

The numbering order in this document corresponds to the numbering in the Historic Nomination Form

1. HISTORIC NAME OF PROPERTY
1788- "Redick's Plan for Reserve Tract"
1835- Borough of Allegheny
1852- Wards 2 and 3 of Allegheny City
2. Mexican War Streets National Historic District
3. *Map attached.*
4. *See inventory in 2008 application*
5. Historic district.
6. Kirk Burkley, Zoning, Department of City Planning
206 West North Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15212
412-322-2517
7. The Mexican War Streets National Historic District is bounded by Buena Vista Street on the west, O'Hern Street on the north, Reddour Street on the east and North Avenue on the south. It contains approximately 84 acres and 23 city blocks. There are estimated to be 925 parcels, the majority of which are 20' x 100' (2000 sq. ft). Approximately 80% contain structures, the rest is vacant land. Within these bounds there is a multitude of early residential structures and landmark buildings. The district is primarily residential, but there are some small commercial establishments; in former times there were significantly more.

The nominated district dates back to the 1840's, although there are family names (like the Robinson family) linked to earlier periods. It is one of the few architecturally coherent neighborhoods in the City of Pittsburgh, due partly to its conception as a city-scape grid of connected row houses, but also to its rapid development, which ensured its stylistic uniformity. Its idiomatic Victorian architecture includes Italianate, Gothic revival, Richardsonian Romanesque, Empire, Queen Anne and the Arts and Crafts styles. Significantly, the land itself is part of the documented history of the Reserved Tract Opposite Pittsburgh drawn up in the 1780s, as well as Allegheny Town and Allegheny City.

8. The history and development of the area can be traced back to its origin as a rich, low-lying, central hunting ground to Native Americans. It lay just below a massive sandstone ridge formed south of the great, glacial thrust.

The settlement of the area was a product of a unique plan of apportionment. In 1783, the Pennsylvania General Assembly set in motion the development of the wilderness north of Pittsburgh (north of the Allegheny, Monongahela and Ohio Rivers). An area bounded by the confluence of the rivers and an east-west line one mile north, was designated a Reserved Tract. In 1785, a survey counted 3,025 acres. Rather than

initiating the sale of the land in large farm parcels-- like most frontier land settlement-- the Reserved Tract was set aside for the development of a new town. Toward that end, in 1787, the state legislature ordered that a plan be drawn up. It commissioned David Redick to complete the task. Subsequent to a physical survey in 1788, Redick delivered the *Plan of the Reserve Tract Opposite Pittsburg.*

Redick laid out the town based on early colonialist models that followed English custom, with a town square, surrounded by common land, and outlying lots.¹ Redick centered the town on the intersection of the Venango Trail and the Great Path, two Native American routes which were the first human imprint on the land. (The Venango Trail stretched from the confluence of the three rivers to Lake Erie.) The town square, town lots and surrounding commons contained 150 acres. The rest of the 3,025 acre tract was divided into "outlots" of 10 acres each. The general concept was that settlers would each receive a town lot for their home and an "outlot" for agricultural purposes.

Meanwhile, James Boggs, who was the first known settler, cleared a portion of land on the northern bank in the 1760's and 1770's. After preparing for agricultural use the first nine acres of his land claim, Boggs died. His widow inherited the parcel. Martha Boggs remarried in the 1790's. Her second husband was James Robinson. While Redick's plan was being implemented, Robinson was able to buy parcels which had been surveyed within the Reserve Tract, land additional to what he had acquired through marriage. He made his business in real estate. He also built the first ferry house near what is today the 6th Street Bridge, on the eastern side of Federal Street.

The parcels defined in Redick's plan were allocated and/or auctioned in the 1790s, and the town of Allegheny gradually took shape over the next 20 years. The town center and river front developed first, with some of the areas north of the commons cleared and converted to farm land. James Robinson owned two of the three "outlots" fronting the North Commons, along Shanopin Lane (now North Avenue).

