

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM
 BUREAU FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION Box 1026
 PA HISTORICAL & MUSEUM COMMISSION Harrisburg, PA 17120

7. Local survey organization
 Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation

8. property owners name and address
 Fifth Avenue High School Associates
 7952 Doleman Road
 Pittsburgh, PA 15235
 (continued)

9. tax parcel number/other number
 11J-2,64
 11. status (other surveys, lists etc.)
 Allegheny Co. Survey

10. U.T.M. Zone easting
 17 5864010
 one acre
 447166510
 usgs sheet: Pgh. East 1:24000
 northing

12. classification
 site () structure () object ()
 building **K** district ()
 thematic **(X)**

13. date(s) (how determined)
 1894 (datestone)
 14. period
 1881-1900

15. style, design or folk type
 Victorian Gothic

19. original use
 School
 20. present use
 Wholesale Store

16. architect or engineer
 Edward Stotz

17. contractor or builder

18. primary building mat./construc.
 Brick

21. condition
 average
 22. integrity
 average

23. site plan with north arrow
 24. photo notation
 25. file/location

BLACK AND WHITE PRINT(S)
 3 1/2" x 5" enlargement or medium format contact
 note location of negative in block 24.

26. brief description (note unusual features, integrity, environment, threats and associated buildings)
 Fifth Avenue High School is a three-and-one-half-story Victorian Gothic school building with a raised basement. It measures 226 by 102 feet and has twenty-one (North facade) by eight (East and West elevations) bays. The roof is basically hipped with pyramidal corner pavilions and crocketed gabled wall- (continue on back if necessary)

27. history, significance and/or background
 Fifth Avenue was the second high school in the City of Pittsburgh, built more than twenty years after the 1871 Central High (demolished). The high schools of Pittsburgh were not organized and run by ward as were the elementary schools, but instead served a city-wide population. A rigorous entrance exam kept the number of students accepted to Central High School artificially low. As the number of grammar school graduates boomed in the 1880s and 1890s protests finally eased the (continue on back if necessary)

28. sources of information
 Fifth Avenue High School Handbook (1950).
 (continue on back if necessary)

29. prepared by:
 Lu Donnelly
 PHLF

Computer Coding (BHP Survey Grantees Must Complete)

30. date
 5/85
 revision(s)

31. county 003 32. style 10; _____; _____; _____
 33. construction material 03; _____; _____; _____ 34. roof _____; _____; _____
 35. design type _____; _____; _____
 36. historic function 0 80 3 0 1 P _____; _____; _____; _____
 37. construction feature _____; _____; _____ 38. ext. walls 03; _____ 39. plan _____
 40. facade width 6 41. roof material _____ 42. stories E 43. depth _____
 44. ext. design _____; _____; _____; _____
 45. int. design _____; _____; _____; _____

1. County Allegheny
 2. municipality Pittsburgh
 3. street address or specific location 1800 Fifth Avenue
 4. survey code
 5. present name N/A
 6. other name (historic name if any) Fifth Avenue High School

SEP 23 1986

8. (cont)

Mr. Meyer Cohen
Excel Kitchen Centers
1800 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15211

Mr. Sol Williams
Sol Williams Real Estate Investments
1810 Washington Plaza
1420 Centre Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

26. (cont)

dormers on each elevation. There are also a collection of smaller roof dormers.

Windows are one-over-one double hung sash with transoms. They vary between stories and sections: flat-arch/pointed-arch/flat-arch on the corner pavilions; pointed-arch/flat-arch/pointed-arch in the recessed portions of the facade. The entire third story is banded by stone lintel and sill courses, and a brick diamond-patterned frieze runs above the lintel course.

The rhythm of the facade is broken by two three-sided two-story bays which flank the central Fifth Avenue entrance. The entrance is recessed and the stairs are now protected by wrought iron railing. Foliate spandrels and a signature stone reading "Fifth Avenue High School - Erected 1894" highlight the entrance.

The corner pavilions have two-story arcades with drip moldings above the transomed windows. The first story windows have been altered to accommodate aluminum windows with opaque upper sash. Brick diamond patterning highlights the spandrel panels between the first and second stories. Pointed arch doorways on the north, east and west shelter recessed doorways behind wrought iron grates. A three-sided one story bay projects at the southern end of the west facade. The raised stone basement has a water table and square apertures.

