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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC FRANK H. BUHL MANSION

AND/OR COMMON

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 422 East State Street

CITY, TOWN Sharon

STATE Pennsylvania

VICINITY OF CODE 42

NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 24th

COUNTY CODE  
Mercer 085

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME David E. Braun

STREET & NUMBER 7125 Southern Boulevard

CITY, TOWN Youngstown

VICINITY OF STATE Ohio

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Mercer County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Mercer

STATE Pennsylvania

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places

DATE April 7, 1977

FEDERAL  STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

CITY, TOWN Harrisburg

STATE Pennsylvania

# DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Frank H. Buhl Mansion, a fourteen room dwelling erected in 1891, is constructed of native ashlar sandstone. The exterior walls--whose sense of weight and bulk is emphasized by squared rubble stone--are punctuated by dressed and carved bands. Evidences of the contemporary Richardsonian Romanesque style of architecture influences are prominent, especially including the employment of the well-recognized round arched style, the steep gabled wall dormers, and the inset porch with heavy arcades--all of which cohesively lend to the sense of general largeness but accompanying simplicity of form. The architect, Charles Owsley, of Youngstown, Ohio, while employing certain features of Richardsonian Romanesque, did not intend to convey this particular style of architecture via the Buhl Mansion; instead, by employing several of the Richardsonian Romanesque elements, this architect allowed the building to assume its own individuality and original character while utilizing and interpreting several of the well-known features of the work of Henry Hobson Richardson.

The 2½ story residence, embellished with decorated gables adorned by heavy stone finials and several turrets with copper capped spires (whose conical roofs merge into the main hipped roof), retains the original slate roof. The first story porch (facing State Street) has been enclosed, but the massive arches of the collonnade, supported by columns with carved floriform capitals, still lends this building an intriguing and tangible impressiveness. The arched porte cochere conveys a feeling of the Richardsonian Romanesque architectural style through its heavy arches, just one of the recognizable thematic entities employed by the mansion's architect.

The enclosed first story porch supports a second floor balcony overlooked by windows which are flanked by a series of colonettes (again utilizing the carved floriform capitals). The entire window section is enhanced by a deeply carved frame executed in a much heavier stone than the exterior rubble stone. A great Syrian arch overlooks the porte cochere, but its original stained and leaded glass panels have since been removed and remain boxed and preserved in the basement of this building. The left side turret of the Buhl Mansion is capped by a hexagonal roof and is inset with a decorated gable. The right side turret, topped by a conical roof, has windows which are flanked by broad columns supporting a wide dressed band. Above this runs a parallel series of dentils. Three semi-circular windows on this third ("ballroom") story are enclosed by thick arches, and the center window supports its arch by a pair of columns.

Minor exterior alterations, in addition to the enclosure of the arched first floor porch, have been executed carefully and without affecting the original character and charm of this

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stately stone building. Windows have been hung with 2 sash, no mullion, fittings. An exterior door has been added to the rear of the building (at what the 1936 floor plans list as the "cooler"). The several small brick chimney units have been removed and replaced by a larger unit at the rear of the residence. Where masonry work has been involved, care has been taken to match not only the fine quality of the materials used in these minor architectural changes, but in the quality of the craftsmanship as well. Attached to the porte-cochere is a six car garage, completed in the 1930's, of the same exterior greystone used in the construction of the main residence.

The interior of the Buhl Mansion contains many of the original appointments and fixtures, even though it has been converted to apartments. Interior walls were added to separate the apartments, so little has been done to destroy some of the building's characteristic features. All original panelling is intact in the drawing room, the dining room, the reception hall, and the side vestibule. The mosaic tile floor in the vestibule still remains but it is beginning to deteriorate. The fireplaces and mantels in the drawing room, the dining room, the reception hall, and the library are in excellent condition. Ornamental friezes remain in good condition in the drawing room and this room retains its highly ornamental plaster decorated ceiling (with wreath and shell motif). Wooden beams span the ceilings of the reception hall and the library; the latter also retains the original built-in bookcases. The stained glass windows and sliding doors have been boxed and preserved in the basement of the Buhl Mansion.

