

1221 FEDERAL STREET (House)  
Pittsburgh  
Allegheny County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-6202

HABS  
PA  
2-PITBY  
83

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
Northeast Region  
Philadelphia Support Office  
U.S. Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, P.A. 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

1221 FEDERAL STREET (HOUSE)

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Location: Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania

USGS Pittsburgh West Quadrangle  
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:  
17.584190.4478890

Significance: 1221 Federal Street is representative of the commercial buildings that fronted on this section of Federal Street in Allegheny by the 1890s.

Description: This two-story, two bay brick building is part of a row set directly on the sidewalk on the west side of Federal Street. It is attached to the north only. Its gable roof has a single interior end chimney on the south end, and the cornice rests on brackets. At an undetermined date, an additional bay was added to the south to house a stairway to the upper floor. The second floor windows are double hung replacement sash. The first floor commercial front was significantly altered at an undetermined date.

The first story contains commercial space, and a side stair leads to the residential spaces above. The entire interior space is inaccessible. (Consequently, no plans have been produced for the structure.) The rear is also inaccessible, making photography impossible.

History: Based on map research confirmed by stylistic analysis, 1221 Federal Street is believed to have been built c.1874-1884. The Day and Cramer map of Allegheny in 1851 suggests that little actual construction then had taken place in the Federal-Eloise-Reddour and Pernod Streets block. The first period of major construction along Federal Street between today's Pernod Street (earlier called Margaret Alley, then West Pearl Street) and Eloise Street (earlier Benton, then Ellsworth Alley) was between 1850 and 1872, a time of rapid urban population growth in Pittsburgh and Allegheny. By 1872, as the G. M. Hopkins atlas shows, a nearly solid mass of buildings fronted on Federal Street, and an early horse car line had begun service in 1868. The division and orientation of lots within the block remained little changed until more recent years. In 1872, a building at what is now 1221 Federal Street was owned by H. Lacock (sp.?), about whom little more is known. This building was possibly demolished by the fire of July 4, 1874 that destroyed some four acres and 199 buildings between Sampsonia Street on the north and Eloise Street on the south. The fire occasioned massive re-building in the block, and by 1884, no fewer than nine stores (including four grocery stores) and a cigar factory (near the corner of Federal Street and Eloise) fronted on Federal Street in this area of Allegheny. In addition to brick row houses and both two-story and three-story stores, lumberyards were also a feature of the urban landscape in this part of Allegheny during the 1880s. The 1884 Sanborn Insurance company map shows that a detached wash house and oven then occupied the center of the block behind 1221 Federal Street. The 1890-1891 G.M. Hopkins atlas shows that a store at 1221 Federal Street was owned by Z.T. Young and adjoined the larger property holdings of Samuel Grove on both Federal and Pernod Streets. The development of tenements such as the nearby "Rafferty's Row," several lots south of 1221 Federal Street, reflected the changing demographics of the neighborhood at this time. The 1893 Sanborn Insurance Company map shows that a laundry and what was possibly a smoke house were located at the rear of the lot behind the store at 1221 Federal Street (then numbered 233 Federal). The 1925 G.M. Hopkins atlas continues to list the owner of 1221 Federal Street as Z.T. Young. African-American, Italian, and eastern European immigrants now predominated among the neighborhood's residents, and older, more established families abandoned the inner city for newer suburbs, a process facilitated by the greater availability of the personal automobile after the 1920s.

Many of the new arrivals were too poor to own their own homes and thus rented property. Only 20 percent of all housing units in the Central Northside neighborhood were owner-occupied by 1940. In more recent years, Florence Bova was the owner of the building at 1221 Federal Street. She sold the property to John and Dorothy Gregris in September 1970. The Urban Redevelopment Authority obtained the building from them through a Declaration of Taking in 1996.

