

Former Croatian Fraternal Union

City of Pittsburgh Historic Landmark Nomination

Nominated by Dr. Anthony Benvin - Prepared by Preservation Pittsburgh



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

October, 2018



INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY HISTORIC NOMINATION FORM

HRC Staff Use Only

Date Received:
 Parcel No.:
 Ward:
 Zoning Classification:
 Bldg. Inspector:
 Council District:

Fee Schedule

Please make check payable to *Treasurer, City of Pittsburgh*
 Individual Landmark Nomination: \$100.00
 District Nomination: \$250.00

1. HISTORIC NAME OF PROPERTY:

Croatian Fraternal Union

2. CURRENT NAME OF PROPERTY:

Allegheny County Health Department

3. LOCATION

- a. Street: 3441 Forbes Avenue
- b. City, State, Zip Code: Pittsburgh, PA 15213
- c. Neighborhood: Oakland

4. OWNERSHIP

- d. Owner(s): 3441 F Street LLC
- e. Street: 3525 Forbes Ave.
- f. City, State, Zip Code: Pittsburgh, PA 15213 Phone: () -

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>vacant</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private – other	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Site	<input type="checkbox"/> Public – government	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public - other	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Place of religious worship	_____

6. NOMINATED BY:

- a. Name: Dr. Anthony Benvin
- b. Street: _____
- c. City, State, Zip: Pittsburgh, PA 15212
- d. Phone: (412) - _____ Email: _____

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: _____
- b. Architectural Style: _____
- c. Architect/Builder: _____

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: _____

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 15233

d. Phone: (412) 256-8755 Email: info@preservationpgh.org

e. Signature: _____



HISTORIC NOMINATION – INSTRUCTIONS

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILLING OUT THE NOMINATION FORM

1. Indicate the original name of the property if it is currently known by a different name; e.g. Union Station.
2. Indicate the current name of the property
3. Indicate the street address for the property. For districts, attach a separate sheet listing the street address of each property included in the nomination and a clear street map of the area showing the boundaries of the proposed district.
4. Indicate the owner of the property and his or her mailing address. For districts, attach a separate sheet listing the owner of each property and his or her mailing address.
5. Check the classification as indicated.
 - a. **“Historic Structure”** means anything constructed or erected, the use of which requires directly or indirectly, a permanent location on the land, including walks, fences, signs, steps and sidewalks at which events that made a significant contribution to national, state or local history occurred or which involved a close association with the lives of people of nations, state or local significance; or an outstanding example of a period, style, architectural movement, or method of construction; or one of the last surviving works of a pioneer architect, builder or designer; or one of the last survivors of a particular style or period of construction.
 - b. **“Historic District”** means a defined territorial division of land which shall include more than one (1) contiguous or related parcels of property, specifically identified by separate resolution, at which events occurred that made a significant contribution to national, state, or local history, or which contains more than one historic structure or historic landmarks, or which contains groups, rows or sets of structures or landmarks, or which contains an aggregate example of a period, style, architectural movements or method of construction, providing distinguishing characteristics of the architectural type or architectural period it represents.
 - c. **“Historic Site”** means the location of a significant event, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure whether standing, ruined or vanished, where the location itself maintains historical or archaeological value regardless of the value of any existing structures.
 - d. **“Historic Object”** means a material thing of historic significance for functional, aesthetic cultural or scientific reasons that may be, by nature or design, moveable yet related to a specific setting or environment.
6. Indicate the person(s) responsible for the nomination. Please note: According to the Historic Preservation Ordinance:

“Nomination of an area, property, site, or object for consideration and designation as a Historic Structure, Historic District, Historic Site, or Historic Object may be submitted to the Historic Review Commission by any of the following:

- a. The Mayor of the City of Pittsburgh
 - b. A Member of the Historic Review Commission
 - c. A Member of the City Planning Commission
 - d. A Member of the Pittsburgh City Council
 - e. The Owner of Record or any person residing in the City of Pittsburgh for at least one year (for the nomination of a Historic Structure, Site or Object)
 - f. A signed petition of 25% of the owners of record (for the nomination of a Historic District)
7. Write a physical description of the nominated property or district. Include the following information as applicable:
- architectural style(s)
 - arrangement of architectural elements
 - building materials
 - method(s) of construction
 - visual character
 - street pattern
 - density
 - type and arrangement of buildings
 - topography
 - history of the development of the area
8. Provide a narrative history of the structure, district, site, or object. Include the following information when available:
- History of the development of the area;
 - Circumstances which brought the structure, district, site, or object into being;
 - Biographical information on architects, builders, developers, artisans, planners, or others who created or contributed to the structure, district, site, or object;
 - Contextual background on building type(s) and/or style(s);
 - Importance of the structure, district, site, or object in the larger community over the course of its existence.
 - Include a bibliography of all sources consulted at the end. Where historical information is uncertain or disputed, reference sources in the text.
9. Listed below are the categories and criteria for historic designation as set forth in the Pittsburgh Historic Preservation Ordinance. Describe in detail how the structure, district, site, or object meets one or more of the criteria. According to that legislation in Section 1.4 of the Pittsburgh Historic Preservation Ordinance, *Criteria for Designation*, a building must meet at least one of the following criteria in order to be designated:
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;
 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.
10. 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.”
 11. The nomination must be accompanied by evidence that the nominator has made a good-faith effort to communicate his or her interest in the historic designation of this landmark or district to the owner(s) of these properties. Describe how this was done, and attach evidence that the owner(s) of the nominated landmark or of the properties within the nominated district have been informed of the nomination. This may include a copy of a notification letter with a mailing list, a letter confirming phone calls, or a petition signed by affected property owners.
 12. Clear photographs of the nominated buildings or districts should accompany the nomination form. The applicant shall include photographs of all elevations of an individual building and its setting, or the front elevation of each building in a district. In the case of closely spaced buildings or rowhouses, several buildings may be included in one photograph. Each photograph must be labeled with the street address of the building(s) and the month and year the photograph was taken.
 13. Copies of major supporting documents should accompany the nomination form. Such documents may include, but are not limited to:
 - historic photographs;
 - historic and contemporary maps;
 - historic or contemporary texts describing the subject property or district;
 - historic or contemporary texts describing people, places, or events that comprise the historic context of the subject property or district.
 - Oversized materials (such as architectural drawings) and materials too fragile to copy may be accepted.

PLEASE NOTE: It is the responsibility of the nominator to provide the Historic Review Commission and its Staff with information sufficient to fairly evaluate the nomination. **Incomplete nomination forms will not be accepted. Fee must be included. Nominations must be submitted in both electronic and hard-copy format.**

CHECKLIST: *INSERT NAME OF PROPERTY HERE*

- #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).**

City of Pittsburgh, Individual Property Historic Nomination

Page 1 of 29

Attachment to Form: Former Croatian Fraternal Union of America Building
3441 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213
Block/Lot: 0028-F-00172-0000-00

Individual Property Historic Nomination Form

Historic Name(s):	Croatian Fraternal Union of America
Current/Most Recent Name:	Allegheny County Health Department
Location:	3441 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213
Parcel ID:	0028-F-00172-0000-00
Neighborhood:	Oakland
Ownership:	3441 F Street LLC
Type:	Structure
Historic Use(s):	COMMERCE/TRADE/organizational GOVERNMENT/government office
Current Use:	VACANT/NOT IN USE

Section 7: Physical Description and Narrative

Description:

Year Built:	1928
Period of Significance:	1928-1961
Architectural Style:	Commercial Flemish Gothic
Architect:	Pierre A. Liesch
Builder & Contractor:	The Rust Construction Company

Narrative:

Preparer's Note: Hereafter, the building located at 3441 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213 will be referred to interchangeably as the "Croatian Fraternal Union Building," "CFU," and "the building." The building is a three-story office building with two single-story ancillary wings extending at the rear. Use of any of the aforementioned descriptors is made with reference to the building in its entirety. Regarding the building's physical description, each façade will be read as a whole; documenting the number of bays, exterior materials, and configuration.

The Croatian Fraternal Union Building is sited on the northwest side of Forbes Avenue. The building measures approximately 79' in width by approximately 126' in depth. Historically the building served as the national headquarters of the Croatian Fraternal Union of America. Most recently it served as the offices of the Allegheny County Health Department. The Croatian Fraternal Union Building is of brick, steel, and concrete construction with an exterior cladding of polychromatic terra cotta. The terra cotta cladding is predominantly gold in color with hues of red used to accentuate detail.

Designed by architect Pierre A. Liesch and built by Rust Construction Company, the Croatian Fraternal Union Building is an innovative and markedly rare commercial interpretation of the Flemish Gothic style in Pittsburgh. The building has few analogs in Pittsburgh. It maintains a moderate level of integrity.

Site

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The Croatian Fraternal Union Building is located in Pittsburgh (City), Allegheny County, Pennsylvania; sited in the city neighborhood of Oakland. The Croatian Fraternal Union Building is a zero-lot line building occupying tax parcel 0028-F-00172-0000-00. The only portion of the parcel not occupied by the building is a small asphalt-paved service lot off Euler Way measuring approximately 28' by 27'. The building's setting is urban; bounded by Forbes Avenue to the southeast, Euler Way to the northwest, a mid-twentieth century, single-story commercial building to the northeast, and a new high-rise residential development to the southwest. The topography of the parcel slopes from Euler Way toward Forbes Avenue. As such, the building is three stories along Forbes Avenue and two stories facing Euler Way. The ancillary wings facing onto Euler Way are one story in height.

