

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Old Allegheny Rows Historic District

and or common

## 2. Location

street & number

not for publication

city, town Pittsburgh vicinity of

state Pennsylvania code county Allegheny code

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" 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	<u>N/A</u> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<u>N/A</u> 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 Multiple

street & number

city, town vicinity of state

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Allegheny County Courthouse, County Office Building

street & number Forbes Avenue and Ross Street

city, town Pittsburgh state Pennsylvania

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Allegheny County Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1978  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

city, town Harrisburg state Pennsylvania

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" 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 _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			N/A

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The historic district is located in an area referred to as California/Kirkbride across the Allegheny River, northwest of downtown Pittsburgh. The district contains a variety of row houses ranging from simple brick structures to an ornately-finished planned development. Nearly all the buildings in the district were constructed between 1870 and 1900. The streets are arranged on a grid pattern and the northern part of the district has a gentle upward slope. The eastern boundary of the proposed district abuts the Mexican War Streets Historic District (National Register, 1975). The boundary runs along Mero Way to the west, Marquis Way to the north and along California Avenue to the west separating the residential district from commercial and industrial areas, and a rail yard. The district is defined to the north by the Uniondale Cemetery and the slope of the hill rising above the Ohio River Valley. Of the total 353 structures in the district, five are non-contributing intrusions. The intrusions include 3 commercial structures, and two small bar establishments. The majority of the contributing structures are two to three story, two to three bay brick row houses. The common features includes Mansard roofs, dormers, bracketed or corbelled cornices, and stone or decorative wood lintels, sills, and architraves. There are several variations in row house styling including: Richardson Romanesque, Italianate, and Victorian vernacular. In the context of Pittsburgh's architecture, the district falls between the generally smaller and earlier buildings of the Mexican War Streets, and the contemporary but grander houses of the Manchester Historic District. The area is set apart from either of those two districts by the speculative nature of its development.

One-quarter of the buildings in the historic district are in a rental rowhouse development built in 1892-3 by Herbert DuPuy, a Pittsburgh industrialist. Many of the buildings feature polychromed brick, stamped metal cornices and finials, and porches assembled from standard pieces of millwork to form intricate compositions.

The district has three significant structures within its boundaries. The buildings include an old theater, a row of four Richardson Romanesque-styled houses, and a row of 14 Victorian vernacular houses.

The first of the three significant buildings is what is known as the New Brighton Theater located on the southwest corner of Brighton Place and California Avenue, a very important location in the district. The terra cotta facade of this three story, seven bay building is done in the Art Deco style. A parapet, decorated with zig-zag designs and sculpted faces, rises above the three center bays. A chevron design outlines the flat roof and the corners are accented with art deco sculpted elephant heads. All the windows are 3/3 and have spandrels with detailed deco designs. The first floor has been altered to accommodate commercial businesses. A decorative canopy remains suspended from the first floor. Erected in 1928, the New Brighton Theater replaced an older theater on the site, and its construction and placement reflect the density of the district's population in that era.

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The row of four houses on California Avenue between B. Street and St. Mark's was constructed in 1888 by Francis J. Torrance. The houses are constructed of stone in a Richardson Romanesque style. The houses are two bays and three stories each and alternate in design. The outer two houses, 936 and 942, have flat roofs with corbelled brick cornices and recessed brick panels. The other inner houses, 938 and 940, are two-stories-plus-mansard with large dormers and cornices of recessed brick panels. The houses exhibit a variety of details including: small and large round arch windows, elaborately detailed stone lintels, belt courses, projected bay windows, and recessed porches on the second story. The entrance centrally located between 938 and 940 is comprised of a recessed porch behind a large stone arch.

The final significant structures are a row of fourteen identical houses which were built in 1892 by Herbert DuPuy. The row is the largest and most ornate surviving from Herbert DuPuy's "Hollywood place" development. This is a contiguous row of two-story-plus-mansard brick houses with two bays each and corbelled brick cornices. 1000 Kirkbride, which acts as the entrance to the development, is highlighted by its distinctive turret. The houses are visually separated by pinnacles topped with finials. The paired dormer windows have decorative mullions. The remaining windows are 1/1 with stone lintels and sills. The peaked gables of the porches have decorative spandrels and curved wood details.

The character of the district is shaped by its grid of streets and the consistent scale of its buildings. The main streets of the district, Brighton Road, Brighton Place, California Avenue, and Kirkbride Street, are all wide, uncluttered, and offer better vistas than the streets of nearby neighborhoods in what used to be the City of Allegheny. From the higher ground in the northern part of the district it is possible to look out over the roofs of the rows on Brighton Road and Place toward the Pittsburgh skyline. To the north of California Avenue the similar size of the buildings along and above Kirkbride Street rise in rows toward the green of the hillside and cemetery. Natural and man-made features clearly define the district, while the topography creating the views of and from the district add to its distinctive character.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
1700-1799	<input 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
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** 1870-1900 **Builder/Architect**

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The various styles and designs of row houses in the proposed Old Allegheny Rows Historic District represent the local evolution of row housing between 1870-1900. The growth of industry and manufacturing, advances and improvements in transportation, and a growing urban working class, increased the demand for housing in what had been a remote corner of the City of Allegheny. This era saw a change in the nature and appearance of city dwellings in the district from simple brick boxes intended to house the workers of a particular local industry, to an ornate polychromed speculative development with modern conveniences designed to appeal to the independent urban wage earner.

