

Allegheny Turn Halle (855 S. Canal Street)

City of Pittsburgh Historic Landmark Nomination

Prepared by Preservation Pittsburgh



412.256.8755
1501 Reedsdale St., Suite 5003
Pittsburgh, PA 15233
www.preservationpgh.org

May, 2023.



HISTORIC NOMINATION FORM

Historic Preservation Staff
Signature:

[Handwritten Signature]

Fee Schedule

Individual Landmark Nomination: \$100.00 District To be
 Nomination: determined

**Nomination is incomplete without historic preservation staff signature

1. HISTORIC NAME OF PROPERTY: Allegheny Turn Halle
2. CURRENT NAME OF PROPERTY: 855 South Canal Street
3. LOCATION
 - a. Street: 855 South Canal Street
 - b. City, State, Zip Code: Pittsburgh, PA 15212
 - c. Neighborhood: Schweitzerloch / East Deutschtown
4. OWNERSHIP
 - d. Owner(s): Holmes Family Limited Partnership (Jeff Holmes)
 - e. Street: 855 South Canal Street
 - f. City, State, Zip Code: Pittsburgh, PA 15212
 - g. Phone: (800) 321-2247

5. CLASSIFICATION AND USE – Check all that apply

<u>Type</u>	<u>Ownership</u>	<u>Current Use:</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Private – home	<u>Commercial & Warehouse Space</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private – other	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Site	<input type="checkbox"/> Public – government	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Object	Public - other	_____
	Place of religious worship	_____

6. NOMINATED BY:

- a. Name: Matthew Falcone & Jeff Holmes
- b. Street: 1501 Reedsdale Street, Suite 5003
- c. City, State, Zip: Pittsburgh, PA 15233
- d. Phone: (412) 417-5910 Email: mfalcone@preservationpgh.org

7. DESCRIPTION

Provide a narrative description of the structure, district, site, or object. If it has been altered over time, indicate the date(s) and nature of the alteration(s). (Attach additional pages as needed)

If Known:

- a. Year Built: Completed in 1889
- b. Architectural Style: Richardsonian Romanesque
- c. Architect/Builder: Joseph Stillburg; constructed by Murphy & Hamilton

Narrative: See attached.

8. HISTORY

Provide a history of the structure, district, site, or object. Include a bibliography of sources consulted. (Attach additional pages as needed.) Include copies of relevant source materials with the nomination form (see Number 11).

Narrative: See attached.

9. SIGNIFICANCE

The *Pittsburgh Code of Ordinances, Title 11, Historic Preservation, Chapter 1: Historic Structures, Districts, Sites and Objects* lists ten criteria, at least one of which must be met for Historic Designation. Describe how the structure, district, site, or object meets one or more of these criteria and complete a narrative discussing in detail each area of significance. (Attach additional pages as needed)

The structure, building, site, district, object is significant because of (check all that apply):

- 1. Its location as a site of a significant historic or prehistoric event or activity;
- 2. Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the cultural, historic, architectural, archaeological, or related aspects of the development of the City of Pittsburgh, State of Pennsylvania, Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States;
- 3. Its exemplification of an architectural type, style or design distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship;
- 4. Its identification as the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose individual work is significant in the history or development of the City of Pittsburgh, the State of Pennsylvania, the Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States;
- 5. Its exemplification of important planning and urban design techniques distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design or detail;

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6. Its location as a site of an important archaeological resource;
 7. Its association with important cultural or social aspects or events in the history of the City of Pittsburgh, the State of Pennsylvania, the Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States;
 8. Its exemplification of a pattern of neighborhood development or settlement significant to the cultural history or traditions of the City, whose components may lack individual distinction;
 9. 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; or
 10. Its unique location and distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City of Pittsburgh.

Narrative: See attached.

10. INTEGRITY

In addition, the ordinance specifies that "Any area, property, site, structure or object that meets any one or more of the criteria listed above shall also have sufficient integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship to make it worthy of preservation or restoration". (Attach additional pages as needed)

Narrative: See attached.

11. NOTIFICATION/CONSENT OF PROPERTY OWNER(S)

1.3(a)(2) Community information process.

Preceding submission of a nomination form for a District, the Historic Review Commission shall conduct at least one (1) public information meeting within or near the boundaries of the proposed district, which shall include at least one (1) member of the Department of City Planning and one (1) Commission member, to discuss the possible effects of designation. Notice shall be given to the owners of property in the proposed district in accordance with Section 1.3(b) below. The final public information meeting shall be held no more than six months before the nomination form is submitted.

1.3(a)(1)(a) Subsection F.

In the case of a nomination as a Historic District, by community-based organizations or by any individual, but in either event the nomination shall be accompanied by a petition signed by the owners of record of twenty-five (25) percent of the properties within the boundaries of the proposed District.

- Please attach documentation of your efforts to gain property owner's consent.-

** The nomination of any religious property shall be accompanied by a signed letter of consent from the property's owner.

12. PHOTO LOGS: *Please Attach*

13. BIBLIOGRAPHY: *Please Attach*

14. NOMINATION FORM PREPARED BY:

a. Name: Preservation Pittsburgh

b. Street: 1501 Reedsdale Street, Suite 5003

c. City, State, Zip: Pittsburgh, PA 15232

d. Phone: (412) 417-5910 Email: mfalcone@preservationpgh.org

e. Signature:  _____

CHECKLIST: Allegheny Turn Halle

- #1-6 Nomination Form:** Address, Ownership, Classification, Nominator Info.
 - #7: Description
 - #8: History
 - #9: Significance
- #10 Integrity**
- #11 Consent of Property Owners**
- #12 Photographs of Property:** numbered and labeled
- #13 List of Supporting Documents**

- Fee**
- Hard-Copy nomination**
- Electronic nomination (Word Format for text).**

**Nomination form is incomplete without the signature of
Historic Preservation Staff.**

**Please email HistoricReview@pittsburghpa.gov
to schedule a meeting.**

A note on nomenclature: “Turn” in German roughly translates to “Gym” in English. “Turners” in German is the English equivalent of “Gymnasts”. Whenever possible, this nomination uses the German nomenclature out of respect and in keeping with the people and culture about whom this nomination seeks to convey.

7. Description



Photo. 1. *Primary & Western Tertiary Façades, 855 S. Canal Street.* Matthew Falcone. May 2023.

855 S. Canal Street (Photo. 1) is a brick and stone, four-and-a-half story, Richardsonian Romanesque building that currently serves as commercial and storage space.

855 S. Canal Street sits in a light, urban, and largely mixed-used street in Pittsburgher’s Schweitzerloch neighborhood, which was part of the larger Deutschtown, an area of settlement most noted for its historical connection to German-speaking peoples. Originally centered along the Allegheny Canal, which was later replaced with elevated railway lines, this neighborhood was bifurcated in the late 1970s and early 1980s by Route 279 and again in the late 2000s and early 2010s by the replacement of East Ohio Street with Route 28. Today the neighborhood is largely comprised of light industrial buildings, a handful of two-to-three story brick row homes, and the former Heinz Co. plant, which occupies several city blocks. Most of the neighborhood is comprised of vacant land and informal parking lots.

