

17 PERNOD STREET (House)  
Pittsburgh  
Allegheny County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-6200

HABS  
PA  
2-PITBU,  
90-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
Northeast Region  
Philadelphia Support Office  
U.S. Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, P.A. 19016

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Location: Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania

USGS Pittsburgh West Quadrangle  
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:  
17.584130.4478890

Significance: 17 Pernod Street is atypical of the brick rowhouse construction that characterized this block after 1884, and therefore stands as a reminder of the less urban nature of the neighborhood prior to that time.

Description: Set back 9'-7" from the street, 17 Pernod Street is the only wood frame building surviving in this block. It is freestanding, but closely set to its brick neighbors at 15 Pernod Street and 1222 Reddour Street. Its two story, two bay, side gable front is covered with insul-brick and measures 24' across; the rear is inaccessible, precluding exterior measurements, but extends to a depth of approximately 41'. The windows are double hung replacement sash. The entry doorway, once transomed, has been altered, but retains its simple wood hood on brackets.

On the interior, a side stair hall provides access to both the front block and the rear ell, some of which is structurally unstable and therefore inaccessible. Accumulated debris further precludes interior photography. Notable interior details include a banister with turned balusters and newel post and simple wood mantels. Accumulated debris and unsafe conditions preclude access to the basement.

History: Based on map research, the building's construction date is estimated at ca. 1874-1884. The attached 1851 Day & Cramer map of Allegheny, Pennsylvania, is the first to show that by that date Pernod Street, first called Margaret Alley and later West Pearl Street, had been built through the block between the commercial and residential Federal Street hub on the east and Middle Alley (later called Race Street and today Reddour Street) on the west. Construction of Pernod Street opened the block to residential and commercial construction by the mid-nineteenth century. Nevertheless, by 1872, the G.M. Hopkins & Company atlas shows that only one row house (possibly at 15 Pernod Street) had been constructed fronting on Pernod Street. The west side of the block closer to Reddour Street was then largely vacant or lightly built upon, while the east side was taken up by residential and commercial buildings facing on the important Federal Street corridor. The property at 17 Pernod Street is shown under the ownership of "H.B. Donald" (?) on the 1872 G.M. Hopkins & Company atlas, but the name may actually be McDonough, as John McDonough did own the property next door at 1222 Reddour Street as early as 1850. No construction seems to have taken place on the 17 Pernod Street property, however, until after an 1874 fire that decimated this entire block. On July 4, 1874 a serious fire began in the carpenter shop of Cresswell and Burgoyne at 255-257 Federal Street, about one block northeast of the subject property. It spread west and south over four acres and consumed some 199 buildings, including the area of the subject property. The extant architecture in the Pernod-Federal-Eloise-Reddour Street block thus dates after this fire, ca. 1874-1884. All of these buildings are shown on the 1884 Sanborn Insurance Company map, and few architectural changes have occurred since that time.

In 1890, 17 Pernod Street was owned by G. Gunn. The 1925 G. M. Hopkins & Company atlas shows that 17 Pernod Street was then owned by Mr. and Mrs. David M. Neilson. More recent owners of the property have included William J. and Helen M. Vezendy, who sold it to Theodore

F. Brothers in 1980. The Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh obtained the house and property from Mr. Brothers in 1996.

