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HISTORICAL DISTRICT MAY POSE OBSTACLE TO JAIL EXPANSION

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Architect E.B. Green designed the 64-year-old original section of the **Erie County Holding** Center, and this may present a problem to the planners trying to choose a site for a 400-bed expansion.

The art deco main entrance at 10 Delaware Ave. and a long block on Upper Terrace are among the 160 remaining E.B. Green buildings in the city. They also are part of the Joseph Ellicott Historical District, where any **construction** requires special permits. The entrance at 10 Delaware Ave. is not a worry because it would not be touched. But the long cell block could be a target for partial demolition if the county decides to expand in there.

The county recognizes Green and his work are held in high esteem by architects, Public Works Commissioner John C. Loffredo said.

To expand near Upper Terrace would require demolishing 80 percent of the long block. That could not be done without preservation group permissions.

The alternate site is 120-134 W. Eagle St., north of the long block. If that location is chosen, the county would want to raze the building, and it, too, is in the protected area.

"Both buildings are considered contributing structures to the Joseph Ellicott Historical District," said architect Joseph J. Lenihan of Kideney Architects, who is supervising the site study. "Obviously, a building by E.B. Green is more significant than one that isn't."

Loffredo said cost and layout will be deciding factors.

"In the next year, we will have a direction," he said.

The average population of 800 jail inmates, including 200 housed in Alden at the county correctional facility, drives the decision to expand, but **construction** will be done in steps. In the next year, the county will build an addition with 200 more beds in Alden. Public Works and sheriff's administrators are working with Kideney to plan expansion downtown. Actual **construction** will follow completion of the new courthouse at Pearl and West Eagle streets.

Green, the famous architect, designed such monuments as the original Albright Art Gallery, First Presbyterian Church and the Market Arcade. He and his firm went on to design Memorial Auditorium after the jail opened in 1938. He was 83.

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"The jail was considered a state-of-the-art humane facility -- the most modern in the country," said Thomas Vaughan, first assistant superintendent of the **holding** center.

At the time, the librarian of the old Buffalo Public Library was a little envious.

"Buffalo has a library that looks like a jail and a jail that looks like a library," the late Alexander Galt observed.

That was then and this is now.

But Vaughan said sheriff's personnel see two reasons to prefer a new building at 120-134 W. Eagle St.: the long cell block could stay in use during **construction** and the building on Eagle Street would not require the height of an addition on Upper Terrace.

Planners are conscious that **Erie County** Hall and its clock tower are the center of the county complex.

"West Eagle would be a little lower," Vaughan said. "We would connect with the present **Holding** Center at ground, first and second floors."

The Sheriff's Department also would like an overhead bridge to the present City Court Building, so prisoners could be walked back and forth.

Now, prisoners are transported in 13-passenger vans across the one block that separates the **Holding** Center and court.

An enclosed connection would be safer and less expensive, Vaughan said.

Loffredo said the county also will have to find new space for the Board of Elections if it expands on the West Eagle side.

The long block, weakened by years, at the minimum will be rehabilitated.

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GRAPHIC: MIKE GROLL/Buffalo News; The original section of the **Erie County Holding** Center was designed by noted Buffalo architect E.B. Green.