*conservatory 100m W → garden house*

Still existing on the property, and located directly behind the main residence, is the conservatory. The present has as concrete foundation with coursed stone walls to the sill, steel constructed frames, pivoted vents, canopies and concrete aisles. An adjacent swimming (or "reflecting") pool is of poured concrete with rounded or finished edges. Located northeast of the mansion is the Gardner's House, a ten room frame late Victorian Era building. It has ahipped, half-gable roof, a one story gable roofed shed, and a protruding two story bay overhung by a decorative shingle facade embellished with drop pendants.

The acreage of the nominated property on which the main residence, the garage, the conservatory, the swimming pool, and the gardner's cottage stand, is approximately two acres.

# **SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 00-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES      1891

BUILDER/ARCHITECT      Charles Owsley

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Frank H. Buhl Mansion, a rambling and imposing late 19th century residence, is an interpretive example of a distinct style of American architecture influenced by the works of Henry Hobson Richardson. The building incorporates a number of the Richardsonian Romanesque elements and conveys its impressiveness through a unifying series of arches, columns, finials, and turrets. It is the combination of these architectural features that give the Buhl Mansion its individual charm and irreplaceable beauty. In all probability the dwelling's architect, Charles Owsley (1846-1935) of Youngstown, Ohio, was influenced by the concentration of Richardsonian Romanesque edifices erected in the Pittsburgh area, less than sixty miles northeast of Sharon, in the late 1880s.

Owsley, architect for this 1891 mansion, was responsible for the designs of the Mercer County Courthouse, Celina, Ohio, and the Mahanoy County Courthouse, Youngstown, Ohio, just two of the noted public buildings he planned in Eastern Ohio and Western Pennsylvania. His biography appears in the Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased).

The Buhl Mansion was erected in 1891 by Frank H. Buhl, one of Sharon's most prominent citizens and one of Western Pennsylvania's leading philanthropists. Head of the Sharon Iron Company, Frank H. Buhl reportedly built the residence for his wife, Julia Forker Buhl shortly after their marriage. Construction on this great house began following the Buhls' return from Detroit, Michigan, where they toured a mansion similar to the one they had in mind. During construction of the rambling greystone mansion, the Buhls resided in the Gardner's House which still stands on the property today. The mansion was formally opened at a reception given by Mr. and Mrs. Buhl for 100 of their friends.

Known throughout Mercer County and adjoining areas for his magnanimity, Frank H. Buhl loomed legendary for his pronouncement that he believed in spending money when he made it. His beliefs in generosity helped found the F.H. Buhl Club, established 15 years before the steel king's death in 1918. Buhl Farm was the main center of activity for the Mercer County Branch of the International Sunshine Society, a charitable organization established

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for the needy children of the Shenango Valley. The multi-million dollar Frank H. Buhl trust was established in 1915 and the income from this foundation still maintains the Buhl Farm Park. Following the death of her husband, Mrs. Buhl continued support of their many projects. One of her more ambitious gestures was the acquisition --shortly before her death--of the Buhl Armory for the Julia F. Buhl Girls Club.

The Buhl Mansion stands today as a testimonial to the industrial and steel magnate, Frank H. Buhl and his wife, Julia F. Buhl, the much touted benefactress of the entire Shenango Valley. Architecturally, its distinctiveness is undeniable; it looms above Sharon's State Street, a monument to the residential work executed by Charles Dwsley in the 1890s. It typifies the great homes, the showplaces of prosperity, that were built by entrepreneurs of the last century. And it has withstood the past 80 years of change and transgression while retaining its fine-and rather individual architectural character.