The site of the Croatian Fraternal Union Building was once associated with the Coltart Estate. The parcel on which the building is built was severed from the estate ca. 1890 (Hopkins, 1890).¹ The parcel remained vacant until being purchased by the Croatian Fraternal Union of America in August 1927 for the construction of its new headquarters (Pittsburgh Press, 14 August 1927). Throughout the early twentieth century, the area within immediate proximity to the Croatian Fraternal Union Building site developed from low-density residential to high-density mixed-use. Most buildings constructed contemporaneously with the Croatian Fraternal Union Building featured ground-level commercial/retail space and offices or residential space on upper floors. The area achieved its most recent configuration and density by ca. 1955. Today, this area is once again the focus of heavy redevelopment pressure. With new construction, density continues to increase; however, the mixed-use land use typology persists.

Southeast (Primary) Façade

Fronting onto Forbes Avenue, the Croatian Fraternal Union Building's primary façade is three stories in height. It is a balanced and symmetric composition. The façade rises from a base clad in polished granite. The façade is clad in polychromatic terra cotta. It measures 5 bays wide.

The first floor of the building features an arcade with 5 pointed arches. Reading the facade from left to right (southwest to northeast), the arches of bays 1, 2, 4, and 5 contain 12 voussoirs. Each arch is anchored by an escutcheoned keystone. The voussoirs at the springing of each arch feature heavy vegetative carving. The central bay (bay 3) contains the main entrance to the building. The entrance arch contains 10 voussoirs, anchored by a keystone featuring a crowned effigy. In bays 1, 2, 4, and 5, the arcade is blind; having been infilled with rectangular terra cotta blocks. Originally, each arch within the arcade housed an individual commercial storefront. Each storefront featured a single off-center man door with a plate glass display window occupying the rest of the space. Above, a nine-light transom window filled the tympanum of the arch.

In bay 3, the main entrance to the building is accessed by a concrete handicapped-accessible ramp from the southwest and two steps from the northeast. Presently, the entrance features an aluminum and glass double door flanked by two single-light sidelights. The door is surmounted by a single-light transom. Occupying the tympanum above the door is a louvered vent. Originally, the entrance featured wooden double doors. Set within each door, trimmed with molding, was plate glass cut in a pointed-arch. The entrance was flanked by sidelights executed in gold, diaper-patterned stained glass. Above the door, in place of the present louvered

¹ The Coltart House of 1843 survived adjacent to the Croatian Fraternal Union Building until ca. 1970.

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3441 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213
Block/Lot: 0028-F-00172-0000-00

vent, was a five-light transom executed in gold, diaper-patterned stained glass, trimmed in green glass. The central light, at the apex of the arch, featured the seal of the Croatian Fraternal Union of America. On either side of the central light, the two lights displayed the seals of both the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. Above each of the arcade's 5 arches, the spandrels are divided into three sections by vertical ribbing. The outer spandrel section of bays 1, 2, 4, 5 feature blank escutcheon panels. Above the central entrance arch, within the central spandrel panel, is an escutcheon bearing an American eagle. Surrounding the escutcheon is a swag, visually anchored on either side by rosettes.

Each bay on the southeast façade is separated by a respond. In total, 6 responds run vertically from foundation to parapet. The responds terminate above the parapet in a pointed-arch pinnacle. Set within each pinnacle is an aedicular recess featuring a carved element. Two of four extant pinnacles were removed in early 2018. The responds vary in width and level of ornamentation.

Reading the building from left to right (southwest to northeast), the responds follow an ABAABA pattern. A-typology responds are wider. The base of these responds, above the granite base, feature drip sills. Four scallop shells ornament each respond's drip sill. A-typology responds also feature highly ornate, Baroque-inspired scroll-work on the first floor. This scroll work features rosettes and is surmounted by projecting oval cartouches. Originally, this scroll work adorned suspended globe lamps. B-typology responds (of which there are two) are narrower than those of the A-typology. B-typology responds are clad in polished granite from the building's base to the springing of the first-floor arcade. At the springing, both B-typology responds feature abacuses that depict a single dolphin. Poised in slight contrapposto atop the abacus, these two responds feature two male figures representing Croatian labor; the equivalent of jamb figures in religious Gothic architecture. Between bays 1 and 2, the figure is a rope maker. He dons a hat, a loose-fitting shirt, and trousers. Clenched to his breast, the figure holds a rope woolder in his left hand. A skein of rope hangs in his right hand. Between bay 4 and 5, the figure is a miner. He dons a miner's helmet. Bare chested, the figure displays a muscular physique. In the crook of his right arm, the figure holds a pick axe. His left arm hangs at his side, holding a shovel.

On the second and third floors, each of the 5 bays is further divided into three window openings by vertical ribbing. Second and third floor window openings feature a projecting terra cotta sill. Running along the underside of this projecting sill is banding carved with a chevron motif. Second floor window openings feature projecting trabeated lintels. On the third floor, each window terminates in a pointed-arch. Each window opening features original one-over-one light, double-hung wood sash windows. Windows on the third floor have been built for their respective openings. Upper sashes conform to the pointed-arch window openings. Spandrels between the second and third floors are largely unadorned. However, the central spandrel contained within bay 3 is highly ornate. This panel features a double-cusp, Gothic pointed-arch. Set within this arch is an escutcheon superimposed over vegetation. The escutcheon displays the seal of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Above the third-floor window openings in bays 1, 2, 4, and 5, a blind arcade of pointed arches—defined by delicate tracery—extend upward into the parapet, between responds. Each arch is divided into two distinct kites. Each bay features three arches. Vegetative pendants transition each bay's blind parapet arcade to its dividing responds. Bay 3 features a large, pointed blind arch that surmounts the entire bay. Within the arch, tracery corresponding with the vertical ribbing between the window openings below further divides the arch

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into three smaller pointed-arches. Contained within each of the smaller arches are blank escutcheons. Rosettes appear in the two kites flanking the central arch. The central escutcheon is larger, more pronounced, and is superimposed upon a highly sculptural ribbon.

Above this point, the original undulating, cantilevered Flemish Gothic terra cotta cornice has been amputated. A blank buff brick parapet wall rises in its place. Originally, this cornice extended outward from the building, springing from each respond and forming a cantilevered masonry hood over bays 1, 2, 4, and 5. Atop bay 3, the parapet featured a large-scale terra cotta hood. Within the hood was elaborate, sculptural tracery. At the hood's pointed-arch apex sat a sculptural element, the subject of which is now lost.

Northeast (Side) Façade

The northeast façade ranges in height from one story (at the northwest, Euler Way) to three stories (at the southeast, Forbes Avenue). The façade is comprised of the building's rear, ancillary wing in addition to the northeast-facing segments of the three-story office section.

The façade measures 8 bays wide. Reading the building from left to right (southeast to northwest), bay 1 consists of the blind, northeast facing wall of the front portion of the office section. The bay is clad in red brick laid in a running bond pattern. At the northwest end of this bay, a large, square brick chimney rises above the parapet. Bays 2-6 comprise the middle portion of the office section. The bays are clad in red brick laid in a running bond pattern. The first floor consists of a blind, northeast facing wall with a metal clad parapet and shallow-slope shed roof clad in built-up asphalt. Above the first floor, the bays recede to form a light well. The second and third floors of bays 2-6 feature window openings fitted with steel casement windows. Each opening possesses a brick sill and steel lintel. Bays 7 and 8 consist of the blind, northeast facing wall of the rear, ancillary wing. However, the roofline of bay 7 extends upward into an end gable, accommodating a rooftop ridge skylight. Bays 7 and 8 are one story in height and clad in red brick laid in a common bond pattern.

Northwest (Rear) Façade

Fronting onto Euler Way, the northwest façade is two stories in height. The façade is comprised of the CFU's rear, ancillary wings in addition to the northwest-facing segments of the CFU's three-story office section. Because of the site's topography, the building's ancillary wings are the most visible elements of this façade from a public right-of-way. The two ancillary wings extend outward from the office section, connecting with the second story. Behind these wings, light wells run along the northeast and southwest sides of the three-story office section. Two two-storied, northwest-facing bays look onto these light wells. The remainder of the northwest façade belonging to the office section faces onto the ancillary wings, recessed from Euler Way.

Beginning with the one-story ancillary wings, the façade at ground level is asymmetric and utilitarian. In all, the façade comprises 5 bays. Reading the facade from left to right (northeast to southwest), bays 1-3 comprise one of the ancillary wings. This wing extends fully from the office section to Euler Way. It is clad in concrete block and buff brick laid in a common bond pattern. Bays 4 and 5 comprise the other ancillary wing. This wing does not extend fully to Euler Way and is separated from the public right-of-way by a small, asphalt-paved service lot. It is of brick construction, clad in stucco. A narrow walkway separates the two ancillary wings

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from one another. Bay 1 is fitted with an overhead rolling metal garage door. Bay 2 features a louvered vent near ground level. Bay 3 features a deeply recessed steel man door. Bay 4 features a steel staircase that accesses an elevated walkway. This walkway connects the service lot to the office section. Bay 5 features a window opening that has been infilled with glass block.

