RAND BUILDING
AN ORIGINAL BUFFALO SKYSCRAPER

HISTORY
When it was constructed in 1929, the Rand Building on Lafayette Square was the tallest building in Buffalo at 408 feet above street level until the HSBC (formerly the Marine Midland) building dominated the city’s skyline in 1972. Named for George Rand, a financier from the 20s, the Marine Trust Company of Buffalo hired architects Franklin and William Kidd of James W. Kidney & Assoc. to design the skyscraper. The site was formerly occupied by the 1903 Olympic Theatre. As a result of George Rand’s efforts, the Marine Midland Corporation became New York States first consolidated banking system. Rand also funded the radio station WGR in 1922, which helped launch radio in Buffalo.

DESIGN
The Rand Building was designed in Art Deco style. The tiered roof line, bas-relief flower and leave detail in the façade, cast-iron “S” scrolls on the interior, and the main entrance are all examples of prominent elements of this style. It has been suggested that the design influenced or was even used as inspiration for the 1930’s design and construction of the Empire State Building.

TODAY
Now, the historic building containing a 40 foot beacon tower hosts a variety of local radio stations that broadcast from the location, including WJYE, WBLK and WYRK, and holds the rank of third tallest building in Buffalo. Its 29 stories are currently used as office space, and much of the first floor operates as an HSBC bank location. The building’s current owner is the Main Seneca Corporation. The Rand building contains over 250 offices, and offers a beautiful view of the Sailor Monument in Lafayette Square. As an excellent example of an old architectural style and a prominent part of Buffalo’s skyline, this building is often forgotten about after dark since there have been no exterior lighting for around 30 years. In the past, lights highlighted its unique roofline and style. History buffs and die-hard Buffalonians alike are pleading with the owner to “Re-light the Rand”.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT
The map on the left shows the Rand Building in its intermediate context, using a road map and highlighting subway stops and one-way streets. There is a variety of shopping and dining experiences nearby, with the convenience of light rail or bus transportation options. The map on the right shows the location of the Rand in a regional context.