills side) from 50 yard line, facing east (Commonwealth 2022).



**Photograph 30.** South sideline (Buffalo Bills side) from 50 yard line, facing east (Commonwealth 2022).



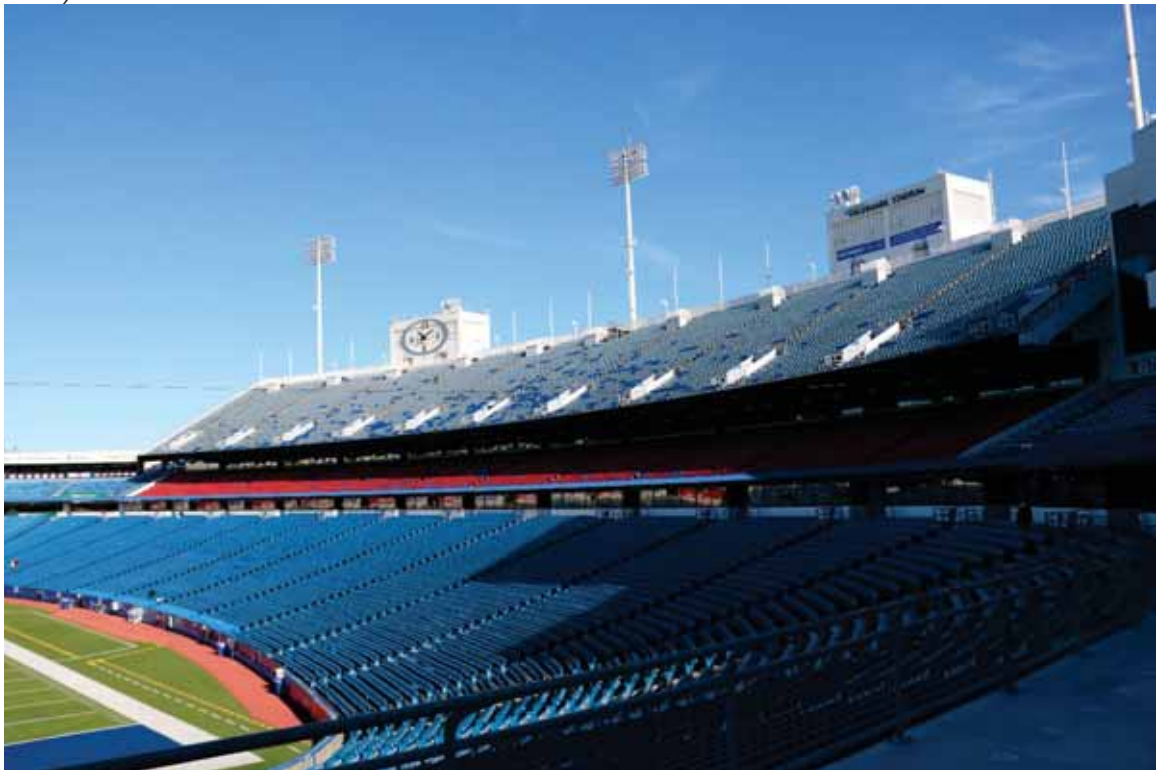
**Photograph 31. Field from East End Zone, facing east** (Commonwealth 2022).



**Photograph 32. Exterior 100 Level concourse at East End Zone with Old Administration Building (Brew Pub) at right Field from East End Zone, facing northeast** (Commonwealth 2022).



**Photograph 33. East End Zone vomitory (122/121, 221/222), facing west** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 34. North sideline seating from East End Zone deck, facing northwest** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 35.** View from 100 Level seating at East End Zone, facing northwest (Commonwealth 2022).



**Photograph 36.** Dugout suites (southeast section), facing northwest (Commonwealth 2022).



**Photograph 37. Level 100 sideline (north) vomitory example, facing south** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 38. Level 100 seating (north sideline) facing west-northwest** *Commonwealth 2022).*



**Photograph 39. 200 Level seating on north sideline with roof of Dugout Suites at left, facing east** *(Commonwealth 2022).*



