

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 Brighton Place

and/or common 838 - 62 Brightridge Street

2. Location

street & number 838 - 62 Brightridge Street

~~NA~~ not for publication

city, town Pittsburgh _____ vicinity of

state Pennsylvania code _____ county Allegheny code _____

3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| district | <input type="checkbox"/> public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input 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 |
| structure | <input type="checkbox"/> both | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress | <input type="checkbox"/> educational | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence |
| site | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> religious |
| 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 Northside Associates, and individual owners listed on continuation sheet.

street & number 1437 Western Avenue

city, town Pittsburgh _____ vicinity of _____ state Pennsylvania

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Office Building

street & number 400 Ross Street

city, town Pittsburgh _____ state Pennsylvania

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title PA. Historical and Museum Commission has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date September 13, 1983 federal state county _____ local _____

depository for survey records Bureau for Historic Preservation

city, town Harrisburg _____ state Pennsylvania

7. 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 brick row structures built along either side of Brightridge Street (originally Brighton Place) were built in 1885. All the buildings in the two rows are the same size, and have the same floorplan. Each row has its own architectural detailing.

Ten of the original twelve houses built on the south side of the street survive. These houses are two-story-plus-mansard structures with slate roofs. Each house has a single twin-windowed dormer. The windows are double-sash, 1/1, with decorative wood surrounds. Below the dormer is a box gutter. The gutter is visually supported by a stepped brick corbeled cornice. The remaining openings have segmentally arched brick hoods with incised floral patterns on the arch infill and mullions. The segmentally arched entrance has a narrow glass transom. A cut stone foundation capped by a plain stone water table completes the facade.

The row on the north side of Brightridge Street has thirteen houses. Each house has a gable roof with bracketed wood cornice, broken by third floor dormers. The dormer window is round arch with a raised brick hood. The second story opening has paired doubled sash, 1/1, windows with wood lintels and sills. The remaining openings and the foundation are identical to those on the southern row.

Each house on the street has about fifteen feet of yard in the rear. The rear elevation of each house is two bays wide with a dormer in the third floor. The mansard on the southern row does not continue around to the rear of the row. A drop in grade behind this row exposes the basement level.

In plan, these buildings are simple and are good examples of the narrow housing built for speculative purposes in the late 19th century. The first floor has two equally sized rooms divided by a transverse-running stairway. The rooms are still used for their original purposes: as parlor/living room and kitchen/dining area. Above the first floor the stairway separates two bedrooms and ends between two bedrooms on the third floor. The houses were originally heated by fireplaces, and chimneys remain, although the mantles have been removed.

8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric | <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> social/ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 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 |
| <input 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 1885 **Builder/Architect** William A. Stone, Developer

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The industrial boom that made Pittsburgh the steel center of America in the years after the Civil War sparked an equivalent boom in the building industry. New housing was needed for the immigrant and native laborers who were attracted to the area. In Pittsburgh's neighboring city, Allegheny, the flat sections near the Ohio and Allegheny Rivers were built-up by the last decades of the 19th century, and development began in the ravines and on the hillsides above the older parts of the city. One of the areas that saw considerable speculative development in this period was a ravine promoted as "Pleasant Vallèy" by the developers of the local street railway line. Three concentrations of speculative housing were built in Pleasant Valley in the mid-1880's. Two of the complexes survive.

The first row of speculative housing was built in Pleasant Valley in 1885. The brick houses on Brightridge Street, along with later speculative housing projects, comprised the largest concentration of rental housing under common ownership in Allegheny. This housing can be tied directly to the Federal Street and Pleasant Valley Street Railway, a horse-drawn street car line that had its terminus in the Pleasant Valley area. The railway was later modified to become Pittsburgh and Allegheny's first electric railway.

A number of prominent Pittsburghers served on the board of directors of the railway. Among them was the developer of the speculative housing, William Alexis Stone. Stone served as legal counsel to the railway, and was on its Board of Directors in the early 1890's. In the mid-1880's Stone was serving as the United States Attorney for Pittsburgh. In his autobiography Stone wrote that he "made considerable money in the organization of street railways in Allegheny City." Although originally a man of modest means, raised in rural northern Pennsylvania, his involvement in the railway and the associated housing gained for him the prominence and the money needed to launch his statewide political career. Throughout his career in politics Stone was a part of the Republican political machine that ran Pennsylvania from the 1880's until 1920. He served four terms in Congress (1891-1899) and one term as Governor of Pennsylvania (1899-1903). Stone returned to the legal profession after serving as governor, and was the primary defender of the City of Allegheny in its annexation battle with Pittsburgh.

