

<https://www.audacy.com/wben/news/local/a-new-lease-on-life-for-the-turtle-in-niagara-falls>

## WBEN Television

# A new lease on life for 'The Turtle' in Niagara Falls

"It can potentially receive historic tax credits for future re-purposing and renovation which is a huge win for whoever owns it"



The Turtle, 25 Rainbow Boulevard, Niagara Falls, N.Y. *Photo credit Joseph Genco, Friends of The Turtle on Facebook*

By [Susan Rose](#), WBEN.com Newsroom



September 4, 2024 11:15 am

**Niagara Falls, N.Y. (WBEN)** - It's one of the most recognized landmarks in Niagara Falls, aside from the Falls themselves.

"The Turtle" (Native American Center for the Living Arts) has been deemed eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The building has been closed since 1995.

"This is a big, big deal," said Bernice Radle, Executive Director of Preservation Buffalo Niagara. "It's means The Turtle potentially has a future."

The designation acknowledges The Turtle's cultural and historical importance even though earlier this year, the Niagara Falls City Council controversially decided that The Turtle was not "historic enough," to warrant landmark status.

The building is less than 50 years old. It was built in the early 1980s.

Radle said 50 years is usually a baseline, but there have been things younger than 50 years old that have been found to have historical value.

"For one, it is a turtle, which is a very rare type of architecture. Secondly, and most importantly, is the spiritual aspect of The Turtle for the indigenous community. It's a sacred space for this community."

Additionally, Radle said when they circulated a petition on the property, they received over 1,400 signatures. The signatures were not all local. They were from Canada, Alaska, and all around the country.

"It shocked me to see that. I actually made a map of all of the zip codes. So many indigenous people have come to The Turtle from around the world. They know it as a sacred space," Radle explained.

### **What will become of The Turtle?**

Radle said there is a group of indigenous people trying to create a new organization for the Turtle.

However, she said the current owner wants an absurd amount of money for it.

"Regardless of what happens," Radle noted, "the property can potentially receive historic tax credits for future re-purposing and renovation which is a huge win for whoever owns it."

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