**Photograph 40. 200 Level seating on south sideline east with suites at right, facing**  
*(Commonwealth 2022).*

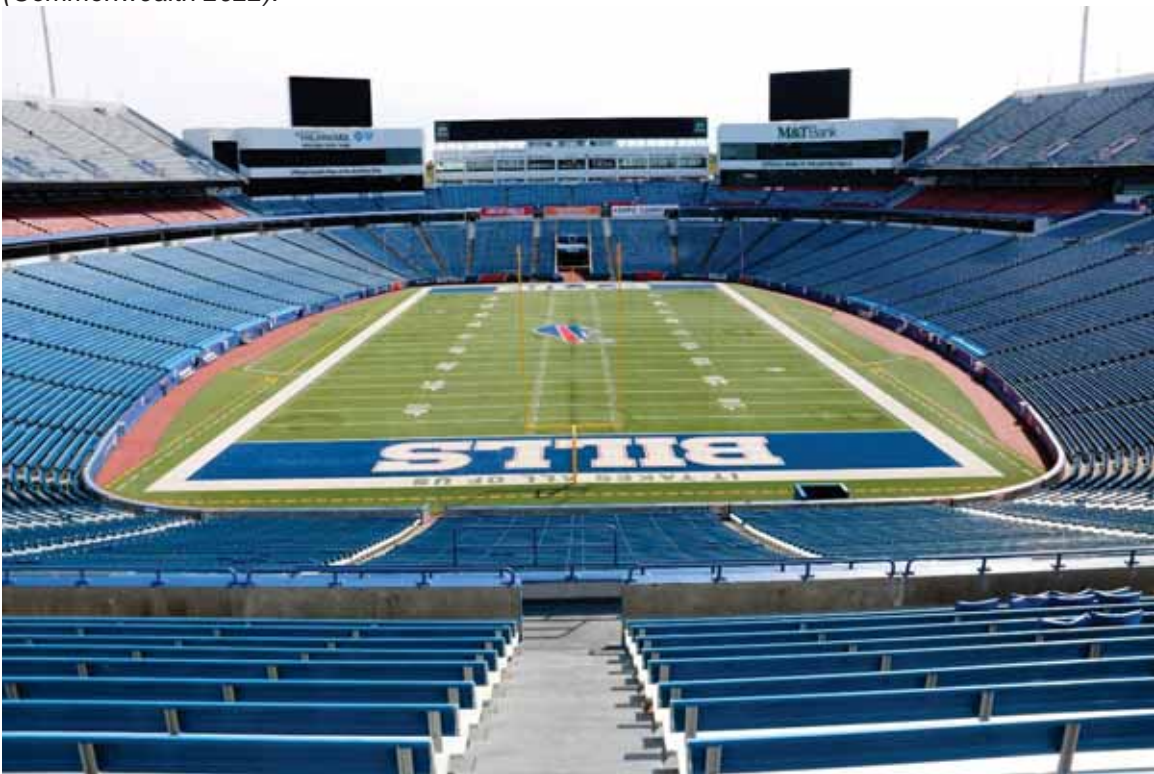


**Photograph 41. 200 Level seating and main scoreboard in East End Zone, facing north**  
*(Commonwealth 2022).*





**Photograph 42.** View from 200 Level seating of East End Zone, facing north east (Commonwealth 2022).



**Photograph 43.** View from 200 Level of East End Zone, facing east (Commonwealth 2022).



**Photograph 44. View of north sideline seating from 200 Level of East End Zone, facing southeast (Commonwealth 2022).**



**Photograph 45. View of south sideline seating from 200 Level of East End Zone, facing southeast (Commonwealth 2022).**



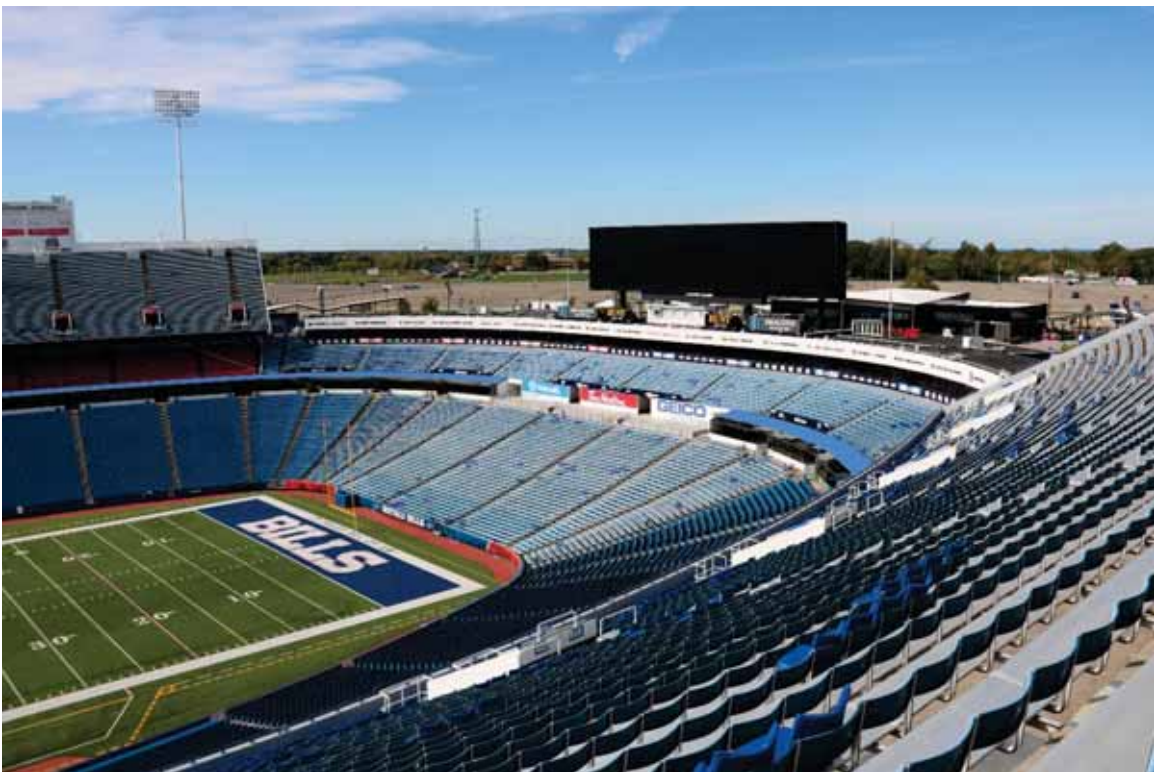
**Photograph 46.** View from 200 Level seating at East End Zone, facing southeast (Commonwealth 2022).



**Photograph 47.** View from 300 Level seating at East End Zone, facing southeast (Commonwealth 2022).



**Photograph 48.** 300 Level seating on north sideline, facing east (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 49.** View from 300 Level (north sideline) of East End Zone with SUNY Erie Campus in background, facing southwest (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 50.** 300 Level seating, facing east (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 51.** View from 400 Level (north sideline) at 50 yard line, facing south (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 52.** 300 Level vomitory example (north sideline), facing north (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 53.** 400 Level (north sideline) with northwest tower, facing west (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 54.** 100 Level concourse example from 134/135 (south sideline), facing east (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 55. 100 Level concourse at 50 Yard Line South Plaza entrance (south sideline), facing south (Commonwealth 2022).**



**Photograph 56. 100 Level concourse at 50 Yard Line North South Plaza entrance (north sideline), facing east (Commonwealth 2022)**





**Photograph 57. 100 Level concourse at 50 Yard Line North South Plaza entrance (north sideline), facing south (Commonwealth 2022).**



**Photograph 58. 100 Level concession stand example (111) (Commonwealth 2022).**



**Photograph 59. 100 Level sideline (north) vomitory entrance from concourse (112/111), facing south** (Commonwealth 2022).



**Photograph 60. Restroom entrance example (100 Level)** (Commonwealth 2022).



Photograph 61. Dugout Suite example north sideline (113B), facing south (*Commonwealth 2022*).



Photograph 62. Dugout Suite example north sideline (113B), facing north (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 63. Dugout Suite example (113B), facing northeast** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 64. Writing Press Box (former 200 suite), facing west** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 65. Tower Club Suite (M&T Club), facing east (Commonwealth 2022).**



**Photograph 66. 200 Level Club (south) concession stands, facing east (Commonwealth 2022).**



**Photograph 67.** 200 Level south sideline suite example (Commonwealth 2022).



**Photograph 68.** M&T Super Suite, south sideline, facing west (Commonwealth 2022).



**Photograph 69. Broadcast Booth, facing north** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 70. West End Suite, facing northeast** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



Photograph 71. 200 Club Level north sideline, facing east (Commonwealth 2022).



Photograph 72. 200 Level Club north sideline, facing northeast(Commonwealth 2022).





**Photograph 73. 300 Level concourse entrance (north sideline), facing east (Commonwealth 2022).**



**Photograph 74. 300 Level concourse (north sideline), facing west** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 75. 300 Level Exterior concourse north sideline, facing west** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 76.** 300 Level concourse vomitory, north sideline *(Commonwealth 2022).*



**Photograph 77.** 050 Level of Tunnel, facing east *(Commonwealth 2022).*



**Photograph 78. 100 Tunnel Level (old Administration Building), Bills Locker Room entrance and elevators, facing north** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 79. Bills Locker Room, facing east** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



Photograph 80. Bills Locker Room, facing west *Commonwealth 2022*).



Photograph 81. Visiting Team Locker Room entrance 100 Tunnel Level (old Administration Building), facing west *Commonwealth 2022*).



Photograph 82. Visiting Team Locker Room, facing south *Commonwealth 2022*).



Photograph 83. Visiting Team Locker Room, facing south *Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 84. Interview Room, facing north** (*Commonwealth 2022*).

