

1227 FEDERAL STREET (House)
Pittsburgh
Allegheny County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-6204

HABS
PA
2-PITBU,
85-

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

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1227 FEDERAL STREET (HOUSE)

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Location: Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania

USGS Pittsburgh West Quadrangle
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:
17.584190.4478910

Significance: 1227 Federal Street is representative of the commercial buildings that fronted on this section of Federal Street in Allegheny by the 1890s.

Description: This red brick building is located on the southwest corner of Federal Street and Pernod Street, and appears to have been the third of a trio that also included 1223-25 Federal Street. It measures 16' across. The gable roof at 1227 is pierced by a single interior chimney at the north end, as well as a gable roofed dormer with a single double hung sash window. The first floor commercial front is largely original, and features a central entrance and flanking display windows.

The first story contains commercial space. The only significant interior detail is the tin ceiling, with its square panels, diamond-pattern border and floral cove crown, all visible above a dropped ceiling. The second and third floors have been sealed off and are inaccessible. The rear yard is too tight to permit photography.

History: Based on map research confirmed by stylistic analysis, 1227 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, with a hours car line which began service in 1868. The division and orientation of lots within the block remained little changed until more recent years. One long-time owner of property in this block was Samuel B. Grove, who, by 1872, owned three residences or stores fronting on Federal Street at the corner of Federal and Pernod; one of these included a building at the corner lot of today's 1227 Federal Street. He also owned property along Pernod Street. Grove's buildings were 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. After the 1874 fire, Grove apparently rebuilt his Federal Street buildings as the 1890-1891 G.M. Hopkins atlas shows that the store at 1227 Federal Street (then 239 Federal) was part of his larger property holdings that then included three stores on Federal Street and four rowhouses at Nos. 9, 11, 13, and 15 Pernod Street. The 1925 G.M. Hopkins atlas lists the owner of 1227 Federal Street as S.G. Church. 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, Nancy Levin (a.k.a. Nancy Levin Mills) owned the building at 1227 Federal Street. In March 1987, she

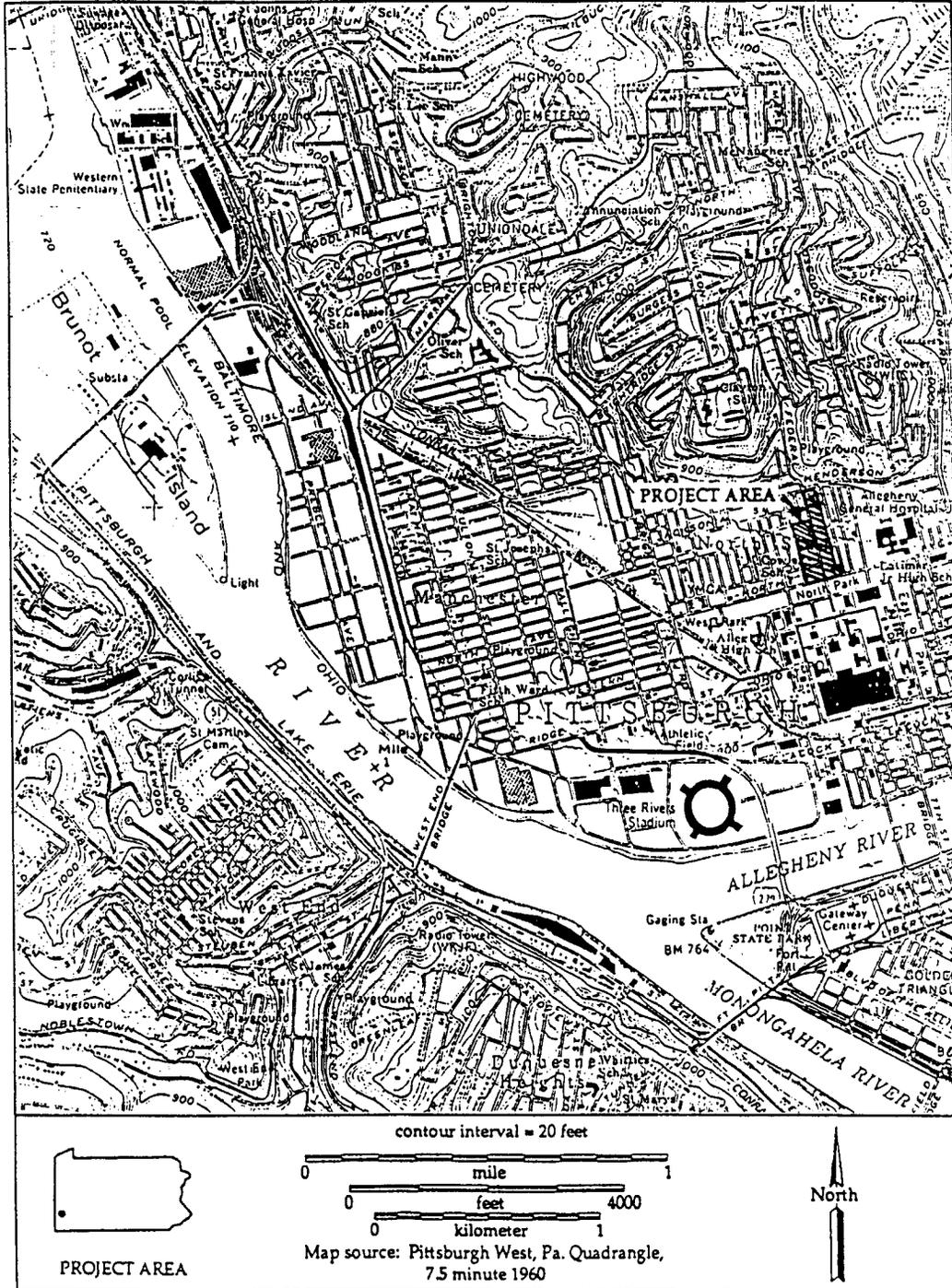
transferred ownership to Eugene Thomas, Jr., and it is from him that the Urban Redevelopment Authority obtained the property in May 1996. The three-block Federal North Redevelopment Area in the Central Northside Historic District of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, was certified in 1989. In 1995, Pittsburgh 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 1227 Federal Street is located in Block # 2.