Allegheny City doubled in size between 1850-1860 due to the growth of the iron, coal, steel, railroad, and other associated industries. In 1868, the Federal Street and Pleasant Valley Railway was granted a charter which allowed the company to lay tracks from the Charles Street Valley (north of Brighton Place) to Pittsburgh, via downtown Allegheny. The completion of the railway generated the first real impetus for development of the outlying portions of Allegheny.

John Taggart, Jr. was the first to construct row housing in the vicinity of the street railway in about 1872. Taggart inherited land from his father and constructed a large tannery on property he owned on the east side of Brighton Road. Almost directly across the street, Taggart built 12 small brick row houses. The houses were without ornamentation and their proximity to the tannery indicates they most likely were built as worker's housing. The majority of the simple houses survive and display the plain nature of early 1870's worker's row housing.

The land to the west of Taggart's and to the south of California Avenue was owned by the Pittsburgh, Ft. Wayne, and Chicago Railroad. The railroad had established its repair shops there in the early 1850's. The land between the repair shops and Brighton Place had been subdivided, but the railroad did not undertake any development. Instead, in the 1880's the railroad sold the plots of land to individuals who developed it in two-to-eight-building rows. By 1890, Brighton Place was fully developed. The various styles and sizes of the surviving rows display the individual and speculative nature of their development. Mansards, bracketed cornices, decorated lintels and architraves, and a pleasant mixture of architectural detailing along the street, show that the urban middle class was conscious of modern architectural style, and that it was worthwhile for speculators to erect stylish buildings.

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By the 1890's, the Pittsburgh, Ft. Wayne, and Chicago Railroad no longer owned any property other than their repair yards. Ten acres of land directly north of the repair yards, across California Avenue, were divided and sold to four local businessmen. A portion of the land was developed for commercial use and the remaining land went for housing. Three slaughterhouses were erected on the property, the largest owned by Lorenzo Schlelein. Schlelein constructed five two-story-plus-mansard row houses fronting on California Avenue, directly behind his slaughterhouse. Four of the row houses survive.

Schlelein's small scale speculative venture was modified and repeated by various individuals, the most important was constructed by Francis J. Torrance. Torrance was one of Allegheny's most prominent and active businessmen. He was the vice-president and chairman of the nationally-known Standard Manufacturing Company (today the American Standard Company). Torrance purchased a plot of land along California Avenue in 1887 and constructed a row of four three-story Richardson Romanesque brick houses in 1888, the same year that Richardson's Allegheny County Courthouse was completed (National Register, 1973). Torrance was also involved in the development of Schenley Farms, an architecturally-resplendent planned community in the Oakland section of Pittsburgh (City-Designated Historic District, 1982).

In the early 1890's the housing market in Pittsburgh boomed due to a tremendous industrial expansion. According to one newspaper report, the type of housing most in demand was small, modestly priced, rental houses. In order to meet this demand, Herbert DuPuy, a noted Pittsburgh industrialist, made plans for a large speculative housing development. The development was to be constructed on six blocks of undeveloped land north of California Avenue that his wife, Amy Hostetter, had inherited. The construction of the DuPuy development began in 1892 and was referred to as "Hollywood place". When completed, Hollywood place was to consist of 300 to 400, four-to-six-room, row houses. According to contemporary newspapers, the development was based on the "Philadelphia Plan", apparently a term used to describe planned communities of row houses. DuPuy's project included architecturally-resplendent houses on the larger streets and modest residences on the alleys. The houses were done in a Victorian vernacular style with sheet metal architectural detailing, and porches on the larger buildings made from standard pieces of millwork. The completion of the project was hindered by the Panic of 1893 and the Home-Steid Riots near Pittsburgh. Only 137 of the proposed 300-400 row houses were constructed. The scale and style of the "Hollywood place" row housing is unique in Pittsburgh. The development features a number of interesting and varying architectural elements, but at the same time has a mass-produced appearance that is different from the more random developments along Brighton Place.

Only one building of any import was constructed in the district in this century. In 1928 a three story, 1,000 seat movie theater opened at the corner of Brighton Place and California Avenue. The art-deco-styled theater still stands with its glazed terra cotta facade intact, although the movie theater went out of business during the Depression.

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The neighborhood has endured a half century of decline and stagnation. The failure of the railroad industry combined with the neglect of Pittsburgh's Northside and the region's general loss of population have left the area largely intact, but depopulated. The location of a large new postal facility on the site of the old railyard, and reinvestment in some of the residences in the neighborhood, promise better things for the future of the district.