In examining the office section, the northwest façade comprises the entire third floor and a small segment of the second floor. It is 6 bays wide. Bays 1 and 6 form the perimeter of the side light wells. Both bays are clad in red brick laid in a running bond pattern. Each bay features second and third floor window openings fitted with paired steel casement windows. Each window unit is comprised of a fixed, twelve-light upper panel, two fixed eight-light side panels, and an operable, central eight-light casement. Each opening possesses a brick sill and steel lintel. Bays 2-5 face onto the ancillary rear wings and are clad in stucco. Bays 2, 3, and 5 feature window openings fitted with steel casement windows. Each opening possesses brick sills and steel lintels. Bay 3 features a steel man door accessed via an elevated walkway.

Southwest Façade

The southwest façade ranges in height from one story (at the northwest, Euler Way) to three stories (at the southeast, Forbes Avenue). The façade is comprised of the building's rear, ancillary wings in addition to the southwest-facing segments of the three-story office section.

The façade measures 8 bays wide. Reading the building from left to right (northwest to southeast), bay 1 consists of the blind, southwest facing wall of a rear, ancillary wing. It is one story in height. The bay is clad in concrete block and buff brick laid in a common bond pattern. Bay 2 consists of the blind, southwest facing wall of the second rear, ancillary wing. It is one story in height. The bay is clad in stucco. Bays 3-7 comprise the middle portion of the office section. The bays are clad in red brick laid in a running bond pattern. The first floor consists of a blind, southwest facing wall with a metal clad parapet and shallow slope shed roof clad in built-up asphalt. Above the first floor, the bays recede to form a light well. The second and third floors of bays 3-7 feature window openings fitted with steel casement windows. Each opening possesses a brick sill and steel lintel. Bay 8 consists of the blind, three-story, southwest facing wall of the front portion of the office building section. A small, square chimney rises above the parapet in the middle of bay 8. The bay is clad in red brick laid in a running bond pattern.

Roof

The roof of the Croatian Fraternal Union Building is flat over both the office section and ancillary additions. The roof is clad in a synthetic membrane. The exterior parapet wall of all facades rises above the roofline and is capped by terra cotta coping tiles. Over the office section, two head houses (one of the elevator, one for the staircase) rise from the center of the building. On the northwest rear, ancillary wing, a ridge skylight runs the width of the wing.

Section 8: History

History: Croatian Fraternal Union of America

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Block/Lot: 0028-F-00172-0000-00

From 1870 to 1910, Pittsburgh's population sextupled; increasing from 86,076 to 533,900. Due primarily to political and economic strife in southern and eastern European countries, mass immigration from these areas contributed to the city's dramatic surge in population.

For native Croatians, the 1860s brought a loss of both autonomy and cultural identity under the Habsburg Monarchy. In 1868, Croatia and Hungary signed the Croatian-Hungarian Settlement, which predicated Croatia-Slavonia's role within Hungarian-controlled territory. During the 1870s and 1880s, the Austro-Hungarian Empire (1867-1918) experienced economic and social shifts that disrupted the daily life and political autonomy of smaller kingdoms absorbed into the empire's regime. This included the Kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia. The economic impacts of the Habsburg principality severely crippled the Croatian-Slavonian economy; instituting higher taxes, restricting trade through its ports on the Adriatic Sea, and stymying industrial production. In response to these changing political and economic climates, over 500,000 Croatians (roughly 20% of the native Croatian population) opted to immigrate to the United States; most prior to World War I.

Large industrial cities attracted many eastern and southern European immigrants. Pittsburgh was among those cities. Due to its extensive opportunities in mining, steel production, and railroad transport, Pittsburgh became a center of immigrant settlement. As early as the 1880s, a Croatian neighborhood enclave developed in Allegheny City: Pittsburgh's present-day North Side. Often ostracized by other immigrant groups, the Croatian-American residents of Allegheny County chose to organize at the local and national level to protect their cultural, social, and financial interests.

The challenges of being an immigrant in a new country were substantial. With flourishing Croatian populations in New York, San Francisco, and New Orleans in the nineteenth century, the first United States Croatian benefit societies were formed in San Francisco in 1857 and in New Orleans in 1874.² However, the Croatian Fraternal Union of America—originally known as *Hrvatska Zajednica* or "Croatian Society"—began in 1892 in Allegheny City. In 1894, the organization was officially chartered. It became one of the United States' leading fraternal benefit societies. The membership was approximately 300 in 1894. There were more than 8,000 members by 1900. In 1912, the organization had grown to almost 30,000 members. Whereas the Croatian Fraternal Union's primary function (both historically and contemporarily) was to offer life insurance, health insurance, accident insurance, and other financial services, the organization also provided important social and cultural opportunities for Croatians. Additional offerings included scholarships, sports and cultural programs, a radio program, and a newspaper.

Among the original supporters and founders of the Croatian Fraternal union was Peter Pavlinac. Pavlinac served as a member and an officer of the organization until his death in 1917. Pavlinac was also instrumental in the founding of Saint Nicholas Croatian Catholic Church, the first Croatian church in the United States. A City of Pittsburgh designated historic landmark, Saint Nicholas Croatian Catholic Church was demolished in 2013.

² The original signers of the 1894 charter for the Croatian Fraternal Union included Slovak and Czech people. To form a fraternal union, 12 members who were US citizens were required and 12 Croatian US citizens were unable to be found (of the 12 original signers, 8 were Croatian). The CFU was initially formed as a secret society for men, but that changed a few years later with the incorporation of women and an increase in membership.

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The organization initially rented space at 639 East Ohio Street, Allegheny City. Members then purchased and renovated 1012 Perry Street (later Peralta Street), Allegheny City; present site of the Schiller School. The Perry/Peralta Street building served as the organization's home office from 1910 until 1928. The Croatian Fraternal Union operated under various names until 1926 when four other Croatian-focused organizations serving different areas of the United States were merged. This merger created the Croatian Fraternal Union of America.

In August 1927, the Croatian Fraternal Union purchased a parcel of land on Forbes Avenue in Pittsburgh's rapidly developing Oakland neighborhood. It purchased the land from John Murphy & Company with the intent was to build a new national headquarters. The organization secured architect Pierre A. Liesch to design the building. The building at 3441 Forbes Avenue represented the first home office built and designed to meet the specific needs of the Croatian Fraternal Union; including offices, an auditorium, and meeting hall.

On February 28, 1928, the Pittsburgh Press announced the construction the Croatian Fraternal Union's new three-story, fireproof steel frame office building. The approximate cost was anticipated to be \$150,000.00. The design of the building was described as gothic and "...leaning toward the Cathedral of Learning style and ... in keeping with the cultural atmosphere of the Schenley district." The new building was dedicated January 20, 1929 with Mayor Charles H. Kline serving as one of the honorary guests and speakers (Pittsburgh Press, January 21, 1929). Total building costs were reported as being \$250,000.00 (Pittsburgh Press, December 23, 1928). The Croatian Fraternal Union occupied the building at 3441 Forbes Avenue until 1961 when it moved to its present home office in Wilkins Township.

The history of the Croatian Fraternal Union is closely linked with national and Croatian immigrant history. During World War I, many non-citizen Croatian immigrants were ostracized for their Austro-Hungarian origins. Still, the Croatian Fraternal Union and its members participated in war and relief efforts. During the Great Depression, the Croatian Fraternal Union offered its members "automatic premium loans" (also known as "reserve") to make ends meet. A third of the organization's membership benefited from this option. During the 1930s, the Croatian Fraternal Union was also involved with labor organization, as many Croatian immigrants were involved in Pittsburgh's mining and manufacturing industries. As a member-owned and operated organization, the Pittsburgh-based Croatian Fraternal Union of America exists today as the largest Croatian organization outside of Croatia.

Section 9: Significance

Criterion 4: Its identification as the works of an architect, designer, engineer, or building whose individual works is significant in the history or development of the City of Pittsburgh, the State of Pennsylvania, the Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States.

Designed by architect Pierre A. Liesch, the Croatian Fraternal Union Building was built in 1928 and dedicated in 1929. Liesch was born in Luxembourg in June 1872. He immigrated to the United States in 1890. Settling in Pittsburgh, Liesch became chief draftsman with the architectural firm of Rutan & Russell.

The firm of Rutan & Russell was developed from the Pittsburgh office of Boston's Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge. Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge was one of several firms formed by the associates of architect Henry Hobson

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Richardson following his death in 1886. George Shepley, Charles Rutan, and Charles Coolidge were the firm's principals. Shortly after its founding, Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge opened offices in several cities throughout the United States. The Pittsburgh office, however, was short-lived. It was closed in 1896. Following this closure, Frank Rutan (brother of Charles Rutan) and Frederick A. Russell formed Rutan & Russell. The firm established itself as one of the most noteworthy, prolific, and versatile architectural practices in the City of Pittsburgh; designing such buildings as the Schenley Hotel, the W.H. Rowe House, and the B.F. Jones House. While working with Rutan & Russell, Liesch would have had familiarity—if not the opportunity for collaboration—with some of the firm's most consequential Pittsburgh buildings. In 1910, Liesch left Rutan & Russell; opening his own architectural practice in Aspinwall, Pennsylvania.