North (Primary) Elevation



Photo. 2. *Primary Façade, 855 S. Canal Street.* Matthew Falcone. May 2023.

The north elevation of 855 S. Canal Street is the building's primary façade. The building rises four stories high off a half-story basement delineated by a course of rough-hewn stone. The façade is divided into three bays that are defined by large-arched recesses that stretch the height of the building. The central archway rises from the second floor, with a similar arched recess extending between the first and second floor that encompasses the window opening. The window openings throughout the façade are all rectangular with the first-floor windows comprised of glass block and the windows of the second, third, and fourth floor comprised of twelve-paned steel projecting windows. Windowsills are either roughhewn stone that matches the basement or are redbrick. Each bay is framed with dental molding brickwork, which provides an ornamental transition from the more austere lower floors to the ornate latticework freeze composed of bricks that crowns the building. The basement course is broken by a glass-block window in the left and right bays and a modern metal door at center, which now serves as the primary entrance for the building. A cornerstone (Photo. 3) that reads "Ecksteinlegung am 21, Juli 1889" (Translation: Laying of the Cornerstone on July 21, 1889) sits to the left of the building on the basement level just below the hewn stone course that divides

the basement from the brick first floor.



Photo. 3. *Cornerstone, 855 S. Canal Street.* Matthew Falcone. May 2023.

South (Secondary) Elevation



Photo. 4. *Secondary Façade, 855 S. Canal Street.*
Matthew Falcone. May 2023.

Because of changes in topography between S. Canal Street and Carpenter way, the south elevation (Photo. 4) of 855 S. Canal Street has another full story from street-level, which is entirely contained in the stone basement. The basement level is comprised of roughly hewn stone, punctuated by three openings, two windows at right and one narrow, metal door at left. The original window openings are marked by their stone surrounds while the windows (comprised of twelve panes, divided by steel muttons with the ability of the four central panes to open inward at a tilt) and partially framed with stylized cement. This

stylized cement infill is also present in the door's opening, which is the full height of the stone basement. The first floor is comprised of three arched windows with stone lug sills. Like the basement, the window openings are defined by recessed arches and twelve paned glass windows though infill here is red brick that closely matches the exterior walls. The second story lacks window openings while the third story window openings are marked with arched tops, stone slug sills, and windows comprised of eight panes with metal muttons. The fourth story contains three openings defined by two courses of brick, the outer two have been infilled with brick that is recessed and the central opening has been infilled with brick that is flush with the façade. The parapet is capped with terracotta and a central, one-story tower rises from the center of the façade on which several antenna are mounted. A very faded ghost sign extends from the roofline to the third floor which appears to read:

“Robinson Ogilive
Packing (North American Van Lines) Storage
Local & Long Distance Moving”

It appears that this was painted over an older ghost sign, the word “Storage” being the most prominent visual vestige remaining as the faded signs continues to fade.

East (Tertiary) Elevation



Photo. 5. *East Tertiary Façade, 855 S. Canal Street.* M. Falcone. May 2023.

The east façade (Photo. 5) of 855 S. Canal Street is divided into seven bays, each marked by a recessed archway spanning multiple stories and perforated by multiple window openings. The basement level, marked by its stone composition contains – from north to south – one square window comprised of glass block, a loading dock opening, four windows with twelve paned glass separated by iron muttons that rest atop a concrete, recessed infill and finally a recessed opening from floor to ceiling. The first floor contains six-paned window recessed marked by an arched brick top and a stone slug sill that in sets of three and

three flank a central arched recess that extends to the top of the basement stone course.

West (Tertiary) Elevation



Photo. 6. *West Tertiary Façade, 855 S. Canal Street.* Matthew Falcone. May 2023.

The west elevation (Photo. 6) of 855 S. Canal Street is comprised entirely of brick rising for four stories upon a stone basement course. The center of the façade provides the best understanding of the correlation to interior space, with two columns of arched recesses (previous window openings that have been infilled with brick) of diminishing height. The first-floor recesses have small sliding vynal windows, with another on right. Two arches openings that have been infilled at top are present. A very faded ghost sign extends from the roofline to the top of the third floor which appears to read “North American Van Lines Robinson Ogilvie... Agents”

8. History

Summary Overview

The Allegheny Turner Association was founded in 1850 in what was then Allegheny City and is today Pittsburgh's North Side. The association grew rapidly over the course of the next several years, in part because of the large influx of German immigrants escaping the failed revolutions of 1848. The Association would rise to prominence as the national seat of the Turners before and during the Civil War, during which the Association suspended all activities to fight for the Union. After the Civil War, the Association would purchase the land at 855 S. Canal Street and construct the new Turn Halle after a fire destroyed a smaller wooden structure on the site. From 1889 to 1919, the Turn Halle would serve as the seat of the Allegheny Turner Association as well as a community center with a gym, swimming pool, concert hall, kitchen, and bedrooms. In 1919, the same year World War I would come to an end, the Turners sold the building, which was purchased by the H.J. Heinz Company. The Turners would move into a rented building at 707 East Ohio Street and The H.J. Heinz Company would convert the building into a warehouse before selling it in 1926. The Allegheny Turners continued on until 1938, when they ultimately disbanded as the United States joined other Allied nations in the war against Nazi Germany and other Axis Powers.

Site History – Pre-Construction

The land where the Allegheny Turn Halle would later stand was originally connected to several Native American tribes that changed over time. The Adena Tribe, the Hopewell Tribe, the Monongahela People were the original inhabitants of the land and, post-European contact, were later joined by refugees from other tribes, such as the Delaware, Shawnee, and Iroquois. Ultimately European colonists would settle this land, which became part of the municipality of Allegheny in 1788. Allegheny grew rapidly and incorporated as a city in 1840, which was the same year that the Pennsylvania Main Line Canal was completed connecting Philadelphia to Pittsburgh. The lots adjacent to the canal were some of the first to be developed after Allegheny's incorporation as a city and this is true of the future site of the Turn Halle. We see this in the Allegheny County deed book:

“Being lots number 169 & 170 in a plan of lots laid out by Warner Painter as recorded in PBV 1: 128.

Lot No 169 being the same lot of ground which said Warner & Painter by Articles of Agreement dated March 12, 1845 conveyed to Nicholas Lang who having died seized and possessed of the same intestate the said lot was sold by virtue of an order of the Orphans court of said County at #73 June term 1859 recorded in DBV 144: 120 and the said Warner and Painter with their wives by deed dated 11/8/1859 recorded in DBV 144: 123 conveyed the said lot to William Ademy for the purpose of perfecting the title in him and the said William Ademy by deed dated 12/12/ 1859 recorded in Vol 144: 122 conveyed the same to George Kirn who by deed dated 12/11/ 1862 recorded in DBV 159:186 conveyed the same to Gotleib Schauwecker.