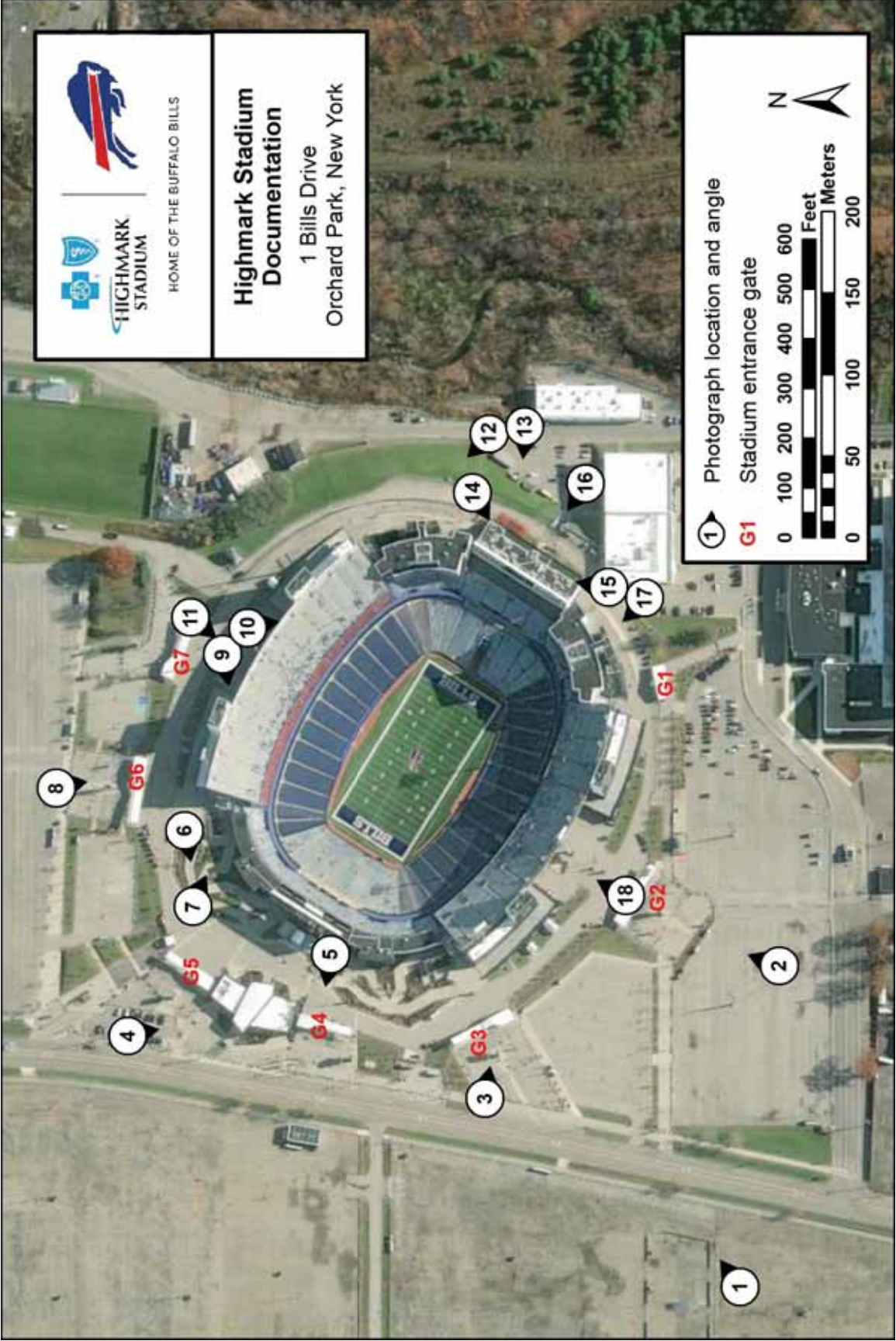



**Photograph 85. Concessions area (Brew Club) at 100 level - Old Administration Building Commissary** (*Commonwealth 2022*).






**Photograph 86. Concessions area (Brew Club) at 100 level - Old Administration Building Commissary** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



 **HIGHMARK STADIUM**  
HOME OF THE BUFFALO BILLS




**Highmark Stadium Documentation**  
1 Bills Drive  
Orchard Park, New York

① Photograph location and angle

G1 Stadium entrance gate

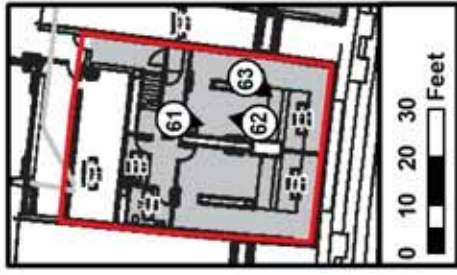
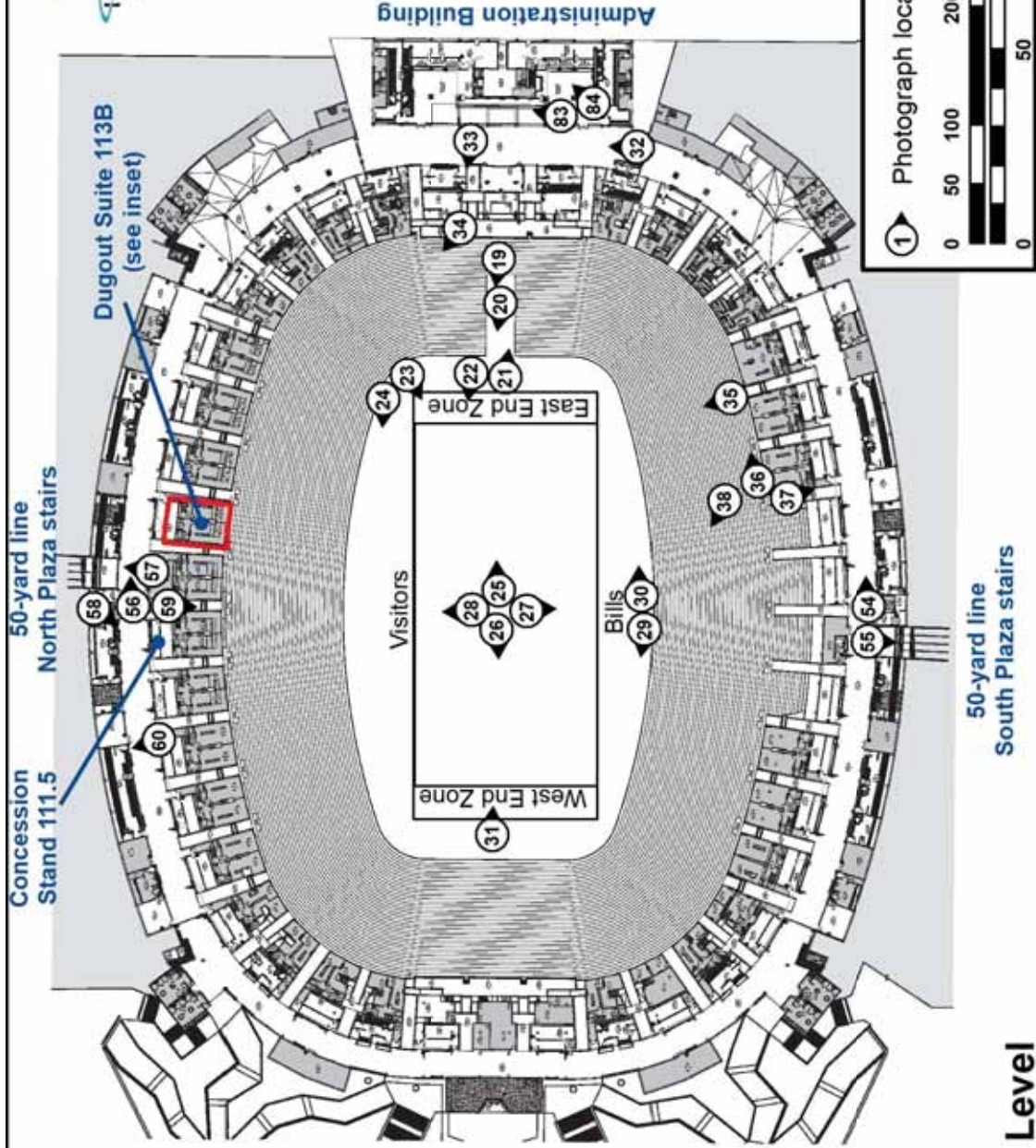
0 100 200 300 400 500 600 Feet