The earliest development in the "outlots" was Mechanic's Retreat. Circa 1815, this land was subdivided and developed into a residential area for workers employed in early industry along the banks of the Ohio River a short distance west. Mechanic's Retreat was a rural enclave of modest housing along Pasture Lane (Brighton Road)

¹ Credit is due throughout this historical account to Lisa Miles, author of *Resurrecting Allegheny City – The Land, Structures & People of Pittsburgh's North Side* (2007). The MWSS retained Ms. Miles to compile a detailed chronological sequence of development of the 14 outlots from Redick's plan that evolved into the nominated district. Her book and the supplemental material she compiled provided the basis for this section. Some material is directly quoted with her permission.

surrounded by acres of undeveloped land. Aside from Mechanic's Retreat, there was no development north of the commons in this era.

By the 1820s, the population of Allegheny Town reached 1000 and the town was incorporated as a borough in 1828. By this time James Robinson had acquired *all* the land fronting the north commons.

The first expansion of Allegheny Town north of the commons occurred on "outlots", on the west side of Federal Street (formerly the Old Franklin Road, along the path of the Venango Trail). Beaver Street (Arch), Middle Alley (Reddour), and Webster Street (Sherman) were extended to the other side of the commons (but not *through* the commons) from the Allegheny Town street grid. The evolved Mechanic's Retreat development saw Jackson Street extended to run the full distance between Federal Street and Pasture Lane (Brighton). Jackson Street (Jacksonia) and Carroll Street (now Armandale) were connected by Coffee Street (now Garfield).

Up through 1835, there was no real development east of Federal or west of Brighton, and James Robinson's "outlots" opposite the commons were still used for agriculture by tenant farmers.

In 1840, Allegheny Borough became Allegheny City. Allegheny City was now expanding on all sides of the commons, including Deutschtown (east) and Allegheny West. During this time, James Robinson's son, General William Robinson, developed the land at the west end of North Avenue opposite the commons. He called his development Buena Vista, naming the streets after places and people from the Mexican-American War. Later the area would be known as the Mexican War Streets. By 1852 both sides of Federal had been subdivided more or less into their current form.

Between 1852 and 1872, residential development pushed west from Federal down Jackson Street to meet with the newly extended Monterey, the western edge of the built-out neighborhood. Lower Buena Vista was still dominated by stock yards, which discouraged residential development (the alley between Buena Vista and Brighton remains "Drovers Way").

By the 1880s, the population of Allegheny City was over 75,000. The installation of sewer and water service throughout the lower wards was a major development during the decade. Buena Vista had been extended north to meet with Perrysville Avenue, a major challenge, owing to the steep grade. But with the observatory and the Western University of Pennsylvania on the bluffs overlooking the town, the motivation was there to improve accessibility.

With the extension up the hill, the lots on upper Buena Vista were built out, while the undeveloped lots on lower Buena Vista became available, no longer stigmatized as

"stock yards." Many homes had been built by this time, and nearly all the land had been subdivided, providing a plentiful supply of town lots for development.

In ten years the population of Allegheny City grew to 100,000. The lower, original wards benefited from the modern amenities of sewer and water as well as proximity to the center of Allegheny City. City center had Market House, a huge European style multi-vendor market place, as well as a contiguous commercial district. Moreover, residing in the lower wards meant that one could walk to downtown Pittsburgh without climbing the steep hills flanking Federal Street. Manchester, originally a separate borough, but by now a part of Allegheny City, shared these same advantages.

A substantial increase in density reflects the population growth. Also, the earliest housing built between the 1820s and 1850s was quite modest by Victorian standards. As the burgeoning middle class became more affluent, these undersized structures were either remodeled and expanded, or they were replaced. The Northside experienced a period of gentrification.

