



From House to HOME: A Preservation Partnership on Rosewood Terrace

by Timothy Wildman

A Rochester resident walking past 380 Rosewood Terrace in the year 1926 would see the same thing a resident in 2026 sees: a sturdy Craftsman home with a shaded front porch that contributes to the neighborhood's sense of permanence. Its renewed appearance in 2026 gives little hint of the house's recent challenging past or the collaborative effort of historic preservation advocates and affordable housing practitioners to transform it into a viable home once again through the HOME Rochester program.

Located within the National Register-eligible Beechwood Historic District, 380 Rosewood is a contributing property in a neighborhood whose architectural cohesion and historic character are among its defining assets. The Landmark Society of Western New York is playing a central role in the designation of this district, recognizing that its modest, architecturally significant houses collectively tell an important story about Rochester's late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century residential development. Preserving that story requires not only advocacy, but practical partnerships committed to protecting both the narrative and the material fabric of the district's houses, from original woodwork and cladding to historic window patterns.

The rehabilitation of 380 Rosewood Terrace began with the Rochester Land Bank Corporation (RLBC), which acquired the tax-foreclosed property after decades of neglect and identified it as a candidate for reinvestment. RLBC subsequently transferred the house to the Rochester Housing Development

Fund Corporation (RHDFC) for inclusion in its long-standing and successful HOME Rochester program. Since the early 2000s, RHDFC's HOME Rochester program has rehabilitated approximately 900 vacant Rochester homes for resale to low- and moderate-income, first-time homebuyers. The program functions with strong support from the City of Rochester and other key partners including: JP Morgan CHASE and a consortium of lenders, administrative and financial support from the Greater Rochester Housing Partnership, local non-profit housing agencies, and small general contractors. Through this collaboration, houses like 380 Rosewood Terrace have been brought back to life and provided critical homeownership opportunities throughout the city via this valuable program.

Once transferred to RHDFC, their staff were able to enter and investigate the property to assess its condition and character. Built circa 1910 on what was then called Shaffer Street, 380 Rosewood Terrace was representative of the modest homes located throughout the Beechwood-Culver/Merchants neighborhood. Immediately noticeable to RHDFC staff was that years of neglect had obscured much of what made the house architecturally significant. Diligent early investigation revealed that beneath 1970s era shag carpeting, drop ceilings, and a lifetime's worth of belongings remained a substantial amount of intact historical fabric, stewardship of which was now required under the rehabilitation standards of the HOME Rochester program and New York State Historic Preservation Office (NY SHPO) oversight.



BEFORE



AFTER



AFTER

Because RHDFC's HOME Rochester program is funded in part with federal HUD HOME funds, the rehabilitation of 380 Rosewood Terrace required review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. That review was especially important given the home's contributing status within an eligible historic district, whose nomination is currently in progress. Compliance with the NY SHPO and preservation standards is a necessary step in such projects, but one that can be complex without preservation expertise.

Here, the collaboration with The Landmark Society proved invaluable. Landmark Assistant Director Larry Francer, who also serves on the RHDFC Board of Directors, offered the

organization's assistance in navigating NY SHPO requirements. RHDFC staff shared correspondence, photographs, work scopes, and specifications with Megan Hillyard, Landmark's Director of Preservation Services. Megan provided detailed technical review and recommendations which guided rehabilitation decisions such as explanation of the historical significance of aspects of the home, selection of materials, and construction methods.

That guidance translated directly into preservation outcomes that respected the home's historic charm while also meeting programmatic and City of Rochester building code requirements. To reinforce the consistent appearance of the street, the home's front porch was rebuilt to its original configuration. Original clapboard siding, fascia, and soffits were retained and repaired rather than replaced. Deteriorated windows were replaced with aluminum-clad wood windows to best match what had existed while working within programmatic budgets. Inside the home, the original wood floors were refinished, plaster walls were retained, and original wood trim and six-panel doors were repaired throughout.

At the same time, the rehabilitation was undertaken with the understanding that the home would ultimately be purchased by a first-time homebuyer, and that the HOME Rochester program must deliver a house that both respects its historic character and meets the functional expectations of modern living. The kitchen was remodeled entirely, with new plumbing, cabinetry, and fixtures, and its layout was adjusted to better serve contemporary households. A new first-floor powder room and laundry space were added, and the upstairs bathroom was fully gutted and remodeled. To ensure that out of pocket expenses are kept low for the buyer, major systems upgrades including a new 200-amp electrical service, all-new plumbing, a high-efficiency furnace, and a new water heater were installed. Exterior improvements, such as a new roof, driveway, concrete walkways, and a backyard storage shed further enhance livability.

Now that this historic and fully functional house is complete, it will be resold through the HOME Rochester program at a price of \$155,000. Sale is restricted to first-time homebuyers earning at or below 80% of Area Median Income, adjusted for household size. More photos of 380 Rosewood Terrace, as well as all homes under construction in the HOME Rochester program, can be found on RHDFC's website: homerochester.org.

As 380 Rosewood Terrace awaits its next owner, it represents more than a single success story. The Landmark Society and RHDFC are currently collaborating on four additional houses to bring the same preservation-minded rehabilitation approach to historic properties throughout Rochester. Together, these efforts demonstrate how the HOME Rochester program can sustain Rochester's architectural legacy while ensuring that formerly vacant, historic houses remain lived in, valued, and actively maintained by the people who call them home.

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All photos courtesy of Greater Rochester Housing Partnership.