0 50 100 150 200 Meters

N 



HOME OF THE BUFFALO BILLS



1 Photograph location and angle

0 50 100 200 300 Feet

0 50 100 Meters

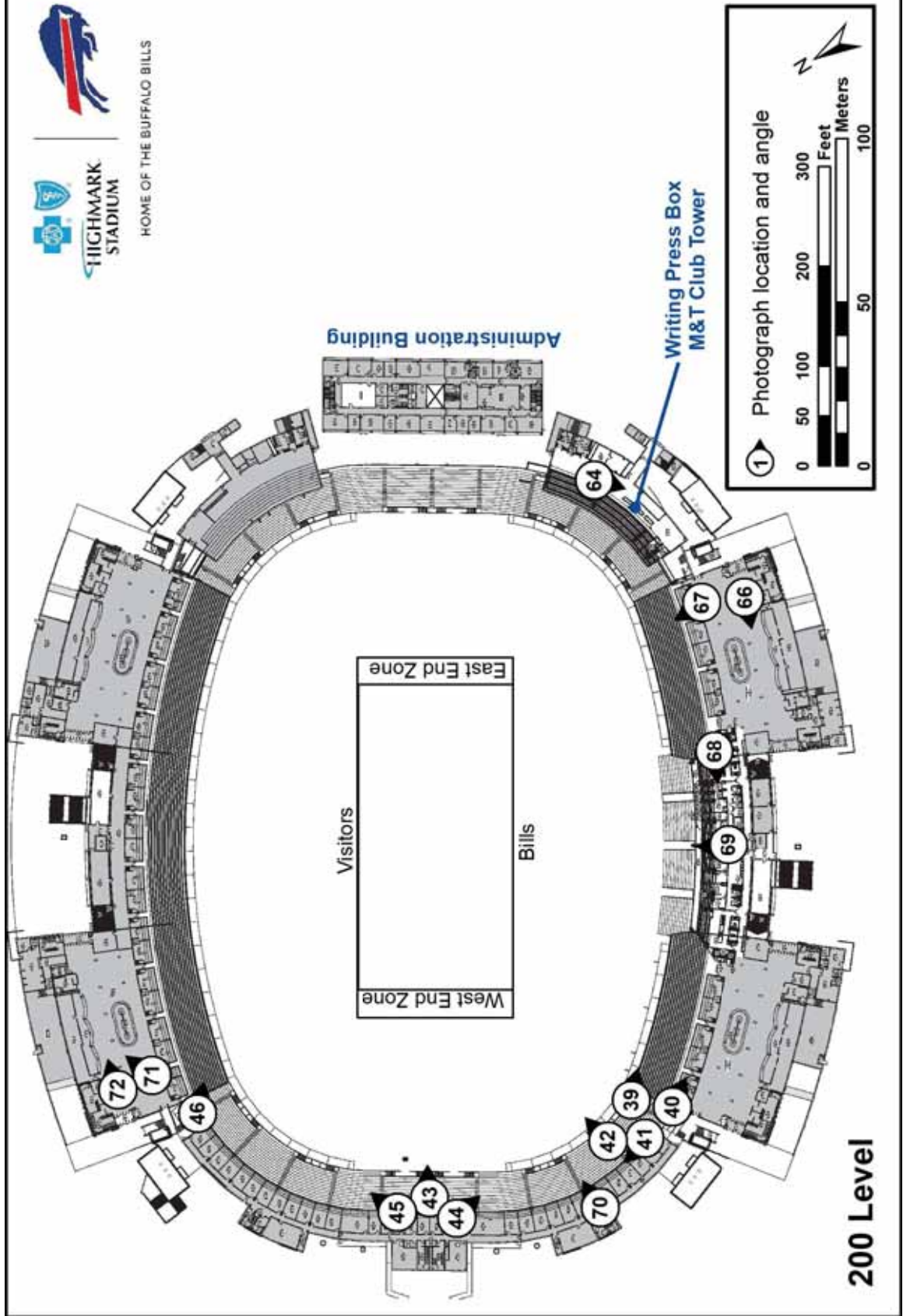
100 Level



HOME OF THE BUFFALO BILLS



HIGHMARK STADIUM



200 Level

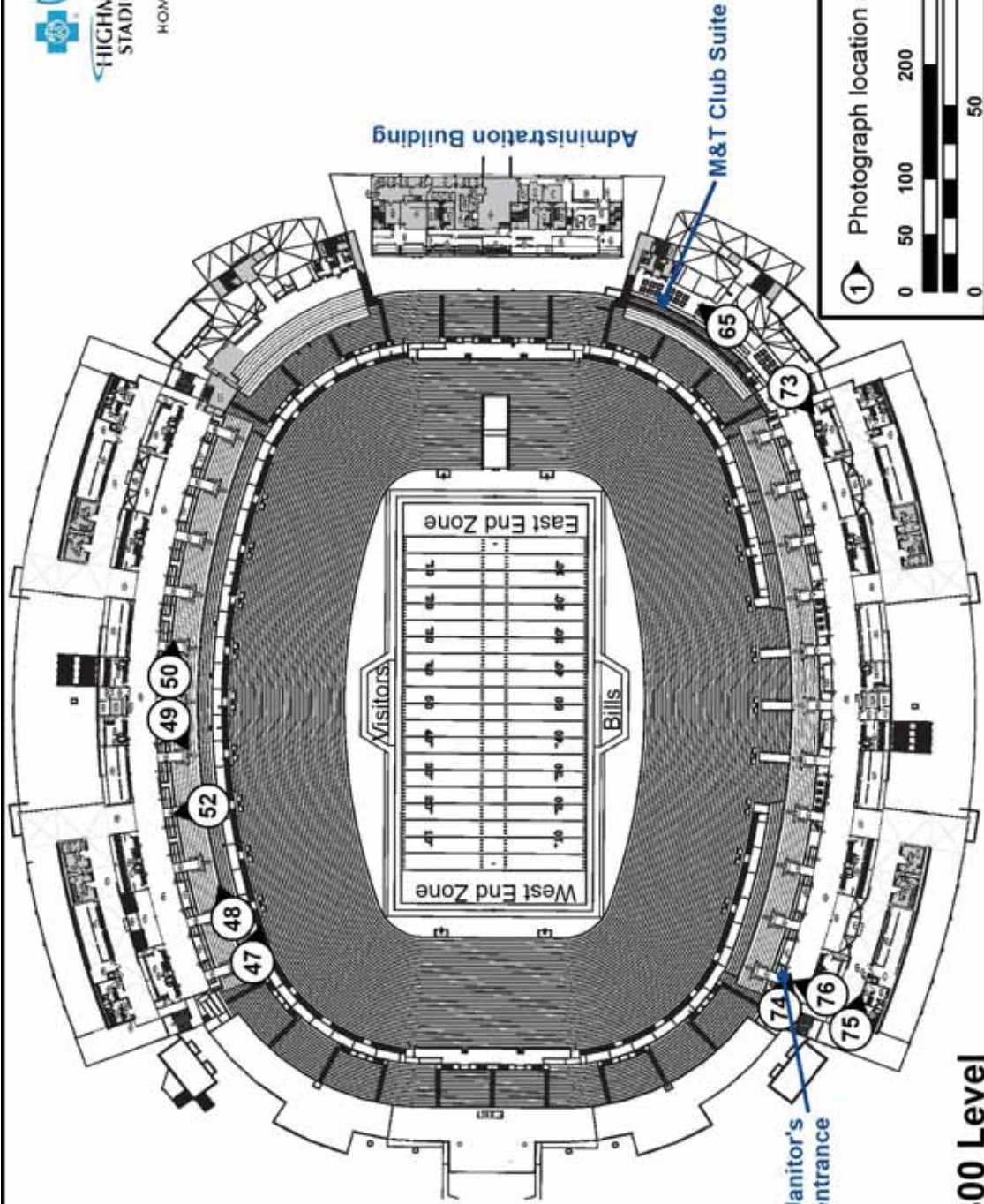
1 Photograph location and angle

0 50 100 200 300 Feet

0 50 100 Meters



HOME OF THE BUFFALO BILLS



300 Level

1 Photograph location and angle

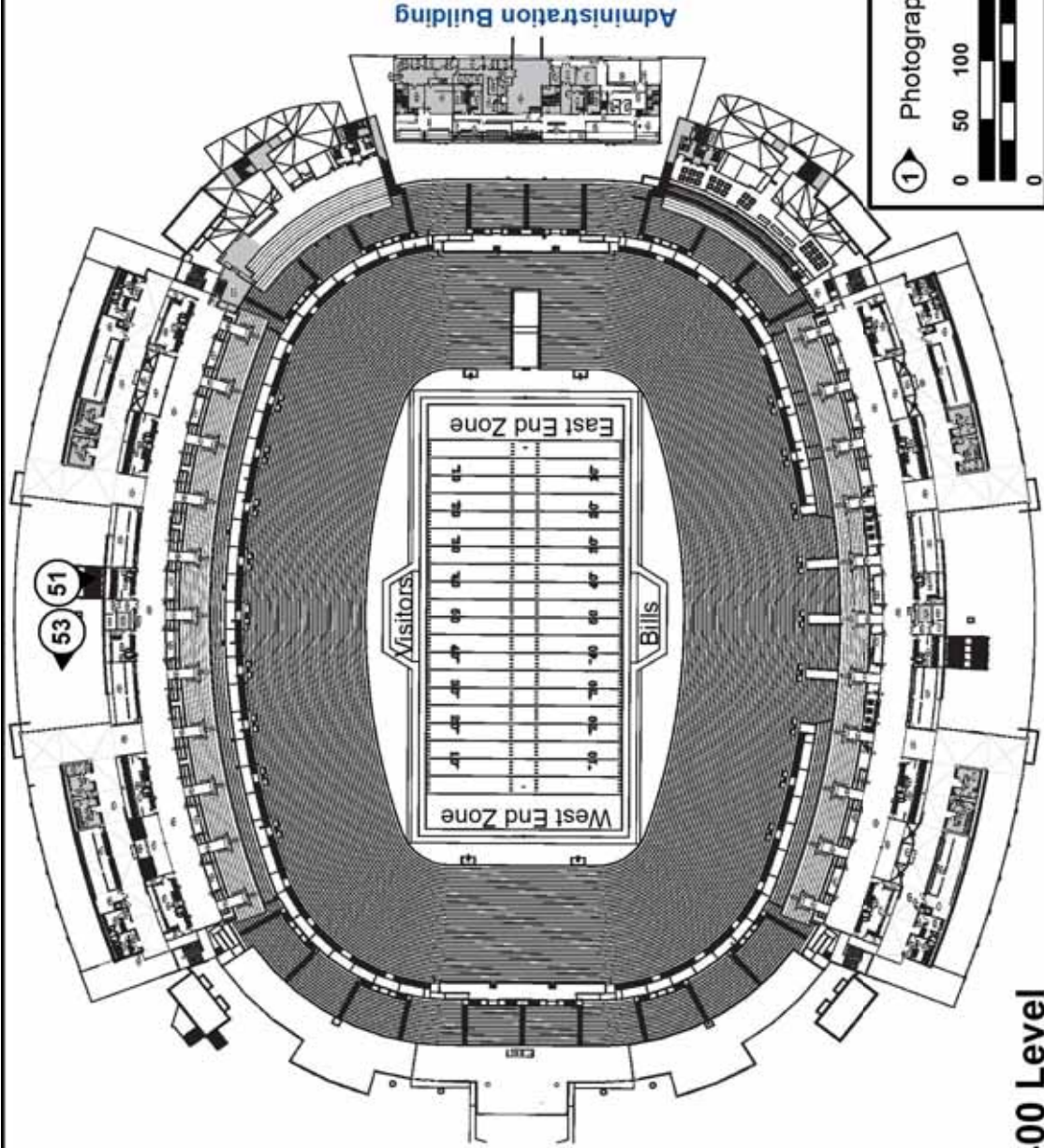
0 50 100 200 300 Feet

0 50 100 Meters



HIGHMARK  
STADIUM

HOME OF THE BUFFALO BILLS



Administration Building

53 51

West End Zone  
Visitors  
Bills  
East End Zone

1

Photograph location and angle

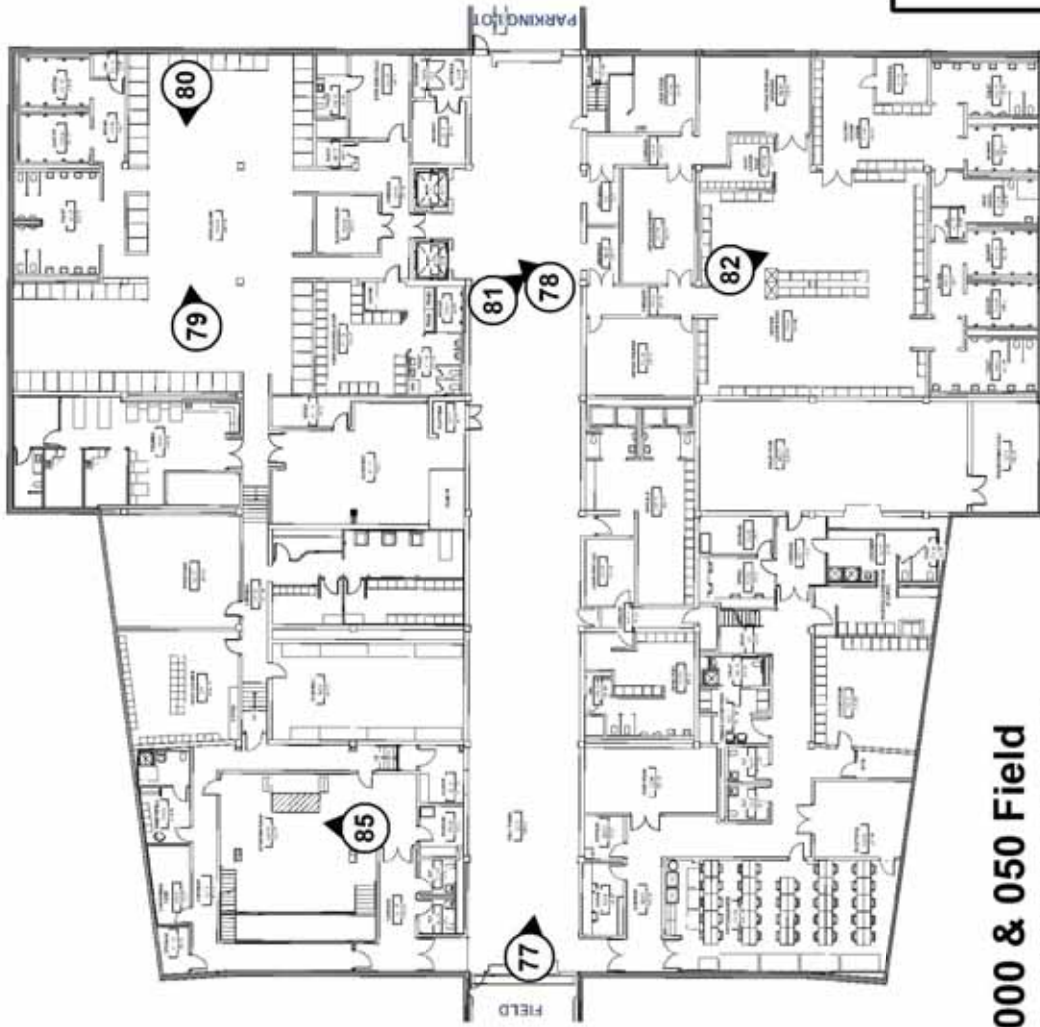
0 50 100 200 300 Feet

0 50 100 Meters

400 Level



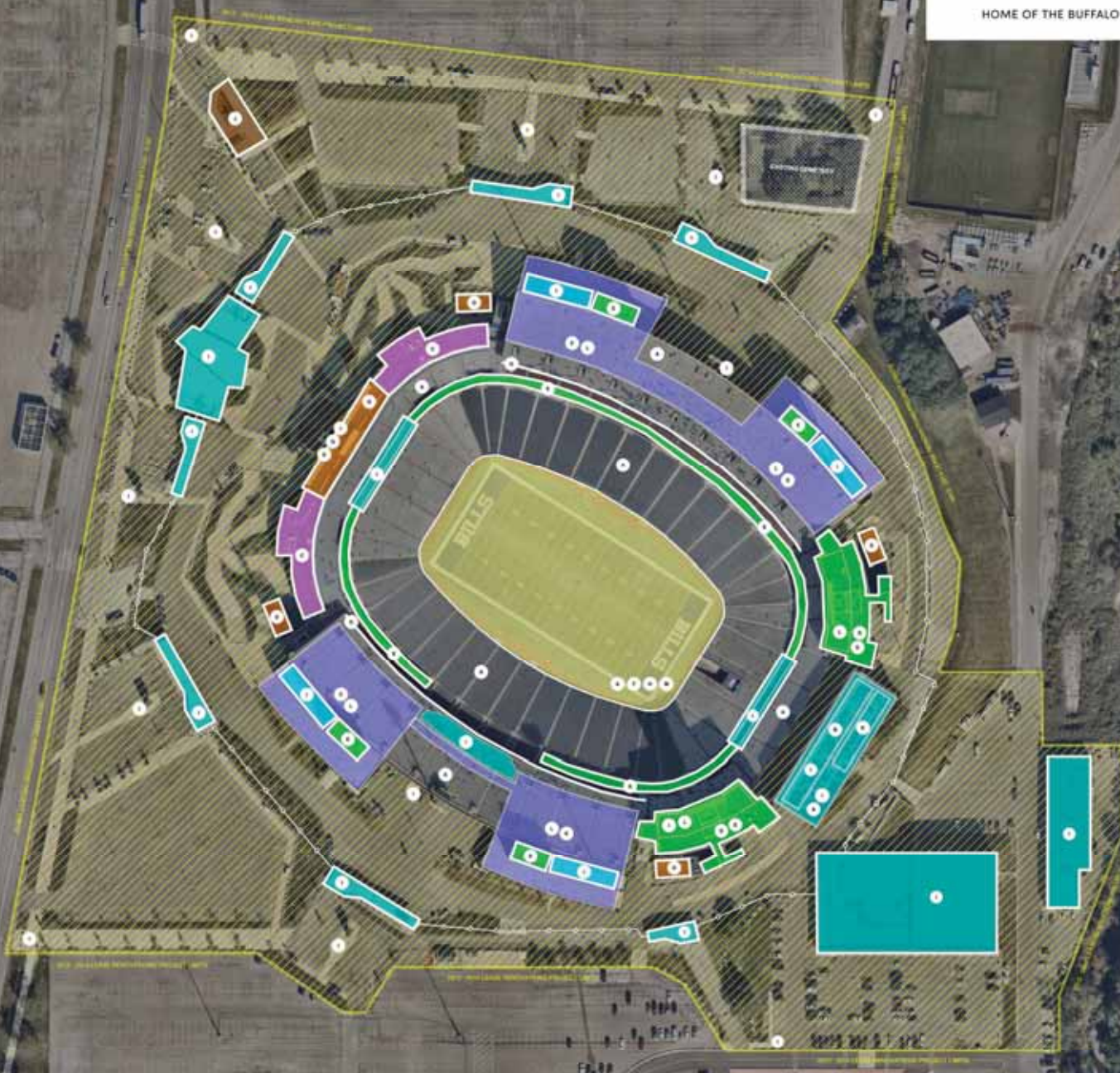
HOME OF THE BUFFALO BILLS



1 Photograph location and angle

0 25 50 75 Feet  
0 5 10 15 20 25 Meters

# 000 & 050 Field and Tunnel Level



<p>1972 - 1973</p>	<p><b>Original Construction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100 Tunnel Level (Locker Rooms, Staff Spaces, and Field)</li> <li>• 100 Level (Concourse, Concessions, Restrooms, &amp; Seating Bowl)</li> <li>• 200 Level (Seating Ring &amp; Press Box) &amp; 34 Sideline Suites</li> <li>• 300 Level (Sideline Seating)</li> <li>• Administration Building (East Endzone)</li> <li>• Scoreboard (West Endzone)</li> <li>• Entry Gates (6) &amp; Fencing</li> </ul>	<p>2007</p>	<p><b>Scoreboard &amp; Ribbon Board Upgrades</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Mitsubishi LED board measuring 88.5x32.5 ft installed to replace Junction</li> <li>• 1,000 feet of Mitsubishi Diamond Vision LED ribbon boards installed at 200 Level</li> </ul>
<p>1984 - 1985</p>	<p><b>Renovation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renovated attic space on the 3rd Floor of the Administration Building adding sixteen (16) Luxury Suites in the East Endzone.</li> </ul>	<p>2011</p>	<p><b>Playing Field</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AstroPlay GameDay Grass Field replaced with A-Turf Titan Field</li> </ul>
<p>1993</p>	<p><b>New Construction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction of the West Endzone Suites adding twelve (12) Luxury Suites to the north of the Scoreboard and twelve (12) Luxury Suites to the south of the Scoreboard</li> </ul>	<p>2013-2014</p>	<p><b>Lease Renovations - Day 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction of Flagship Team Store</li> <li>• Construction of seven (7) new Entry Gates &amp; six (6) Entry Pyramids/Plazas</li> <li>• Construction of Concessory Building &amp; Broadcast Compound</li> <li>• Construction of Operations Building</li> <li>• Construction of New 300 Level Concessions/Restrooms (4)</li> <li>• Expanded/Upgraded Concessions &amp; Restrooms at 100 and 300 Level</li> <li>• Expanded/Upgraded Broadcast Booths at existing 200 Level Press Box</li> <li>• Addition of New 200 Suite Boxes</li> <li>• Addition/Renovation of 1st Floor of the Administration Building to New News Pub Bar / Concessions &amp; Restrooms</li> <li>• Relocated Writing Press to Second Level of Southeast Endzone Club</li> <li>• Installation of two (2) 33.5x10.84 ft H5 Video Boards above East Endzone Club</li> <li>• 3rd Floor Administration Building Suite conversion to Suite Board Control and Central Command</li> </ul>
<p>1994</p>	<p><b>New Construction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction of the Center West Endzone Suites adding fourteen (14) Luxury Suites under the Scoreboard</li> <li>• Construction of four (4) Bath Restroom Buildings &amp; 50-seat Restrooms between the 34 Sideline Suites</li> <li>• Construction of East Endzone Club</li> <li>• Redstone Club on the north side of the Administration Building</li> <li>• Oval Line Club on the south side of the Administration Building</li> <li>• Expansion of Scoreboard Structure and installation of 41.2x31.5 ft Junction (largest in US at the time)</li> </ul>	<p>2015</p>	<p><b>Lease Renovations - Day 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established "Founder's Plaza" to the north of Team Store including new landscaping features, monumental sign feature, and the size statue of Team Founder Ralph C. Wilson Jr.</li> </ul>
<p>1995</p>	<p><b>New Construction / Upgrades</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction of four (4) Sideline Clubs at the 200 Level</li> <li>• Construction of four Signature Restrooms, Teams</li> <li>• Construction of expanded level to reach East Endzone Club</li> <li>• Construction of seventy-six (76) Duplex Suites at the edge of the 100 and 200 Level accessed via the 300 Level Sideline Clubs</li> <li>• Replacement of 36,000 Stadium Seats</li> <li>• Replaced 8,000 Stadium Seats in Sideline Club sections with compressed heated seats (first of their kind)</li> <li>• Field Lighting upgrade</li> <li>• Stadium Scoreboard, Sound System, and Control Room upgrade</li> <li>• Stadium water service upgrade</li> </ul>	<p>2016</p>	<p><b>Renovation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3rd Floor Administration Building Office Renovation</li> </ul>