With the exception of the grand homes on North Avenue, the district was never like Millionaires Row on Ridge Avenue. Nevertheless, what these homes lacked in scale, they made up for in style and quality of craftsmanship. The new middle classes of merchants and industrial professionals built spacious houses; many designed to include servants, with stone quarried from nearby Fineview, lumber floated down the Allegheny River from Allegheny Forest, and glass made in Pittsburgh. A wide range of Victorian architectural styles were used including Italianate, Gothic Revival, Richardson Romanesque, Empire and Queen Anne. Given the relatively rapid build-out and the gentrification that occurred, there is a stylistic consistency throughout the streetscape of the district. Furthermore, these structures were well built; if maintained, still in service today. The quality and durability is a modest reminder of the birth of the American middle class and the emergence of Pittsburgh as a first-tier industrial center. By the turn of the century, the district had been completely built out. All of the vintage housing stock standing today is between 110 and 170 years old.

There have always been some commercial establishments within the North Allegheny Commons area, but it was primarily residential. The commercial district was in the center of Allegheny City, a short walk across the commons. When downtown Allegheny was demolished and replaced with Allegheny Center in the 1960s, the north commons area declined significantly. Saved from the brink by preservationists, the Mexican War Streets has been the center of a renaissance. The historic designation of the War Streets by the National Parks Service and the City of Pittsburgh played the key role in its revitalization. Extending historic designation to

the greater area would significantly enhance the continuation of that organic, market-driven renewal across the whole district.

9. While all of the information necessary to categorize this nomination is contained above and within the attached documents, these thumbnail accounts may be useful.
 - i. *Its location as a site of a significant historic or prehistoric event or activity.* The story of North Allegheny Commons begins with a prehistoric, geologic event which caused a topographical delineation. An ice-age ridge set aside what would become a fertile agricultural plot and productive hunting ground for Native Americans. For these early inhabitants the area was a gateway for passage between inland rivers and the Great Lakes. Eventually, it was discovered by settlers, whose use was agricultural, then industrial. The story culminates in the birth of Allegheny City and the economic expansion of Pittsburgh.
 - ii. *Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the cultural, historic, architectural, archaeological, or related aspect of the development of the City of Pittsburgh, State of Pennsylvania, Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States.* James Robinson married the widow Martha Boggs and acquired land through marriage. He bought more land in the area and started a ferry service to the three rivers triangle. Later, his son William subdivided that land which would become a part of Allegheny City. Not quite Christopher Columbus, still James Robinson was a quiet visionary and the first Northsider.
 - iii. *Its exemplification of an architectural type, style or design distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship.* The Mexican War Streets is one of the few architecturally coherent neighborhoods in the City of Pittsburgh. This is due partly to its conception as a city-scape grid of connected row houses, but also to its development, over a short period of time, which ensured its stylistic uniformity. Its idiomatic Victorian architecture encompasses Italianate, Gothic revival, Richardsonian Romanesque, Empire, Queen Anne and idiomatic Arts and Crafts meet Queen Victoria. While there are other neighborhoods in the city which exhibit areas of some coherence, as in the English Tudor Style of Shadyside and Highland Park (and elsewhere), these are small compendiums by comparison.
 - iv. n/a
 - v. *Its exemplification of important planning and urban design techniques distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness or overall quality of design or detail.* Consider each dialectical pair: the row house and Grid against green space and relentless topography; high density against security; the checkerboard of residential façade against commercial storefront. And ask: is it because of or in spite of? This is the dialectic of compression

and release. The essence of good residential urban design is a dramatic concept! In Pittsburgh, this particular manifestation is found only on the Northside.

vi. n/a

vii. n/a

viii. n/a

ix. *Its representation of a cultural, historic, architectural, archaeological or related theme expressed through distinctive areas, properties, sites, structures or objects that may or may not be contiguous.* Addressed above, especially in criteria iii and v.


