

# 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 Schenley Farms Historic District

and/or common Schenley Farms/Oakland Civic District

## 2. Location

street & number Various Streets in North Oakland

not for publication

city, town Pittsburgh

vicinity of

congressional district

state Pennsylvania

code 42

county Allegheny

code 001

## 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input checked="" 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 Multiple Ownership (see attached survey forms)

street & number N/A

city, town N/A

vicinity of

state N/A

## 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 LAAC; Oakland Survey; Allegheny County Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1967; 1976; 1980  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation

city, town Pittsburgh

state Pennsylvania

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

NSA

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

#### Introduction:

The Schenley Farms Historic District is largely the design of developer F. F. Nicola, who in 1905 conceived of "a model city"<sup>1</sup> on a verdant tract of land in the Oakland area of Pittsburgh. Nicola envisioned a fine residential enclave adjoining a monumental civic complex, a combination of model suburb and City Beautiful. By design, a nineteenth-century air of gentility pervades the residential portion of the district, though, at the same time, the most modern amenities are provided. Houses by prominent local architects in the then fashionable revival styles are uniformly terraced along streets named for British and American literary figures--Parkman, Lytton, Tennyson, and Ruskin. A wide boulevard, endemic of City Beautiful planning, separates the residences from the prestigious array of civic, institutional, and cultural buildings that comprise the urban component of the district. Though the generous amenities and design controls of Nicola's development made the residential area a neighborhood for the upper middle class, the civic portion of the district had broader appeal and accessibility; indeed, it remains the cultural center of Pittsburgh. This unusual blending of urban and suburban qualities, within an impressive architectural context, makes Schenley Farms a significant document of early twentieth century architecture and planning.

#### Background:

Located approximately 2½ miles east of the center of Pittsburgh, the district lies within Oakland, a large glacial terrace some 200 feet above the Monongahela and Allegheny River valleys. The approximately 170-acre tract belonged to William Penn, who conveyed it to Edward Smith in 1791. It remained in the O'Hara family until the death of descendant Mary Schenley in 1903. Andrew Carnegie, Danny Brereton, and J. W. Herron, Mrs. Schenley's trustees, held the property until 1905, when it was purchased by Nicola's Schenley Farms Company for \$2,500,000. The acreage remained open, even pastoral, until 1905, due to the Schenley family policy of leasing the land rather than selling or improving it--hence its name, Schenley Farms.<sup>2</sup>

An established developer, Nicola was responsible for the building of the Schenely Hotel in 1898 (included in the Schenley Farms tract) and Forbes Field in 1909. The Carnegie Institute (1895), Carnegie Technical School (1904-1923), the Phipps Conservatory (1893), and several churches also bordered the vacant tract. Henry Hornbostel (architect of Carnegie Technical School) designed an educational "Acropolis" for the University of Pittsburgh on the district's western border, though the plan was never completed. Surrounded by such cultural variety, Schenley Farms--attractive, accessible, and most importantly, vacant--was particularly fertile for Nicola's real estate venture.

The physical boundaries of the proposed district differ slightly from Nicola's original plan, due to unsympathetic development in the western portion, counterbalanced by the addition or, in some cases, prior existence, of compatible buildings on the west and east.

1. "Description of Twelve Houses for Sale by Schenley Farms Co.", brochure c.1906.
2. James Van Trump states that "the fact that the Schenley holdings remained intact through out a period of great expansion and a general rise of land values is due at least in part to the land tax policies of Pittsburgh before the 1910 reforms. The Schenley Farms area in Oakland paid either an agricultural rate (one-half the normal rate) or rural rate (2/3 the normal rate) while development went on all around it on land that paid the full rate. In addition, the land was assessed at a rate far below its true value." James D. Van Trump, "History of Oakland" manuscript, PHLF files.

## 7. Description (continued)

The entire district is somewhat defined by its topography, with a steep hillside forming a northern border, and a ravine defining the southeastern border. A jagged border is formed by the following streets: Forbes Avenue, including Carnegie Institute, on the south; S. Dithridge and N. Bellefield on the east, extending to include St. Paul's Cathedral and Rectory on Fifth Avenue and N. Craig Street; Bigelow Boulevard, Andover Road, and Bryn Mawr Road on the northwest; and Thackeray Street through to Fifth Avenue on the southwest, excluding several buildings on University Place. Altogether the district includes 155 buildings. Thirty-two cultural and/or institutional buildings are located within the district, the vast majority in the south and east portion. The district's 123 residences are sited in the northwest portion of the district, on gently rising ground which then terraces steeply upward. The northernmost group of 22 houses is known as Schenley Farms Terrace and was built slightly later than the lower enclave. These are sited on the highest ground in the district, and have a uniform southeastern orientation. Individual survey forms have been prepared for all of the institutional buildings and 100 of the residential structures. Six buildings date to the 1880-1899 period; 93 date to the 1900-1919 period; 42 date to the 1920-1939 period; 11 date to the 1940-1959 period and 3 date to the 1960-1979 period.

