

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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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 Merrick Art Gallery

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Fifth Avenue & 11th Street (southwest corner) N/A not for publication

city, town New Brighton N/A vicinity of congressional district N/A

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Beaver code 003

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> 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 Edward Dempster Merrick Estate, Robert S. Merrick, Trustee

street & number Fifth Avenue & 11th Street

city, town New Brighton N/A vicinity of state Pennsylvania

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Beaver County Courthouse

street & number Third Street

city, town Beaver state Pennsylvania

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Pennsylvania Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 11/28/80 federal state county local

depository for survey records Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>1974</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Located two blocks east of the main commercial street of New Brighton, the Merrick Art Gallery stands prominently at the southwest corner of Fifth Avenue, formerly the path of the Pittsburgh, Chicago, and Fort Wayne Railroad, and 11th Street. Facing it across the intersection are a new post office on the southeast corner, a wood frame Stick Style/Carpenter Gothic house on the northeast corner, and a nineteenth century two story brick house on the northwest corner. To the west on the block it occupies is a broad expanse of lawn.

The Merrick Art Gallery consists of two brick buildings of 125' x 25' separated by a courtyard of approximately 15' x 125'. Both buildings are 2 stories with gabled roofs and skylight monitors.

The western of the two buildings is the more recent, having been constructed in 1901. It contains one gallery space on each floor of approximately 100' x 23', with an entrance foyer in the remaining space on the first floor and an office above in the remaining space on the second floor. The second floor gallery is the most impressive interior space in the building. The long high space is surmounted by a light monitor running the entire length of the gallery and is entirely finished in wood. A wood wainscoting is topped with a small platform held in place by additional small turned columns which support the lowermost row of heavy picture frames. The remainder of the wall above is sheathed entirely in vertical boards with flush joints approximately 4" on center. The underside of the gable roof is sheathed in narrow beaded boards running parallel with the light monitor. The roof trusses are made of camfered beams with bolted connections.

The first floor gallery was used by the New Brighton Public Library. Alterations to this space include the addition of 2 furnace rooms, 2 restrooms, and a partition separating a storage area from the library space. The library also added a modern vestibule on the north side of the building in the 1950s. However the original fabric of this gallery remains intact-marble flooring, wood wainscoting and high windows to allow light into the gallery space without taking up hanging room. Plans are in progress to remove the modern vestibule and restore the gallery space.

The exterior of this building is of red brick with pilasters made of buff colored brick dividing the north and south elevations into 6 equal bays.

The eastern building is the older. The northern portion was built as a one story train station around 1850 when the rail line ran along the eastern side of the building where 5th Avenue now exists. Merrick acquired this building in 1880, and made alterations to the first floor and added a second floor (1884) to create an art gallery. No pictures of the train station to show it in its unaltered state have been located.

The present first floor of this building has four rooms. All rooms except the small southern one have flooring of square shaped stones laid on a diagonal to the sides of the room. All of the rooms have narrow beaded vertical board wainscoting to about 5' above the floor which is also the present window sill line. The windows and doors have wide "shouldered" mouldings around them extending to the floor which appear original to the train station. The area below the existing window sills was filled in at the time the building was converted to an art gallery, thus providing hanging space while maintaining natural light from above. The northern room has a tin ceiling. The wood mantels and iron fireplace surrounds also appear original to the train station. The southernmost room, which contains a stair to the second floor, has a large square multi-colored tile floor.

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National Park Service

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The second floor above the train station was added in 1884. It contains a large skylit gallery, a smaller gallery now referred to as the "Parlor," and a smaller room at the top of the stairs now used as storage.

A two story addition with a slightly higher roofline was added to the south of the train station in 1888. The first floor gallery has 4 high windows on the east and west sides, an elaborate tin ceiling and beaded wood paneling. This room is presently used by the New Brighton Historical Society. The second floor gallery is one single windowless room surmounted by a skylight monitor.

The second floors of the east and west buildings are joined together by an enclosed wood bridge at their midpoints. The bridge spans over a courtyard which also contains 2 new sets of steel emergency stairs added to bring into conformance with modern safety codes.

The facades of the buildings reflect the original transformation of the one story early Victorian train station to a two story late Victorian art gallery and the historic growth of the gallery from 1884 to 1901. On the eastern facade, the 4 bay addition of 1888 has a transomed door and three high windows at the first floor and a solid brick wall divided by the brick pilasters at the second level. One second floor full length window in the southern bay has been bricked in. The main east elevation consists of 6 irregular brick bays separated by brick pilasters. The 7 first floor windows are original to the train station with their lower sections bricked in to create hanging space inside and the wide wood "shouldered" mouldings cut at the new sill level and fitted with a new wood sill and decorative wood apron with corner blocks.

