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NEWS

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The Pennsylvania Preservation Crisis:

As We See It at the Moment

We are, at the time of writing, still uncertain of what resources historic preservation in Pennsylvania, or perhaps anywhere in the United States, will have in the future. The situation looks bad for any sort of governmental land-marking that uses an element of legal force. Until three months ago it appeared that governmental police power might extend to historic preservation, and municipal bodies in Pennsylvania such as the Pittsburgh City Council, advised by the Historic Review Commission, and the Philadelphia Historical Commission, which itself can designate buildings, were operating in confidence.

No longer: things have, or seem to have, changed.

An interesting story appeared in the *Post-Gazette* of August 8. The City of Philadelphia is being asked for \$2.5 million by Old Original Bookbinder's, a restaurant of long standing in the historic waterfront area. Having built a replica of the Krider Gun Shop for expansion a couple of decades ago, Bookbinder's wants to tear down the authentic, and landmarked, Elisha Webb Ship Chandlery for a parking lot; the \$2.5 million is apparently to be compensation for not doing so. Since the Philadelphia Historical Commission has landmarked a staggering 13,000 individual buildings and two districts (with five more districts pending), a city already in plenty of trouble may be facing an avalanche of lawsuits or other such claims.

This, of course, is a consequence of the State Supreme Court's decision of July 10 in the Boyd Theater case, *United Artists Theater Circuit v. Philadelphia Historical Commission*, discussed in our last issue. The question of whether designation backed by a landmarks ordinance is an uncompensated taking under the Pennsylvania Constitution has implications for such landmarking all over the state, and indeed nationally.

Our own current situation is a peculiar one, with City preservation agencies operating in the subjunctive mood at best. Important issues such as those of Syria Mosque, 901-11 Bingham Street, and the Howe-Childs gate house have been handled *as if* the Historic Review Commission and City Council had power over their destinies, even as the City Solicitor has been warning of City liability for landmarkings of individual buildings, and of districts as well.

This precipitated the famous HRC session of August 2 in which the members showed themselves so unsure of their obligations and powers in the present legal situation — and perhaps unsure of what they had been supposed to be doing all along — that they decided nothing on Syria Mosque and 901-11

Bingham Street, and merely passed the staff reports on to City Council.

Councilman Jim Ferlo has spoken as well in favor of making the Oakland Civic Center a City Historic District, an act that would protect historic buildings and impose design controls on the Mosque site and other cleared areas: *but*, would this be constitutional?

On August 23, the State Supreme Court granted the "petition for reargument and petitions on behalf of *amicus curiae* to intervene": in other words, consented to reconsider the question of whether designation of a property without owner's consent constitutes a taking. The reargument is scheduled for October, and the storm clouds may yet pass.

We are thus in a state of suspense.

When the matter of 901-11 Bingham Street first came before the HRC, there was indeed a brief presentation of the proposed design, but the developer's representative was not there to talk culture; he talked only of money — jobs and taxes. There might have been a more appropriate forum to present such an argument and have it considered carefully, but the representative was perhaps clinging to reality as he perceived it, was perhaps one for whom, in such a situation, money *was* everything. A similar attitude appeared in the HRC membership in the August 2 meeting, a manifestation of the members' uncertainty as to their purpose.

A historical analogy is possible. The Pittsburgh developers of the past built industrial plants devoid of amenity though awesome in their size and force. Had they bothered to justify themselves, they would have talked jobs and taxes. Is not a modern developer who wants to break up a streetscape for an office cluster in the middle of a parking lot, take a slice off the top of Mount Washington for a hotel, or wreak some other defacement simply acting in the Pittsburgh tradition?

Probably so, though the results are almost bound not to be as heroic as they were in the industrial past. The *laissez-faire* spirit is the same though, and we may know it to our cost if the preservation ordinance is voided.

Suppose the State Supreme Court's decision holds, and historic-preservation ordinances, insofar as they involve landmarking without owner's consent, are invalidated. Such a direct means to the preservationist end has been so tempting, and one looks about, anxiously, for *something* to take its place. Out there are a few buildings that would be works of art or shrines anywhere. Moreover, there are many other buildings and districts that probably should not be frozen in time but that, in



330 South Third Street, Philadelphia. The Historical Commission plaque is just over the ground-floor window.

changing only slowly, form tough strands binding the past to the future, leaving us the sense of remaining at home. We entertain nightmares of an absentee, or merely money-blinded, developer's architecture of indifference spreading over land cleared of such old places; of a community adequate only for semi-nomadic business types, here for a couple of years and more interested in consumer goods than in streets and neighborhoods.

What other resources might there be?

For one thing, there is guidance and/or pressure from organizations such as Landmarks, publications such as this one, and from a critical public awakened to and vocal concerning matters of quality in their community. Some developers, property owners, and tenants will be more accessible to advice and comment than others, but the power of public opinion is considerable. Our publications and education programs will attempt to address both the public and the property owners.

Again, there is the almost-untried resource of facade and scenic easements. So little has been done in this area that even lawyers interested in historic preservation do not know if the City is empowered to accept such easements. Perhaps, until the controversies over St. Peter's and West Shadyside two years or so ago, there was no need to know; landmarking before that time, especially as regards individual properties,

seems to have been an amicable affair with effects similar to the grant of a facade easement. Landmarks, being a private charitable organization, developed a program to accept several facade easements, and continues to be willing to do so. Such easements bind the owner and future owners to maintain the affected parts of the building unaltered and in good condition. This obviously limits the uses to which the property can be used, and its saleability to a developer assembling a larger parcel, and the main advantage to the owner, apart from gratification at seeing the building preserved, is in the tax deduction available for a charitable donation.

Scenic easements, used in Virginia, seem unknown here. Yet even formidable terrain like ours can be defaced: a ravine made a parking lot, a hilltop chopped down for a hotel. The grant of easements on a few critical places that are still largely wild might prevent some nasty intrusions in the future.

Finally, in some cases outright purchase, by the community or by a private foundation, may be possible and justified by the unique quality of the property, its beauty, its historical value.

Remaining up in the air is the question of whether any property can be said to *belong* to the people of a community through their affection for it, rather than to its normal owner. But this had better be saved for another article.

PHLF NEWS

Welcome New Members

Allegheny Historic Preservation Society, Inc.
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Mrs. Lois Monahan
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Nock
Mr. & Mrs. Elmer R. Pohl & Family
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Taylor

New Corporate Members

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The Westin William Penn Hotel

Leonore R. Elkus

We deeply regret that a long-time member of our Board of Trustees, Leonore R. Elkus, died on August 7. Active at WQED, Mrs. Elkus conceived of our Bicentennial lecture series and then edited the lectures into the popular book *Famous Men and Women of Pittsburgh*, which we published in 1981. She was deeply committed to Pittsburgh and to civic affairs. She conceived of and hosted programs such as "Key to the City" and "Let's Explore Music," and was a Distinguished Daughter of Pennsylvania. Mrs. Elkus was well known to many of our trustees and she worked closely with several members of our staff. We will miss her warmth and guidance, and extend our sincere sympathies to her family.

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Proceeds benefit the continuing restoration of
the historic Neville House in Collier Township.