<p>2000</p>	<p><b>Playing Field</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original style AstroTurf Field replaced with newer AstroPlay GameDay Grass</li> </ul>	<p>2017-2018</p>	<p><b>Renovation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modernization of Sideline Clubs, addition of Grab-N-Go style cafe, Oval Line Club, and Redstone Club</li> </ul>
		<p>2019</p>	<p><b>Playing Field</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A-Turf Titan Field replacement including sub-pat</li> </ul>



## **APPENDIX B**

### **SUNY Erie South Campus Photographs**



**Photograph 1. Setting view of SUNY Erie South Campus with Building 1 in center, facing southeast** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 2. Setting view of SUNY Erie South Campus with Building 6 at left, facing southwest** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 3. Setting view of east side of SUNY Erie South Campus, facing west** (Commonwealth 2022).



**Photograph 4. Setting view of SUNY Erie South Campus with Building 7 at right, facing northwest** (Commonwealth 2022).



**Photograph 5. Setting view of SUNY Erie South Campus with Building 5 in background, facing north-northwest (Commonwealth 2022).**



**Photograph 6. Setting view of south side of SUNY Erie South Campus with Building 5 in center, facing north (Commonwealth 2022).**



**Photograph 7. Setting view of SUNY Erie South Campus with Building 4 in center, facing northeast** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 8. Setting view of west side of SUNY Erie South Campus with Building 3 at left, facing east** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 9. Building 1, facing southeast** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 10. Building 1 with north entrance in center, facing east** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 11. Building 1 north entrance, facing south** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 12. North side of Building 1, facing southwest** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 13. Area between Buildings 1 (at right) and 2 with Bridge 2-3 and Main Court in background, facing south (*Commonwealth 2022*).**



**Photograph 14. South and east sides of Building 1, facing northwest (*Commonwealth 2022*).**





**Photograph 15.** Bridge 1-3 with Building 1 at right, facing west (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 16.** West side of Building 1, facing northwest (*Commonwealth 2022*).



Photograph 17. North side of Building 2, facing south (Commonwealth 2022).



Photograph 18. East side of Building 2, facing southwest (Commonwealth 2022).