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

518 GEOLGICAL SURVEY

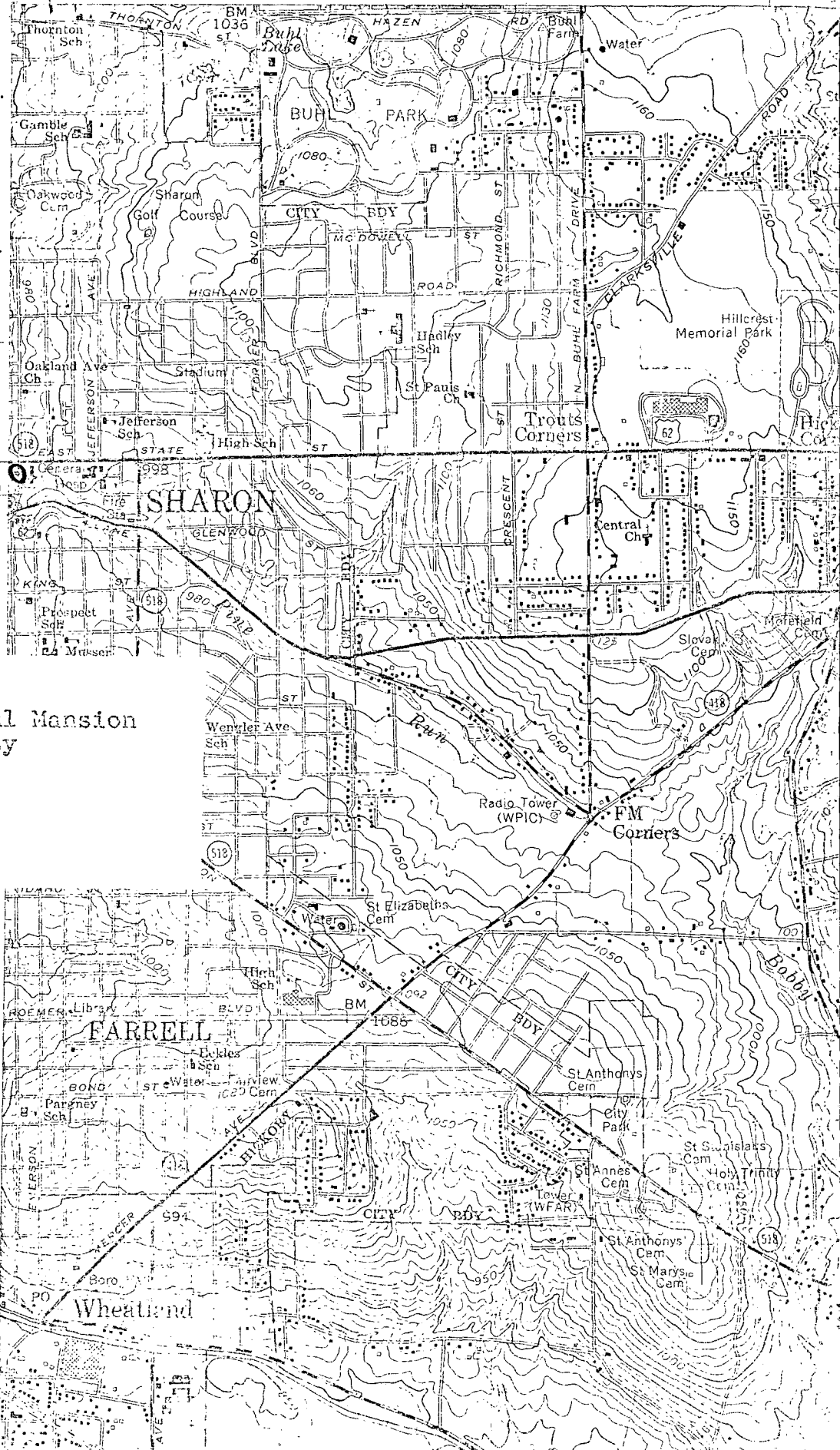
SHARPSVILLE (CIVIC CENTER) 1.1 MI.

543000m.E

80°30'  
41°15'

4566000m.N

YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO (CIVIC CENTER) 14 MI.  
HUBBARD, OHIO 7.3 MI.



Frank H. Buhl Mansion  
Mercer County

Zone 17

E 541940

N 4564460

12'30"

2.3 MI. TO U.S. 62