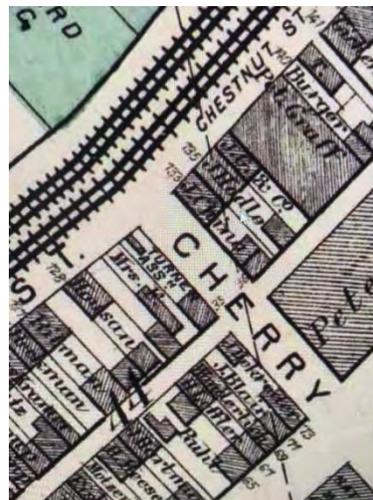
Lot #170 being the same lot of ground which the said Warner and Painter by articles of Agreement dated 9/16/1845 conveyed to Frederick Sitzeler who by endorsement said articles dated August 3, 1846 assigned all his interest therein to Anthony Jawar who died seized and possessed of the same intestate leaving one child, Elizabeth, wife of Philip Fichter and a widow afterwards intermarried with Charles Lanke whereupon the said Philip Fichter & wife

by deed dated 8/12/1863 did sell and convey their interest in said lot to the said Charles Lanks who with his wife by deed dated November 7, 1866 and intended to be recorded herewith and also a deed of conveyance from G. E. Warner and Jacob Painter & their wives dated 12/5/ 1866 for the purpose of perfecting the title.

By early 1870, the Turner Association acquired the first parcel that would later house the Turn Halle:

On February 17, 1870 (Allegheny County Deed Book 255: 52): John W. and Ann Simpson conveyed 855-857 South Canal Street to The Allegheny Turners Association of the City of Allegheny for \$2,975.

This is affirmed by the 1872 plat map, which shows the “Turner Ass.” Owing a parcel on the corner of Cherry Street & Carpenter Alley. From newspaper articles it is known that this structure was a “large, three-story frame” structure that housed all activities of the organization, ranging from lectures, a school, athletic activities, and other community gatherings. Tragedy would strike the morning of January 4, 1888 when a fire completely destroyed the Turner Hall and damaged several of the nearby homes.¹ It was decided that the ruins of the old building would be cleared until funds could be raised for the type of structure that was wanted by the stockholders of the association.² Though the archives and records of the Allegheny Turners have not survived, it can be inferred from newspaper articles that the fire had a tremendous impact on the organization’s decision making and the “type of building” that the stockholders wanted was one that incorporated modern design and technology that would make it nearly fire proof.



Site History – Construction



Funds were apparently raised fairly quickly, as an article in the Pittsburgh Press on July 22, 1889 indicates that the cornerstone was laid for the new building amid great fanfare. The Turner associations of the South Side, Lawrenceville, “Pittsburg” (sic), Steubenville, and Bellaire threw a parade and celebration for the occasion. This article also gives us the best insight into the original interior function of the building, stating:

In the basement are to be placed the gymnasium, bowling alley, and baths. On the first floor will be the meeting room, dining room, and club room, and on the second floor will be two toilet rooms and the large hall, which will have one gallery and will be fitted with a stage at one end.³

Construction of the building went swiftly and it was officially dedicated on November 28, 1889 in a celebration that involved the entire German community in and around Pittsburgh. A Pittsburgh Daily Post article from November 29, 1889 called the building “A Temple to Muscle” and indicates that over 3500 men participated in a parade throughout Deutschtown that involved Turner and other German social societies. Speeches by dignitaries that day succinctly capture the major contributions of the Turners to American society, including fighting en masse against the rebels during the Civil War, advancing fitness and musical education, and ensuring that physical education

¹ “Fire in Allegheny,” *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, January 4, 1888.

² “Deferred Building a Hall,” *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, January 12, 1888.

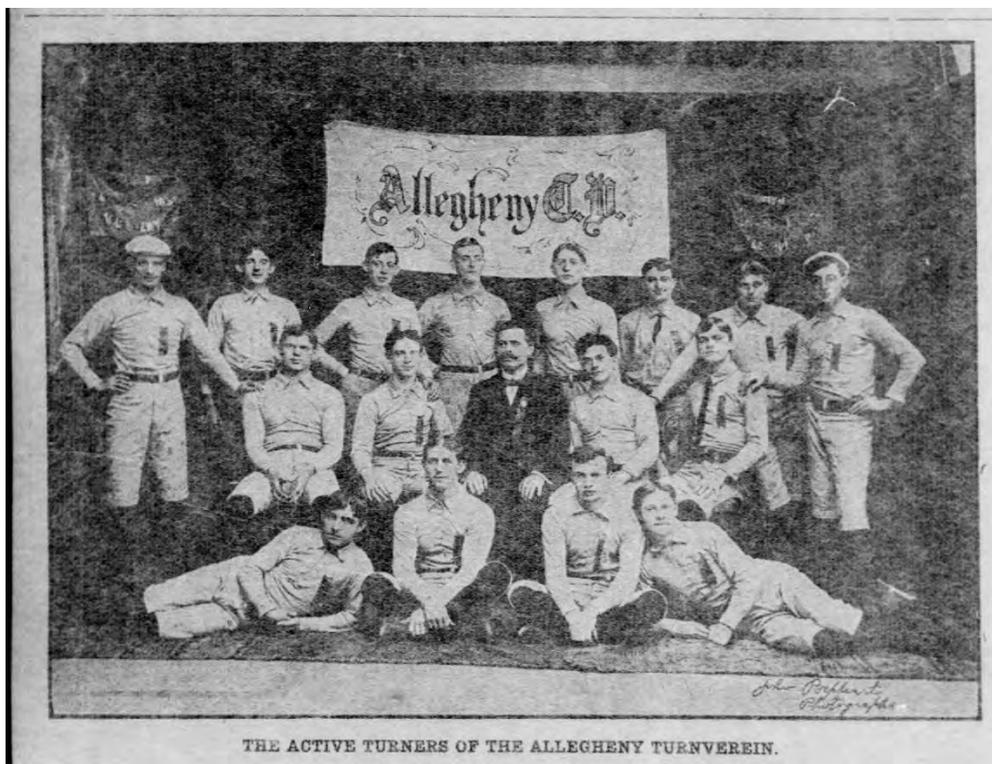
³ “Allegheny Turner Hall: the Cornerstone of the New Building Laid Yesterday Afternoon,” *Pittsburgh Press*, July 22, 1889.

became compulsory part of public-school education throughout the Commonwealth. As part of the ceremony, Architect Joseph Stillburg on behalf of members the construction company Murphy & Hamilton handed the keys of the building to H.C. Bloedel, the first speaker of the Verein.⁴

On December 7, 1893 tragedy would again strike the Allegheny Turners as a fire broke out within the building that killed Mrs. Carl Benninghoff and her daughter Emma (the wife of the janitor that lived in the attic of the building) and endangered the lives of 50 girls who were practicing gymnastics in the basement. The building was substantially damaged by the fire (which began in the kitchen and spread through the stairwell to all floors of the building) and the Turners would again undertake additional renovations to ensure the building had more modern, fire-resistant measures in place.⁵



In 1898 the social and cultural programming of the Allegheny Turners would be disrupted as it had been during the Civil War as the society readied to support the Spanish-American war efforts. An article from the Pittsburgh Daily Post proclaims that the “Allegheny Turners Preparing for War” and that “...at the first tap of a drum in the call to arms a regiment of Germans will march from the Northside to fight in defense of their adopted country.” Interestingly, the regiment formed was done so entirely outside of the structure of the U.S. military and the press makes it clear that the Allegheny Turn Halle was instrumental in hosting both talks about the war and physical training for those volunteering for the war effort. So great was the number of volunteers it was discussed if a larger facility would be needed to accommodate the needs of all who wished to fight.⁶



Clipping that emphasizes the Turners (gymnasts) from the Pittsburgh Post Gazette. September 6 (above and left) & November 11 (above), 1906.