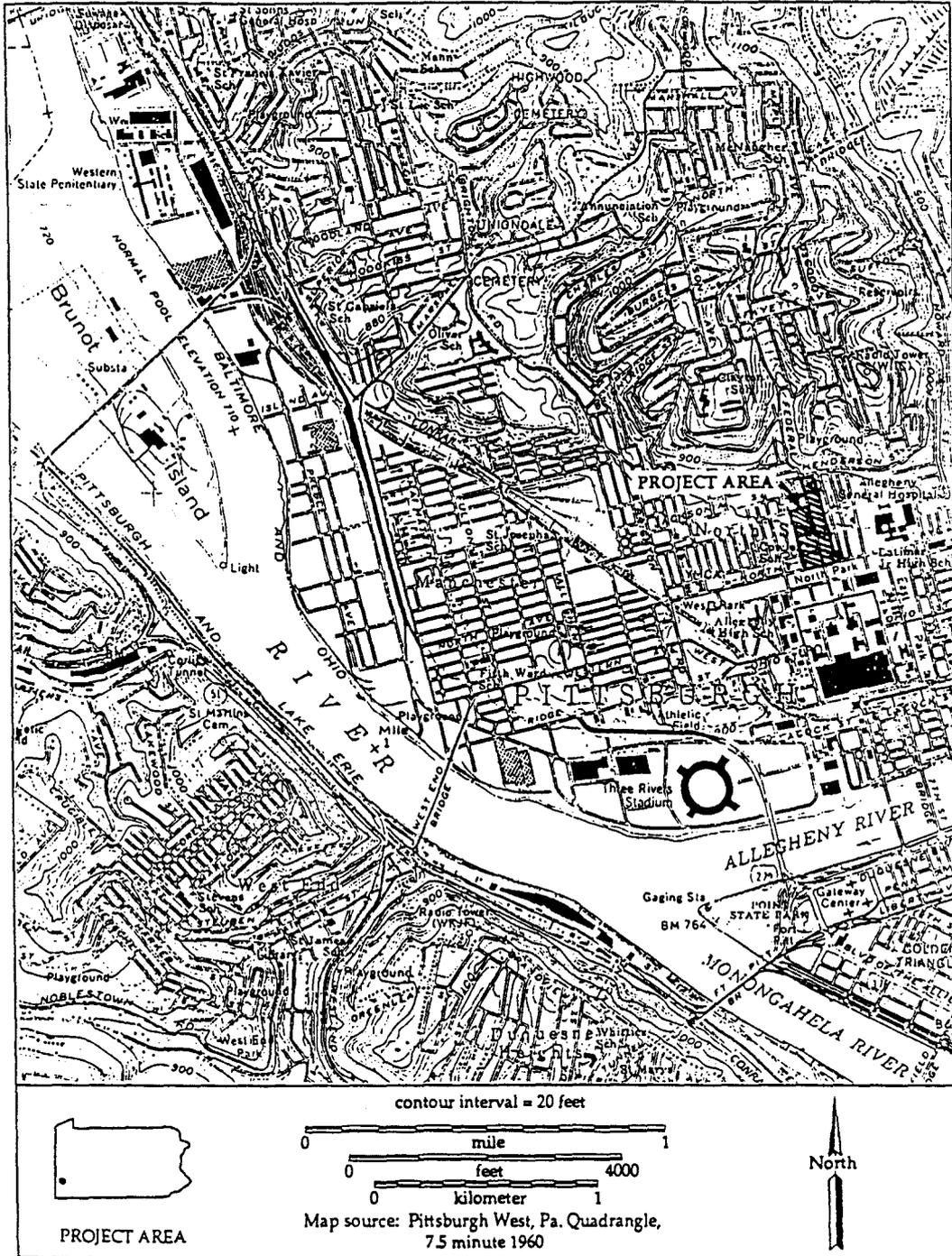
The three-block Federal North Redevelopment Area in the Central Northside Historic District of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, was certified in 1989. In 1995, Pittsburgh adopted a redevelopment plan for this neighborhood. In consultation with the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Officer (PASHPO) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), it was determined that proposed redevelopment in the Federal North neighborhood would affect National Register of Historic Places-eligible historic properties. One condition of the project's Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) provided for Historic American Building Survey (HABS) recording of 14 buildings in a portion of the redevelopment project called "Block #2." Block #2 includes the area bounded by Federal Street on the east, Eloise Street on the south, Reddour Street on the west, and Pernod Street on the north. The building at 1221 Federal Street is located in Block # 2.

Sources:

- Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Recorder of Deed's Office  
Deed Book 4629, page 31, September 1, 1970.  
(Note: Deed information for transfer of property ownership to the Urban Redevelopment Authority in 1996 not finalized by the Recorder of Deeds office as of this writing.)
- Day & Cramer. Plan of Allegheny City Surveyed in 1850 and 1851. Pittsburgh: Day & Cramer, 1851.
- Hopkins, G.M. & Company. Atlas of the Cities of Pittsburgh and Allegheny, and the Adjoining Boroughs. Philadelphia: G. M. Hopkins & Company, 1872.
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- Hopkins, G.M. & Company. *Atlas of the City of Pittsburgh*. Vol. 5. Philadelphia: G.M. Hopkins & Company, 1925.
- Sanborn Insurance Company. Sanborn Insurance Company Map of the Cities of Pittsburgh and Allegheny. New York: Sanborn Insurance Company, 1884.
- Sanborn Insurance Company. Sanborn Insurance Company Map of Pittsburgh. New York: Sanborn Insurance Company, 1926 (updated to 1940).
- Sanborn Insurance Company. Sanborn Insurance Company Map of Pittsburgh. New York: Sanborn Insurance Company, 1926 (updated to 1979).
- Carlisle, Ronald C., and Arthur B. Fox. "Visual Inspection and Land-Use History in the Federal Street/North Avenue Redevelopment Area Northside, Pittsburgh." A report prepared by the Cultural Resource Management Program, University of Pittsburgh, for the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh under the supervision of Ronald C. Carlisle, Ph.D., principal investigator, 1990.
- Millis, Heather. "An Archaeological Survey and Land-Use History for the Proposed Federal North Redevelopment Project, City of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania." A report prepared for the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh by Garrow & Associates, Inc., Thomas R. Baker, Ph.D., principal investigator, 1995.

Historians:

Ronald C. Carlisle, Ph.D, and Eliza Smith Brown  
Brown Carlisle & Associates, Inc.  
March 1997



Location of the Federal North Redevelopment Area in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Source: USGS Pittsburgh, West 7.5 minute quadrangle map. After Millis (1995: 2, Figure 1).