x. *Its unique location or distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City of Pittsburgh.* Like the original waterfront neighborhoods of Baltimore, find here a discreet location, bounded by river and ridge; like Baltimore, giving birth to the row house but within a discrete architectural period. Are we in Pittsburgh? Of course. What sets this neighborhood apart is the architecture. What brings this city together, finally, is the topography.



xi. (NOTE: The "additional significance" requirement (in Section 11.4 of the Pittsburgh Municipal Code) that the "...area... have sufficient integrity of location, design, materials and workmanship to make it worthy of preservation or restoration" is more than abundantly met. Nothing has changed the nominated area's topography since the ice age (the mountaintops in coal mining districts of West Virginia should be so lucky). And the "design, materials and workmanship" is either still here to be preserved OR can be restored; nomination makes the restoration inevitable. ²

10. This nomination is being made by a member of the Department of City Planning. However, the two community groups, Central Northside Neighborhood Council and Mexican War Streets Society have a combined membership of over 300. Both CNNC and MWSS have championed this application. With 750 households in the National Historic District, a membership of 300 supporting this application through their community based organizations would suggest that the 25% threshold has been met.

11. Photographs are a part of the documents submitted. An inventory is also included. If a request for photographs of each building and vacant lot (900 +/-) is required, then it will be accommodated.

THIS NOMINATION FORM HAS BEEN PREPARED BY:


Kirk Burkley, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Department of City Planning


Chris D'Darrio, President Central Northside Neighborhood Council
BARBARA TALERICO, TREASURER, CENTRAL NORTHSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD
 COUNCIL.

Paul Johnson, President, Mexican War Streets Society

May 18, 2012

2 The authors of this nomination would like to suggest that the "additional significance" requirement is in direct contradiction to the requirements of items li, v, vii, viii, ix and x; they are mutually exclusive. For example, consider item ii. It supports site "identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the cultural, historic, architectural, archaeological, or related aspect of the development of the City of Pittsburgh..." And yet the "additional significance" requirement would not allow honoring James Robinson. What remains of "sufficient integrity"? His cabin? His ferry hut? The lots he sold to others on North Avenue? James Robinson is but a ghost. But then again, so are Martha Graham and Mary Cassatt. Nothing remains of the houses where they were born— in Graham's case just a plot of land bisected by a street paved in 1960. Does the city of Pittsburgh *really* mean to consign these major figures to oblivion... in their home town? Of course not! The City has designated that desecrated triangle of land an historic site. The same holds for Mary Cassatt. And this is as it should be, regardless of the "additional significance" requirement.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries complete applicable sections)

STATE: Pennsylvania
COUNTY: Allegheny
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
The Mexican War Streets

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
South by North Ave., West by Drovers Way, East by Arch St., North by

CITY OR TOWN:
Pittsburgh

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
Sampsonia

STATE: Pennsylvania CODE: 42 COUNTY: Allegheny CODE: 003

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Various Owners and the City of Pittsburgh

STREET AND NUMBER:
South by North Ave., West by Drovers Way, East by Arch St.,

CITY OR TOWN:
Pittsburgh

STATE:
Penna.

CODE:
42

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Allegheny County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
414 Grant St.

CITY OR TOWN:
Pittsburgh

STATE:
Pennsylvania

CODE:
42

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Landmark Architecture of Allegheny County

DATE OF SURVEY:
 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation

STREET AND NUMBER:
Allegheny Square West

CITY OR TOWN:
Pittsburgh

STATE:
Pa.

CODE:
42

STATE: Penna.

COUNTY: Alleg.