Practicing independently, Liesch designed several significant buildings in and around Pittsburgh, including: the Carl H.N. Borntraeger House, Homewood Avenue (1910); the Tippy Canoe Club House, River Road, Glenover (1911); the Emmanuel Christian Church, Davis Avenue at Lee Street (1914); the F.W. Stangee House at 3849 Evergreen Road (1911); and alterations of the Trinity Cathedral Studio, Sixth Avenue (1919). Liesch is also credited as providing design inspiration for the Union Trust Building in downtown Pittsburgh. The Union Trust Building was constructed in 1916 for industrialist Henry Clay Frick to serve as a shopping arcade in the city's center. Frick contracted architect Frederick J. Osterling to design the large, ornate building. However, documentation indicates that Osterling consulted Liesch, who heavily influenced the building's final design.³

Pierre Liesch retired from architectural practice in 1947. He died March 8, 1954.⁴

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.

The Croatian Fraternal Union Building serves as a representation of the organization and advancement of a specific immigrant population, both locally and nationally.

Croatian immigrants significantly contributed to the region's industrial growth in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Facing discrimination due to their ethnicity, Croatian-Americans formed a mutual benefit society. The fraternal society provided insurance, loans, social and cultural programs, and a Croatian language newspaper. The plan for the Croatian Fraternal Union Building, conceived as the organization's national headquarters, was developed in 1927; one year after the national merger of four Croatian-focused organizations to form the Croatian Fraternal Union. The building was specifically designed to meet the new needs of the organization, including offices, an auditorium, and a meeting hall.

Criterion 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.

³ The Pittsburgh Press, "Pierre A. Liesch obituary," 9 March 1954; Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, "Emmanuel Baptist," 3 June 1914; The Pittsburgh Press, "Borntraeger House," 26 June 1910; Jason Shymoniak, "Pittsburgh Architectural Tour: Union Trust Building," DLA+ Architecture & Interior Design, <http://www.dlaplus.com/pages/pittsburgh-architectural-tour-union-trust-building>.

⁴ "F. E. Rutan, F. A. I. A." American Institute of Architects Quarterly Bulletin 1911: 48; Journal of the American Institute of Architects Dec. 1915: 541.

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The Croatian Fraternal Union Building is a distinctive feature of the Fifth/Forbes Corridor in Pittsburgh's Oakland neighborhood. For 90 years, it has visually anchored the intersection of Forbes Avenue and Coltart Street. Even in its altered state, the building is one of only three examples of the Flemish Gothic style in Pittsburgh. As one of the exceedingly few extant works of architect Pierre A. Liesch, the Croatian Fraternal Union Building serves as a built record of the skill, originality, and distinctive design aesthetic of Pittsburgh's early twentieth century architectural talent. As a cultural landmark, the Croatian Fraternal Union Building represents a distinct era in the growth and advancement of the Croatian-American immigrant population, both in Pittsburgh and nationally.

As this specific area within the Oakland neighborhood undergoes immense developmental change, retention and preservation of the Croatian Fraternal Union Building *in situ* is imperative to maintaining human scale and neighborhood identity.

Section 10: Integrity

The Croatian Fraternal Union Building was evaluated considering the seven aspects of integrity as defined by the Secretary of the Interior in National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation (U.S. Department of the Interior [DOI] 1994). The Croatian Fraternal Union Building retains a moderate level of integrity.

Location: The Croatian Fraternal Union Building retains high integrity of location. The building remains in its original location on the northwest side of Forbes Avenue in Pittsburgh's Oakland neighborhood.

Design: Overall, the Croatian Fraternal Union Building retains moderately-low integrity of design. The original building has been altered since construction. These alterations impact the building's integrity, but to varying degrees. Following the 1961 acquisition of the CFU by the Allegheny County Health Department, the first-floor arcade was infilled with terra cotta block and the ornate, cantilevered, Flemish Gothic cornice was removed. Exterior lighting was removed. The main entrance was significantly altered; fitted with a modern aluminum and glass door. A number of the building's character defining features have not survived to the present; however, the building retains a sufficient level of design integrity to be identifiable.

Setting: The Croatian Fraternal Union building retains moderate integrity of setting. Early in the building's period of significance, its setting was in a regular state of flux. The area witnessed a distinct shift from suburban residential development to high-density mixed-use development. Ca. 1955, the area reached a point of stasis. Whereas the neighboring 1843 Coltart House was demolished after this date, between ca. 1955 and 2016, there was relatively little impact to the CFU's integrity of setting. However, beginning in 2016, new large-scale residential development appeared along Forbes Avenue. At present, two large-scale residential developments are being constructed on the parcels adjacent to or across Forbes Avenue from the CFU. As such, the integrity of the building's setting is actively changing.

Materials and Workmanship: Overall, the Croatian Fraternal Union Building retains moderate integrity of materials and workmanship. Despite the degradation and substantial alteration of a number of exterior elements, most alterations to the building have been subtractive. Later alterations are recognizable as such.

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Feeling: The Croatian Fraternal Union Building's retention of moderate to high integrity in location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship contribute to its retention of moderate integrity of feeling.

Association: The Croatian Fraternal Union Building does not retain integrity of association. The building no longer functions as the National headquarters of the Croatian Fraternal Union of America. It is currently vacant.

Section 11: Notification of Property Owner

In Summer 2017 Preservation Pittsburgh discussed the building and its importance to Croatian history and immigration. We discussed the building with Oakland Planning & Development Corporation, Preserve Croatian Heritage Foundation (PCHF), and the Croatian Fraternal Union. With various nearby development, Preservation Pittsburgh wanted to understand Allegheny County's plans for the building and contacted the County on a few occasions by phone and did not get a response. PCHF expressed their support in working with us. As we waited to hear from the County, we learned that there were plans for the University of Pittsburgh to purchase the building, pending County Council approval. In May 2018, we learned that repairs were being made to the exterior and saw this as a positive sign. In July 2018, Preservation Pittsburgh sent a letter to the University of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County (who was still listed as owner) stating our concern and request for a meeting. In response, Preservation Pittsburgh received a call from the University of Pittsburgh's architect who informed us that they were planning to demolish the building and did not realize it had any significance since it is not a designated city landmark.

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Section 12: Photo Log

Historic Images and Resources

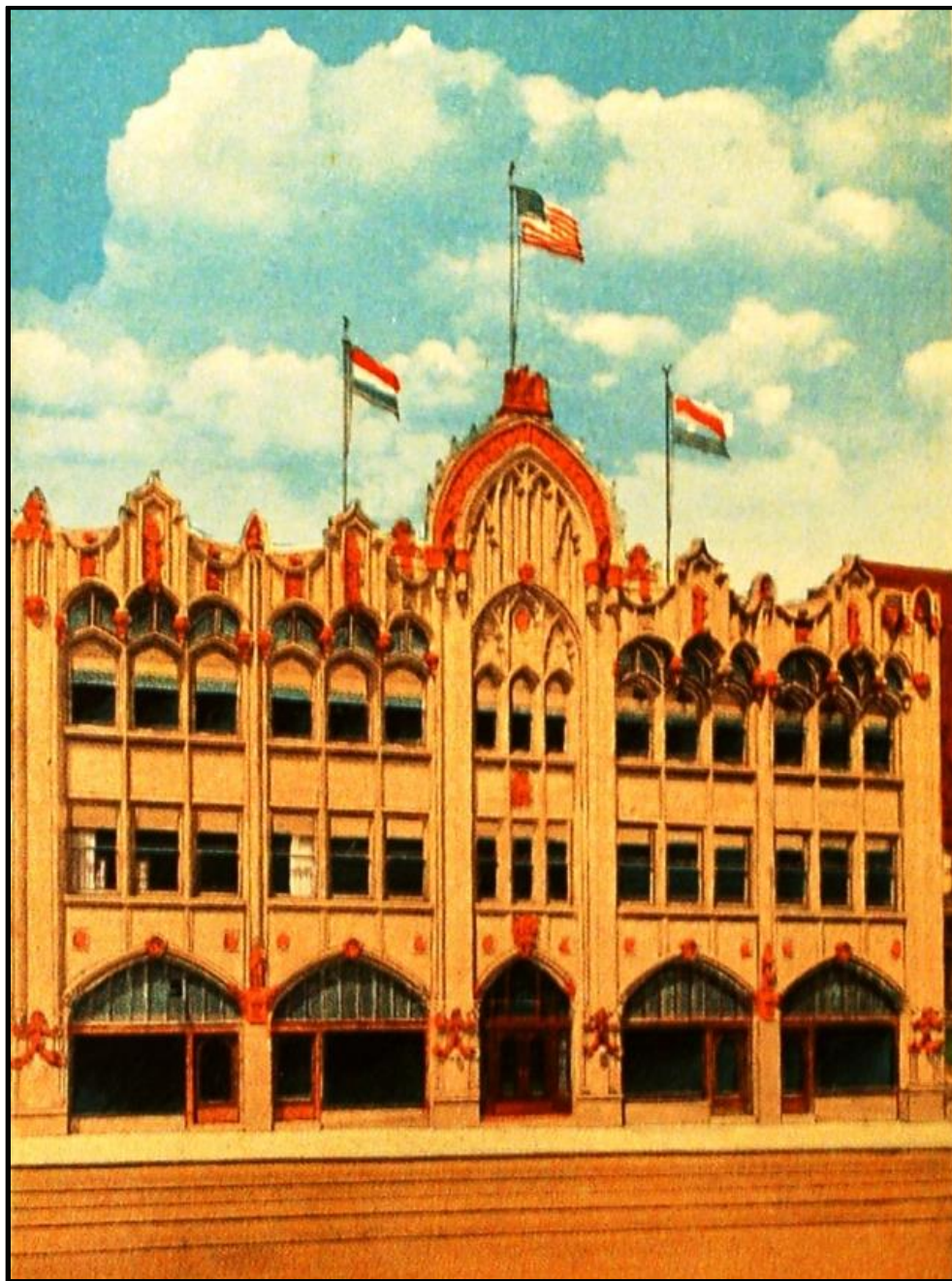


Figure 1: Croatian Fraternal Union as built, c. 1930. Source: Postcard Image, Croatian Fraternal Union of America