A four-story, seven-by-seven bay limestone annex lies directly south of the original high school. It is oriented to the south facing Forbes Avenue and is connected to the 1894 school by a third story bridge. The annex, designed in a restrained Classical mode, has modillions and egg and dart moldings at the cornice line. Five colossal arches frame windows in the center of the Forbes Avenue facade. A fret band separates the first and second stories. The first story is finished in smooth dressed and rusticated stone. The five windows on the first story have been enclosed. A simple metal door lends access on the southeast. The entrance at the southwest corner has a small dentil-lined cornice with reel and bead molding surrounding the boarded door.

The interior of the 1894 building experienced extensive damage while sitting idle for several years. The stair railings and copper piping have all been stolen. What remains is the original tile floors of the hallways, maple classroom floors, and oak door moldings.

EVALUATION

EVALUATOR(S)

1 County Allegheny
2 Municipality Pittsburgh
3 Street address or specific location 1800 Fifth Avenue
4 Survey notes

27. (cont.)

requirements and between 1911 and 1930 ten new high schools were built in the city.

Edward Stotz designed Fifth Avenue High School at the age of 26 (1894) as his first major commission. He went on to complete a total of 903 commissions before his death in the late 1940s. Stotz established his practice in Pittsburgh in 1893 after spending a year in Europe and apprenticing with local architects. He completed many major buildings from banks to hospitals, but his schools have best withstood the test of time. South Side High School (1898) was Stotz's second major commission. In 1916 Stotz was commissioned to design Schenley High School.

Fifth Avenue's Victorian Gothic design is unique in Pittsburgh but reminiscent of schools designed by New York City's Superintendent of Schools in the 1890s C. B. J. Snyder. The Gothic pinnacles and arcaded windows epitomize the attitude of the time that schools were meant to be formal in character. They were designed to impress the parents of the students with their traditional imagery more than to accommodate the needs of students as individuals. Cecil George Stillman in his 1949 book on school architecture describes this era of school design as having produced schools with "forbidding and institutional" character irrespective of the architectural style grafted on to them.¹ Fifth Avenue High School was the first high school in the city to contain a cafeteria (1913) and was reportedly the first fireproof school in Pennsylvania. It was the first city school to host an evening adult education program (1907), and the first school in the country to receive its National Honor Society Charter (1922). In the first year of its operation the school accommodated the teacher training center or Normal Department on the third floor, the Commercial Department on the second floor, and the executive offices of the Board of Education on the first story.

The school was located on the former site of a farmer's market which was serviced by nearby farms in East Liberty, Squirrel Hill and Schenley Farms. The site was deemed suitable since it was adjacent to trolley lines and the City's growth was in the easterly direction. But in 1976 with the opening of the new Brashear High School in the South Hills Fifth Avenue High School was closed and ownership reverted back to the city of Pittsburgh. In 1981 the City sold it to John Gonnella of Fifth Avenue High Associates. Carl Perelman of the firm Rosenberg and Perelman supervised the present privately financed renovation. During this renovation several elaborate dormers were altered and the original roof tiles were removed.

In 1926 the annex facing Forbes Avenue was erected and connected to the original building with a bridge over the alley. The annex has a very subdued Classical limestone facade and contains an auditorium, two gymnasiums, and a swimming pool. There are plans to create a rehabilitation center there using the athletic facilities for patient therapy.

A 1950s handbook indicates the nostalgia which Pittsburghers feel for Fifth Avenue High School:

Used continuously as a day school since September, 1896 [sic] and as a night school since September, 1907, it ranks as one of the best high school buildings in the city. . . . The alumni of Fifth Avenue High School stand high in the professional and business circles of Pittsburgh.²

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM
OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION Box 1026
PA HISTORICAL & MUSEUM COMMISSION Harrisburg, PA 17120

ADDITIONAL PHOTOS -- References:

27. (cont.)

1. Cecil George Stillman. The Modern School (London: Architectural Press, 1949), p. 12.
2. Fifth Avenue High School Handbook (c. 1950), p. 10-11.

significance: architecture, education

Verbal boundary description and justification.

The nominated property consists of Allegheny County block and lots 11J-2,64 which encompasses the school building and its contiguous grounds.