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	and	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The proposed Mexican War Streets Historic District is a 27 acre tract of land on Pittsburgh's North Side. The District will include the following streets and alleys (from west to east) Drovers Way, an alley, Buena Vista St., Mimosa Way, an alley, Monterey St., Day Way, an alley, Resaca Place, Filson St., an alley, and Palo Alto St. These streets and alleys are parallel and run south to north. These streets are bound by Jacksonia St. ^{ANNANDALE} and O'Hern St. to the north and by North Avenue to the south. Opposite North Avenue is West Park, a city park. Houses were first built in this area in 1846-47. Construction continued through the 1850's; and there was a building boom here in the 1860's. All tracts of land are shown as well built up in Hopkins Atlas of 1882. Thus the architectural styles vary from Greek Revival, Italianate, Second Empire Mansards, Richardson Romanesque, and early 20th Century retardaire styles of the previous century. All of the streets have a consistent scale of two and three bay; two to four story houses. The houses on Monterey, Resaca Place, Palo Alto and Taylor are basically three bay, two and half story brick structures in Greek Revival or Italianate modes. Buena Vista is most noteworthy for a row of three story Romanesque Masonry houses; across from these are very early 20th century brick houses, two and three bays, two and a half stories, with roof dormers, fine brick corbeling patterns at the cornice levels, and stone belt courses connecting the stone lintels. The houses on North Avenue are larger three and four story structures with small front yards; these are, for the most part, Italianate. Various smaller brick and frame houses abut the alleys that parallel these streets. (The brick sidewalks enhance the architectural character and quality of the streets.). The first building restored in the area by the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation was at 1233 Resaca Place. The three bay three story brick building is characteristic of the house form of the district. To emphasize their rich details, the elaborate molds and sills of the windows and doors, and the bracketed cornice were painted mustard gold. The interior was subdivided into three apartments. An original Victorian fireplace was restored, brick walls were exposed and artifacts from other North Side buildings that have been demolished were reused. Most of the houses in the area have been divided into apartment units. "The reason is that tenants have less to lose than owners and are more willing to risk

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

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COUNTY Allegheny	
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Statement of Description

moving into an older yet interesting area". Other houses have been sandblasted to clean the facades; wood trim, lintels, hood molds, brackets, cornices, and brick walls have been repainted; stained and etched glass has been cleaned and repaired; cast and wrought iron crestings and grill work has been repaired and Victorian window forms and other facade components have been reinstated to return the houses to their original appearance. Many houses have brick surfaced patios and gardens. But, in any event, the yards are clean and well kept. The interiors have been creatively divided into single and multi-level units. Brick walls and ceiling joists have been exposed, stained and etched glass has been cleaned and authentic ceiling moldings and rosettes have been repaired. In addition, the interiors offer the resident original white or black marble fireplaces, tall oak mirrored mantles, wide plank floors and high windows and high ceilings. Many houses also incorporate artifacts such as paneling from demolished buildings; and other houses have added skylights in order to use previously dark attic space.

The Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation painted the exteriors and remodeled the interiors for low income tenant houses. ^{Some of} the tenants did their own redecorating in which they were sensitive to the original moldings and fireplaces.

The Mexican War Streets is once again a diverse urban neighborhood in terms of its inhabitants and its architectural structures. Architectural, urban, and the psychological renewal of the inhabitants have successfully taken place within the Mexican War Streets. Because of the manageable sizes of the houses and the close proximity of Allegheny Center and Community College, the restoration process will assuredly continue.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE			
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	
SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)			
AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	<u>Preservation</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	<u>Urban Rehabilitation</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			_____
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE			
<p>Prior to 1788, the land on which the Mexican War Streets now stand sat idle. It was Indian country. In 1788, the legislature directed a survey of 3,000 acres with the intention of bringing it onto the market to pay claims of Pennsylvania soldiers. The land was named "The Reserve Tract Opposite Pittsburgh."</p> <p>The first white man to settle in Old Allegheny was William Robinson. He lived in a log cabin and earned his keep by ferrying across the river, passengers who wanted to journey West. His son was General Robinson who later became the first Mayor of Allegheny. The importance of these facts in relation to the Mexican War Streets, is that the Robinsons held onto the land where they were located (city lots 9 & 10) from 1788 into the 1840's, when streets were finally laid down and houses built. It was from the Robinson estate that the Buena Vista Tract north of the Commons was developed. The streets are named for battles of the Mexican War (1846-47).</p> <p>Robinson's Buena Vista Extension was sold off to 12 buyers between 1848 and 1859.</p> <p>All tracts of land are shown well built up in Hopkins Atlas of 1882.</p> <p>The 27 acre proposed historic district include the following streets: (from West to East) Drivers Way, an alley, Buena Vista St., Mimosa Way, an alley, Monterey St., Day Way, an alley, Resaca Place, Filson St., an alley, and Palo Alto St. These streets and alleys are parallel and all run South to North. This area is bound by Jacksonia St. and ^{ARMANDALE} O'Hern St. to the North and by North Ave. to the South. Opposite North Ave. is West Park.</p>			