The various styles of buildings in the district provide a visual understanding of the evolution of speculative row housing. Row housing in this section of Allegheny progressed from a simple way to house workers to a sophisticated speculative business. While New York became notorious for its tenements, in other cities, such as Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh, row houses were constructed to shelter America's new urban working class. The various styles of row houses within the district provide a physical understanding of the social and economic changes which occurred in the period, and the effect of those changes on the housing market between 1870 and 1900.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Allegheny County, Deeds, County Office Building.

Archives of Industrial Society, University of Pittsburgh, Railways Company Records,  
Snow Report.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheets.

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

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Patricia A. McLaughlin - Charles Uhl		
organization	Tom Mistick and Sons, Inc.	date	
street & number	1437 Western Avenue	telephone	(412) 322-1121
city or town	Pittsburgh	state	Pennsylvania

# 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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature \_\_\_\_\_

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

For NPS use only

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

date \_\_\_\_\_

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

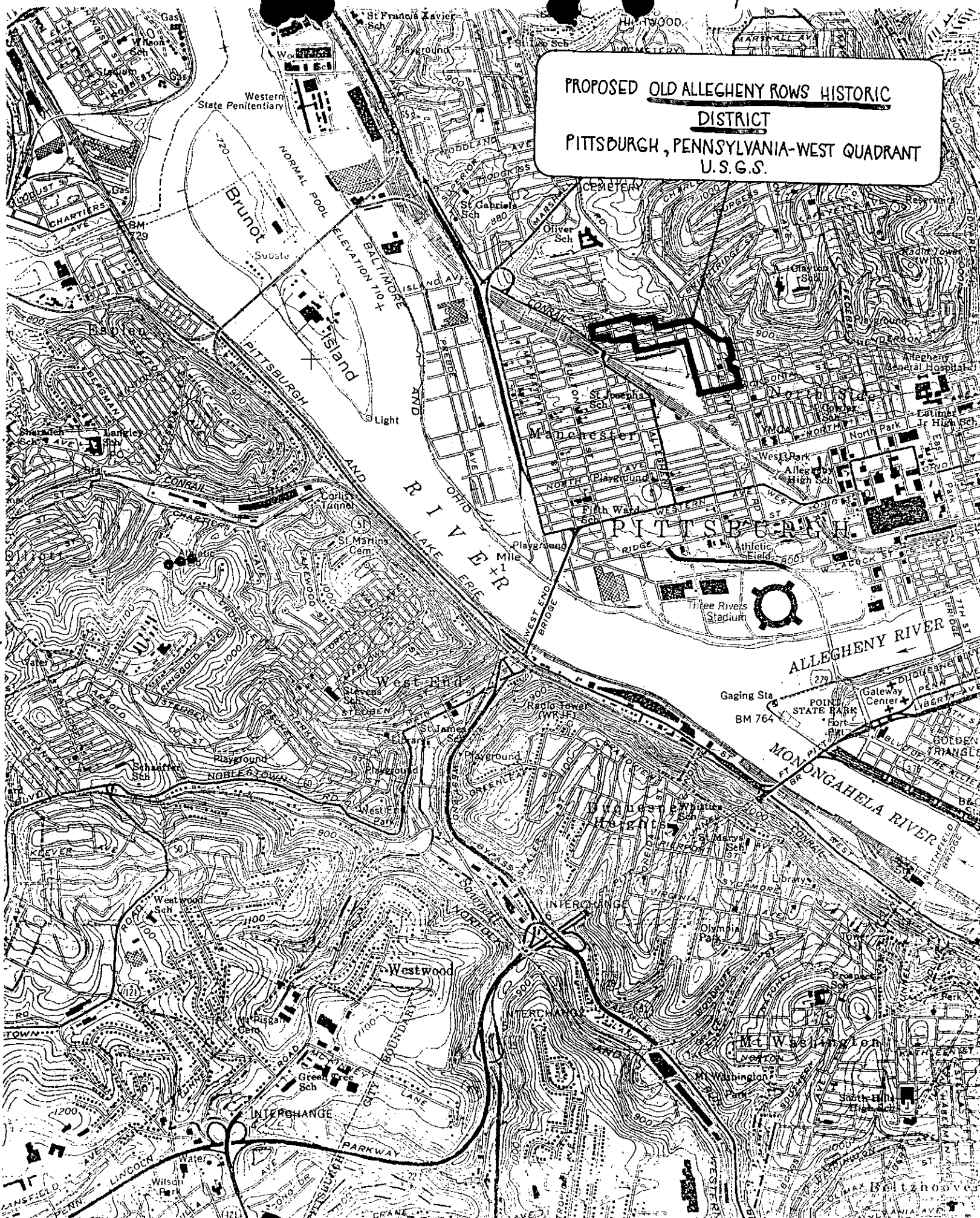
date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

UTM COORD. SEE REVERSE

Pittsburgh West Quad

**PROPOSED OLD ALLEGHENY ROWS HISTORIC DISTRICT**  
**PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA-WEST QUADRANT**  
**U.S.G.S.**





a.	E 582 750	N 4479	050
b.	E 582 920	N 4479	000
c.	E 583 335	N 4478	900
d.	E 583 345	N 4478	750
e.	E 583 520	N 4478	750