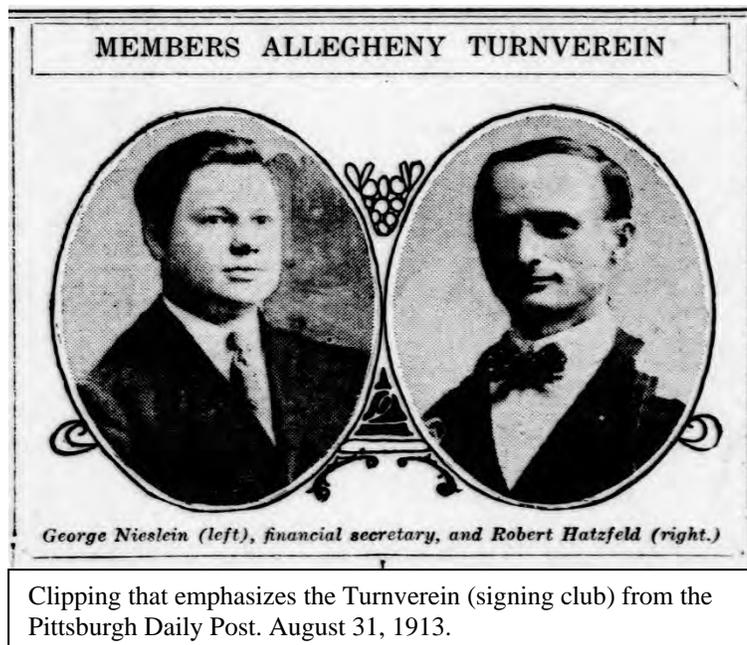
⁴ “A Monument to Muscle: The New Allegheny Turner Hall Dedicated,” *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, November 29, 1889.

⁵ “Three Lives Lost,” *Pittsburgh Press*, December 7, 1893.

⁶ “Allegheny Turners Preparing for War,” *Pittsburgh Post*, March 21, 1898.

The war with Spain was short lived and over the course of the next two decades, the Allegheny Turn Halle would continue to host community-centered events and programming that was tremendously important to German immigrants and to the larger German-American community. Frequent reports in Pittsburgh's public newspapers made clear that these events were open to the public and often involved different segments of the community. What is particularly important to note is the subtle changes that occurred between roughly 1910 and 1914 in not only what was being reported by the Anglo press in Pittsburgh but the frequency as well. Between 1910 and 1913 in region-wide outlets like the Pittsburgh Press and Pittsburgh Daily Post, articles about the Allegheny Turners become substantially less frequent and tend to focus almost exclusively on singing events put on by the society. This is likely an indication of two different, concurrent trends that are significant to the history of the Allegheny Turn Halle and the Turnverein in greater Pittsburgh.

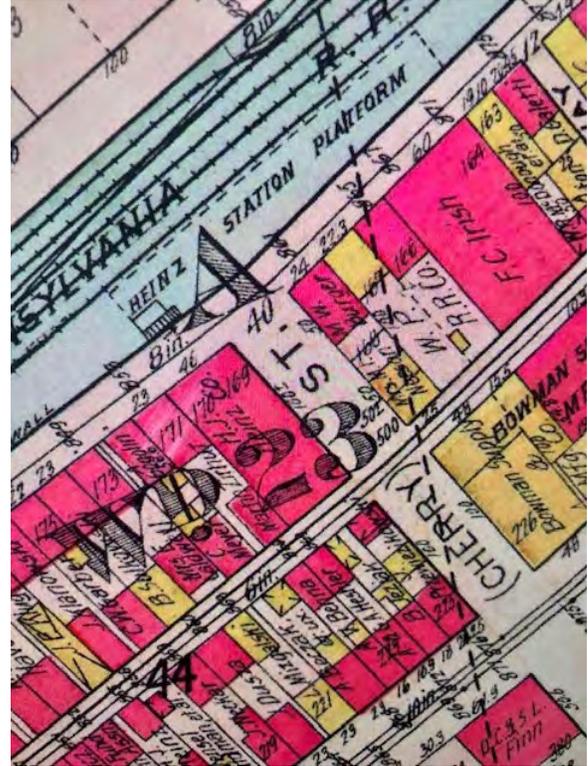
As geo-political tension grew between the German and British Empires it created a complex social and cultural situation for many German-Americans who felt deep allegiance to their adopted county and to their cultural roots. These themes will be explored further in the significance section of this nomination though very broadly speaking, English language newspapers reported on German-American happenings with less frequency and German-American organizations began operating with a lower public profile, often suspending public events, altering programming, and in some instances altering their names.



The Allegheny Turners were no exception to this and all reporting in Pittsburgh-based public newspapers appears to have ceased during 1914, the year that World War I began. While the United States did not join the war effort on the side of the Allies until 1919, the war had a profound impact on America and German-Americans. The same year that America entered the war, 1919, the Allegheny Turners sold Turn Halle, which was bought by the H.J. Heinz Company and the Turners began meeting at 707 East Ohio Street.⁷ The Allegheny Turners would continue on until 1938 when rising tensions between Nazi Germany and formerly Allied countries would again cause significant cultural and social strain for German-Americans.

⁷ Hoisington, Daniel. "Allegheny Turners." Email, 2023.

After the Turners sold their Turn Halle in 1919, 855 S. Canal Street would have a new life with another owner of German descent, H.J. Heinz. The timeframe and circumstances will be explored in the significance section but it is important to note that H. J. Heinz Company made a substantial investment in the building at the time and altered the building to what remains today. The 'Turn Halle' lettering was removed from the primary façade, the attic was expanded to the building's exterior walls, and Heinz signage was added to the eastern tertiary side of the building. The plat map from this period not only affirms H.J. Heinz Co.'s ownership of the building but provide insight into how the building quickly became an integral part of their commercial operations. The adjacent Pennsylvania Railway line was altered and the Heinz Company created their own station platform, the entrance to which was immediately in front of 855 S. Canal Street. Though overgrown, the platform, and the stairwell in front of the building still exist and offer a material connection to this new phase in the building's existence. The interior of the building was also modified at this time and the substantial investments in fire protection and prevention made by the Turners were augmented under Heinz's ownership. Automatic firedoors were added (all of which remain intact). Despite this large investment, Heinz remained owner of the building for only a short period of time, 6 years, before selling it for an incredibly modest sum:



July 8, 1926 (Deed Book 2293: 198): H. J. Heinz Company conveyed 855-857 South Canal Street to Samuel, Howard G. and Walter Hasley for \$1. (\$28 in taxes). An examination of the chain of title shows that throughout the remainder of 855 S. Canal Street's existence, it would remain primarily a warehouse and office space:

April 16, 1936 (Deed Book 2525: 477): Howard G. and Anna B. Hasley conveyed 855-857 South Canal Street and two properties on Uneeda Way to Walter Hasley for \$20,000.

