

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received JUN 21 1985

date entered JUL 18 1985

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

1. Name

historic Pennsylvania Railroad Station, Wilkinsburg

and or common N/A

2. Location

street & number Hay Street at Ross Avenue not for publication

city, town Wilkinsburg vicinity of

state Pennsylvania code 042 county Allegheny code 003

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Borough of Wilkinsburg

street & number 605 Ross Avenue

city, town Wilkinsburg vicinity of state Pennsylvania

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number 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 1979-1984 federal state county local

depository for survey records Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

city, town Harrisburg state Pennsylvania

7. Description

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

N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Wilkinsburg Pennsylvania Railroad Station is located on a triangular site whose hypotenuse is formed by the elevated railroad right-of-way which the station was designed to serve. A classic symmetrical form and plan -- a large central block with smaller flanking dependencies -- characterizes the building. The central section, which houses the principal waiting room, is a double-height single story. The flanking wings, which house auxiliary service rooms, are a lower single story. At the rear, a rectangular projection issues in an enclosed walkway which drops to a tunnel beneath the railroad right-of-way. The building is constructed of buff brick and stone and exhibits restrained Beaux Arts styling.

The station property is prominently located at the foot of Ross Avenue at the western edge of Wilkinsburg's commercial district. The site slopes gently toward the south so that the basement level of the station is accessible from the south side. The building is recessed from the street behind an arced forecourt driveway. Behind the property, the railroad right-of-way has been partially adapted for a public transit busway, and the stairways and raised and covered platforms which originally lent access to the trains are no longer extant.

The building's central block is rectangular in plan and surmounts a raised stone-faced base with a watertable above banded fretwork. Corner piers project slightly from the facade. The intervening broad central recess is divided into three bays by four engaged Ionic columns resting on plinths with fretwork bands. Double-door entries topped by tall paired single-pane windows fill each bay. A rectangular metalwork marquise overhangs the entries. The columns support an entablature with a frieze which reads "PENNSYLVANIA" and a cornice with modillions. The entablature wraps all four sides of the central block, and is topped by a partially crenelated parapet with stone coping. The coping rises to encircle a circular medallion with a large clock face at the center of the facade.

The two side wings are also rectangular in plan. They are two bays wide and three bays deep, with double-sash one-over-one windows with stone architrave surrounds. Base and cornice treatments are simplified versions of those on the central block. The basement level of the south wing is exposed and is extended as a quadrilateral to abut the railroad right-of-way. It is outfitted as a loading dock, overhung by a metalwork marquise, and topped by a peaked parapet.

The rectangular rear projection has tall round-arched windows and the enclosed walkway extension has half-circle windows and a gable roof. All other roofs are flat. A polygonal chimney rises from the northwest corner of the central block.

The brick exterior is bonded in alternating rows of headers and stretchers (English bond) and is articulated by slightly recessed brick panels with geometric decorative stone inserts.

The building's interior plan consists of a large central waiting room, flanking offices, and lavatories, and a rear room which exits into the walkway and tunnel. The waiting room features marble wainscoting, stone pilasters, and plaster capitals. A plaster entablature with dentil and modillion rows, augmented by additional ceiling moldings, rings the room. The center of the ceiling is devoted to a skylight of small glass panes

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Pa. RR Station, Wilkesburg, Allegheny Co., PA.

Continuation sheet Description

Item number 7

Page 2

surrounded by a bold fretwork border. Doorways and triad "ticket office" windows at either end of the room have marble surrounds. The south set of window openings has metal grilles, and was formerly surmounted by a clock. The office behind retains wood wainscoting and shelving. Lavatories are largely intact. Portions of the interior have mosaic tile flooring, and feature recessed brick panels on the walls, with decorative tile and stone inserts, similar to those found on the exterior. A few hanging glass globe lighting fixtures remain. A basement underlies the entire building and extends to the southwest. It is rudely finished, but the loading dock section has a raised wooden platform at the north end of the room and features a built-in scale.

The exterior of the building appears to be in generally good condition. But extensive interior water damage, especially to the plaster ceiling of the waiting room, speaks of past or present roofing problems, and all mechanical systems are inferior.

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 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" 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 1916

Builder/Architect Pennsylvania Railroad Co./Walter H. Cookson

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Wilkesburg Pennsylvania Railroad Station is significant because of the important role which it played in the transportation system of Western Pennsylvania, and because of its architectural design and prominent siting. Wilkesburg was a station stop and point of origin for trains on the Pennsylvania Railroad "Main Line" for over one hundred years. The station was built as part of a major capital improvement project on this line. Its restrained Beaux Arts styling and its prominent location in the community mark it as a significant product of America's "Railroad Age."