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Statement of Significance

Houses were first built in the area in 1846-47. In the 1860's there was another period of housing construction. All the streets have a consistent scale of 3 bay, 2 to 4 story houses. Architectural styles vary from Greek Revival, Italianate, Second Empire, Richardsonian Romanesque, and early 20th century. The Romanesque Houses were most probably influenced by Henry Hokson Richardson's Allegheny County Courthouse and jail and later by Smithmeyer and Pelz's Allegheny Library.

The houses on Monterey St., Resaca Place, and Palo Alto St. are basically 3 bay, 2 1/2 story brick structures; either Greek Revival or Italianate. Buena Vista is most noteworthy for a row of stone Romanesque masonry houses; across from these are very early 20th century brick houses, 2 1/2 stories, 2 and 3 bays, with fine brick corbeling patterns at the cornice levels and stone belt courses. On North Taylor, the house are 3 bay 2 or 3 story brick houses, either Greek Revival or Italianate. The houses on North Ave. are large 3 and 4 story structures with small front yards; these are for the most part Italianate. Various smaller brick and frame houses abut the alleys that parallel these streets. (The brick sidewalks enhance the architectural character and quality of the streets.)

By the late 19th and early 20th century, the Mexican War Street Area was a thriving middle class community. Most people owned their own property and the population consisted largely of Irish and German professional and working class families. The family business and residence were commonly housed in the same building; shops and houses were interspersed along the streets. For example, across from Resaca on North Taylor are 2 yellow brick houses built by the grandfather of Mr. Pivorotto of Hornes. There was originally a macaroni factory in the back of these houses. Down the street, ^{ON N TAYLOR} was a grocery store; number 600 North Taylor was a tobacco shop; number 1246 was a barber shop; and 1241 was a bakery. This street also had a beer garden, and a church. It was also a common practice for doctors to have their office in their homes.

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Statement of Significance

The Mexican War Streets are architecturally homogeneous in scale, proportion and style, and formerly supported a diverse commercial and residential community. Beginning in the 1920's and continuing through the 1940's the original population and their decedents were leaving the area. The area remained in a neglected delapidated condition until 1966 when the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation became interested in the area.

The Sarah Mellon Scaife Foundation granted the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation \$100,000.00 to establish a fund for the restoration of significant residential structures as deemed appropriate by Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation. The primary area of concern was to be the Mexican War Streets district in central North Side.

Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation initial goals for the area involved more than architectural restoration. After purchasing houses in the poorest condition and those owned by absentee landlords, Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation conducted housing experiments involving different levels of restoration. This concept was heretofore untried by preservation groups in America, i.e., complete restorations for all income groups.

The Foundation also induces sympathetic investors to purchase houses in poor condition from absentee landlords and restore them. They encourage owners occupying property in the district to remain and to invest in restoring and maintaining their houses. Also, the Foundation attempts to bolster neighborhood efforts to renew the area and to improve city and county services affecting it.

Four houses were initially purchased and restored in compliance with the goals of selling and renting to various income levels.