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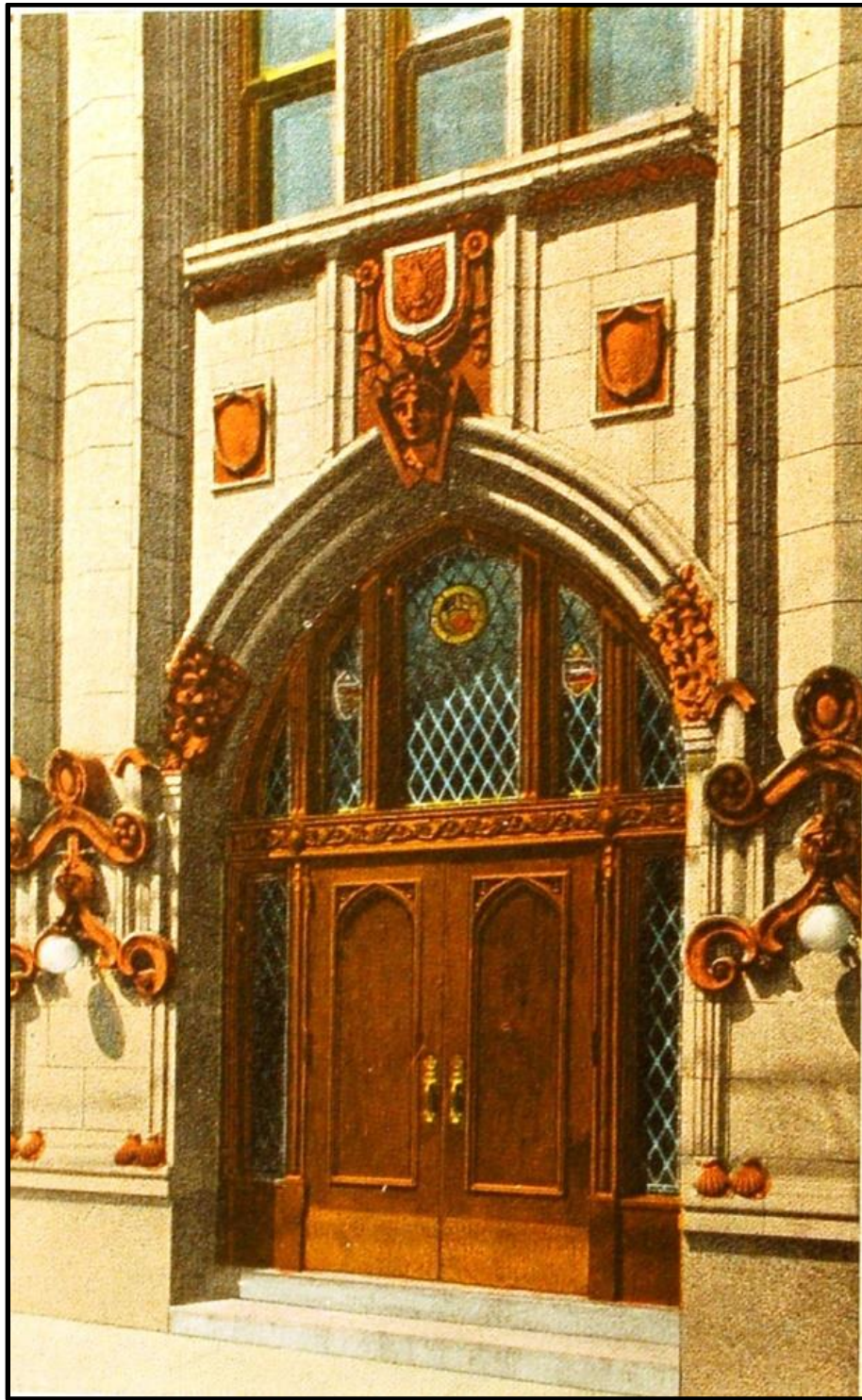


Figure 2: Croatian Fraternal Union entrance as built, c. 1930. Source: Postcard Image, Croatian Fraternal Union of America



Figure 3: "Croatiains Plan Office Building." Source: *The Pittsburgh Press*, 14 August 1927

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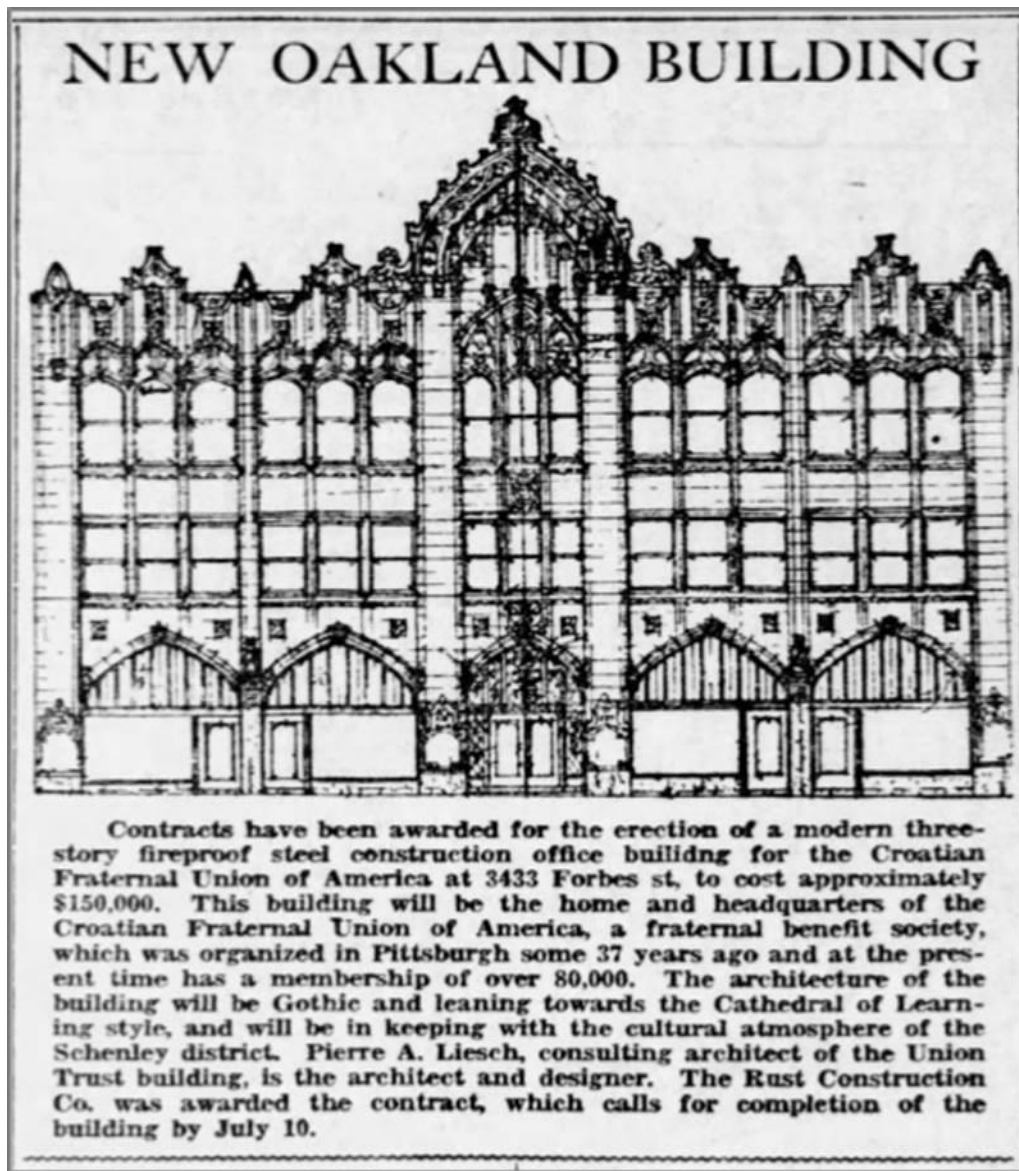


Figure 4: "New Oakland Building." Source: *The Pittsburgh Press*, 28 February 1928

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Figure 5: "Croatian Fraternal Body Dedicates New Home." Source: The Pittsburgh Press, 21 January 1929

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Current Images



Photo 1: Southeast (Primary) facade, view facing northwest. Source: Brittany Reilly



Photo 2: Croatian Fraternal Union Building in context, view facing north. Source: Amy Fisher

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Photo 3: Croatian Fraternal Union Building in context along Forbes Avenue, view facing east.

