## TREE A MAINSTAY DING

CASE



OST-STANDARD COLUMNIST This is a

story about a It's a copper beech and it grows in the

yard in front of the former 1055 E. state armory at Genesee St there for a century, or more, according to which version we accept. One guess puts the age at much further back than that, planted about 1870. There's The tree could have been said to be a row of similar beech trees in Oakwood Ceme-

tery.
This particular beech is of a European species (fagus sylva-tica), planted for decorative

tica), planted for decorative purposes. It has purple leaves. Chris Sandstrom, of Cayuga Tree Service, knows this one well. He says lots of copper beeches were planted in the Syracuse area in the early 1900s.

This copper beach is special.

This copper beech is special another way, too. It's the

in another way, too. It's the namesake of the new student apartment project going in be

apartment project going in behind it in the old armory.

Copper Beech Commons is scheduled to open next August

gust.
Yes, developer Norman
Swanson explains, it was
named for the tree.
Norm's our own creator of
hotels. He redid the former
Temple Adath Yeshurun (most
recently home of Salt City
Playhouse) in the 600 block of
South Crouse Avenue as Hotel
Skyler. Before that project he
converted the Medical Arts
Building, across from Forman
Park, into Parkview Hotel.
Norm's finest creation, so gust.

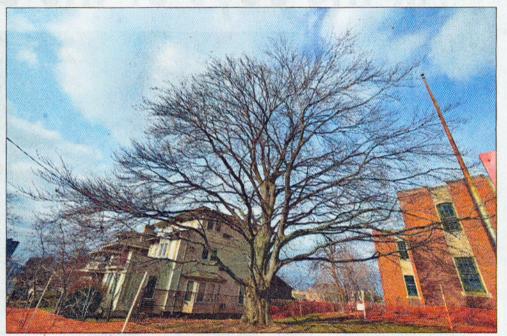
Park, into Parkview Hotel.
Norm's finest creation, so
far, is the Genesee Grande
Hotel and The Mayflower,
next door, which sit directly
across East Genesee Street
from Copper Beech Commons.
Sandstrom regards himself
as the custodian of this copper
beech. He recently put small
bottles of fertilizer around the
tree's base, a treatment installed once a year. He's set up
a protective zone around the
tree with fencing to make sure
nothing hurts the beech's root
system. Chris got very upset
when he found the tracks of a system. Chris got very upset when he found the tracks of a

construction machine around the tree

He also plans to agrate the soil around the tree with a special device.

The tree service was founded by his dad, Arthur Sand-strom, 37 years ago. Chris has been involved almost that

**APARTMENTS, PAGE B-2** 



Dick Blume / The Post-Standard

THE COPPER BEECH tree in the 1000 block of East Genesee Street, in Syracuse, stands at the site where the Copper Beech Commons is being built. The tree, which produces purple leaves, is believed to have been planted in the late 1800s or early

## **Apartments Named for Tree**

APARTMENTS, FROM PAGE B-1 long.

The beech was there when New York state built the National Guard Armory in 1940. Norm Swanson bought the abandoned property in 2004 for \$579,000. Before the armory went up, the lot held Onondaga Orphan Asylum, in the early 1900s, and later a Tigris Shrine Temple.

The Syracuse Industrial Development Agency has granted Copper Beech Commons a 100 percent exemption from an increase in tax assessments for eight years, with a partial exemption for an additional four years. Some 133 apartments for about 300 Syracuse University students are planned. The project is independent of the university.

Norm Swanson said some of the apartments would go in the existing brick-faced armory, the rest in a new structure being built in the rear and connected by a courtyard. He said the site will include a fitness center, coffee shop, grocery, yoga studio and small basketball court.

The complex will include two-, three- and four-bedroom apartments. Each tenant would pay rent based on using one bed in the apartment. The developer explained that system is found in student apartments across the country, including new Park Point apartments on Comstock Avenue, which now is fully rented.

I asked Norm Swanson what his



The Onondaga Historical Association

THE ONONDAGA Orphans Home was torn down to make room for the National Guard Armory in 1940.

next project would be. "I always have three or four lined up," he replied. "I can't tell you which one will be next."

## Otto and Marvin

Marvin Levine called with an interesting story related to my recent column about SU's sports mascot, Otto, the Orange. Marvin is an avid Orange fan who said he recently gave up his season tickets he's had at the Carrier Dome for almost 50 years.

Marvin's 87 this year and had trouble climbing those stairs to his seat. He'll cheer on SU from home. A while back, according to Marvin, he claims he got Otto's rig straightened out when the mascot came by and Marvin piped up, "Otto, you're out of uniform." The mascot was wearing brown pants!

At the next game, Marvin says Otto had on the blue pants he (she) wears today.

Another time, Marvin spotted an SU athletic official in the crowd and berated him for starting basketball games at 8 p.m. Shortly, they started at 7 p.m.

Dick Case writes Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday. Contact him at 470-2254 or dcase@syracuse.com.