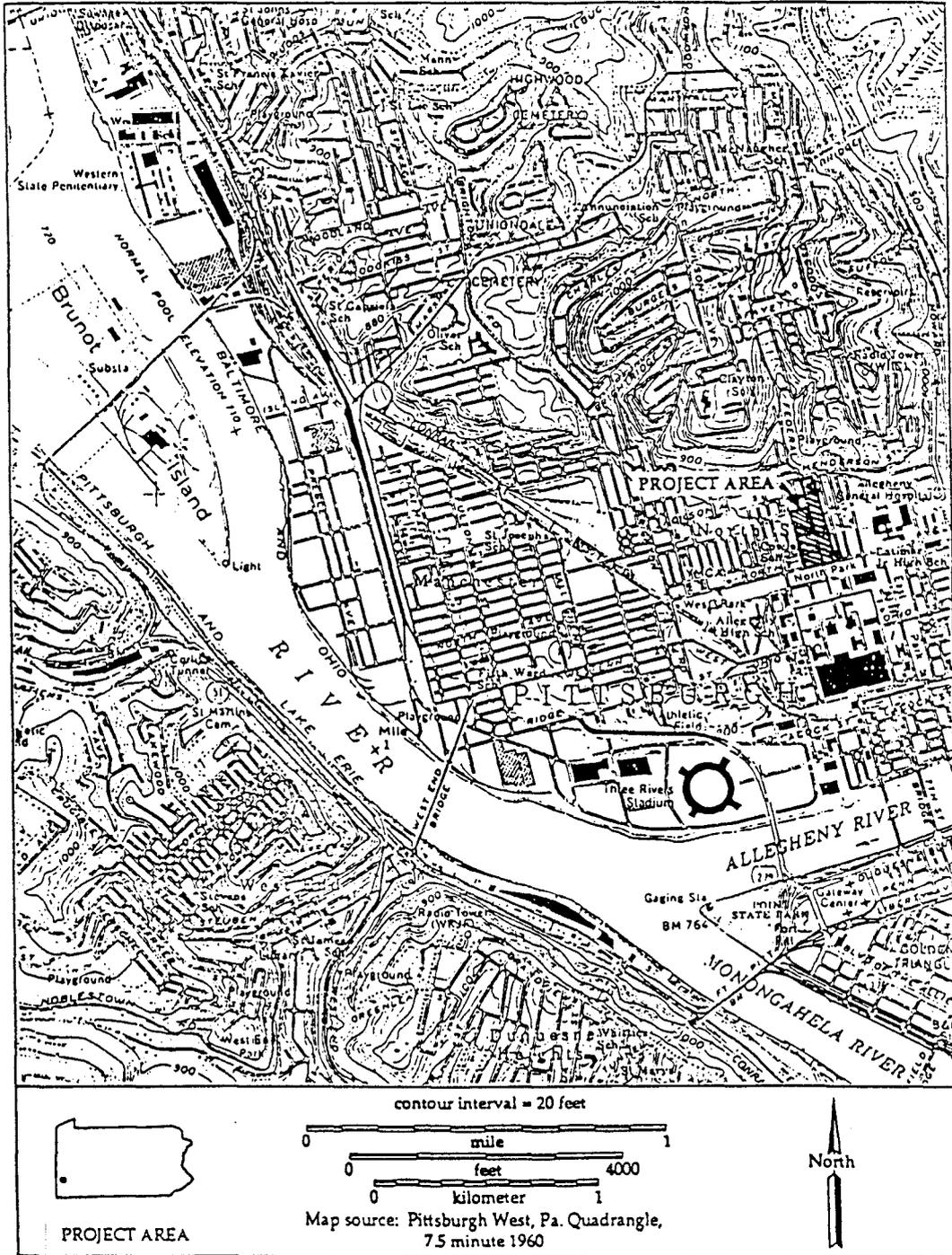
The three-block Federal North Redevelopment Area in the Central Northside Historic District of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, was certified in 1989. In 1995, Pittsburgh adopted a redevelopment plan for this neighborhood. In consultation with the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Officer (PASHPO) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), it was determined that proposed redevelopment in the Federal North neighborhood would affect National Register of Historic Places-eligible historic properties. One condition of the project's Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) provided for Historic American Building Survey (HABS) recording of 14 buildings in a portion of the redevelopment project called "Block #2." Block #2 includes the area bounded by Federal Street on the east, Eloise Street on the south, Reddour Street on the west, and Pernod Street on the north. The building at 17 Pernod Street is located in Block # 2.