The northern facade of the original gallery building has 2 second floor double-hung windows which have been foreshortened. Approximately 15 years ago, the Department of Labor & Industry required that the Gallery remove the floor length windows and replace them with the current standard ones. The first floor has one steel flush door which replaced a wood one in the same location.

The northern, western and southern facades of the 1901 gallery building are intact with the exception of a modern one story vestibule added by the Library on the western facade in the 1950s. Plans are underway to remove the vestibule.

8. 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"/> 1400-1499	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates c.1850; 1884; 1888; 1901 **Builder/Architect** N/A

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Merrick Art Gallery is significant as an early private museum in Western Pennsylvania—it predates Pittsburgh's Carnegie Institute by 10 years. It is further significant as a notable philanthropic contribution by Edward Dempster Merrick, a manufacturer in the heavily industrialized upper Ohio Valley—an area not blessed with many cultural or philanthropic gifts. In addition, the principal gallery space in the 1901 section stands as one of the few unaltered gallery spaces from the turn-of-the-century in the Commonwealth.

The Merrick Art Gallery is a fine document of nineteenth century collection and display techniques. It was founded by Edward Dempster Merrick (1832-1911) a native of New Brighton, in 1880. Although art was a life-long interest for Merrick, he engaged in business, particularly family manufacturing businesses, until 1885. At age 53, having acquired sufficient interest in the business to establish his financial security, he began to devote most of his time to art. Merrick began by developing his own painting skill, and purchased the old New Brighton Railroad Station (c.1850) in 1880 for a display space, adding a second story in 1884. Eventually he began to collect the work of other artists according to personal taste, focusing on eighteenth and nineteenth century paintings by American, English, French, and German artists. Reflecting the Victorian penchant for eclectic collections, Merrick also acquired a number of natural history exhibits and curios. To house the collection, he added an extension to the south in 1888 and the main gallery in 1901, and arranged for the display of paintings on several levels in the long galleries. Today, the collection of over 240 paintings, including works by Thomas Sully, Gustave Courbet, Pierre Paul Prudhon, and Asher B. Durand, is still displayed as envisioned by its founder.

Historical, scientific, and artistic collections had been compiled in America before 1880; most notable was Charles Wilson Peale's collection which opened first in his Philadelphia studio in 1782. The Merrick Art Gallery, however, was the first cultural institution in western Pennsylvania and particularly novel as a collection open to the public, free of charge. Merrick traveled frequently to New York and met often with Andrew Carnegie, with whom he undoubtedly discussed museums. In addition, the Gallery offered art instruction which continues today in deference to the founder's wishes.

As a building which developed through the evolution of a c.1850 structure with additions of 1884, 1888, and 1901, the Merrick Art Gallery stands as an early example of adaptive use, as well as a document of late Victorian utilitarian design. The Greek Revival railroad station has adapted well to the simple design of the subsequent structures, all surmounted by light monitors in the nineteenth century European manner.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Edward Dempster Merrick. "Edward Dempster Merrick: An Autobiography. "Geneology of the Merrick-Mirick-Myrick Family, of Massachusetts, 1636-1902. By George Byron Merrick. Madison, WI.: Tracy, Gibbs & Co., 1902, pp. 241-245.

(continued)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .43 acres

Quadrangle name Beaver

Quadrangle scale 1: 24000

UMT References

A

1	7	5	5	8	2	0	0	4	5	0	9	1	4	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D

Zone				Easting				Northing						

E

Zone				Easting				Northing						

F

Zone				Easting				Northing						

G

Zone				Easting				Northing						

H

Zone				Easting				Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

Beginning at a point at the eastern intersection of Eleventh Street and Fourth Avenue in Borough of New Brighton, Beaver County, Pennsylvania; thence in a northeasterly direction along Eleventh Street a distance of 150 feet to a point at the southerly intersection (cont.)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state WA code WA county WA code WA

state WA code WA county WA code WA

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Eliza F. Smith

organization Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation

date 1980

street & number One Landmarks Square

telephone 412/391-7640

city or town Pittsburgh

state PA

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title _____ date _____

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

date _____

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date _____

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National Park Service

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Charles L. Moore. Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission Register of
Historic Sites and Landmarks nomination form. Dated June 16, 1978.

Cathy A. Cairns. "Merrick Free Art Gallery Features Victorian Collection"
and "Merrick Art Gallery Eclectic by Design." Antique Monthly. Vol. 13,
No. 9, August 1980, pp. 6B and 8B.

"The Merrick Art Gallery Celebrates a Century of Culture 1880-1980."
Pittsburgher Magazine. Vol. 3, No. 12, May 1980, pp. 60-61.