Source: Amy Fisher

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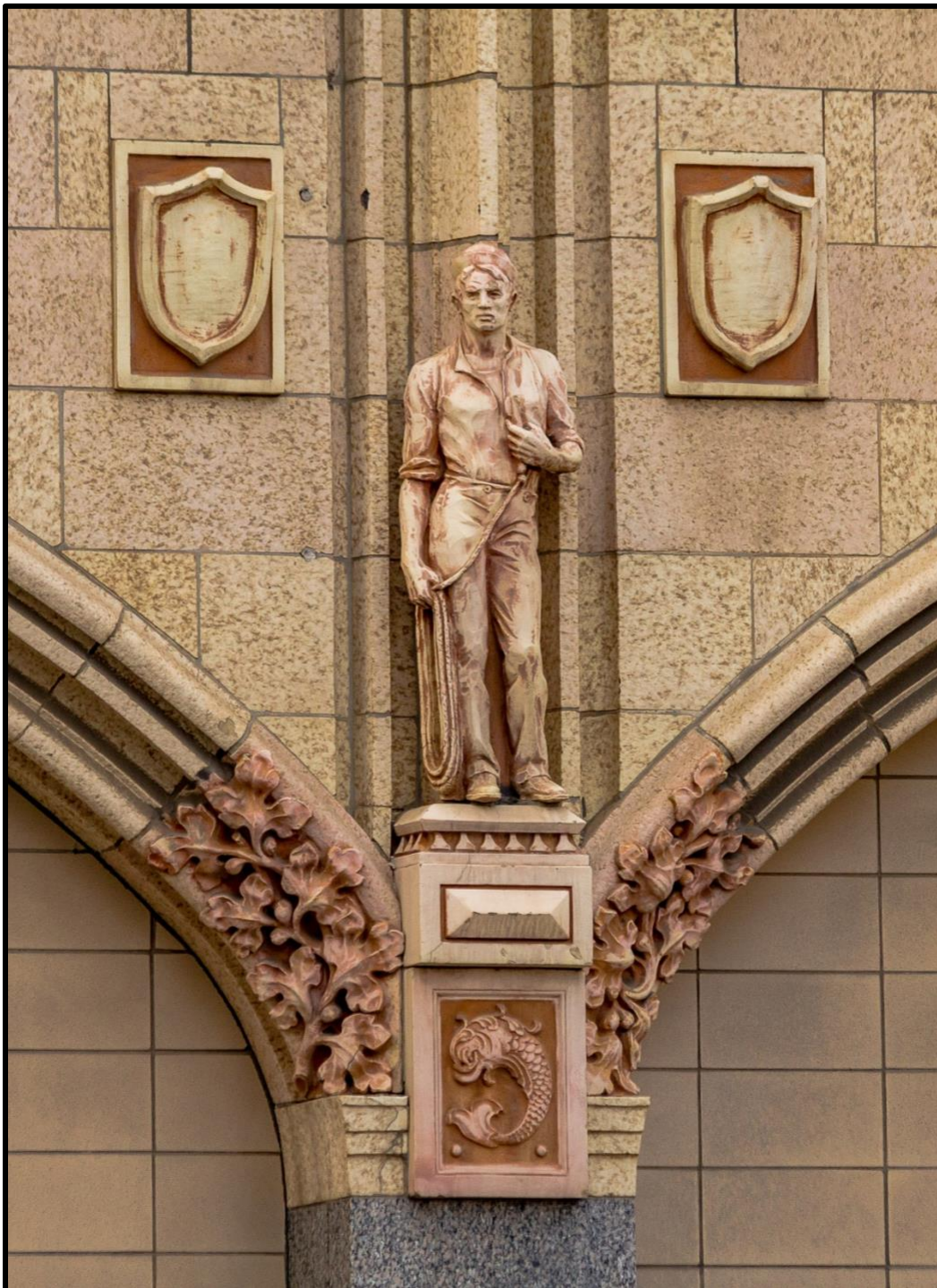


Photo 4: Figure, Rope Maker. Source: Amy Fisher

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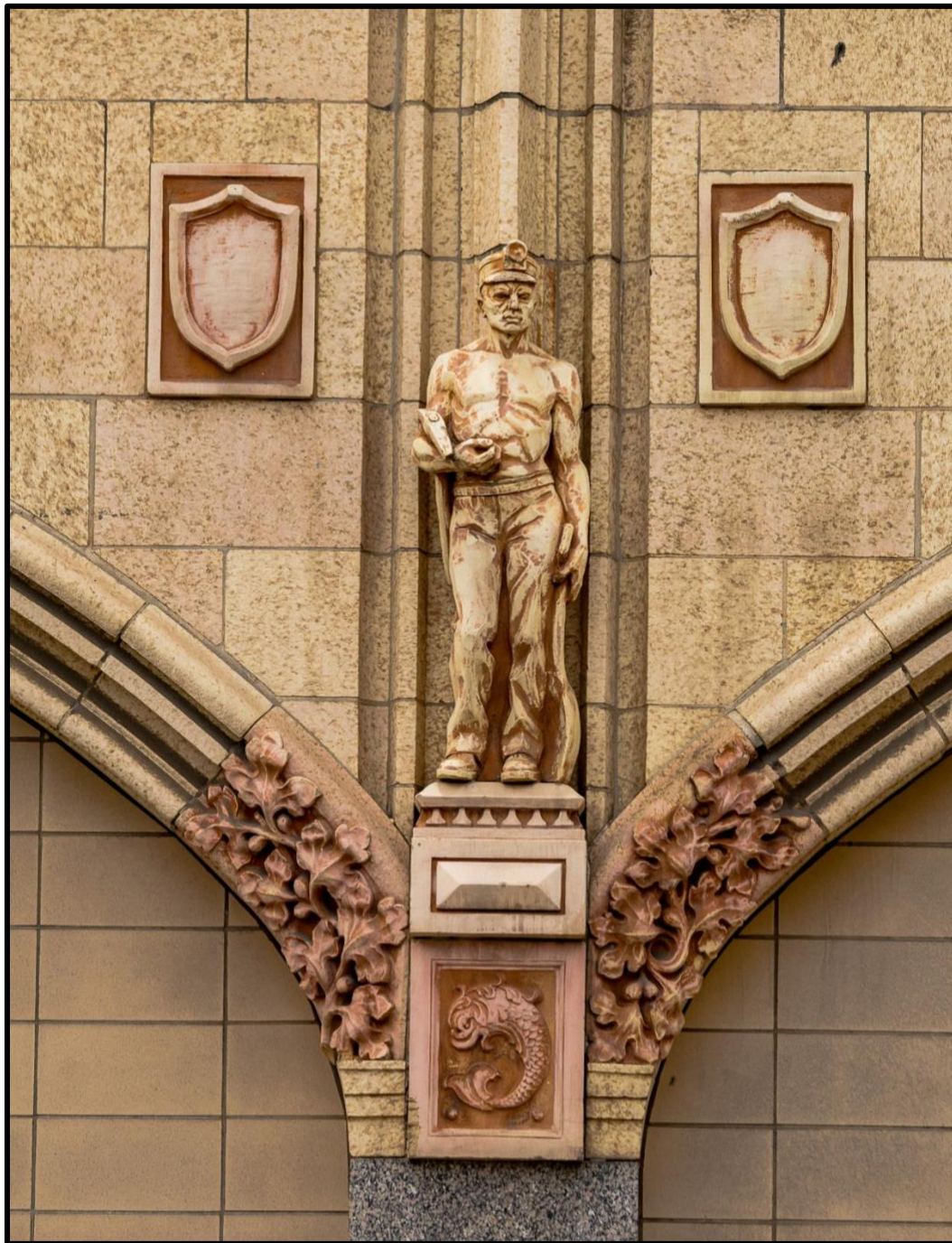


Photo 5: Figure, Miner. Source: Amy Fisher

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Photo 6: Light fixture terra cotta scrollwork. Source: Amy Fisher

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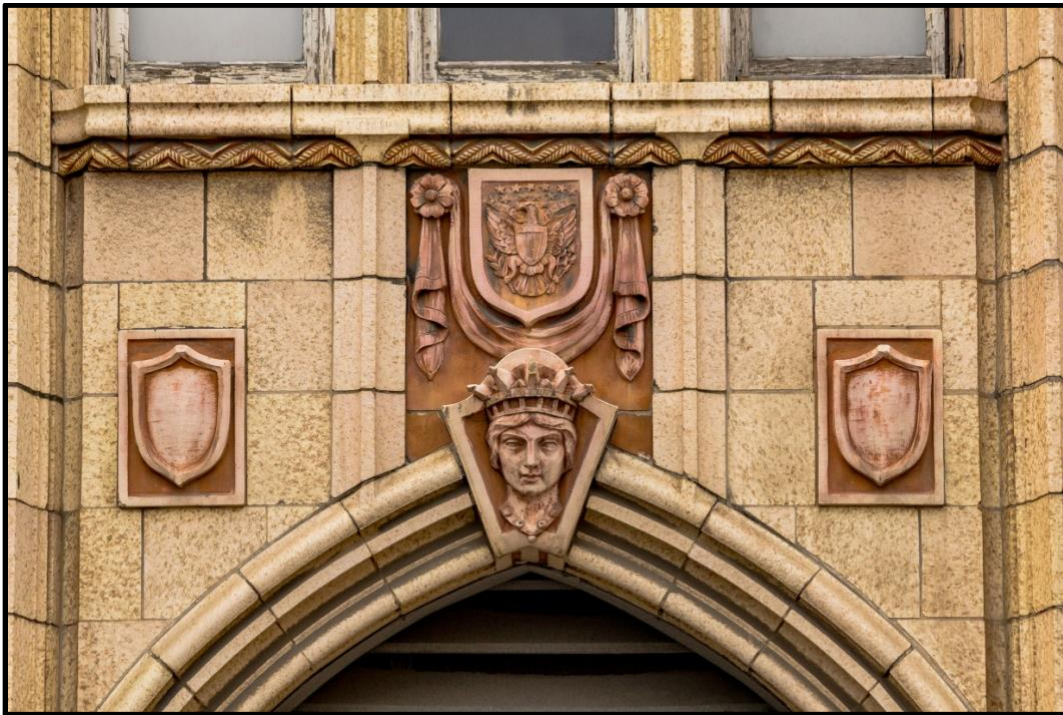