Sources:

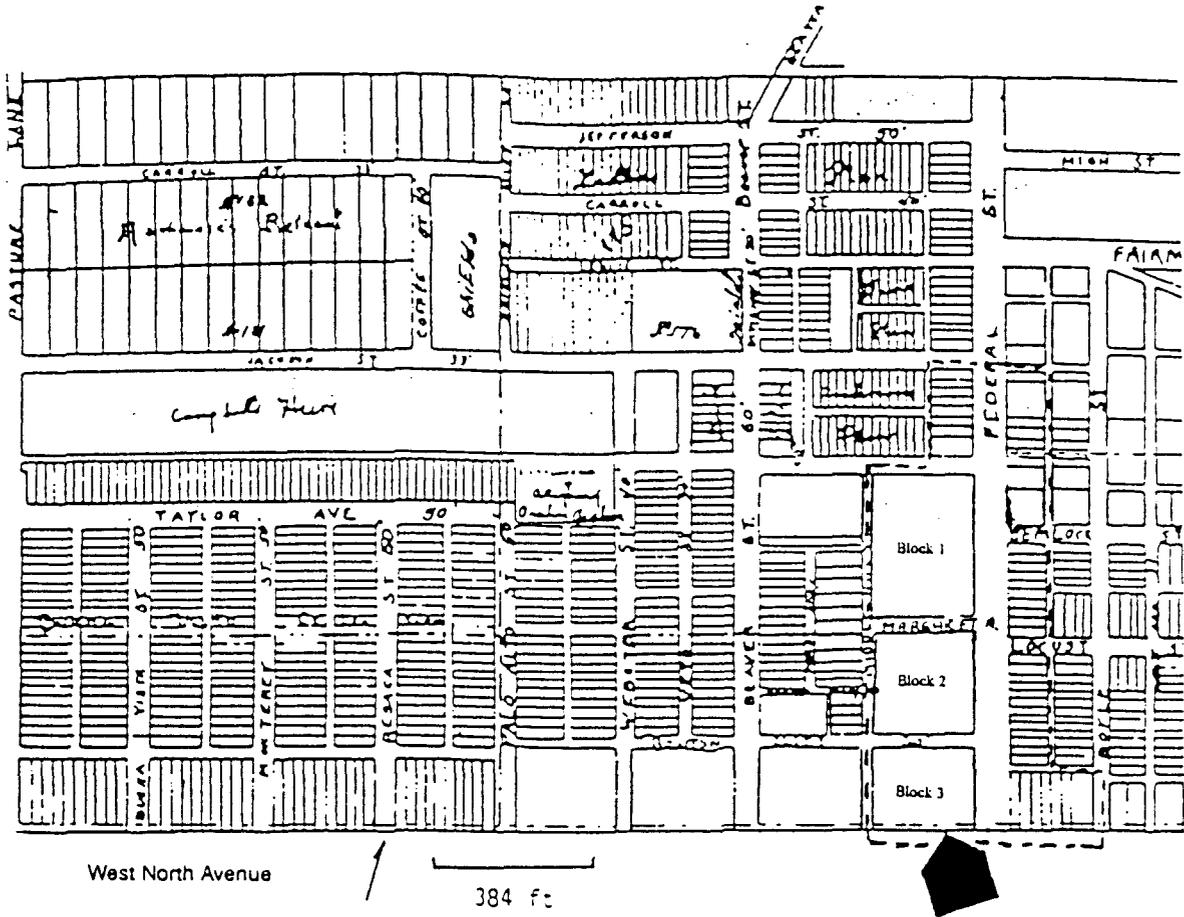
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Historians:

Ronald C. Carlisle, Ph.D, and Eliza Smith Brown  
Brown Carlisle & Associates, Inc.  
November 1996



Location of the Federal North Redevelopment Area in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Source: USGS Pittsburgh, West 7.5 minute quadrangle map.



The Day & Cramer 1851 map of Allegheny, Pennsylvania (today, the Northside neighborhood of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) showing lot divisions in and near the Federal North Redevelopment Area (arrow). Dashes outline the project area. The subject building is located in Block 2. Benton Alley is today's Eloise Street. Margaret Alley is today's Pernod Street. Middle Alley is today's Reddour Street. Federal Street has retained its name to the present.