**Photograph 19.** Bridge 2-6 with Building 2 at left, facing north (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 20.** Main Court side of Building 2, facing northwest (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 21. Main Court side of Building 2, facing west** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 22. View from Bridge 2-3 of west section of Main Court side, facing south** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 23. Bridge 3-4 and Building 3, facing northwest** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 24. Building 3, facing northeast** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 25. Building 3, facing east** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 26. Building 4, facing east** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 27. Building 4 and southwest walkway to Main Court, facing north** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 28. Area between Buildings 4 and 5 with Bridge 4-5 and Main Court in distance, facing north** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 29. Building 5, facing northeast** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 30. Brick and concrete screen wall in front of Building 5 with Building 7 at right background, facing east** (*Commonwealth 2022*).





**Photograph 31. Bridge 4-5 and north side of Building 4, facing south** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 32. Building 4 ramp, facing east** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 33. Building 5, facing southeast** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 34. South side of Main Court, facing east** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 35. Lower terrace of Main Court, facing west-northwest** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 36. Main Court, facing northeast** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 37. Building 5, facing southwest** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 38. Building 5, facing southeast** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 39. Building 6, facing east** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 40. Building 5, facing north** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 41. Building 5, facing west** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 42. Building 6, facing northwest** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 43. Building 6, facing southwest** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 44. Area between Buildings 2 and 6, facing south** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



Photograph 45. Building 7, facing northeast (Commonwealth 2022).



Photograph 46. Building 7, facing southwest (Commonwealth 2022).