PHLF News is published six times each year for the members of the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation. This year, the newsletter has expanded, both in the number of pages and in the number of issues. It is supported through membership dollars, proceeds from Station Square, and advertising revenue. We have been pleased with the early responses to the substantive essays by Walter C. Kidney, and appreciate your continuing comments and suggestions.

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Edwards Court, South Side



1403 Sheffield Street, Manchester



1251 Liverpool Street, Manchester



Walter Kidney taking notes,
Mexican War Streets



1007-11 Manhattan Street, Manchester



901-05 Western Avenue, Allegheny West

Around Town with the Preservation Fund

The Preservation Fund of the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation was established in its present form in 1985. It has lent well over \$1 million to neighborhood associations in Allegheny County for project startup costs and bridge financing, property acquisition, professional services, and construction. The Fund also provides technical assistance. This year, the geographical distribution of projects is slightly different from heretofore, with one in the South Side and three in the East End.

Edwards Court

The Fund has lent \$53,350 for the construction of five row houses on South Thirteenth Street near Breed, on the South Side. Developer is the South Side Local Development Company, and the total cost per unit is about \$80,000; the present units were sold before completion. Completion of five more houses is anticipated this fall.

1251 Liverpool Street

Here, the Fund has granted \$1,500, half the closing cost, under Union National Bank's Closing Cost Assistance Program, for the Manchester Citizens Corporation's construction of three infill houses. Brick walls, lintels, and decorative gables are intended to blend these new buildings with those near by.

1403 Sheffield Street

This is a small Mid-Victorian Italianate house of brick. Here, UNB's Closing Cost Assistance Program will be using a grant of \$1,600.

1007-11, 1019, 1025 Manhattan Street

These six houses are being sold to moderate-income persons with salaries beginning at \$22,000. The price per home is from \$68,294 to \$76,898, with 33-to-50% subsidy available. This is Phase II of Landmarks' involvement with Manchester's Home Ownership for Working People. Landmarks will provide up to 50% closing-cost assistance for eligible buyers through Union National Bank.

901-05 Western Avenue

Restoration of these very old buildings is complete, as is the new office row on Galveston Avenue around the corner, which is in a similar style. The Western Avenue restoration was assisted by an

initial loan of \$80,000 from the Preservation Fund to the Northside Civic Development Council and the Allegheny West Civic Council.

Darlington House

Work at the Harry Darlington house, at Brighton Road and Lincoln Avenue, has been proceeding briskly. Some of the exterior brownstone had been cleaned by early summer, though only a test patch or two had been made on the red brickwork. Inside, reconversion of the 21-unit building into a single-family one left strange mixtures of construction and furnishing, but the owner, Dr. David Spence, was certain that he could move in in September, while the restoration process continued. Dr. Spence and John DeSantis, who is restoring the house next door, will help stabilize what has been a desolate part of Allegheny West. Dr. Spence received a \$165,000 stopgap loan from the Preservation Fund through the Allegheny West Civic Council.

940 Beech Avenue

A loan of \$15,000 was made through the Allegheny West Civic Council to buy and allow work to begin on this three-story house, alleviating the owner's problem with slow sale of his former house.

1225 Monterey Street

This house had been condemned when a large part of a rear wall collapsed. The Mexican War Streets Society and the Central Northside Neighborhood Council went into partnership to rescue the house, aided by a \$17,000 grant from the Preservation Fund, recoverable from sale of the house, which is now owned by HUD.

607 North Homewood Avenue

Landmarks has made a loan of \$45,000 for the Brushton property now under commercial development. Acquisition costs were paid through a loan to Landmarks from Union National Bank to the Homewood Brushton Revitalization and Development Corporation.

1074 Wheeler and 7212 Race Streets

These two small houses, HUD property since foreclosures, were bought by the Homewood Brushton Revitalization and Development Corporation with an \$11,000 stopgap loan from the Preservation Fund.

For further information on these projects, call Stanley Lowe, director of the Preservation Fund, at (412) 471-5808.



1225 Monterey Street, Mexican War Streets



940 Beech Avenue, Allegheny West



7212 Race Street, Homewood



The Darlington house in Allegheny West (right), with the DeSantis house to its left.

Dr. Spence in the Darlington house, Allegheny West



1074 Wheeler Street, Homewood



607 North Homewood Avenue, Homewood

Preservation Scene

Preservation Law Workshop to Be Held in Pittsburgh

On Thursday, November 14, the National Center for Preservation Law, the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation, and the Allegheny County Bar Association are sponsoring a preservation law workshop. Speakers will report on oral arguments delivered on October 25 before the Pennsylvania Supreme Court on the "taking" issue that arose this July in *United Artists Theater Circuit v. Philadelphia Historical Commission*.

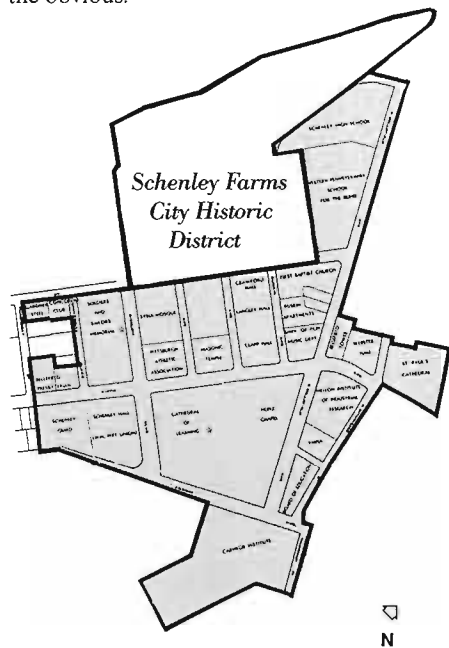
Anyone interested in historic preservation issues or in the "taking" issue under Pennsylvania law is encouraged to attend this workshop. For location, time, registration fee, and further details call Mary Lu Denny at Landmarks (412) 471-5808.



Favoring a Civic Center

We made the following statement at a meeting of the City of Pittsburgh's Historic Review Commission on September 6:

The Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation wishes to state that the proposal for an Oakland Civic Center City Historic District, made by Councilman Jim Ferlo, has very great merit. The Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial, the former Schenley Hotel, the Cathedral of Learning and the late 19th- and early 20th-century buildings surrounding them form a remarkably grand and harmonious ensemble, and in several cases have great individual distinction. To say that a proposal to preserve this district, at least from casual destruction, has merit is to state the obvious.



The perimeter of the district as proposed by Councilman Ferlo needs to be altered in several details, however. All buildings on University Place, including the University Club and the buildings to either side, make a noble contribution to the group around the Soldiers' Memorial, and the University Club gives an example of how a rather tall building with a suitable setback can harmonize with ones built lower.

Allen and Thaw Halls across O'Hara Street, the latter especially, might be considered for inclusion. Thaw Hall is a handsome fragment by Henry Hornbostel, and gives a northern frame to the Soldiers' Memorial group. Another nearby Hornbostel building along Parkman Street, State Hall, was demolished around 1970.