All of the described properties are part of the partnership assets under Hasley Brothers, which partnership was dissolved by the death of Samuel Hasley on 11/14/1935.

August 2, 1965 (Deed Book 4283: 677): Kathryn H. Mazur and Samuel Hasley, Executors under the Last Will and Testament and Codicil of Walter Hasley, Deceased conveyed 855-857 South Canal Street to Samuel S. Stewart Company for \$50,000.

September 22, 1988 (Deed Book 7874: 415): Samuel S. Stewart Company, Inc. conveyed 855-857 South Canal Street to Babcor Packaging Corporation for \$75,000

June 23, 2004 (Deed Book 12096: 119): Babcor Packaging Corporation conveyed 855-857 South Canal Street to Jeffery A. Holmes for \$1.

April 18, 2008 (Deed Book 13621: 380): Jeffery A. and Joyce Pascual Holmes conveyed 855-857 South Canal Street to Holmes Family Limited Partnership for \$1.

9. Criteria / Significance Statement

As such it is recommended eligible for listing on the City Register under the following Criterion:

(1) *Its location as a site of a significant historic or prehistoric event or activity;*

This resource does not meet this Criterion.

(2) *Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the cultural, historic, architectural, archaeological, or related aspects of the development of the City of Pittsburgh, State of Pennsylvania, Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States;*

This resource does not meet this Criterion.

(3) *Its exemplification of an architectural type, style, or design distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship;*

This resource likely meets this criterion (which corresponds with Criterion C of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) because of the building's unique construction and use of advanced technology meant for fire prevention. Examples of this can be seen in the extensive use of steel (beams are present a foot apart from one another) and terra cotta to distinguish each floor. The automatic fire doors are also a prime example of the use of innovative technology that makes 855 S. Canal Street worthy of historic designation. Extensive discussion of the interior (which is not within the HRC's purview) is necessary though it is important to note that this building remains one of only six within the City of Pittsburgh that holds the highest fire safety ranking.



Interior Ceiling, 2nd floor showing the parged steel beams divided by parged terra cotta.

(4) *Its identification as the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose individual work is significant in the history of development of the City of Pittsburgh, the State of Pennsylvania, the Mid- Atlantic region, or the United States;*

This Criterion corresponds with Criterion C of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). As Joseph Stillburg was once a prolific architect in Pittsburgh, having designed both major commissions such as the Exposition Buildings, as well as many minor commissions, particularly in his home of the North Side, with a notable extant example being the Eberhart and Ober Brewery in addition to this resource. Having been born in Germany, his work exhibits the fine attention to nature-derived detail, often called Art Nouveau, and the highly ornamental styles of Romanesque and Beaux Arts. He was well known both for the quality of his craft and as well as for being the mentor to another notable Pittsburgh architect, Frederick Osterling. As one of only a handful of Stillburg's work to retain integrity and to remain extant, this resource retains significance for its association with him.

Joseph Stillburg was born in what was then the Austrian Empire, to Joseph Stillburg, Sr., and Marie Berchschnieder (Gudmundsson, "Stillburg Family History,"). He served in the Austrian Army during the Austro-Prussian War in 1866, where he was stationed in Tirste. During this time, he survived a deadly cholera outbreak (Gudmundsson, "Stillburg Family History,"). He immigrated to the United States in 1868 and married Amelia Hoenig in 1879. Hoenig was born in Wisconsin in 1856. Her parents were Freiderika Schiller Moeier and Oskur Koenig (the 1860

Census spells their last name as Koenig not Hoenig, likely a mistake in transcription). Her father was born in 1827 and her mother in 1833, both in Saxony (Gudmundsson, “Stillburg Family History,”). She had a brother Albert, born in 1859, and a sister Louisa, born in 1853. They lived in a German community in Green Bay, Wisconsin. After marrying, Joseph Stillburg and his wife Amelia had four sons: Joseph, born in October of 1880 and died after less than one year, in October of 1881 (Gudmundsson, “Stillburg Family History,”). They had three sons live to adulthood: Frederick Albert, born in 1882, Osker, born in 1885, and Albert James born in 1893.

Of these, both Frederick and Osker became architects like their father (Photos 1-2); Frederick taught at Carnegie Institute of Technology in the 1920s, and died in 1952; it is speculated he suffered from mental illness later in life (Gudmundsson, “Stillburg Family History,”). His brother Osker practiced architecture in Green Bay due to a family disagreement over his choice of wife, and died in 1914 at only 28 years old of pneumonia (Gudmundsson, “Stillburg Family History,”).

Only Albert chose not to pursue architecture as a profession and instead became an accountant (Gudmundsson, “Stillburg Family History,”). He married Mildred Reese and had two daughters, Jean and Nancy (Gudmundsson, “Stillburg Family History,”).

Joseph Stillburg’s work as an architect in Pittsburgh was well-known and highly regarded. He and his wife were lifelong residents of Reserve Township, where he built a fine Shingle Style residence for his family just west of Spring Garden Road (now Avenue), between Beech and Hazlett Avenues (Figure 3).

Somewhat uniquely, this house was spared the wrecking ball during the construction of the Northview Heights public housing development, and still stands at the center of the complex, although much changed, and is now used as the headquarters for Bethany House Ministries (Figures 4-5). Stillburg completed many commissions for upper North Side and adjacent communities, working primarily in the Classical styles, being particularly adept at Beaux Arts, and was a popular choice for municipal, civic, and educational projects.

Perhaps Stillburg’s most well-known work was that of Exposition Hall (Figures 6-7). The Winter Garden at Exposition Hall was comprised of three buildings, the Main Hall, the Music Hall, and the Machinery Hall. It was originally conceived of a place for social gatherings and a sort of exchange market; the Western Pennsylvania Exposition Society envisioned it as a cross between a county fair and a World’s Fair (Januzzi, 1953). The Society was organized in 1885 at the peak of an era where these sorts of nonprofit societies and their accompanying expositions and fairs were quite common. Originally located on the North Side, their first home was called Exposition Park and eventually became home to the Pittsburgh Pirates (until 1909 when Forbes Field was completed). However, the Society quickly outgrew their North Side home and in 1886 Pittsburgh City Council approved the purchase of land at the Point along the Allegheny River for a new facility and site (Januzzi, 1953). Joseph Stillburg acted as architect and designed the Richardson Romanesque and Beaux Arts buildings in a highly ornamental manner (Gudmundsson, “Stillburg Family History,”).

During its initial months of opening, it had a daily average attendance of 10,000 and featured automobile, poultry and trade shows as well as live music by the likes of Victor Herbert and John Philip Sousa (Januzzi, 1953). Outside, a roller coaster, Ferris wheel, and merry-go-round entertained families.

Although its initial years were successful, disaster struck in the form of a fire on St. Patrick’s Day, 1901, when winds carried embers from a nearby stable fire. The blaze destroyed the great

Main Hall and adjoining buildings, leaving only Machinery Hall as a surviving structure on the six-acre site (Januzzi, 1953). Although it was rebuilt, interest in such expositions was waning, and although the Society tried to remain relevant by booking musical acts, particularly orchestras, by 1916 the Exposition Hall had seen its last great event (Januzzi, 1953). Combined with a severe polio outbreak and the onset of World War I, hosting an exposition that would turn a profit was deemed impossible, and the Society voted in 1919 to give up the remaining 17 years of its 50-year lease from the City (Januzzi, 1953).