**Photograph 47. SUNY Erie Green Building Technology Center (4196 Abbott Rd), facing northwest** (*Commonwealth 2022*).



**Photograph 48. SUNY Erie Green Building Technology Center (4196 Abbott Rd), facing northwest** (*Commonwealth 2022*).

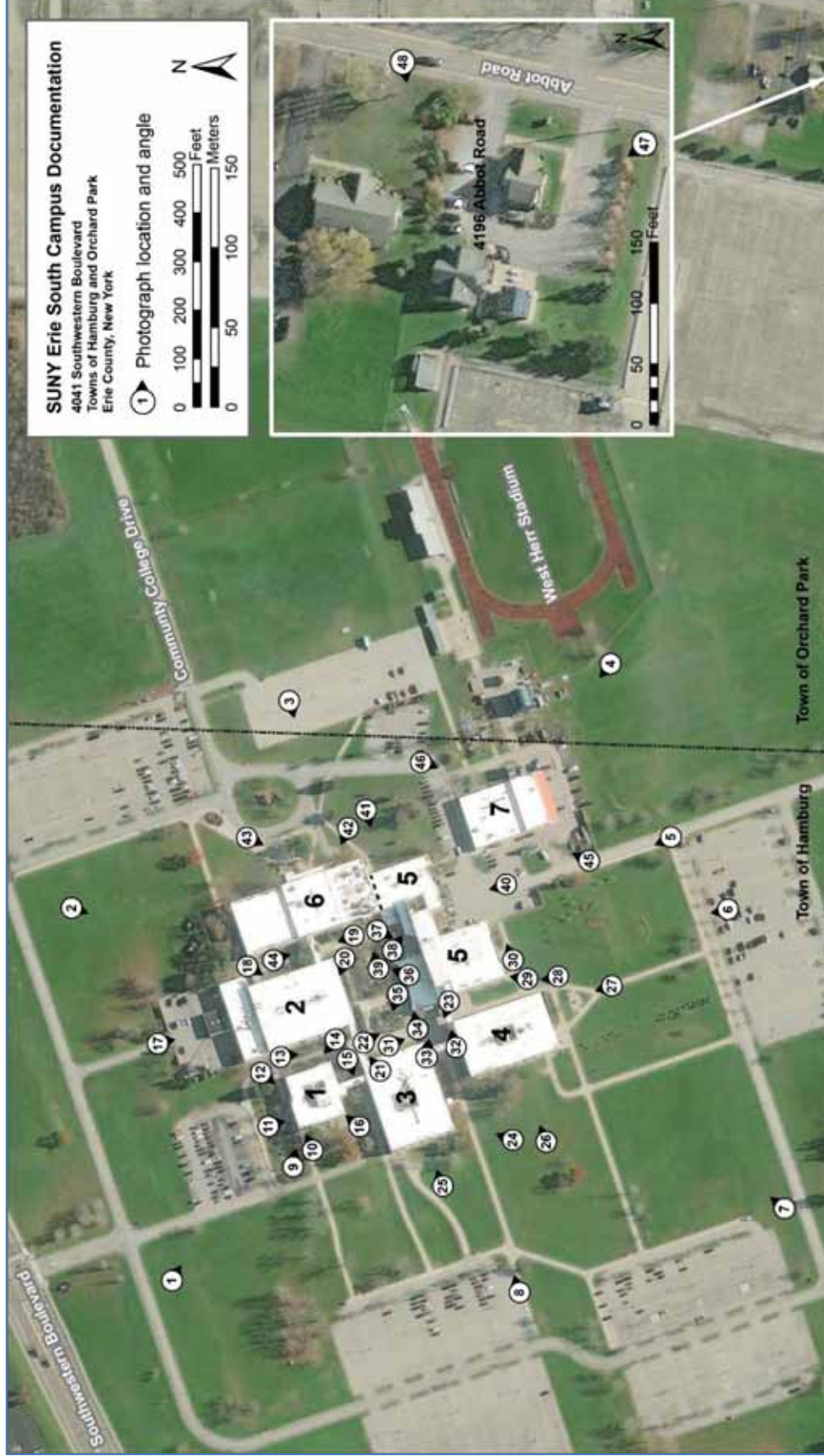


Figure B-1. SUNY Erie South Campus photograph angle locations (NYS GIS Clearinghouse, 2022).



**New York State  
Parks, Recreation and  
Historic Preservation**

**KATHY HOCHUL**  
Governor

**ERIK KULLESEID**  
Commissioner

August 3, 2022

Stephen Gawlik  
VP/Senior Counsel  
Empire State Development  
95 Perry Street  
Buffalo, NY 14203

Re: ESD  
New Buffalo Bills Stadium  
1 Bills Drive, Orchard Park, Erie County, NY  
22PR04875

Dear Stephen Gawlik:

Thank you for requesting the comments of the Division for Historic Preservation (DHP) of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). We have reviewed the submitted materials in accordance with the New York State Historic Preservation Act of 1980 (Section 14.09 of the New York Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law). These comments are those of the DHP and relate only to Historic/Cultural resources.

It is OPRHP's understanding that a Phase IA Archaeological Literature Review and Sensitivity Assessment report is being prepared for the current project's Area of Potential Effects (APE). A link is provided with this response to upload the report to the Cultural Resource Information System (CRIS) when completed. If you have any questions regarding archaeology, please contact Andy Farry at [andrew.farry@parks.ny.gov](mailto:andrew.farry@parks.ny.gov).

The existing stadium, originally known as Rich Stadium and now Highmark Stadium, was built between 1972-1973, is now 50 years old and requires evaluation for potential eligibility for the State and National Registers of Historic Places. To complete the evaluation, we request the following information:

- 1.) Please provide additional photos showing the exterior and interior of the stadium including views from the playing field. Sample photos of interior areas, such as public concourses and concession areas should be included. Photos should be keyed to a map, site plan, or floor plan. A current aerial image of the stadium is also requested.
- 2.) Please provide a history of the stadium that includes an overview of the events leading to its construction, how this site was selected, construction history, etc. This complex appears to have been constructed as part of a wave of 1960s/70s stadiums known as "multi-purpose" or "cookie cutter" stadiums - please provide additional context, including typical characteristics, of this type of stadium. As part of this, submission we request a diagram, preferably color-coded, showing

those areas that have been added or altered on the stadium and when these alterations occurred.

- 3.) Please provide information on the Erie Community College South Campus, which is directly adjacent to the project site. Preliminary research indicates the campus was constructed sometime around 1974. We request a brief history of the development of the campus, a site map identifying all buildings and their dates of construction, and photos showing the campus buildings.
- 4.) Please provide information about the maximum anticipated height of the stadium. We understand that the design is still in preliminary stages, however, we need to understand if there will be visual impacts.

If you have questions regarding above-ground architectural resources, please contact Jennifer Walkowski at [jennifer.walkowski@parks.ny.gov](mailto:jennifer.walkowski@parks.ny.gov).

Sincerely,



Nancy Herter  
Director, Technical Preservation Services Bureau

Cc: Chuck Vandrei, David Witt, Josalyn Ferguson, David Denk, Kerri Pickard-DePriest; DEC  
Frances Kabat, Labella  
Kate Whelan, Mark Steinback; CHG  
Paul Tronolone, ESD