Neither the Holiday Inn nor the trio of Crawford, Langley, and Clapp Halls seems worthy of inclusion, nor does the building immediately south of the First Baptist Church. It may be said, of course, that including these simplifies the perimeter and may prevent worse architecture from being built in their stead.

Where Are the Sycamores?

Schenley Farms in Oakland has held its own all these years. It is a distinctive, well-defined, and elegantly preserved neighborhood. Houses have not been carved up into apartments, and most seem to have loving owners.

But where are the sycamores? For years, one of the principal ingredients contributing to the elegance and distinctiveness of Schenley Farms has been the sycamores lining each street. They frame a view up each block to a fine house at the head of the street.

In recent times the sycamores have been failing, one by one. In a few cases a tree of another species has replaced them; in many cases there is painful blank space. On a recent stroll we found two huge stumps as reminders of the great life that had been lost.

Let us remember that landscaping also endears the architecture that it sets off, and in these greening times we should urge that the sycamores be replaced.

Roof Returned

This spring the rectory of St. Mary of the Mount on Grandview Avenue caught fire, burning much of its upper part. When repairs on the rectory began, we worried over the fate of its clay tile roof, almost a rarity these days. In a steep front gable with a Gothic window the house reveals Mid-Victorian origins, but it was greatly added to and altered in the early 1920s. Until around 1980 the stuccoed upper stories were marked off with dark slats in a quasi-half-timber fashion that, like similar Stick Style fronts of 1870, organized windows and other elements that otherwise would seem to drift. When new siding was applied, though, the slats were not put back and the windows do indeed now drift. When the tiles were stripped away, then, one expected to hear them crash into the dumpster and see asphalt shingles be hoisted up. But no, the tiles are back on the roof as a welcome sight. Now, should the present plain siding be marked off with slats . . .

Ross Township Church Conversion

St. Teresa's Church, on Perry Highway, is undergoing conversion into offices as well as a rental public hall. The developer, a lawyer, has already converted the adjacent rectory into offices. The church is a very simplified Gothic work of 1934 by William P. Hutchins, best known for St. Mary of Mercy Church downtown. The "Great Hall," the church space itself, will remain much as originally, with aisles, pointed arcades, and an open-timber roof. Between the arcades and the roof, however, horizontal ductwork will run the length of the Hall; this will be boxed in, with an outer surface of sand-finish plaster, but whether this long projection just under the corbels will look all right remains to be seen. At any rate, Perrysville Center — as the St. Teresa complex is called — adds to the list of adaptively-used churches.



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Brandt at Calvary

Susan E. Brandt, a Landmarks trustee, has been hired by the Allegheny Historic Preservation Society to devise and execute a \$3 million restoration fund campaign for Calvary United Methodist Church at Allegheny and Beech Avenues; her title is restoration director. This April she received a Landmarks Award of Merit for a similar and very successful campaign at the Braddock Carnegie Library, and has a total of 12 years experience in development consultation, fund-raising, and non-profit management.

Some necessary stabilization work has already been done at Calvary, and the \$3 million is in addition. A report on the church by Landmarks Design Associates calls for an immediate \$500,000 for initial repair to stonework; about \$2 million for further restoration which would result in the return of the church to its condition after its remodeling in 1941; and a final \$800,000 to return the church to its original condition in 1895.

Address donations to:
Allegheny Historic Preservation Society
971 Beech Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15233

For inquiries: (412) 323-1070.

Riverside Commons

The old and mysterious industrial buildings at Lacock and Hope Streets on the North Shore, long May-Stern warehouses, may have been parts of Pollard, McCormack's Hope Cotton Factory of a century-and-a-half ago. Whatever the case, they will henceforth be the Riverside Commons Innovation Center, a business incubator and office building that will include its own day-care center. The two buildings will be united by a glazed linking element. The North Side Civic Development Council is the managing general partner of Riverside Commons Associates, the developers. Architects are Design 3 Architecture, of Monroeville.



The New Granada Theater on Centre Avenue, from the glory days of Black entertainment on the Hill.



Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church, on the Central North Side.

Black History Project

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission has granted Landmarks Design Associates \$30,000 for a year-long African American Historic Sites Survey for Allegheny County. The Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation will provide a \$14,000 match in cash and staff support.

The importance of such a survey became evident during an LDA historic-site review in the Hill District's Crawford-Roberts Redevelopment Area. The work product will be fourfold: a thematic narrative of Black history within the county; Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey forms for all sites and districts identified; a list of National Register-eligible sites; and a bibliography for further research.



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The library at "Sunnyledge" (above) and the parlor (below).



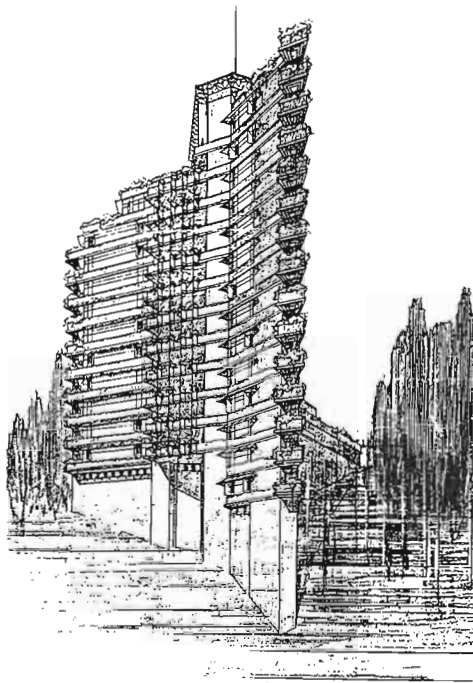
"Sunnyledge"

In October, the fate of this excellent near-mansion of 1886 is still in doubt. The home of the McClellands and of Rachel McClelland Sutton, the artist, contains the tangible evidence of a hundred years of family life, and is as natural a museum as "Clayton." Its historic value is in addition to its value as a work of architecture. The somber beauty of the Longfellow, Alden & Harlow house at Fifth and Wilkins Avenues in Squirrel Hill has been noted by many passers-by, and in the lifetime of its late owner, Rob Meyerjack, many Pittsburghers saw the house inside.

But now its days are apt to end unless a sympathetic buyer is found. Rob Meyerjack's

heirs cannot maintain the house, and the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, though interested, apparently cannot acquire and maintain it. (The Historical Society was one of several organizations named in the Will as a beneficiary.) An organization such as our Neville House Auxiliary may be the best hope, and Landmarks has offered help in organizing such a group for "Sunnyledge."

Persons interested in the house and with ideas or offers of help should write: Gretchen Hempen, c/o May, Long & Sanders, 3030 USX Tower, Pittsburgh, PA 15219.



Point View Residences

This summer the future of Point View Residences, the Frank Lloyd Wright apartment house design of 1952, was still undecided. The chances appeared good but construction was waiting on further buyer commitments.