Bigelow Boulevard (originally named Grant Boulevard, but renamed for the Director of Public Works responsible for its construction, E.M. Bigelow) is the major border between civic and residential buildings within the district. Bigelow runs NW from Forbes, then jogs NE to just past Ruskin Avenue, then runs NW again, curving NE as it continues out of the district. The wideness of Bigelow Boulevard contrasts sharply with the narrower, shady residential streets. However, one might infer the civic-residential border from the street names alone--Bigelow Boulevard, named for a prominent local politician; and Ruskin Avenue, Tennyson Avenue, et al, named for romantic literary figures. Just such juxtapositions are what contribute to Schenley Farms' unique ambience. Sited on the residential side of Bigelow Boulevard (NW) are the 20th Century Club and the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. The only two institutional buildings actually within the residential area (i.e., surrounded by houses) are the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, and the Pittsburgh Oratory, both religious organizations. Schenley High School built in 1916, is geographically within the residential area, but because of its giant lot size and the surrounding street patterns, it seems more aloof than intrusive.

A copy of Nicola's plan in 1909 (see enclosed plan) shows that approximately half of the original lots had been sold at that time. Investigation of building permit dockets shows that residential construction began with a spurt in 1906-08 and then tapered off. Twenty-eight residential building permits were issued to both "The Schenley Farms Co." and to individuals in the district in 1906-08; ten were issued in 1909-10; and eight were issued in 1911. By the 1930's, the residential area was largely built up, and therefore resisted intrusions of incompatible structures. Only a few of the twelve post-1930 structures are incompatible with the district's character (see map). Three modern, institutional buildings are located on a central block of the district, but do not unduly alter the district's character. Several large, vacant lots still remain in the district, located on the southeast of the civic-residential border. Development pressure appears to be strong; hence, the uncertain future of these lots is of critical importance to the District.

### Architecture-Civic Buildings:

Architecturally, the Schenley Farms Historic District is an archive of early twentieth century revival styles, with buildings designed by prominent Pittsburgh architects. The civic buildings are predominantly monumental, four-story stone structures in Beaux Arts, Classical, and Renaissance Revival styles. The precedent of high-quality

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3. Schenley Farms Terrace is covered in a single form.

## 7. Description (continued)

architecture was established in Oakland in the 1890s and was substantially reinforced by the subsequent development in Schenley Farms. The most prominent of the structures pre-dating Nicola's development is the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh's premier cultural resource, combining a museum, library, and music hall. It exemplifies architecturally both the 19th century cultural palace phenomenon and the Beaux Arts style as interpreted in newly affluent, early twentieth century Pittsburgh. The original Italianate design by Longfellow, Alden, and Harlow, built in 1891-95, was remodelled and enlarged by Alden and Harlow in 1903-07 in the Beaux Arts style. This later portion, in addition to including the spectacular Carnegie Music Hall with its Baroque abundance of dark green marble, was one of Pittsburgh's earliest steel-frame buildings. In the eastern portion of the Schenley Farms area is the Bellefield Presbyterian Church (1889) and Rectory (1891), designed by F.J. Osterling. The church is a Gothic structure showing Richardsonian Romanesque influence, while the Rectory (now the Music Hall of the University of Pittsburgh) is a high-quality Richardsonian Romanesque mansion. Bordering Schenley Farms on the northeast is the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children, built in 1893-94, a seven-building, Romanesque Revival complex on a park-like site. The First United Presbyterian Church relocated to Schenley Farms in 1896, to a Romanesque structure on the district's western edge designed by William Boyd. St. Paul's was another church that moved from its downtown site to Schenley Farms, erecting a Gothic Revival cathedral in 1903-06 on the eastern edge of the district.

The most significant pre-1900 building to Nicola's development itself may be the Schenely Hotel (now the Student Union of the University of Pittsburgh). Its design by Rutan and Russell was built by F.F. Nicola's company in 1898, and was Pittsburgh's first large, steel-framed "skyscraper hotel."<sup>4</sup> Also described as "Pittsburgh's 'class' hotel of the early 20th century,"<sup>5</sup> it was unique in that it was "perched on the edge of a cornfield"; that is, it bordered the then vacant acres of Schenley Farms. All these buildings set an architectural and cultural standard for later development in the area, attracting a growing variety of institutions.

Institutional construction naturally accelerated with the freeing of the Schenley land for development. 1909-12 saw the construction of the First Baptist Church at the corner of Bellefield and Bayard. Designed by Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue of Carr, Goodhue, and Ferguson, it is regarded as "possibly...the best Gothic Revival building in Pittsburgh."<sup>6</sup> This period also saw the construction of the 20th Century Club, the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, the Pittsburgh Athletic Association, and the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall. Both the 20th Century Club and the Historical Society, sited within the "residential" portion of the district, are interpretations of Italian Renaissance styles, done by Janssen and Cocken<sup>7</sup> and Ingham and Boyd, respectively. On a larger scale and more centrally located are the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall and the Pittsburgh Athletic Association, both listed on the National Register. Henry Hornbostel's Beaux Arts design won a 1904 competition for the Memorial Hall. The Athletic Association is a Renaissance Revival design by Benno Janssen, and was described by architectural critic Montgomery Schuyler in 1911 as "the architectural

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4. Landmark Architecture of Allegheny County, by James D. Van Trump and Arthur P. Ziegler, Jr., PHLF, Pittsburgh, 1967, p. 97.
  5. Oakland Survey form - PHLF Allegheny County Survey file for North Oakland, 1980.
  6. Jamie Van Trump, "History of Oakland" manuscript, PHLF files.
  7. PHLF Allegheny County Survey file for North Oakland, 1980.
  8. The original design was by G.H. Schwan in 1910; it was remodelled by Janssen and Cocken in 1929-30.