Sources:

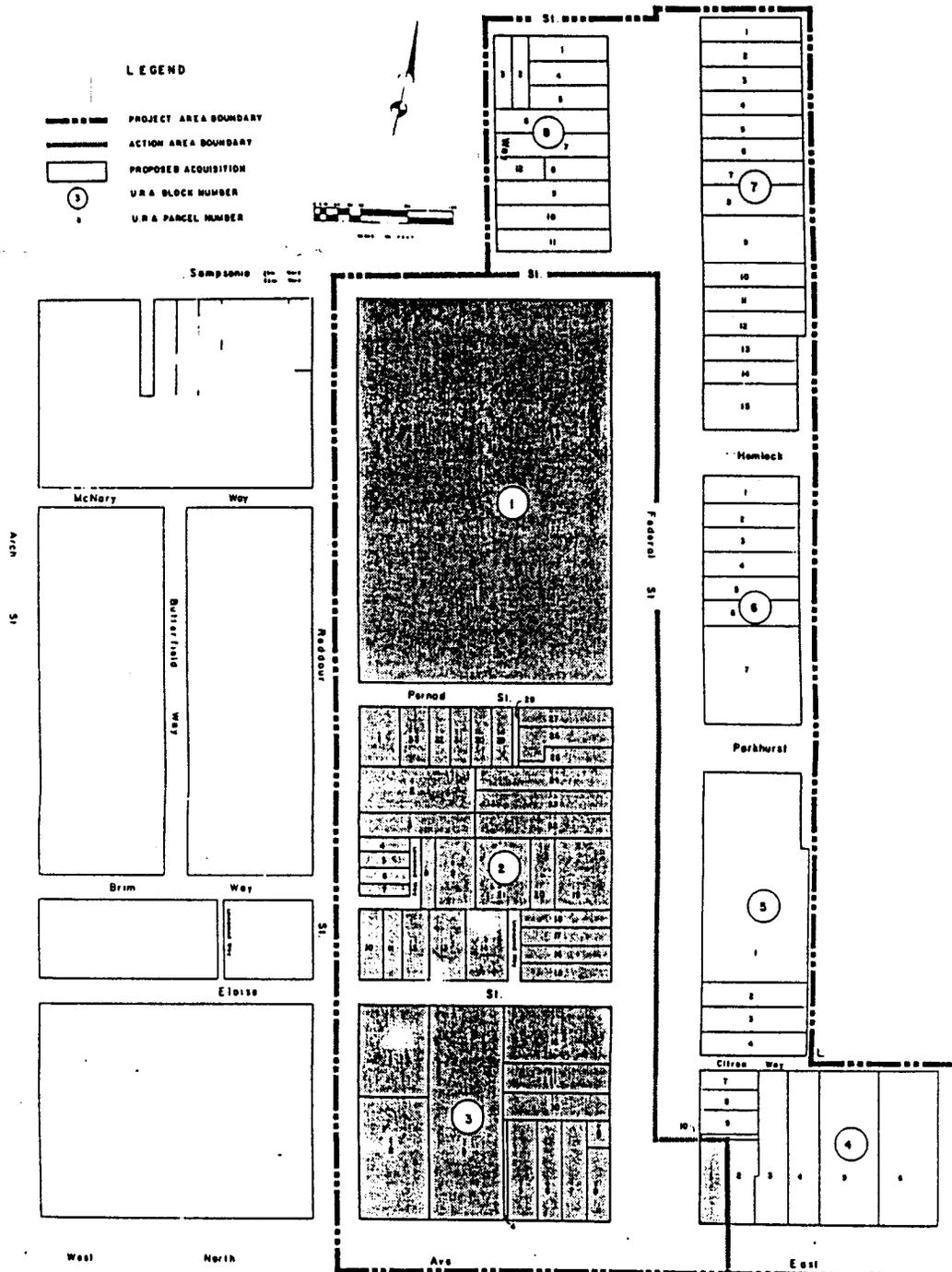
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Historians:

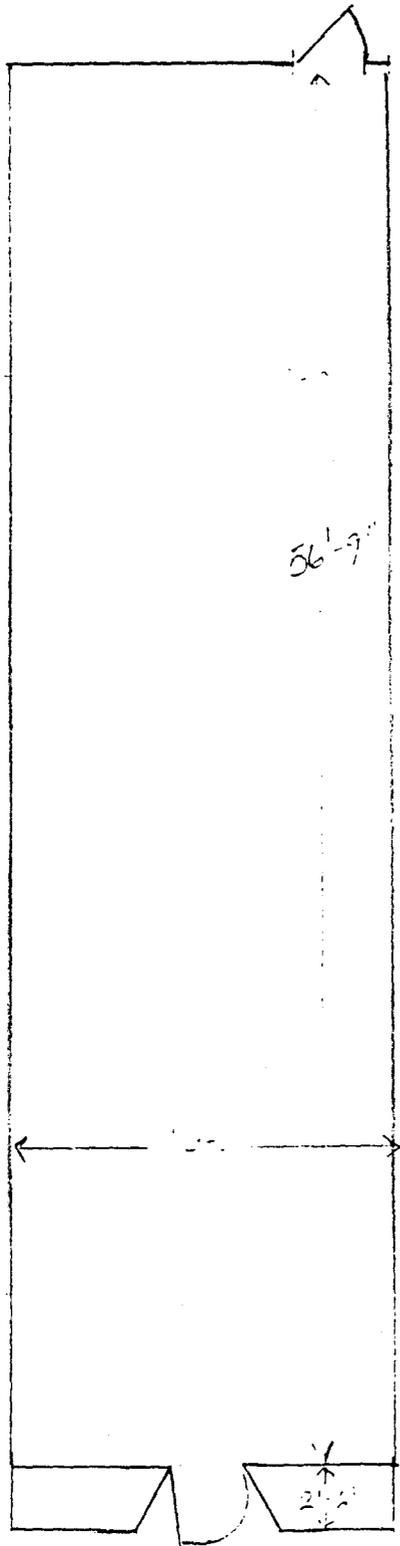
Ronald C. Carlisle, Ph.D, and Eliza Smith Brown
Brown Carlisle & Associates, Inc.
March 1997



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).



Federal North Redevelopment Area plan in the Central Northside neighborhood of the City of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The subject building is located in Block 2 of the project. Source: Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh.



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