In 1868, the Federal Street and Pleasant Valley Railway was granted a charter that allowed it a right-of-way on any street in the city of Allegheny. The line was completed in 1871 and as the name implies, the main line was along Allegheny's primary north-south street, Federal Street, and up into the narrow run parallel to Brighton Road. The company advertised the latter area as "Pleasant Valley". However, little development occurred in the valley between 1873-1880 because of the nationwide depression of that era.

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Continuation sheet

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SIGNIFICANCE

By the early 1880's, Pittsburgh and Allegheny were once more prospering and the population increasing. With the population expanding and moving into the surrounding ravines and hills, the railway, and Pleasant Valley in general, began to prosper. Stone erected the rows of speculative housing in 1885 along Brighton Place (now Brightridge Street). Twenty-five party-wall row houses were built along a block-long section of the street between Brighton Road and Taggart Street. All but two of the buildings are still standing. The two-story houses are 13 feet wide, 35 feet deep, and have two rooms per floor. Rental advertisements for the Brighton Place rows appearing in the 1885 Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette emphasized the fact that these houses were along the Pleasant Valley Railway. In 1888, real estate agents reported that there was considerable inquiry for "lots on the new electric line".

An examination of the 1900 census for the City of Allegheny reveals the ethnic background and employment of the people who were living in the speculative housing. The occupations of the tenants of the buildings include laborers, railroad workers, skilled tradesmen, clerks, and shopkeepers. The number of people per household was not unreasonable for the size of the buildings (each house has four bedrooms). The tenants of the rows were of modest means, but were not as poor as their much-studied contemporaries in the overcrowded company housing near the steel mills of the region.

Although a few of the speculative housing tenants were native Americans, most were foreign born. The immigrant tenants almost exclusively came from Germany, Ireland, and England. There were no Italians, Poles, or "Slavs" (people from Middle-European countries) listed as living in the buildings. The city of Allegheny did not attract the waves of turn-of-the-century immigrants that settled in Pittsburgh and in the mill towns along the Monongahela River. The lack of more recent immigrants in the rows is an indication of the difference in ethnic make-up between Pittsburgh and Allegheny.

In the early twentieth century, social reformers criticised Pittsburgh for the housing condition of the mill workers. However, Stone's rows of speculative housing resemble the apartment courts that evolved in the early twentieth century, more than the contemporary housing found around Pittsburgh's mills. The Brighton Place houses were equipped with indoor plumbing, provided space in the rear of the rows, and were given character through architectural detail. These features were virtually unheard of in the company housing for the mill workers, and were most likely undertaken to increase the appeal, as well as the revenue of the buildings.

In the middle third of this century the development of automobile-related suburbs caused many of the residential areas of the old city of Allegheny to go into decline. The Pleasant Valley area lost its importance as a neighborhood close and convenient to the mills, factories, and central business district of the old city. The rows of housing deteriorated through the 1950's and 1960's.

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SIGNIFICANCE

Throughout the 1900's some of the houses on Brightridge Street (old Brighton Place) have passed to private owners. In the early 1970's the rows were acquired and rehabilitated in an attempt to deal with the blighted conditions of the Charles Street Valley section of Pittsburgh's Northside. The rehabilitation was largely cosmetic and did not alter the plan of the buildings or much of the architectural detail. Some of the badly deteriorated doors and windows were replaced.

The rows comprising 838-62 Brightridge Street are good local examples of 19th century speculative rental row housing which preceded apartment construction. They also represent the development of the Pleasant Valley area of Pittsburgh's Northside (the former City of Allegheny) which was directly stimulated by the Federal Street and Pleasant Valley Railway. William A. Stone, an influential lawyer and investor in the railway, was the developer of three principal concentrations of this type of row housing: 838-62 Brightridge Street, rows facing Hamilton Place (demolished), and 2501-31 Charles Street. These projects for their time comprised the largest concentration of rental housing under common ownership in the City of Allegheny. Stone, a primary defender of the City of Allegheny in its annexation battle with Pittsburgh, gained prominence and income from the railway and the associated housing projects which helped him launch a statewide political career.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Archives of Industrial Society, University of Pittsburgh, Palmer Collection, "History of the United Traction Company of Pittsburgh."

Biographical Directory of the American Congress (Government Printing Office Washington, 1928)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name Pittsburgh West Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale 7.5 Minute

UTM References

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Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The structures adjacent to and facing the block of Brightbridge Street between Brighton Road and Charles Street in the Northside of Pittsburgh.