Would it be a good thing for our skyline if this were built? It probably would, though with a plan virtually free of right angles the building's shape is impossible to imagine in perspective. The location is on Grandview Avenue in Mount Washington, about 200 feet west of the top of McArdle Roadway where a deserted school now stands. The building would rise 103 feet above its entry floor and descend the northeast-facing slope some 40 feet. Its flattest aspect, facing northerly, would be about 32 feet wide but would be angled so as not to present the look of a slab. Its narrowest aspect was that chosen for the only exterior rendering made available, a view from the northwest, on the slope parallel to Grandview Avenue, that shows the building as a great prow. Its least interesting aspect, unfortunately, would be that facing Station Square, with 10 broad identical window strips. Exterior materials are to be red brick — a cheerful strong red, we hope — bandings of white limestone, and copper awnings (which would probably turn pale green) over most windows.

The interior plan is quite unconventional, mainly 60- and 120-degree angles, offering a living room facing north and southeast, a southeast-facing dining room, a north-facing porch, and two bedrooms with baths facing southwest. This arrangement would afford good views toward Three Rivers Stadium and the portions of the North Side beyond, Station Square, the hillsides, the South Side, and Mount Washington, a somewhat less good view of the Triangle, and very little of a view down the Ohio Valley except from the porch. There is also to be a two-story studio penthouse. Floor levels are typically nine feet apart, allowing maximum ceiling heights of 8'8". A curiosity of the plan is the presence of 11 servants' bedrooms above the hillside ground though below street level.

If built, Point View Residences will be at least an interesting addition to the Mount Washington skyline, and at a guess will probably remain the best-looking multiple dwelling there, and the most sympathetic to the terrain.

Storage Space Needed

Various neighborhood organizations have been collecting artifacts from buildings that are demolished. These artifacts could be sold to people who need them for restoration purposes, thereby reclaiming some of the costs of the original salvaging.

What is needed, recommends Nick Kyriazi, a resident of the Deutschtown Historic District, is a centralized storage facility available on a long-term basis at no cost. Possibly neighborhood volunteers could staff it on Saturdays to handle the sales and it would be a good service to the community.

Call Nick Kyriazi at (412) 323-2569.

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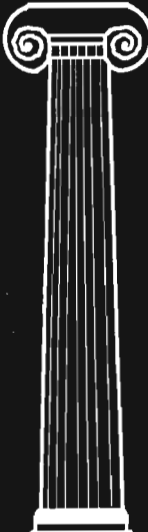
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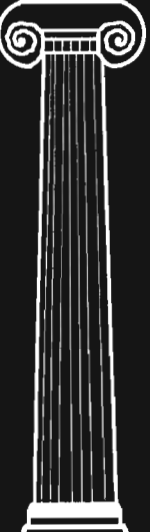
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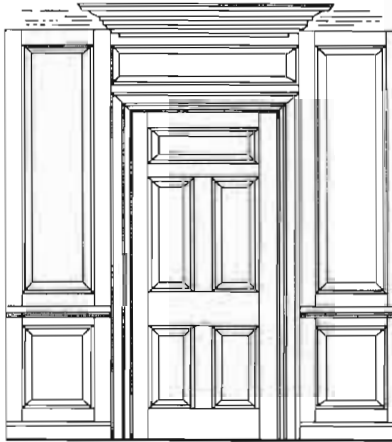
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The Syria Mosque Site

The Syria Mosque is going, and we have lost an institution with fond associations for many of us. Accepting this, though, we should be thinking about what will go up in its place. The Mosque has been a slightly untypical but harmonious part of a harmonious urban group that is itself one of the three components of the Civic Center of our early twentieth century. We should articulate our desire for a replacement building at least equal to what is being removed, and make positive recommendations as to how this can be done.

First, let us have a quick look at the Civic Center. It has the form of an L, composed of three lawns. Joining the two arms are the grounds of the old Schenley Hotel, now the Pitt student union, the hotel itself being a large blocky mass 125 feet high. To its east is the Cathedral of Learning campus, 14 acres almost surrounded by grandiose Classical buildings that are subordinated however to the 535-foot Gothic tower. To the north is the lawn of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial, 590 feet north to south, 280 feet east to west, the Memorial itself being about 150 feet high and, in its main part, 175 feet wide. The buildings around it are once again subordinate, yet full of character for the most part taken one by one. With the exception of the Mosque, which did have Arabic exoticisms though embedded in a no-nonsense modern geometry of massing, the style of each has been Classical in some way or other. Most of the buildings step back a little from the street, and on the street they are between 40 and 70 feet high. Warm gray and cream are median colors, though dead white and dark brown are found. Materials are brick, limestone, terra cotta, and in the Soldiers' Memorial a warm gray sandstone. All in all, there is unity in variety, and had the corner lots at Fifth Avenue and University Place, and at the turn of Bigelow Boulevard north of Syria Mosque, been built up in a similar way, the Soldiers' Memorial area would have been perfected.

The latter empty lot, with the adjacent Syria Mosque lot, is to be built on, and the question is, With what? Zoning permits the function contemplated, offices. These are nothing new here anyway; two buildings of this group were constructed for offices in the 1920s. What is now Mervis Hall began as the National Union Fire Insurance Company; and the Physicians' Building, medical offices, stands on the other side of the University Club.

The total lot available for development is about 360 feet north to south and 260 feet across. Building is not allowed closer than 25 feet from the

edge of the property on all sides. The construction cannot be higher than 45 feet or three floors, whichever is less, for the first 200 feet from the opposite property line in the Schenley Farms Historic District. Beyond that, construction can go up to 85 feet or nine floors, whichever is less. Thus, zoning permits a mass 310 feet long and spreading 210 feet between Bigelow Boulevard and Lytton Avenue, 85 feet high opposite the entrance of the Soldiers' Memorial, and situated as little as 140 feet away across Bigelow Boulevard. Without constructing perspectives nothing is certain, but it seems that such a mass, rising to its full height from the building line, could diminish the power of the Memorial and detract from the beauty of the whole building group as we have known it. Should the taller part be withdrawn from Bigelow Boulevard by some 50 or 75 feet, it might be quite another matter; it would simply balance the University Club, whose bedroom tower is about as tall but does not register as an object on University Place.

The surface matter known as "treatment" is of course very important: that is what the public actually sees. The Holiday Inn in the next block, whose massing is that permitted by the neighborhood zoning, is illustrative. On the one hand, the tan brick tones in well with the older buildings, and the white concrete echoes the older limestone and terra cotta in, say, the Pittsburgh Athletic Association. On the other hand, the openings have untypical proportions and spacing, there are no subtle details such as moldings, and there is too much white, especially in the top story. The building tries not to offend, but it lacks character. In theory, it should be possible to build something confessedly of our time on the Syria Mosque site and have it fit in well and still remain individual. But we are confused these days, and for 150 years advanced architecture has been too often a translation of words and theories into material form, disregarding the actual look of the building as it is, where it is. Probably this new element of the Civic Center, to belong here, will have to be Classical in some way: not wryly, campily Classical, but Classical from conviction, using an orderly progression of elements, proportions that blend all the necessary elements of the exterior into a harmony, moldings that articulate large blank walls into comprehensible parts and that introduce places of delicacy here and there, and materials that go well with the other materials in this place in their color and subtle patterning.