The buildings were turned over to municipal use, and the City used them as a union trolley freight station, city garage and machine shop, and as a meeting space for larger meetings and conventions. The buildings were not well maintained during these years and the surrounding site was used for a variety of storage purposes; by 1940 they were in poor shape (Januzzi, 1953). The Music Hall was demolished in 1941, and Machinery Hall was dismantled in 1942 to use the metal for the World War II effort; the Main Hall was the last remaining building until 1951 when the structure was torn down to make way for the 37- acre Point State Park (Januzzi, 1953).

Stillburg also designed the Eberhart and Ober Brewery (known now as the Penn Brewery) (Figure 8), the Spring Hill School (Figure 9), and the St. Anthony of Padua Shrine, which is located just north of the Troy Hill Fire House (Figure 10); outside of Pittsburgh, he was also responsible for Administration building at what is now Seton Hill University (it was originally designed for the St. Joseph Academy for Girls). The thread that runs throughout his work is the influence of German and Austrian motifs, particularly evident in his use of decorative brickwork and stonework, and his mastery of using high Classical orders mixed with Art Nouveau and other similar ornamentation styles to create complex, interesting, and Old World-esque facades.

Additionally, Stillburg was well respected as the mentor for Frederick J. Osterling, another German architect who became well known in Pittsburgh and environs, who apprenticed at his office. His influence on Osterling is evident when seen through the lens of Osterling's own highly ornamented styles which often recall Eastern European decorative motifs (such as the Union Trust Building, the Heinz Company factories, the Horace Mann public school, and the Osterling "flats" triplex in Brighton Heights).

Pittsburgh's Historic Review Commission has repeatedly recognized the significance of Stillburg and his work to the history of Pittsburgh. St. Anthony's Shrine in Troy Hill, Spring Hill School (in Spring Hill), and the Troy Hill Firehouse (Troy Hill) are all individually listed with the City of Pittsburgh in part because of their association with Stillburg. The Allegheny Turn Halle would be the first social hall by Stillburg to be landmarked and work and add depth and diversity to his contributions to Pittsburgh's built environment.

(5) Its exemplification of important planning and urban design techniques distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design or detail;

This resource does not meet this Criterion.

(6) Its location as a site of an important archaeological resource;

This resource does not meet this Criterion.

(7) *Its association with important cultural or social aspects or events in the history of the City of Pittsburgh, the State of Pennsylvania, the Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States*

This Criterion corresponds with Criterion A of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The Allegheny Turn Halle building is associated with the important, though incredibly complex, historical narrative of German immigration to Pittsburgh and their assimilation into American society. The building's unique connection to the Turners (a group of German immigrants with a shared philosophy), its design by a prominent Austrian-American architect (Joseph Stillburg), and its sale to H.J. Heinz (one of American's most prominent businessmen of German descent) are significant parts of this larger historical narrative. Key to understanding the significance of this building is contextualizing it with the contributions of the Turners to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and national life.

The Turners were founded in 1811 by Friedrich Ludwig Jahn who furthered the idea of a nationalist gymnastics in Berlin, which quickly spread throughout the German-speaking states. Though the founder of the movement, his focus was primarily on physical fitness and its transformation into a liberal political movement in the 1840s completely rejected Jahn's commitment to monarchical forms of government and anti-Semitism. Throughout the 1840s the Turner movement became devoted to liberalism, democratic forms of government, equality, and advocates for national unity for German-speaking peoples. The Turners were heavily involved in the Revolutions of 1848 in Europe and when they failed in the German states, the Turner clubs were ordered to disband, their property was confiscated, and they were sent into exile.⁸

Thousands of Turners sought political refuge in the United States and began to establish Turner societies in their newly adopted home. In Pittsburgh, the first Turner Society was established in 1850 in Allegheny City and a national convention of Turners was held here in 1854 that established an organizational structure by which each city had a primary chapter to which branch societies would report. In 1855 the Turners, now numbering in the hundreds of thousands across the country, adopted a platform that rejected nativism, prohibition, and firmly established:

*The Turners are opposed to slavery, and regard this institution as unworthy of a republic and not in accord with the principles of freedom.*⁹

Several of the southern societies left the national bund and attempted to form another party. The national Turnerbund rejected any compromise with the handful of southern societies and moved the convention, and executive committee, to Pittsburgh so that it was firmly rooted in an abolitionist state. By their own account, one of the proudest achievements of the Allegheny Turners was that all activities of the society were placed on hiatus so that all members could enlist to fight for the Union during the Civil War.¹⁰

It is important to note that the belief and work of the Turners were by no means divorced from the larger Deutschtown neighborhood in which they lived. At this time Deutschtown was home to several institutions, like Avery College, which was just blocks away from Turn Halle, that advocated for abolition, equal rights, and greater freedoms for African-Americans. The political activism of the Turners continued after the Civil War, as they adopted a platform in 1867 that

⁸ Claire Nolte. German Turnverin. Accessed: <https://www.ohio.edu/chastain/rz/turnvere.htm>

⁹ Metzner, Henry. A Brief History of the American Turnerbund. Revised Edition. Pittsburgh, Pa. National Executive Committee of the American Turnerbund, 1924.

¹⁰ Pamphlet

called for:

*... the impartial administration of justice without discrimination as to race, color, or nationality; for the uniform legal qualifications for voters in the national elections; for a general and uniform distribution of taxes and the maintenance of the principles of a progressive capital and income tax.*¹¹

Their advocacy for reform and liberal political ideals continued throughout the 19th century and in 1871, nearly fifty years before women could vote in the Commonwealth, the Turners adopted a platform that “urged that men and women should have an equal status in the political life of the nation, and that the power of the ballot should be conferred upon the latter.”¹² The Allegheny Turners also made substantial political contributions to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and to the city of Pittsburgh through their activism. It was because of the Allegheny Turners that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania adopted a physical education requirement in public schools and, in turn, public schools began building gymnasiums as an integral part of their design. The Allegheny Turners also successfully advocated for the introduction of German language was added to the curriculum of Pittsburgh public schools.¹³

As active and integrated as the Allegheny Turners were in society, the rising hostilities between The Germany & Austria-Hungarian Empires, and France, England, and America would fundamentally alter the environment for German immigrants and German-Americans in the country. In an incredibly short time frame German-Americans faced pressure from within and without to assimilate and renounce their cultural bonds and heritage, which created a fundamental conflict for societies like the Turners that advocate for German language, arts, and culture and provided a comfortable, safe space for German-Americans. Wittke speaks of these external pressures when they state:

*A large section of the American population condoned the illegal activities of a minority in the “Drive against Teutonism”. German music and literature, German church services, the German language, the activities of all German society, and everything even remotely associated with a German origin came under the ban of superpatriots*¹⁴

The law would also put pressure on the Turners, among many others, and in 1917, Congress passed a law that required translations of all foreign-language newspapers in the United States.¹⁵ Many German organizations in Pittsburgh, like the Bloomfielder Liederkrantz (a German singing society) discontinued all outside activities as to keep a lower public profile. Other organizations dissolved entirely or changed their name in order to remove outward reminders of their German roots though some of this can be attributed to an accelerated pace of assimilation. For example, Peiffer suggests that the re-naming of disappearance of such organizations as the Germania Savings Bank (which became the Citizens Savings Bank of Pittsburgh) is evidence of the “expiation of the German upper class during the first world war.”¹⁶ This disassociation occurred on an individual level as well and can be seen in the 1910 U.S. Census that lists 26,483 German foreign born living in Pittsburgh and the 1920 U.S. Census that lists 16,028. As Holli asserts,

¹¹ Metzner, Henry. A Brief History of the American Turnerbund. Revised Edition. Pittsburgh, Pa. National Executive Committee of the American Turnerbund, 1924. P.25.