Wilkesburg's history has always been closely tied to the existence of overland transportation routes. The town's initial late eighteenth century development resulted from its role as a stopping place at the intersection of two major routes from the East. The railroad's arrival in 1852 provided an additional route for commerce. A simple frame station was built in 1858. By 1887, a regular train schedule was maintained between Wilkesburg and Pittsburgh, and trains left Wilkesburg daily for the East.

The growth of railroad operations and borough development were mutually complementary phenomena. A town of 100 residents in 1852 incorporated as a borough of 2,500 in 1887. In the mid-twentieth century borough population topped 30,000. But increases in local railroad activity and population had a point of conflict: railroad grade crossings at the center of town were the scene of many accidents, and not a few deaths.

After much negotiation between the borough and the railroad company, the Pennsylvania Railroad initiated a multi-million dollar railroad reconstruction project in 1914. The railroad grade was raised between Swissvale to the south and Homewood to the north, which allowed for construction of overpasses over three busy Wilkesburg streets. The project also provided for construction of a new improved station which would reflect the significance of railroad operations and borough development.

The project was completed in 1916--the year that marked the high point of railroad mileage in the United States. The Wilkesburg project was an indication of things to come. Hereafter, railroad company capital investments were more often devoted to the rebuilding of existing infrastructure and facilities than to expansionism.

The Wilkesburg grade crossing elimination and station opening were celebrated in a community-wide celebration of unprecedented scope in 1916. A newspaper of the time enthused: "A monster procession, a public reception and appreciation meeting, the unveiling of an Abraham Lincoln statue, a group of races, an athletic meet, a half dozen band concerts, and public dancing are the big features arranged for the three-day jollification."¹ The banquet included a model of the station made of sugar.

9. Major Bibliographical References

"Glance Back Over Negotiations Between Borough and Railroad to Eliminate Grade Crossings,"
The Wilkesburg Sentinel, June 2, 1916. pp. 1, 3.

10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property .5
Quadrangle name Pittsburgh East

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>7</u>	<u>5</u> <u>9</u> <u>4</u> <u>3</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>7</u> <u>3</u> <u>3</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C			
E			
G			

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D			
F			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Property consists of Allegheny County block and lot 175S-90 as bounded by Sawyer way to the north, Hay Street to the east, and the PAT Busway/Conrail right-of-way to the southwest.

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

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Martin Aurand; Director, Preservation Research

organization Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation date December 31, 1984

street & number One Station Square telephone 412/471-5808

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 

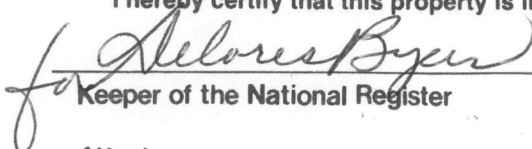
title Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer date 5/17/85

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date 7/18/85


Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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received
date entered

Pa. RR Station, Wilkinsburg, Allegheny Co., PA.
Continuation sheet Significance Item number 8

Page 2

The actual station was "granite, limestone and tapshaled brick in construction, finished in vitrified Kittanning brick and marble trimmings."² It was designed in a restrained Beaux Arts style by Walter H. Cookson, who is presumed to have been a company architect for the Pennsylvania Railroad Company.

The Beaux Arts railroad station was a product of both broadly-based architectural currents and City Beautiful ideals, and represents the last great era of railroad station construction in the United States. Well-ordered Classically-derived architectural themes were widely adopted at the turn-of-the-century, marking the end of an era of picturesque design. The railroad station assumed the guise of a monumental public building, replete with columns and impressive public spaces. The City Beautiful movement helped to foster this image, and sought to include the station in larger landscape and planning schemes.

The Wilkinsburg Railroad Station well represents these influences. Its plan and form, which are strongly symmetrical in a neo-Palladian manner, and the facade-high columns give the building monumentality. It is prominently sited at the head of Ross Avenue; and it became the centerpiece for a kind of civic center when the Wilkinsburg Borough Building and the United States Post Office were built on opposite corners in the 1930's.

The Wilkinsburg Railroad Station is unusual, however, in its realization of these influences in a relatively small-scale structure. In appearance and siting, the building is more closely related to large city stations of the period than it is to typical small town or suburban stations of similar scale. It is a manifestly urban station.