It may be, then, that the architect, or at least one of the advisors of the pro-

ject, should be an architect who is literate in and comfortable with Classical architecture. What he should do can only be expressed in negatives at this point: he should not straitjacket or make a nonsense of what goes, and goes on, inside the building; he should not design a shrinking, mousey exterior; he should not design an especially showy one. We should be glad that whatever is there, is there.

Let us hope for good architectural intentions in those who build here, and competent advice to guide those intentions.

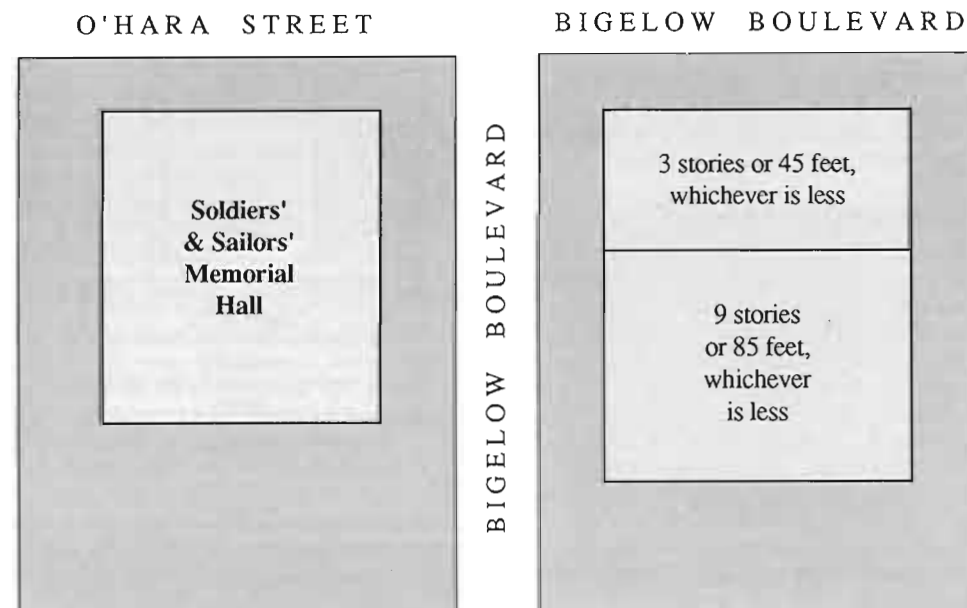
P.S.: a propos of a style choice, see the essay "Moldings and the Like" on page 8. Classical architecture loves moldings, in due moderation; Modern architecture abstains from them, save for an occasional raised flat strip; Post-Modern architecture proves its inventiveness by using moldings awkwardly.

Pitt's present Mervis Hall was once the National Union Fire Insurance Company, 25 feet back from the street, 50 feet high, and 75 feet wide. A mansion-like exterior of white limestone fails to stress, to say the least, the business function for which this building was planned.

The University Club can serve as an example for the new building directly across the Soldiers' Memorial lawn. The dining room and library block, set back 15 feet from the street, is about 60 feet high and 80 feet along University Place. The eight-story guest tower begins 60 feet back from the property line and is not overpowering. This much withdrawal from the street might be impracticable for the taller part of the new building, but the effect of height would be mitigated to some extent in a composition along University Club lines. The materials here are white limestone for pilasters and other decorative trim and a warm gray Roman brick.

To the left of the University Club is the Physicians' Building, one of the two office buildings along University Place. It stands 12 feet back from the street, and is 65 or 70 feet high and 45 feet wide. The street rises northward, and the building heights there, varying from as much as 70 to as little as 40 feet, are fairly evened out as it happens. Walls are of cream-colored brick. The lot to the left was unfortunately never built upon.

At the north end of University Place is the Concordia Club, a less-polished work of cream-colored brick, built right on the property line, about as high as the National Union Fire Insurance Company, and 110 feet along University Place.



To the right is the allowable footprint of the new building, with maximum heights indicated.

Behind the Soldiers' Memorial is Thaw Hall, a fragment of Henry Hornbostel's abortive 1908 hillside plan for the University of Pittsburgh; this was the engineering school. It is 67 feet high, and was 150 feet long before its rather dim modern additions. The materials are cream-colored brick, gray granite, and white terra cotta.



O'HARA STREET

The Twentieth Century Club is about 60 feet high at its lower end. Its street wall is about 100 feet long. In its white limestone and its rather elaborate Italian Renaissance treatment it is something of a response to the Pittsburgh Athletic Association a block to the south. Both stand equally high on their sites, and both, indeed, are by Benno Janssen.

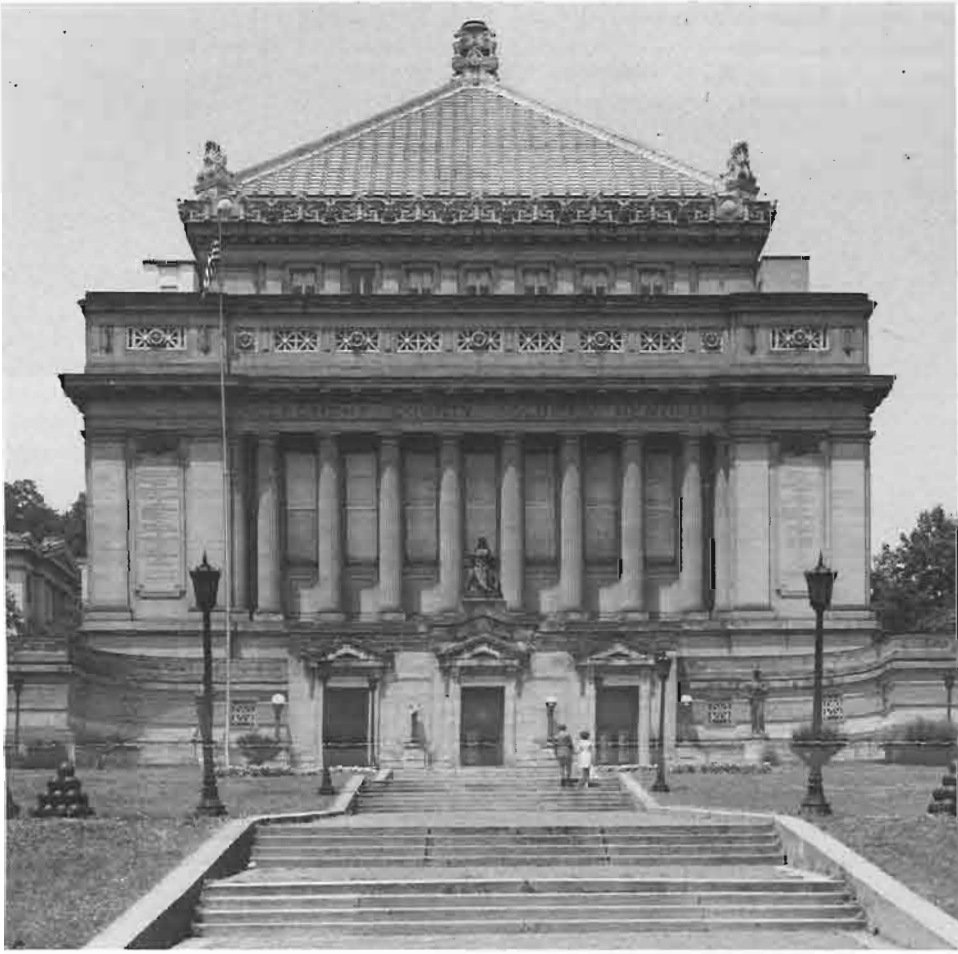


BIGELOW BOULEVARD

To the right of the Twentieth Century Club, on the margin of the group, is the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, only 33 feet high but 65 feet wide and set well up on a terrace so as to mediate between the grandiose clubhouse to the left and the Edwardian home to the right. Its materials are cream-colored brick and white terra cotta.