¹² Metzner, Henry. A Brief History of the American Turnerbund. Revised Edition. Pittsburgh, Pa. National Executive Committee of the American Turnerbund, 1924. P. 27.

¹³ News of the German Societies. Pittsburgh Press. December 30, 1906.

¹⁴ Wittke, Carl. German-Americans and the World War. Columbus, OH. 1936. P. 268.

¹⁵ Peiffer, Layne. “The German Upper Class in Pittsburgh, 1850-1920.”Seminar Paper. University of Pittsburgh 1964. P. 15.

¹⁶ (Peiffer, Layne. “The German Upper Class in Pittsburgh, 1850-1920.”Seminar Paper. University of Pittsburgh 1964. P. 29.

“Self-identifiers had found it convenient to claim some other than German nationality.¹⁷

It is in this environment that the Allegheny Turners chose to sell their building at 855 S. Canal Street. Unfortunately, scant records exist from this time that could illuminate the deliberations and reasoning for the sale though the aforementioned context and records of sales provide insight. In September 1919 the Allegheny Turners Association of Allegheny City conveyed 855-857 South Canal Street to William H. Robinson (the first person with a non-German name to own the property) for \$28,000, a sum less than they paid to construct the building. Interestingly, in April of 1920, William H. Robinson conveyed 855-857 South Canal Street to H. J. Heinz Company for only \$1.

H.J. Heinz was the son of German immigrants and like his cultural brethren, took the challenges brought about by the First World War very seriously, ever cautious of the impact the perception of his heritage may have on his business and his community. Similar to his compatriots, during the war H.J. Heinz would work emphasize his loyalty to the country by working with the United States Food Administration, an independent Federal agency that controlled the production, distribution and conservation of food in the U.S. Heinz also continued to invest heavily in the welfare of his workers and the community in which they lived and made a point to personally and publicly attended efforts and rallies to support the war effort.¹⁸ Through this lens, the acquisition of the former Allegheny Turn Halle and conversion into an integral part of the Heinz complex helped to ensure that a major community landmark continued to exist through the process of adaptive reuse.



Figure 11. *Main Plant & General Offices H.J. Heinz Co. Pittsburgh, Pa.* Note 855 S. Canal Street is circled in blue.

This approach was very much in keeping with the philanthropic efforts of H.J. Heinz in his later years that heavily focused on improving the living conditions of the surrounding neighborhood.

¹⁷ (Holli, 1981, 446).

¹⁸ Skrabec Jr., Quentin R. *H.J. Heinz: a Biography.* Jefferson, N.C. McFarland & Company. 2009. P.204.

As Skrabec sets forth:

*The neighborhood environment would be a major problem for both the (Heinz) house and the Heinz plant that was attracting 40,000 visitors a year. Heinz was a lover of Pittsburgh, and he was determined to improve the city rather than leave it.*¹⁹

Heinz formed Progress Realty Company, which started to purchase hundreds of houses in the neighborhood. While a block was cleared for the construction of the Sarah Heinz House, which was in and of itself a major investment in the welfare of the predominantly German-American neighborhood. Most acquisitions by the company, however, were renovated and rented out, which greatly improved the neighborhood and helped to preserve the physical and cultural heritage of Schweitzerloch. It is also worth noting that the acquisition of the former Allegheny Turn Halle and its conversion would have helped reinforce the new role of the Sarah Heinz House within the community.

To this day, the building that is most closely associated with the Allegheny Turners and their contributions to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and the nation remains 855 S. Canal Street. By the same measure, 855 S. Canal Street provides an unique physical connection to the complex events surrounding German immigration to America and assimilation into American society. All of these events, and especially the decision to sell the Allegheny Turn Halle and for the H.J. Heinz Company to purchase the building merits further research and exploration.

(8) Its exemplification of a pattern of neighborhood development or settlement significant to the cultural history or traditions of the City, whose components may lack individual distinction

This resource does not meet this Criterion.

(9) Its representation of a cultural, historic, architectural, archeological, or related theme expressed through distinctive areas, properties, sites, structures, or objects that may or may not be contiguous

This resource does not meet this Criterion.

¹⁹ Skrabec Jr., Quentin R. H.J. Heinz: a Biography. Jefferson, N.C. McFarland & Company. 2009. P.197.

- (10) Its unique location and distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City of Pittsburgh

By the very nature that it is one of the last remaining buildings in the Schweitzerloch neighborhood, and it is highly visible from several major thoroughfares, the former Turn Halle meets this criterion. Schweitzerloch is now defined by route 28 to the north, the Allegheny River to the south, route 579 to the west, and the H. J. Heinz plant to the east. The construction of 579 and expansion of 28 removed (1970s to today) hundreds of houses, businesses and places of worship and artificially isolated Schweitzerloch from greater Deutschtown, which, overtime, encouraged the removal of the remaining building stock which was largely two-to-three story Victorian-era homes. At four stories tall, the Allegheny Turn Halle



Photo. 7. *Schweizerloch & the Former Allegheny Turn Halle view from the 16th Street Bridge, 855 S. Canal Street.* Matthew Falcone. May 2023.

always stood out within the neighborhood as exceptional and its place as a cultural and community center reinforced its presence. With the near total removal of this building stock today and its physical presence near 28, 579, and the 16th Street Bridge, the building remains one of the last visual reminders of the people and history that defined the neighborhood. As the secondary and tertiary facades of the building are the most visibly accessible, the sparse decoration and utilitarian design of these facades conveys the building's current and historical function as a warehouse to most viewers.

10. Integrity Statement

- Location: the location of the Allegheny Turn Halle remains the same as when first constructed.
- Design: Though the original design of Allegheny Turn Halle has been altered, the alteration itself is integral in reflecting the historical significance and evolution of the building, and the changes to the community with which the building held importance. Interestingly, the additions to the original building maintained significant design elements to the primary and secondary facades, while the addition of the third story was largely in line with the utilitarian nature of the original Allegheny Turn Halle and was encompassed entirely within the roofline.
- Materials: Brick, steel, and terra cotta (on the building's interior) are overwhelmingly the materials that define Allegheny Turn Halle's character and span the periods of the building's historic significance.
- Workmanship: Physical evidence of craftsmanship is resplendent throughout the former Allegheny Turn Halle. The intricate brickwork in the primary façade of the building, particularly in the former parapet is indicative of late Victorian Revival 19th century design as presented by Stillburg. The fixed steel windows on the secondary facades are clear ties to the early 20th century conversion of the building into a Heinz Factory warehouse and allude to the substantive interior changes that are also representative of early 20th century workmanship.