1 county Allegheny
 2 municipality Pittsburgh
 3 street address or quarter lot name 1800 Fifth Avenue
 4 survey code

5 present name (Fifth Avenue High School)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number

Page

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name Pittsburgh Public Schools TR
State Allegheny County, PA

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

-50

41. Schiller Elementary School

Substantive Review

Keeper

[Signature] 10/3/86

Attest

42. South Side High School

*Entered in the
National Register*

Keeper

[Signature] 9/30/86

Attest

43. Springfield Public School

*Entered in the
National Register*

Keeper

[Signature] 9/30/86

Attest

44. Sterrett Sub District
School

*Entered in the
National Register*

Keeper

[Signature] 9/30/86

Attest

45. Washington Vocational School

Substantive Review

Keeper

[Signature] 9/30/86

Attest

46. Westinghouse High School

*Entered in the
National Register*

Keeper

[Signature] 9/30/86

Attest

47. Wightman School

*Entered in the
National Register*

Keeper

[Signature] 9/30/86

Attest

48. Woolslair Elementary School

*Entered in the
National Register*

Keeper

[Signature] 9/30/86

Attest

49. Fifth Avenue High School

*Entered in the
National Register*

Keeper

[Signature] 10/23/86

Attest

50.

Keeper

Attest

8600 2956

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Fifth Avenue High School (Pittsburgh
Public Schools TR)
Allegheny County
PENNSYLVANIA

SEP 23 1986

Working No. _____

Fed. Reg. Date: 2/2/88

Date Due: 10/23/86 - 11/7/86

Action: ACCEPT 10-23-86

RETURN _____

REJECT _____

Entered in the
National Register

Federal Agency: _____

- 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	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

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

- 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

- 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: _____



PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS:
Fifth Avenue High School
Allegheny County
PD: 1985 PC: L. Donnelly
NL: PHLF
PV: Northwest corner
#6

SEP 23 1986

Please refer to the map in the
Multiple Property Cover Sheet
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000731



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION
P.O. BOX 1026, HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17108-1026

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

September 10, 1986

National Register of Historic Places
U.S. Department of Interior
Carol Shull, Chief of Registration
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

*Need folder
and sign in
sheet
Patrick has it*

Re: Fifth
Allegheny County, National
Register nomination

Dear Ms. Shull:

The following survey form and photograph for the Fifth Avenue High School in Allegheny County are being submitted for your review and response. The Fifth Avenue High School is being nominated as part of the Pittsburgh Public Schools thematic nomination that was sent to you on July 18, 1986. Enclosed in the nomination sent to you on July 18th is a U.S.G.S. map that notes the location of the Fifth Avenue High School.

The proposed action for the Fifth Avenue High School is listing in the National Register. The Pittsburgh Public Schools thematic nomination contains a total of forty-nine schools. Forty-eight schools were approved by the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Board on July 15, 1986. Unfortunately, the owners of the Fifth Avenue High School were not notified in time to have this school considered on July 15. Subsequently, the owners of the Fifth Avenue High School were notified at least thirty days before the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Board approved this school at its meeting on September 9, 1986. No letters of objection were filed by the owners of this school.

Thus as the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. If you have any questions about this nomination, please call our office at (717) 783-8946.

Sincerely,

Larry E. Tise
State Historic Preservation Officer

LT:vms

SEP 23 1986



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION
P.O. BOX 1026, HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17108-1026

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

September 10, 1986

National Register of Historic Places
U.S. Department of Interior
Carol Shull, Chief of Registration
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

Re: Fifth Avenue High School
Allegheny County, National
Register nomination

Dear Ms. Shull:

The following survey form and photograph for the Fifth Avenue High School in Allegheny County are being submitted for your review and response. The Fifth Avenue High School is being nominated as part of the Pittsburgh Public Schools thematic nomination that was sent to you on July 18, 1986. Enclosed in the nomination sent to you on July 18th is a U.S.G.S. map that notes the location of the Fifth Avenue High School.

The proposed action for the Fifth Avenue High School is listing in the National Register. The Pittsburgh Public Schools thematic nomination contains a total of forty-nine schools. Forty-eight schools were approved by the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Board on July 15, 1986. Unfortunately, the owners of the Fifth Avenue High School were not notified in time to have this school considered on July 15. Subsequently, the owners of the Fifth Avenue High School were notified at least thirty days before the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Board approved this school at its meeting on September 9, 1986. No letters of objection were filed by the owners of this school.

Thus as the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. If you have any questions about this nomination, please call our office at (717) 783-8946.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Larry E. Tise".

Larry E. Tise
State Historic Preservation Officer

LT:vms

SEP 23 1986