Station operations ceased in the late 1960's. The building now marks the eastern terminus of a public transit busway which links it with Pennsylvania Station³ in downtown Pittsburgh much as the passenger railroad once did. Both stations are excellent candidates for reuse. But even in their current forlorn states they complement each other and give eloquent testimony to the significance of the railroad and its structures during America's "Railroad Age," and to their enduring significance in the urban landscape.

-
1. "50 Year Old R.R. Station Described at Dedication," The Gazette (Wilkinsburg, Pa.), June 2, 1966. p.3.
 2. "New Passenger Station Opened at Wilkinsburg," The Pittsburgh Gazette Times, April 18, 1916. p. 3.
 3. Pennsylvania Station is a flamboyant Beaux Arts design of 1898-1903 by Daniel H. Burnham & Co. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

Pa. RR Station, Wilkinsburg, Allegheny co., PA.

Major Bibliographical

Continuation sheet

References

Item number 9

Page 2

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received
date entered

Information For Employees and the Public. Volume IV, Number 25, July 18, 1916 (published by the Pennsylvania Railroad System).

"New Passenger Station Opened at Wilkinsburg," The Pittsburgh Gazette Times, April 18, 1916, p. 3.

Van Trump, James D. "Wilkinsburg: A Personal View," Carnegie Magazine, Volume XLVIII, Number 6, June 1974, pp. 245-252.

RAILROAD/BUSWAY
RIGHT-OF-WAY

PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD STATION
WILKINSBURG, PA.
ALLEGHENY COUNTY

SHIPPING ROOM
[BASEMENT LEVEL]