Photo 7: Entrance keystone, spandrels, and escutcheons. Source: Amy Fisher



Photo 8: Spandrel with arch and escutcheon. Source: Amy Fisher

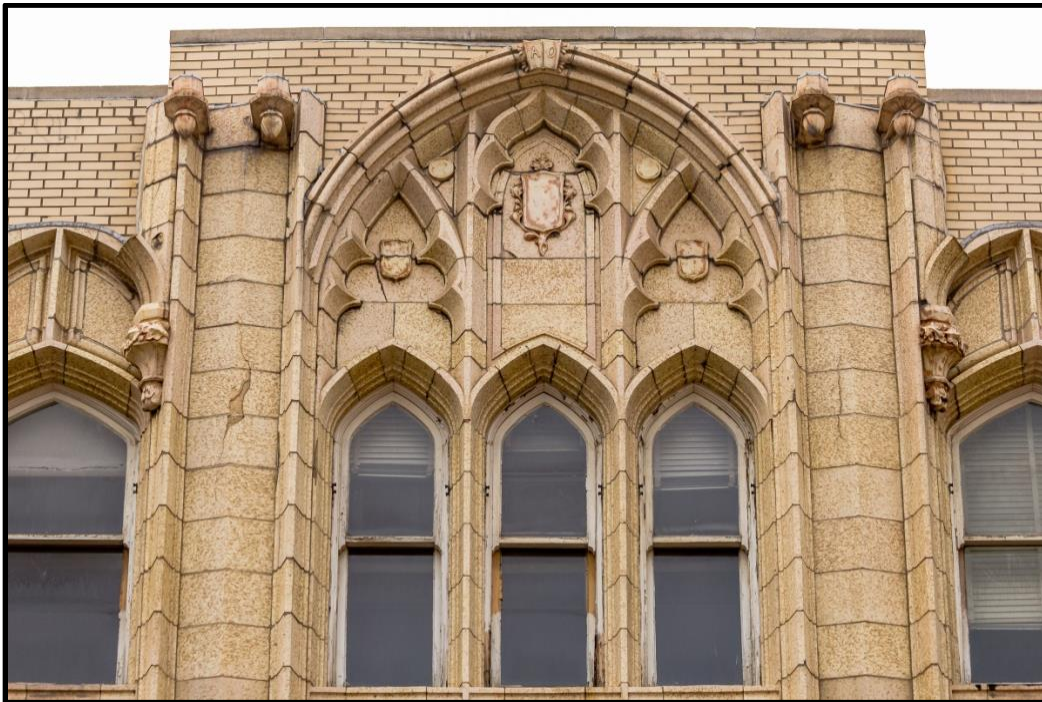


Photo 9: Central bay parapet, arch, and tracery. Source: Amy Fisher



Photo 10: Blind parapet arcade. Source: Amy Fisher

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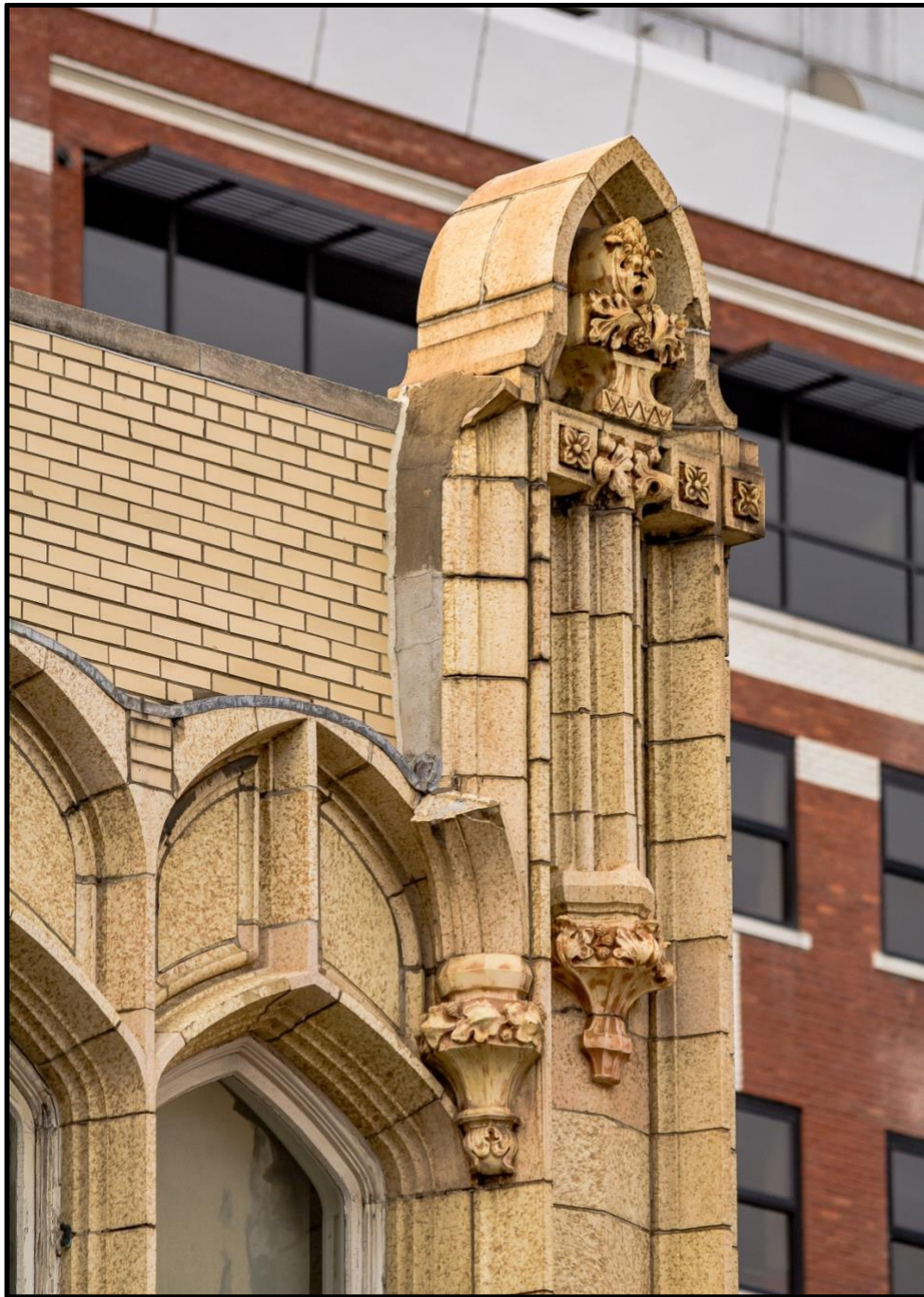
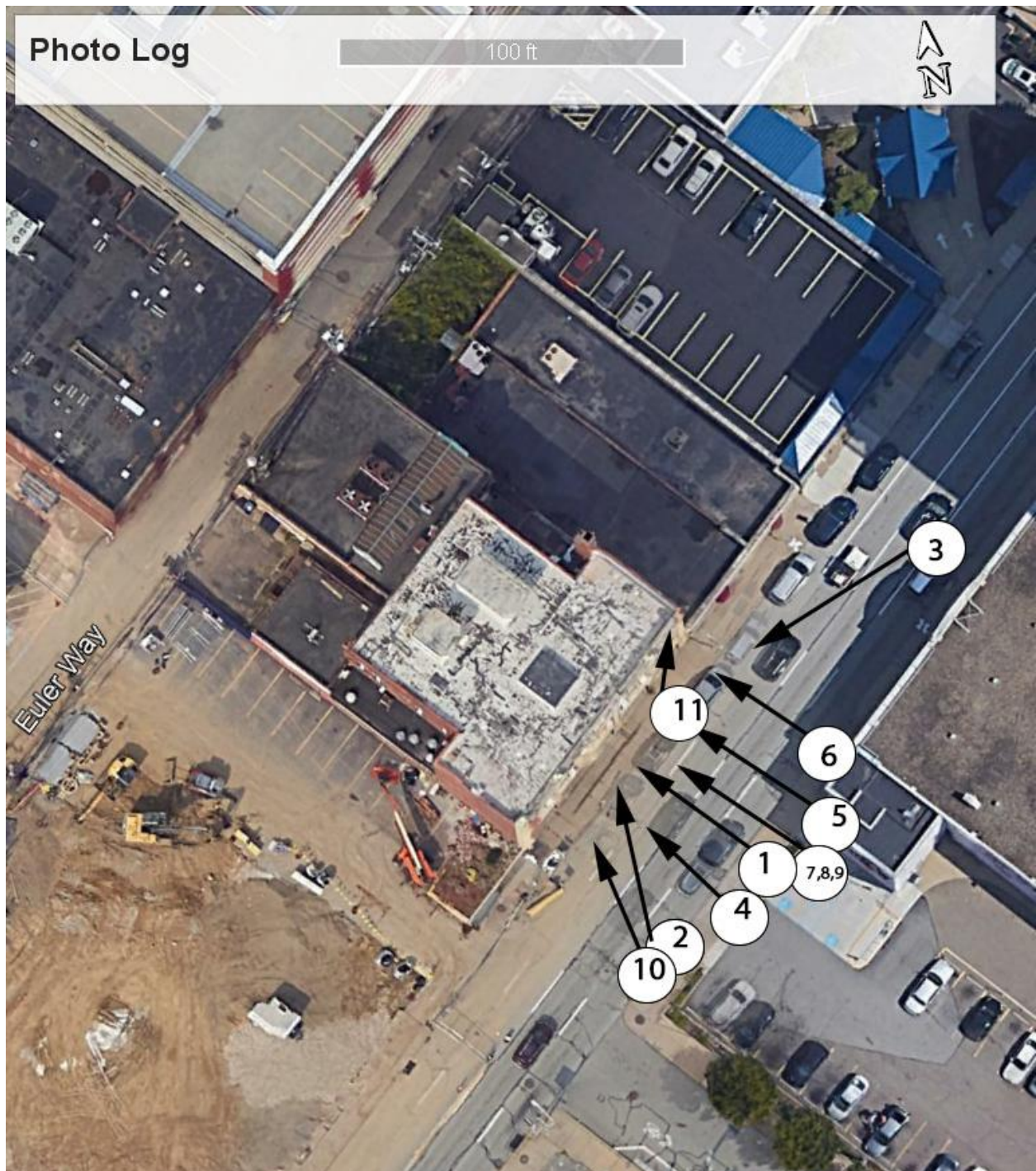


