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The Turtle in Niagara Falls scores win in its fight for preservation

The Turtle has played a vital role in preserving Native American history. The city recently decided against making the building a local landmark.



Author: Tommy Gallagher (WGRZ)

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NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y. — An iconic building in Niagara Falls has reached a major milestone in its battle for preservation.

The [New York State Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation](#) has given The Turtle building a determination of eligibility for its historical significance.

It means that the building's owner can now apply to have it listed in the [National Register of Historic Places](#). The move comes after a controversial decision from the City of Niagara Falls earlier this year against making it a local landmark.

The Turtle building has played a vital role in preserving Native American history.

"While planning for the project started in 1976 and it has not yet reached the 50-year mark, the building appears to be exceptionally significant for the relative rarity of its iconic zoomorphic form," the determination of eligibility said. "The Turtle holds great spiritual significance to the indigenous community, and its sitting, with its head raised to look over Niagara Falls, further connected it to this sacred location."

A group celebrating the latest news is planning a 6 p.m. event on Sept. 13 at the Cataract House Park.

The [Niagara Falls City Council voted down a proposal](#) to give landmark status to The Turtle back in March. Michael Martin, the executive director of Native American Community Services of Erie and Niagara counties, told 2 On Your Side at that time that they were disappointed following the vote.

"People who love The Turtle love the building, love Niagara Falls, and want to continue to see it be an asset as part of the fabric of downtown of Niagara Falls, and we're committed to doing everything we can until that building's no longer standing and that possibility stops," Martin said.

"I think we're even more committed to see what we can do to make a viable project."