HALL

LAVATORY

TICKET
OFFICE

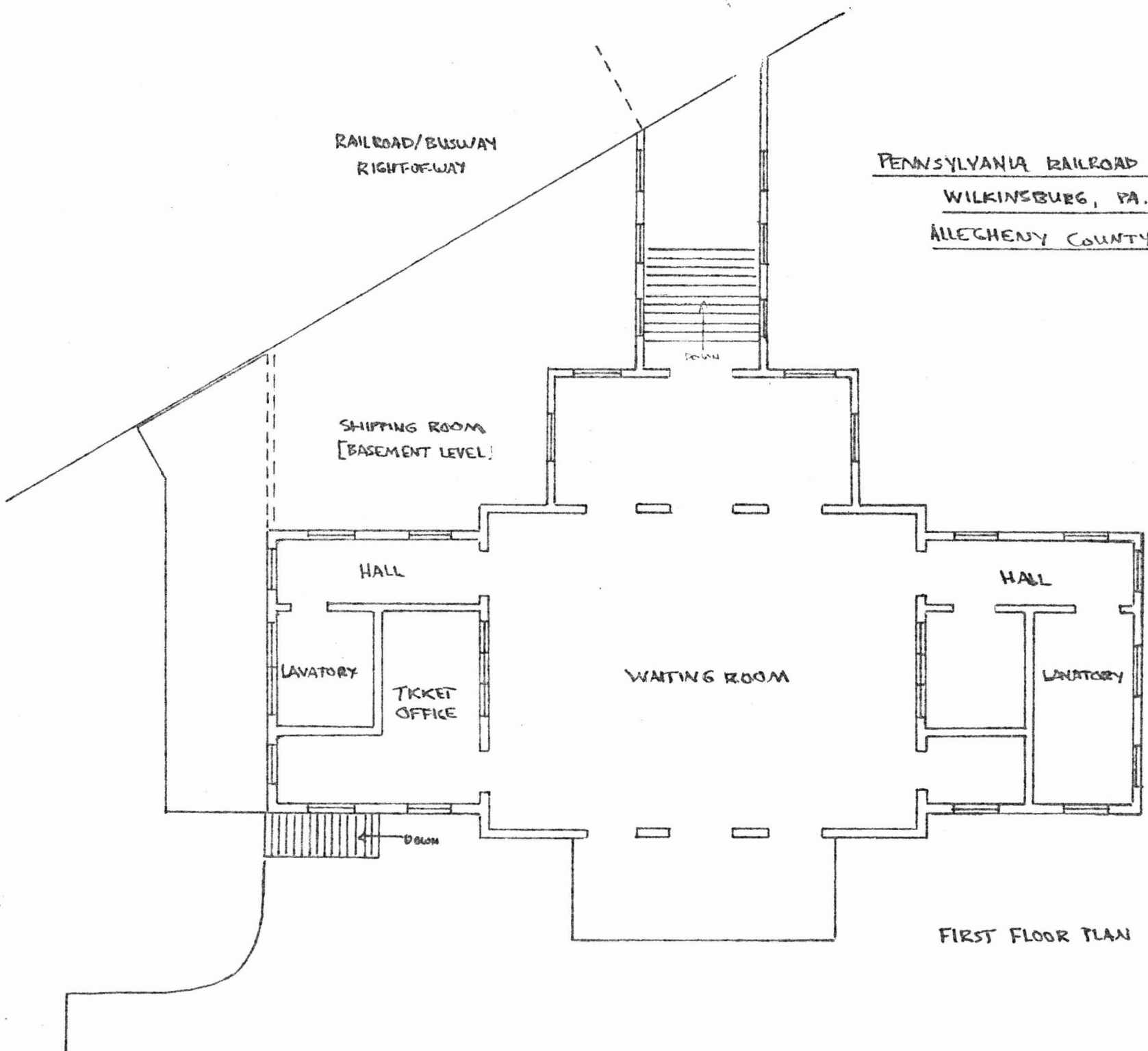
WAITING ROOM

HALL

LAVATORY

DOWN

FIRST FLOOR PLAN



Ref #
85001568

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Pennsylvania Railroad Station-Wilkinsburg
Allegheny County
PENNSYLVANIA

Working No. JUN 21 1985
Fed. Reg. Date: 2/4/86
Date Due: 7/18/85 - 8/5/85
Action: ACCEPT 7-18-85
 RETURN
 REJECT
Federal Agency: _____

Entered in the
National Register _____

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review: sample request appeal NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____
Reviewer _____
Discipline _____
Date _____
_____ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: _____ technical corrections cited below
_____ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership Public Acquisition	Status Accessible	Present Use
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4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? yes no

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

8. Significance

Period Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect
Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____
Quadrangle name _____
UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national ____ state ____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

13. Other

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____



Wilkinsburg Pennsylvania

Railroad Station

Allegheny County

PD: 1984 PC: M. Aurand

NL: PHLF

PV: East facade



Wilkesburg Pennsylvania

Railroad Station

Allegheny County

PD: 1984 PC: M. Aurand

NL: PHLF

PV: East facade detail



Wilkinsburg Pennsylvania

Railroad Station

Allegheny County

PD: 1984 PC: M. Aurand

NL: PHLF

PV: East facade and south side



Wilkinsburg Pennsylvania

Railroad Station

Allegheny County

PD: 1984 PC: M. Aurand

NL: PHLF

PV: Interior--waiting room
ceiling



Wilkinsburg Pennsylvania
Railroad Station
Allegheny County
PD: 1984 PC: M. Aurand
NL: PHLF
PV: Interior--waiting room