Photo 11: Parapet and termination of respond. Source: Amy Fisher

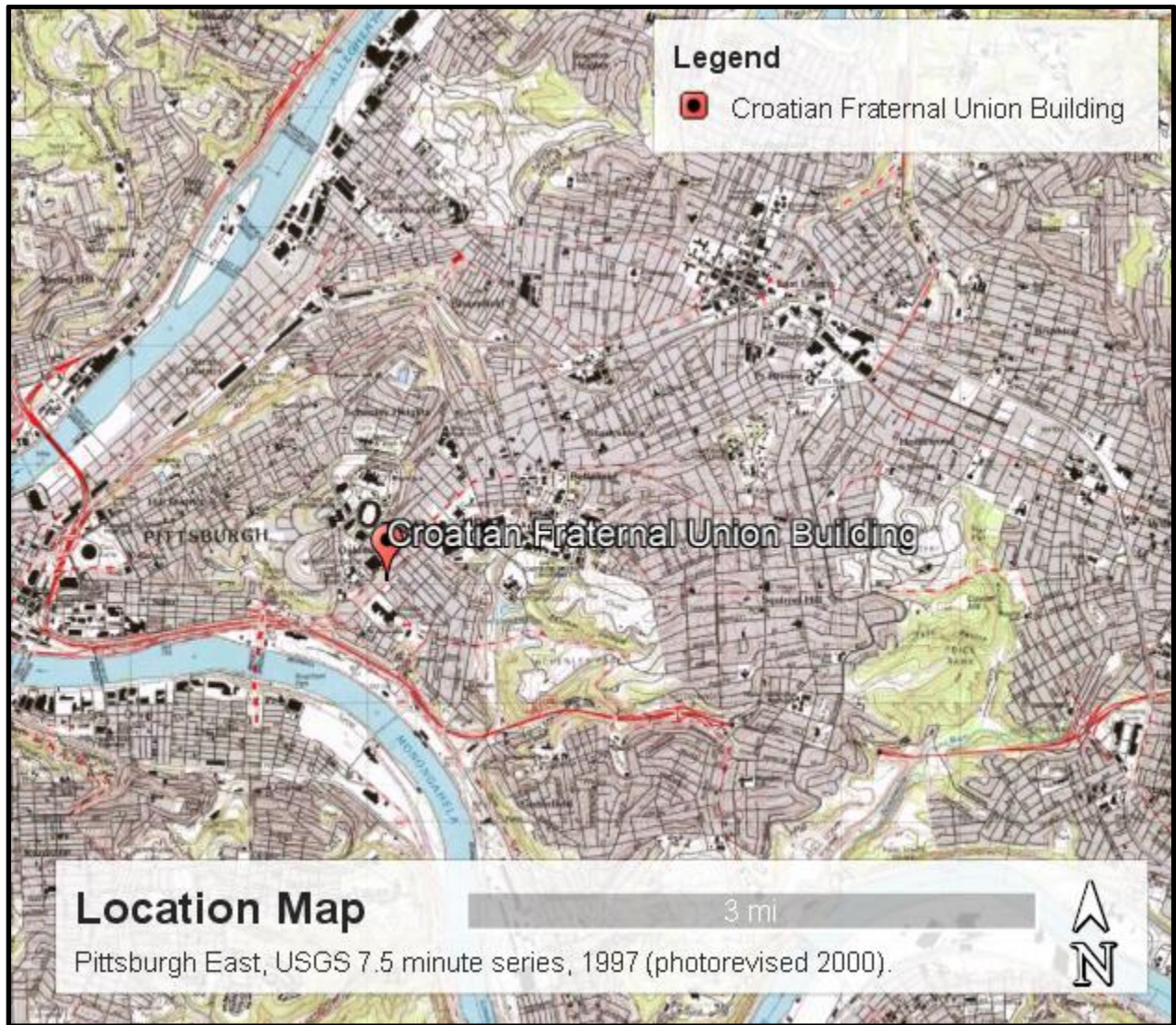


Location Map

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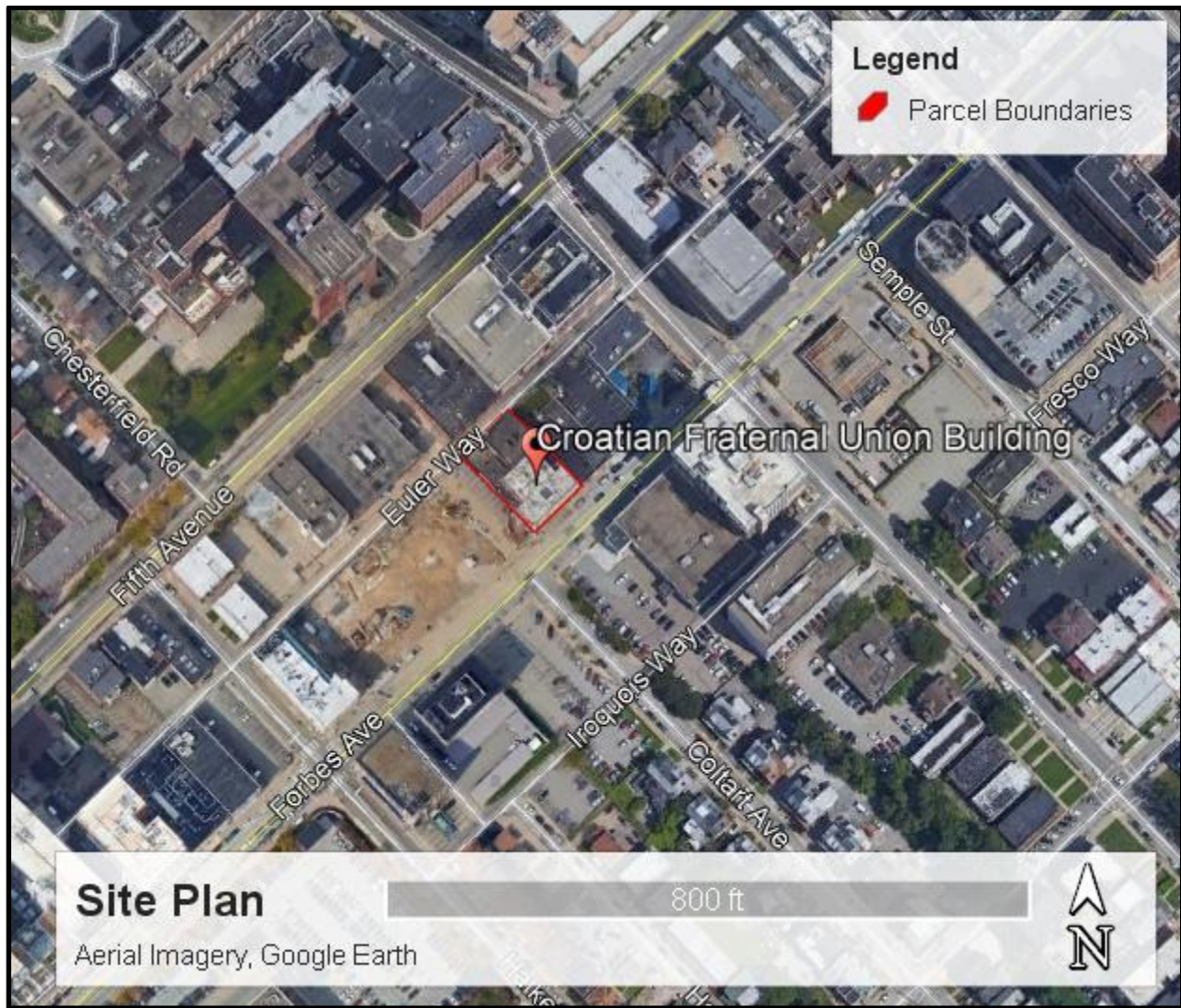


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Site Map



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