UNIVERSITY PLACE



The Allegheny County Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial, as it was some years ago. The main body of the building, rising above the spreading basement, is about 150 feet square; the total height is about 150 feet. The walls are of a light-to-medium gray sandstone. Judging from early postcards the roof tiles, now gray-coated, are strong-red terra cotta.



Left: The Civic Center in the 1940s, showing the Soldiers' Memorial, Schenley Hotel, and Cathedral of Learning lawn around which subsidiary buildings are organized. Below: A more pompous group of the Civic Center buildings surrounds the 535-foot Cathedral of Learning on its 14-acre lawn.

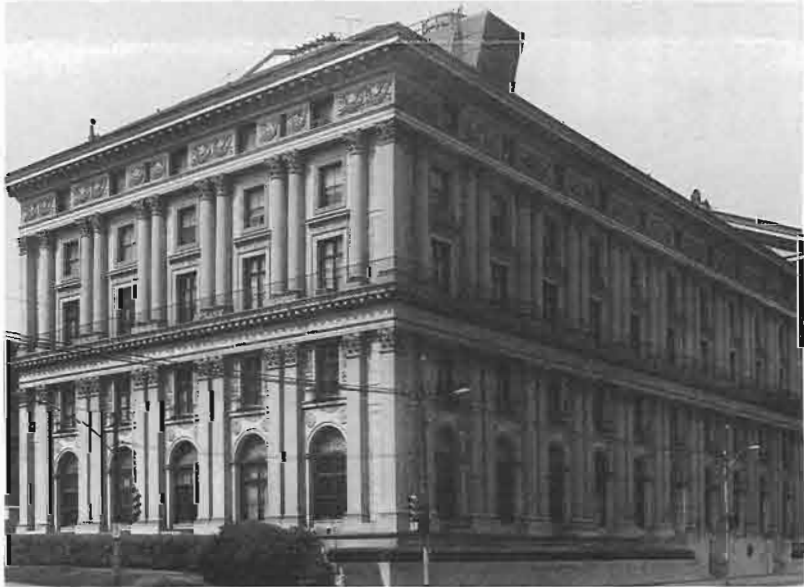
Though the nearby Carnegie Institute is a little older in its original part, the Civic Center proper began with this hotel of 1898, which faces both the Cathedral of Learning and the Soldiers' Memorial. Unfortunately it has lost its cornice. Its main material is a brick of a strong reddish-orange. It stands 120 feet back from Fifth Avenue, and the front facing the Soldiers' Memorial (though not set axially) is 125 feet high and 130 feet wide.



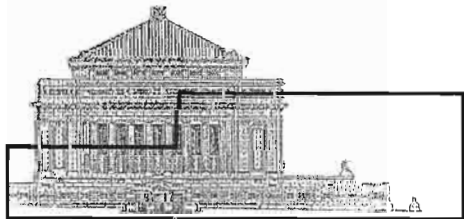
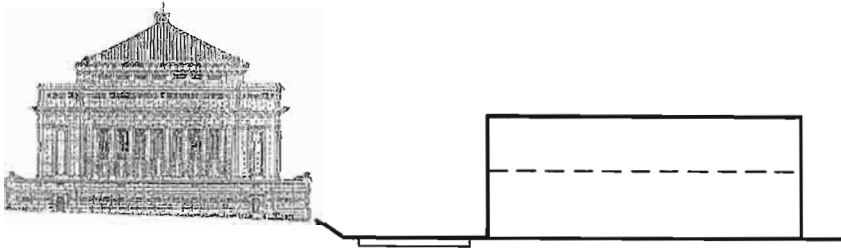
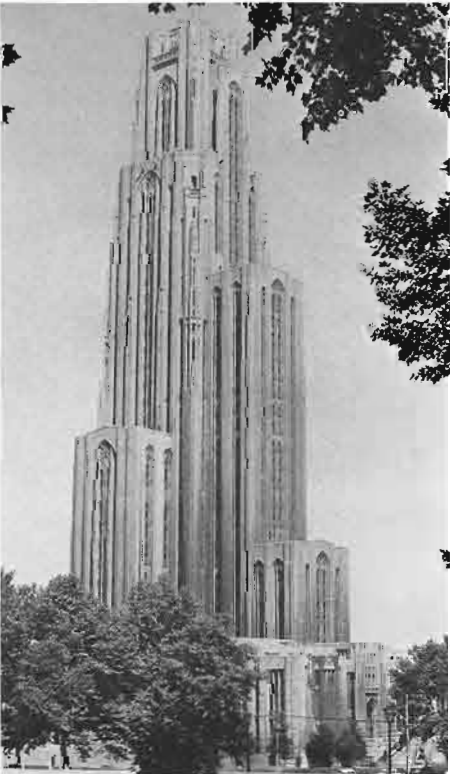
BIGELOW BOULEVARD



Syria Mosque stood south of the east-west stretch of Bigelow Boulevard, next to vacant land opposite the Soldiers' Memorial that was never filled.



The Pittsburgh Athletic Association has a grandeur, even an ostentation, more appropriate to the gigantic Cathedral of Learning campus that its main front faces. The rear toward the Syria Mosque site is plain by contrast. It is about 70 feet high to the cornice. Materials are white limestone and white terra cotta.



Allowable dimensions for the new building: only an approximation, but serving to compare its possible bulk with that of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial.



PITTSBURGH A

Walter C. Kidney

Here is a corner detail by Henry Hornbostel, at the former Bureau of Mines. The corner has received the equivalent of an ovolo molding, a quarter-round, between two narrow fillets. Instead of a mere intersection of two planes, the corner implies the volume contained within the walls. Of course, you know that the walls enclose space, but such a rounded corner — its roundness emphasized by slightly darker courses of bricks every so often — makes the fact vivid.



Above, a roll molding on the arch on the Ross Street entrance of the Courthouse, shown here in an old view, defines the edge of a large opening, emphasizes the inward turn from the wall plane. The narrow side windows gain effectiveness from the contrast between the rugged wall surface and the much smoother reveals in the depth of the wall. The openings are given a role in the composition, are made more than an omission of stonework, by having crude quasi-arches cut in the first-floor lintels and having shallow corbels to shape the openings above.

Hornbostel's surround for a niche of the Fine Arts Building at CMU uses a heavy raised molding to define the whole opening.