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 H. Uhl

organization Tom Mistick & Sons, Inc.

date 11/14/83

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:

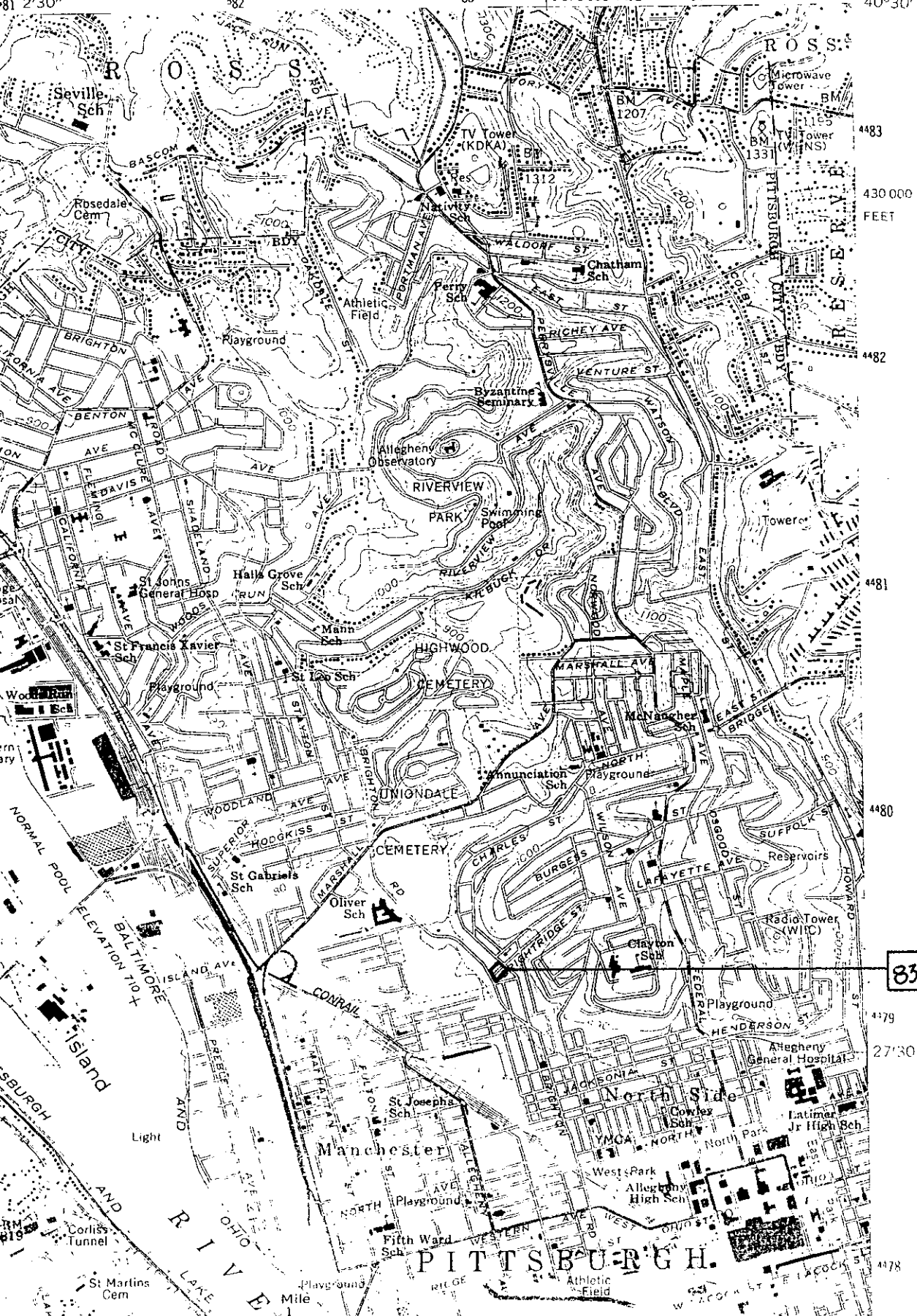
date _____

Chief of Registration

PITTSBURGH WEST QUADRANGLE
PENNSYLVANIA—ALLEGHENY CO
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

5003 III SW
(CL 1 N55-5 A W)

81 2'30" 582 583 1 370 000 FEET 584 80°00' 40°30'



838-862 BRIGHTRIDGE ST.

479
27'30"

478