Photo. 8. *Brick Parapet Detail, Primary Façade, 855 S. Canal Street.* Matthew Falcone. May 2023.

Allegheny Turn Halle
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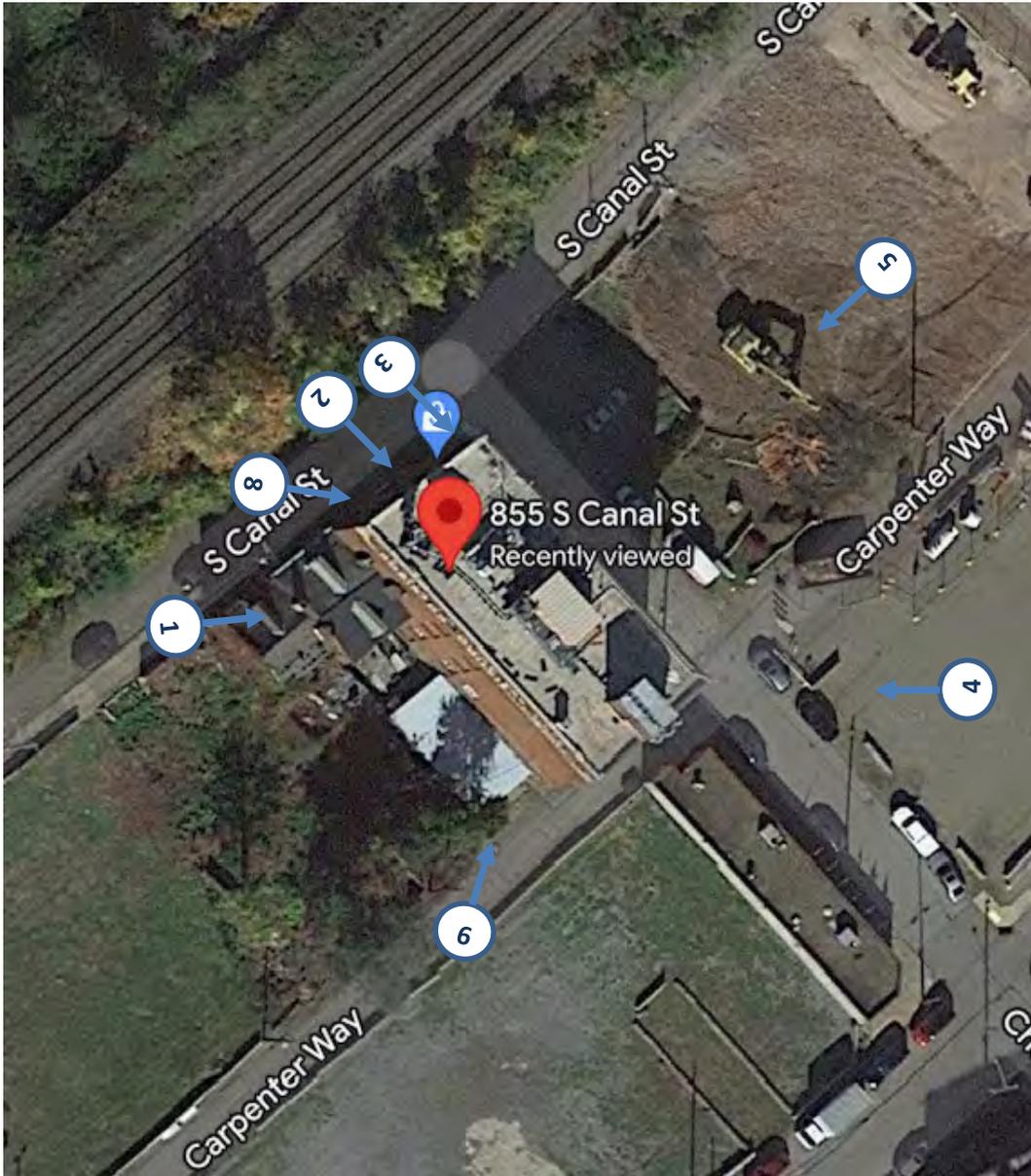
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Allegheny Turn Halle
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Photo Logs



Allegheny Turn Halle, Areal View with Photo Key

Photograph 1. Primary & Western Tertiary Façades, 855 S. Canal Street. (Matthew Falcone, May 2023).

Photograph 2. Primary Façade, 855 S. Canal Street. (Matthew Falcone, May 2023).

Photograph 3. Cornerstone, 855 S. Canal Street. (Matthew Falcone, May 2023).

Photograph 4. Secondary Façade, 855 S. Canal Street. (Matthew Falcone, May 2023).

Photograph 5. East Tertiary Façade, 855 S. Canal Street. (Matthew Falcone, May 2023).

Photograph 6. West Tertiary Façade, 855 S. Canal Street. (Matthew Falcone, May 2023).

Photograph 7. Schweizerloch, view from the 16th St. Bridge, 855 S. Canal Street. (M. Falcone, May 2023).

Photograph 8. Brick Parapet Detail, Primary Façade, 855 S. Canal Street. (M. Falcone, May 2023).

Turner Hall
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Supporting Documents



Figure 1: Joseph Stillburg, c. 1900. (Courtesy of "Stillburg Family History,").



Figure 2: Son Oscar, also an architect, on left in his office (Courtesy of "Stillburg Family History,").



Figure 3: The Shingle Style Stillburg residence in Reserve Township, as it looked shortly after construction, c. 1900 (Courtesy of "Stillburg Family History" website).



Figure 4. The Stillburg House as it appeared c. 1930, in this family photo of son Albert and wife Mildred (Historic photograph courtesy of the "Stillburg Family History,").



Figure 5. The Stillburg House as it appears today. It currently sits within the center of the Northview Heights housing complex. Note the curvilinear Shingle Style balustrades and posts on the porch which has been retained from the original. Photo courtesy of the Bethany House Ministries Website.



Figure 6: The Exposition Building Complex, c. 1900. Photo courtesy of The Brookline Connection. <http://www.brooklineconnection.com/history/Facts/Point1943.html>



Figure 7: "Exposition building, Pittsburg, Pa. Date between 1900 and 1906." Courtesy Library of Congress, via Detroit Publishing Co. no. 016359. Gift; State Historical Society of Colorado; 1949.



Figure 8: Eberhart and Ober Brewery, now the Penn Brewery, as it appeared in 2009. Photo courtesy of Wikipedia/Wikimedia Commons.



Figure 9: Spring Hill School. Date Unknown. Photo courtesy of “Stillburg Family History.”



Figure 10: Troy Hill Fire Station. Date Unknown. Photo courtesy of “Stillburg Family History.”



Figure 11. *Main Plant & General Offices H.J. Heinz Co. Pittsburgh, Pa.* Note 855 S. Canal Street is located in the top left corner.



Figure 12. *Turn Halle, Johnstown, Pa.* Designed by Joseph Stilburg, 1890.