CHITECTURE: *Moldings and the Like*

In spite of all the supporting body of theory, in spite of all the intelligent people who have testified to their personal enjoyment, I have never been happy with Modern architecture, even with all its variety. I find it — to put matters in one word — mute. It is as if the architect's ideology, his conception of the building, his lines on paper, the cardboard and green sponge of his model, were all very well but did not lead up to an actual building that has any sort of discourse, so to speak, with the inhabitant or the passer-by. There is something skimped and grudging about even the most sumptuous Modern buildings, and I feel, when I look at them, positively starved for moldings.

Any distinctive shape given to the cross-section of a length of material is a molding. The contours catch the falling light, break it up into brightness, shadow, gentle shades sometimes; yet this is no affair of flat striping, but something solid. Why a molding can give vitality to the experience of a building is perhaps not to be fully explained, since it is mostly — not entirely — a visual matter. But a molding, properly conceived, can glorify the mere, otherwise dull fact that there is a building before you. So much beauty is an intense perception of what you knew about all along; a sky, scattered with clouds or seen through the bare branches of a tree, may impart a glorious sense of space that in its own unqualified emptiness it cannot. The same is true of moldings; they are sometimes unnecessary, they are sometimes inappropriate, but often they bring construction to life.

In the First National Bank Building, now demolished, moldings are joined with other surface treatments to indicate where the banking rooms leave off and the rental office space begins, and to create a climactic feature for this very conspicuous building. A first cornice finishes off the bank, which was actually built first. Then come the rental offices, with string courses every two stories and horizontal rustication of the terra-cotta wall surface. This treatment opposes the Modern idea that a skyscraper should rise "without a dissenting line," but it makes the tall shaft of the building more visually comprehensible through its rhythm and texture. At the top the treatment, conspicuous from afar, is frankly decorative and is topped by a cornice, a super-molding intended to make an emphatic conclusion.



At the Bank of McKeesport, a roll molding defines a panel of wall that contains three stories of windows. The windows themselves are divided into six lights each with a handsome, spare frame of brick and stone that needs no moldings.



The telephone offices on Grant Street have a little formed sheet metal to diversify its surfaces, but the architectural treatment has no beginning, middle, or end, being merely sawn off top and bottom with nothing in-between.

In the old McCook house in Shadyside, a molding just below the roof romps out and in again, up, up, down, down, out and in again, binding the irregular front together as well as staging a small sideshow.



In this pair of Shadyside houses, moldings in the form of chamfered battens are applied to the vertical board sheathing, organizing the openings with their quietly-relentless verticals, adding rich shades and shadows, and emphasizing the woodiness of the wood.



The Pittsburgh region is our home, a familiar place we do not want to leave. But without historic preservation, it could leave us.

Education News

Pittsburgh Heritage Teacher In-service

This summer 21 teachers from Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, and Beaver County followed Landmarks' instructor Sue Neff as she led *Pittsburgh Heritage* participants on a journey of sites revealing Pittsburgh's heritage, history, and architecture. One teacher appropriately commented that Sue Neff "is a real trooper, always forging ahead!"

The *Pittsburgh Heritage* class spent a day touring four ethnic churches in the industrial bottoms of McKees Rocks: St. Mary's Ukrainian Orthodox Church; Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church; St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Church; and St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church. Members of the parishes spoke to *Pittsburgh Heritage* participants about the churches' congregations, history and architecture, as well as life in the McKees Rocks neighborhood.

Other on-site explorations included a ride on the Gateway Clipper to study the river banks, river towns, and bridges

of Western Pennsylvania; a walking tour of downtown Pittsburgh; a scavenger hunt in the Children's Museum (the old North Side Post Office) and its adjoining sculpture garden; and a tour of the Station Square adaptive re-use project.

Hands-on activities included writing, constructing, and designing a book based on experiences from the course. Pages from several books are shown here.

Teachers also created origami structures of houses and churches similar to those they had explored. Each teacher drew a sketch to be included in a cityscape mural made from print blocks. Teachers also worked on a group design and constructed a cardboard bridge.

After eight days of exploring Pittsburgh's heritage, teachers agreed that they had really *seen* their city and that Landmarks should develop a follow-up course, *Pittsburgh Heritage II*. Landmarks' education department is interested in doing this, and perhaps next summer teachers will be touring the South Side, Oakland, Sewickley, Polish Hill, Manchester, and the Strip District.

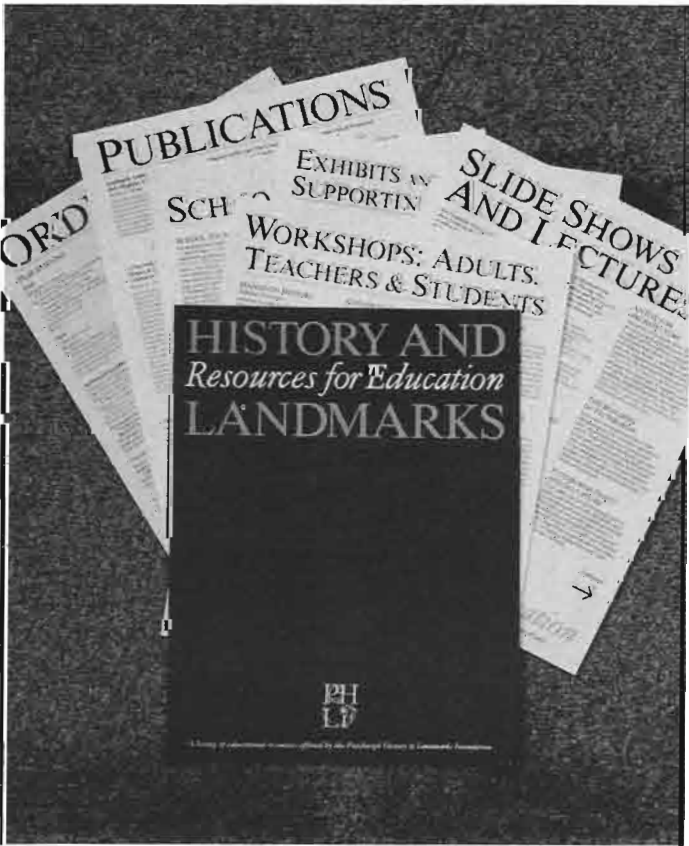


Diane C. DeNardo, director of education for Landmarks.



Twenty-one teachers participated in Pittsburgh Heritage, an eight-day exploration of Pittsburgh's history, architecture, and ethnic heritage. Many art activities were included in the course, which teachers can later use with their students.

The Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation offers a full range of educational programs for schools and community groups. Our slide shows, tours, publications, exhibits, video, student/teacher workshops, and Portable Pittsburgh program feature the history, architecture, and character of Pittsburgh. Call Diane DeNardo (412) 471-5808 for further information or to make program reservations.



Pittsburgh Heritage graduates, summer of 1991.

A Year-End Gift

Since its founding in 1964 as a non-profit membership organization, Landmarks has made a difference in the life of Pittsburgh. Our great accomplishments have been to identify and save architectural and industrial landmarks, preserve historic neighborhoods, educate the public regarding our history, and create Station Square.

Our work continues as vigorously as ever, with the help of members' contributions. We have no governmental support, and depend on individual donations to maintain our General Fund and our individual projects.