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Statement of Significance

In relation to the problems of maintaining the indige-ⁿous tenant population in the district, the Foundation thor- oughly studied the problems of ghetto housing and the fed- eral programs that are available to try to solve them. The Foundation entered into a leased housing agreement with the Pittsburgh Housing Authority. Under this program, the up- per floors of 1220 Monterey St. were restored as a 3 bed- room apartment and rented to the Housing Authority who in turn lease the unit to a low income family at a rate it can afford. Through this arrangement, a vital piece of architecture was preserved, a low income family has a good dwelling, no federal red-tape was required, an abandoned unit was brought back on the market, and no dislocation or demolition occurred. This program has never been at- tempted by a preservation organization in the United States.

Dr. S. K. Stevens, Chairman of the Presidents's Ad- visory Council on Historic Preservation has said that this experimental program is of national significance both for the preservation movement and for the problem of renew- ing ghetto housing without wholesale dislocation and demo- lition.

In 1970 a national conference held in Pittsburgh to review this method of architectural preservation was called for by the National Advisory Council on Historic Preser- vation, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Prior to this, 115 members of the American Institute of Planners from throughout the country attended a conference here to review the program.

The Department of City Planning has declared the area a preservation district and recognizes the Foundation to be the chief force for renewal in the area.

Simultaneously, the Foundation and private owners were restoring numerous other properties in the area for higher rentals. By encouraging mixed income levels in the

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(Number all entries)

Statement of Significance

area, the district was stabilized. To date 96 properties have been restored; 23 are in the process of restoration.

The decay of the Mexican War Streets has been arrested, the area has been infused with new life and given the beginnings of a sound future. More notably than any other renewal area in Pittsburgh, the Mexican War Streets district is a balanced neighborhood, properties have been sold and rented to professional persons, business executives, retired middle income persons, white collar workers, blue collar workers and low income families.

Because the houses and apartments are a manageable, restorable size and within a close proximity to Allegheny Center and Community College, the trend of restoring this 19th century neighborhood is assured to continue.

The restored areas have brought a new awareness of the value of the houses and location of the neighborhood to the people who live there, instilled civic pride at a time when the people needed it, and showed them how they could renew their own area without dislocation, demolition and massive federal spending.

The Mexican War Streets restoration program is unique from any other preservation program in the country. The different levels of restorations have aimed for and achieved a healthy, balanced neighborhood. This is a small but ideal solution both to preserving our architectural heritage and solving critical urban problems. Private enterprises, civic pride, and notable architecture have been brought together in an urban environment and worked out a solution for urban renewal based on the efforts of individuals.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Van Trump, James D. and Ziegler, Arthur P. Jr.
ARCHITECTURE OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY, Pennsylvania; Pittsburgh
 Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation, 1967 PP 23-26

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	40° 27' 35"	80° 00' 59"		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	40° 27' 35"	80° 00' 30"		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	40° 27' 12"	80° 00' 30"		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	40° 27' 12"	80° 00' 59"		° ' "	° ' "	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 27 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
 James D. Van Trump, Research Director

ORGANIZATION: Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation DATE: March, 1973

STREET AND NUMBER:
 Allegheny Square West

CITY OR TOWN: Pittsburgh STATE: Penna. CODE: 42

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

 Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



PA TURNPIKE (INTERCHANGE 3) 14 MI. WEST VIEW 2.3 MI.

NE 1/4 CARNEGIE 15' QUADRANGLE

580 581 2'30" 582 583 584 80°00' 40'30"

BELLEVUE

High Sch

Grant Sch

High Sch

Wilson Sch

Stadium

Langley Sch

Esplen

Langley Sch

Langley Sch

Langley Sch

Sevilla Sch

Rosedale Cam

Playground

Woods Run Sch

Western State Penitentiary

Normal Pool

Island Dump

Light

St. Martin's Cam

West End

Playground

Playground

St. John's General Hosp

St. Francis Xavier Sch

St. Gabriel's Sch

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