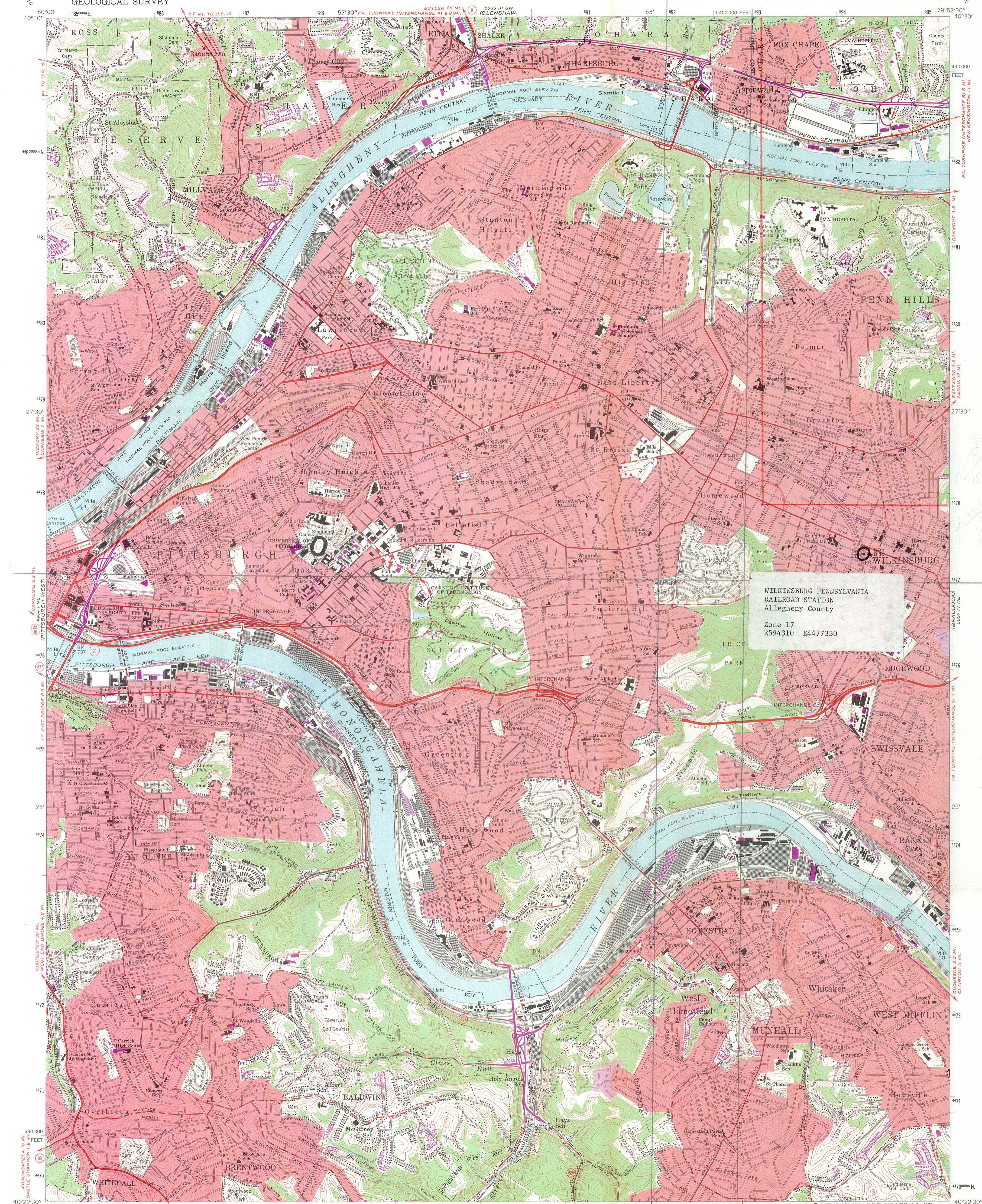


Wilkinsburg Pennsylvania
Railroad Station
Allegheny County
PD: 1984 PC: M. Aurand
NL: PHLF
PV: West rear and north side

Lat Clayton
 40° 26' 54" Long
 79° 57' 04"

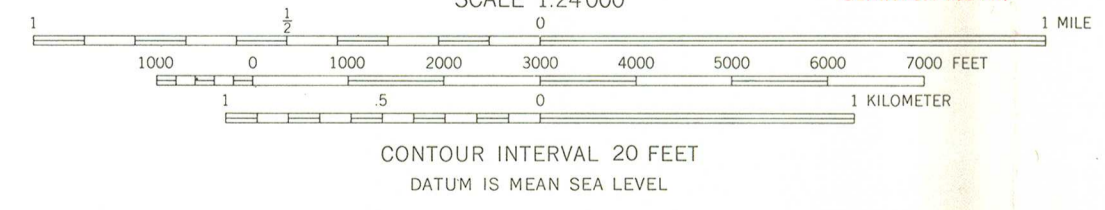
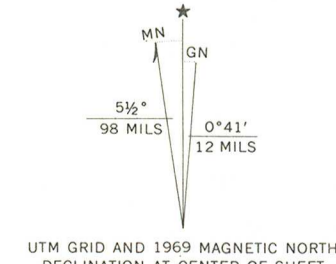
PITTSBURGH EAST QUADRANGLE
 PENNSYLVANIA—ALLEGHENY CO.
 7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

UNITED STATES
 DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



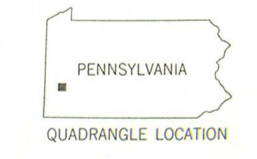
WILKINSBURG PENNSYLVANIA
 RAILROAD STATION
 Allegheny County
 Zone 17
 E594310 E4477330

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
 Control by USGS, USC&GS, USCE, and the City of Pittsburgh
 Topography by planetable surveys 1925-1941, and 1948
 Culture revised by photogrammetric methods from aerial
 photographs taken 1959. Field check 1960
 Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
 10,000-foot grid based on Pennsylvania coordinate system, south zone
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
 zone 17, shown in blue
 Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
 Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial
 photographs taken 1969. This information not
 field checked
 Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty	Light-duty
Medium-duty	Unimproved dirt
Interstate Route	U.S. Route
	State Route



PITTSBURGH EAST, PA.

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
 FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

N 4022.5—W 7952.5/7.5
 1960
 PHOTOREVISED 1969
 AMS 5064 IV NW—SERIES V831