Our program goals for 1992 are ambitious, and your contribution to the Landmarks General Fund is the means by which we can attain them. Please contribute now, and help us keep working for the future of Pittsburgh's past.

CONTRIBUTIONS

to Landmarks' General Fund in 1992 will help us:

- ◆ advocate the preservation of endangered landmarks.
- ◆ retrieve endangered artifacts that will later be displayed in a riverfront walk at Station Square.
- ◆ provide technical assistance and funding support through our Preservation Fund to more than 20 neighborhood/community groups that are restoring historic properties.
- ◆ complete a survey of historical sites in Allegheny County relating to Black history.
- ◆ organize the Landmarks library and describe our historical collections so they can be available for research purposes.
- ◆ offer educational programs such as *Portable Pittsburgh*, *Pittsburgh Heritage*, the *Hands-On History* summer institute, teacher inservices, and family workshops.
- ◆ publish major books, brochures, and *PHLF News*.
- ◆ host tours and special events for the benefit of our members and the public.

Enclosed is my year-end contribution of \$ _____ to Landmarks' General Fund.

Name _____

Address _____

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Contributions are tax-deductible. Please make checks payable to the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation and return payment with this form to:

Pittsburgh History &
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One Station Square, Suite 450
Pittsburgh, PA 15219-1170

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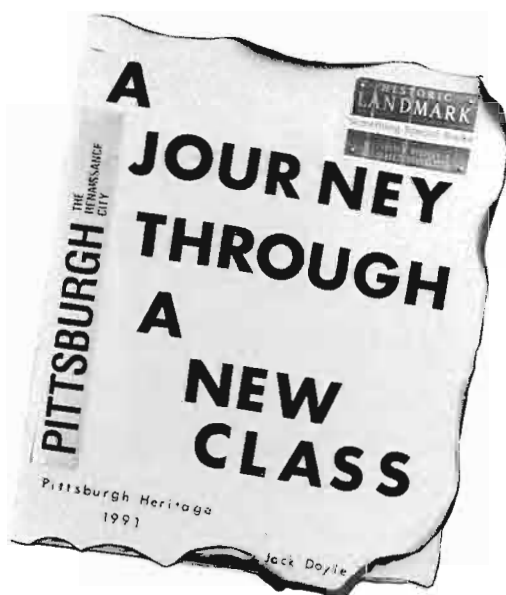


Exploring Architecture

Two sessions of *Exploring Architecture* were offered this summer, and a total of 40 teachers from Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, and Beaver County participated in the five-day teacher in-service courses.

Teachers were introduced to the art of architecture through walking tours, hands-on activities, and exercises in architectural sketching and site planning. After a week of exploring Pittsburgh's architecture, teachers worked on curriculum materials explaining how they would incorporate the new information into subjects such as Art, English, Chemistry, Music, and Industrial Arts, for students in kindergarten through twelfth grades.

In the course evaluations, teachers said they most enjoyed the all-day walking tour of downtown Pittsburgh and the variety of activities including the hands-on projects. Many of the teachers enthusiastically asked for an *Exploring Architecture II* course.



A Pittsburgh Heritage teacher shows her hand-made book on Pittsburgh; several book covers also are shown (left).



Exploring Architecture participants toured downtown Pittsburgh and made gravestone rubbings at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral on Sixth Avenue.

Nineteen teachers participated in Exploring Architecture, offered June 26-July 2. A second session for 21 teachers was offered July 31-August 6.



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More Luck at the Neville House

More work has been done in the ongoing restoration of John and Presley Neville's House in Collier Township, thanks to the cooperation of the Allegheny Committee of the National Society of Colonial Dames of America, the Neville House Auxiliary, and the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation.

The Neville House, a National Historic Landmark, is a continuing puzzle, its general history of additions and remodelings still to be worked out, its interiors one by one yielding up the secrets of their early days. One part of the wooden plantation house dates back to 1785 at the latest.



The Neville House from the rear. The window just left of the back porch lights the bedroom.

Up to this year, the dining room, living room, and nursery had been restored, with full accuracy as regards wall and trim finishes. The living room was especially lucky in this regard, since rolls of an out-of-print reproduction wallpaper were found that corresponded to traces of the original paper of the 1760-90 period.

This was a lucky find, and in the current phase of restoration the luck was repeated. Anne Genter, past chairman of the Colonial Dames and a trustee of Landmarks, devoted to the restoration of the house, researched finishes of the two small bedrooms that adjoin the living room. She succeeded in removing the original paper of c. 1815 from nine upper layers. The pattern is 9½" wide, on light gray paper printed in off-white, light beige, orange, medium gray-green, and black. It shows a boy with a dog and a flower basket, alternating with a sprig of leaves and flowers, with leaf and flower ornaments creating verticals. Thirty rolls of reproduction paper have been printed at a cost of \$3,000, including plate-making, and Waterhouse Wallhangings, the wallpaper maker, will market it commercially as the "Woodville" pattern, paying a royalty to the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation as owner of the Neville House.

("Woodville" is the original name of the John and Presley Neville House.) The paper was recently hung in both bedrooms within a two-inch border in a black, orange, and green geometrical design. The trim of the two rooms, separated by a plank partition with a doorless opening, will be off-white with a dark-gray baseboard.

Anne Genter points out that it is fairly rare for house museums to have wallpaper in the actual, authentic patterns, even in reproduction. On her recovery of the bedroom pattern she says that it was "beyond my wildest dreams that there would be something as recognizable as this."

The "Woodville" pattern will appear in a book on historic wallpapers by Richard Nylander that is to be published. Printing of the paper was funded by the three organizations that have been in charge of preserving and restoring the house: the Neville House Auxiliary, the Allegheny Committee of the National Society of Colonial Dames of America, and the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation. (Proceeds from Landmarks' fall Antiques Show at Station Square support the continuing restoration of the Neville House.)

In addition, Nathaniel Neblett, a restoration architect familiar with service rooms and buildings of the 18th century, is at work on the log kitchen, now clapboarded, that is the oldest part of the house. Stripping off the old random-width beaded board wainscoting revealed termite infestation, calling for almost complete replication. The random-width oaken floor has also had to be replaced with new boards. This work is in progress. The fireplace wall is to be left as exposed log; this will show evidence of the kitchen's history, some fire damage, and fireplace reconstruction. The new wainscoting will be painted in the original dark red-brown.

On October 29, the trustees of Landmarks will hold their fall meeting at "Woodville," and will be able to see the work accomplished and in progress. The membership and the public will have their chance on Saturday and Sunday, December 7 and 8, when the Neville House will be open for guided holiday tours. A small donation will be asked for the purpose of continuing the restoration effort. Cookies and mulled cider will be served.

The Neville House is just off the Kirwan Heights exit, No. 12, of Route 79. Free parking is available across the road. Call (412) 471-5808 for further information.

The dining room



A view of one of the bedrooms, with the "Woodville" reproduction wallpaper.



Nine layers of wallpaper were peeled away, revealing the original "Woodville" pattern.



Russ Mixter, contractor, and Hazel Peters, president-elect of the Neville House Auxiliary.



The "Woodville" pattern.



The parlor

