



PITTSBURGH HISTORY &  
LANDMARKS FOUNDATION

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NEWS FOR MEMBERS NUMBER EIGHT JULY 1968

PITTSBURGH'S SOUTH SIDE

## Birmingham

### An area with a past that has a future

We have now initiated our Birmingham Self-Help Community Restoration Program in Pittsburgh's South Side. This area is rich in architecturally delightful neighborhoods set on the flatland and against the hillside, itself a patchwork of precipitous streets, nineteenth century houses, and green spaces. Our booklet on the area and the program is being furnished to all of our members at no charge.

The program is being co-sponsored by the South Side Chamber of Commerce, which has aroused the interest of the community in the program and which donates its offices to it as our joint "neighborhood office." Here any resident can come to receive free architectural counseling about restoring the facade of his house. This service is furnished by the Pittsburgh Chapter, American Institute of Architects. There too, at the courtesy of the South Side banks, he can obtain financial counseling to enable him to carry out this work of saving and repairing Victorian ornamentation in brick and wood.

Restored, architecturally significant commercial districts are eminently successful these days, but none in America has the potential of Carson Street: 18 blocks of fine late nineteenth century storefronts. But Carson Street is dying; we hope that in its past--its architectural past--lies its future. Through the years remodellings at the street level have occurred that failed to respect the architectural character of the buildings. Taking the lead from Urban Design Associates' studies done for us of Carson Street, the members of the Pittsburgh American Institute of Architects are now hard at work producing renderings for each shop owner of how to return his building to its original fine quality and thereby create the longest restored nineteenth century shopping street in the United States.

The Department of City Planning has accepted our total plan for South Side, and we are working with both the South Side Chamber of Commerce and City Planning to select street lights, place wires underground, redesign sidewalks and street furniture. The generosity of the Sarah Mellon Scaife Foundation and the cooperation of the Department of Parks & Recreation will bring street trees to many blocks of South Side in the fall.

All of this promise derives from our aspiration to save the architecture of South Side and the commitment of many others to the community in general. It shows once again how complicated is the task of saving buildings because so many other supports must be developed if the structures are to survive.

Mailed with this newsletter is a new membership brochure. It is the first revision in our brochure since we were founded in September 1964. It reviews our current work and defines our goals. For NEW MEMBER-SHIP BROCHURE members it is a succinct review of what we are doing at present. If you wish copies for friends to invite them to become members or if you would like us to mail any to persons who might want to join with us, just call Mrs. Smith at the office, 281-6207.

That lacy, delicate cast-iron front over Wattles' Jewelry Store on Wood Street, downtown, which we tried very hard to save, is now demolished. We did retrieve one bay....Pittsburgh National Office Building, a handsome landmark at Wood Street and Fifth Avenue, is going now....The William Penn Parking Garage on Stanwix Street, once decked out in terra cotta ornament, has just been stripped of all of it....We rescued a considerable number of artifacts when St. Michael's Rectory in Braddock, built in the art nouveau fashion, was razed in May.

#### SUMMER WALKING TOURS

We are holding a series of summer Sunday afternoon tours as follows:

##### OAKLAND

Schenley Farms area and the early classical campus of the University of Pittsburgh

Sunday, July 28, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Meet at the University Club, University Place

##### DOWNTOWN

Eastern end, Penn Avenue to Grant Street, 6th to 11th Avenues, including the Pennsylvania Railroad Rotunda

Sunday, August 25, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Meet at the Rotunda, Grant Street at Liberty Avenue

##### LAWRENCEVILLE

Allegheny Arsenal, the Gothic architecture at Allegheny Cemetery, and the delightful nineteenth-century residential area

Sunday, October 6, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Meet at corner of 40th Street and Butler Street  
(large supermarket parking lot on corner)

Charge to members: \$2.00; non-members: \$3.50 each tour

Reservations are required; telephone the office at 281-6207