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SPOTLIGHT

## Niagara Falls' Turtle named to endangered buildings list

**Jonathan D. Epstein**

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The Turtle in Niagara Falls was abandoned by the city decades ago. While Buffalo is making attempts to preserve and celebrate its history, Niagara Falls neglects its own.

Buffalo News file photo

Jonathan D. Epstein

# Niagara Falls' Turtle named to endangered buildings list

The National Trust for Historic Preservation added the iconic Turtle building in Niagara Falls to its 2025 ranking of America's 11 most endangered historic places, designed to highlight architectural and other "treasures" that are most at risk to demolition or neglect.

The designation was highlighted Wednesday by Friends of the Niagara Turtle, a nonprofit that is seeking to have the building designated as a landmark.



The Turtle, shown here in 2015, on Rainbow Boulevard in Niagara Falls.

Buffalo News file photo

Located at 25 Rainbow Blvd., adjacent to Niagara Falls State Park, and named for its animal-like shape, the Turtle was designed by Northern Arapaho architect Dennis Sun Rhodes to invoke the Haudenosaunee creation story of the Earth forming on the

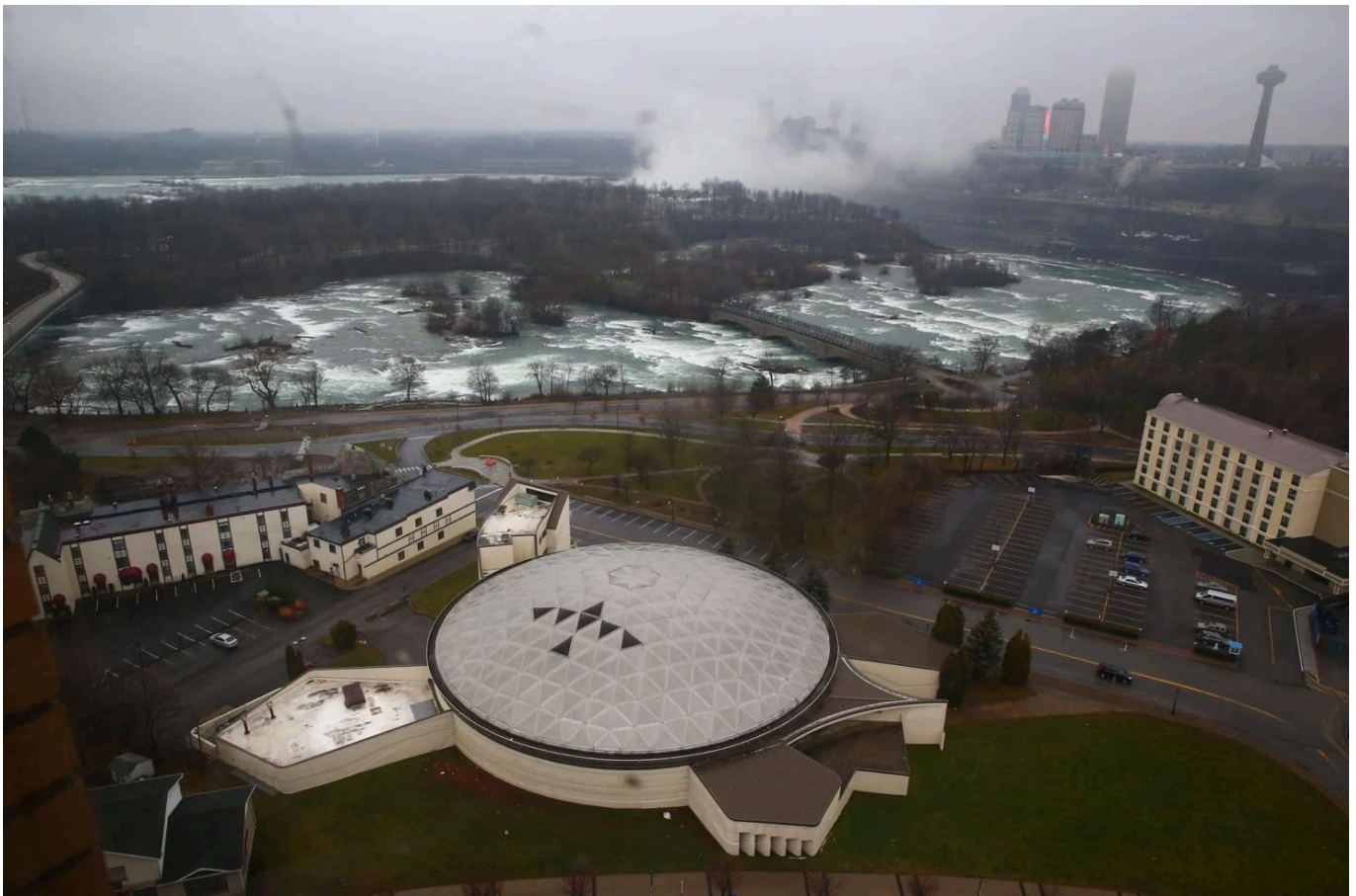
back of a giant turtle. It was built in response to concerns by tribal leaders in the 1970s that their culture was being threatened after years of federal interference and Indian boarding schools.

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Opened in 1980, the three-story building with 67,000 square feet of space has eagle skylights, a geodesic dome roof “shell” and large porthole “eye” windows.



The Turtle in Niagara Falls was abandoned by the city decades ago.

Buffalo News file photo

The building housed the Native American Center for Living Arts national Native American cultural center for 15 years, until it closed in 1995. It's been vacant since., hosting the largest collection of Indigenous arts in the Eastern United States.

– Jonathan D. Epstein

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