## 7. Description (continued)

lion of its day in Pittsburgh."<sup>9</sup> The Oakland Turnverein and the Concordia Club were both recruited by Nicola to locate in Schenley Farms in 1912-14; they constructed an Early Modern and a Romanesque Revival building, respectively, on the District's western edge.

The years 1914-16 saw the completion of two monumental structures in the center of the civic area; a Janssen and Abbott design for the Masonic Temple on Fifth Avenue, and the Syria Mosque, a Moorish-style auditorium designed by Huehl, Schmid, and Holmes. The Schenley High School was completed in 1916, on a large lot just north of the Blind School. It was controversial at the time; while its cost of over two million dollars provoked criticism, from a design standpoint the triangular structure of stone over a steel frame was considered to be one of the most elegant schools in the nation.

The practice of Benno Janssen continued to flourish in the 20's and 30's, with the completion of the Jewish Community Center in 1924 and Mellon Institute in 1937. The collection of Janssen's designs within the district--Italianate, Renaissance, and Classical Revivals--is an architectural showcase for both a fecund designer and an eclectic era. The Mellon Institute, in particular, is notable as "Pittsburgh's farewell to the Classical style."<sup>10</sup>

The 20's saw the construction of three high-rise buildings in the civic portion of Schenley Farms. The Schenley Apartments, designed by Henry Hornbostel in 1922, were sited behind the Schenley Hotel and became the residence of Nicola. Ruskin Hall, in the midst of the District, was another early high-rise apartment complex, one of many to be constructed in Oakland in the 20's. Next to St. Paul's Cathedral arose the 11-story Hotel Webster Hall, a Hornbostel design with Eric Fischer Wood built in 1924, which balanced the Schenley Hotel and Apartments on the western edge of the District. With the construction of these high-rises, Schenley Farms was stylistically, as well as technically, launched into a modern era.

The civic portion of the District is dominated by one of its latest additions, the Cathedral of Learning of the University of Pittsburgh. Completed in 1937, it is perhaps the visual landmark of Pittsburgh, certainly of its educational life. While it is clearly a skyscraper, it conveys an anachronistic Gothic romanticism. As well as being a most impressive collection of buildings, the civic portion of the District forms a buffer zone between the residential core of Nicola's plan and later, less distinguished development.

### Residential Buildings:

Residential construction in Schenley Farms proceeded apace with civic development, the eclecticism of the houses echoing that of the civic buildings on a smaller scale. In promotional material, Nicola promoted the growing civic center as an advantage of owning a house in Schenley Farms, almost as though the grandeur of the civic structures would somehow, by proximity, rub off on the Schenley Farms residents.

It is clear from records and letters that many of the architects of civic buildings of the District also designed its residences, and dozens of these designs appeared in issues of the Pittsburgh Builder magazine during the years 1907-12. MacClure and

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9. PHLF Allegheny County Survey file for North Oakland, 1980.

10. PHLF Allegheny County Survey file for North Oakland, 1980.

## 7. Description (continued)

Spahr, Theodore Bilquist, Edward B. Lee, Janssen and Abbott, and Kiehnel and Elliott all contributed designs; 4040 Bigelow Boulevard was a Hornbostel design for Arthur Hammerschlag, then president of Carnegie Technical School. It is difficult, however, to attribute most of the individual residences to the specific architects with certainty. The majority are variations on English Tudor or Colonial, with representative Georgians, chalets, bungalows, and palazzos. Their predominantly brick, 2½-story, 3-bay facades lend a good deal of visual coherence to the stylistically eclectic assortment.

Common to all the original Schenley Farms houses is fine-quality craftsmanship and an unusual attention to detail.<sup>11</sup> Nicola specified brick walls 13" thick, furrowed, lathed and plastered on the inside with air chambers between the brick walls and plaster. Decorative bonds are the rule, with Flemish bond predominating. One notable exception is Hornbostel's house at 4040 Bigelow Boulevard, with its fieldstone first story, and upper stories of stack bond brick. The only completely stone house is 4320 Centre Avenue, a rugged building of irregularly coursed large black stones. Window sizes and shapes vary enormously from house to house, but nearly all houses have some stained or bevelled glass, or have leaded panes with tracery; many have large stained glass windows opposite the main entrance in the central hall.

Interiors are lavishly detailed with wainscotting, hardwood floors, marble and marbleized fireplaces, moldings, solid brass fixtures, and wide window sills--the details varying with the specific house. Nicola highlights the modern conveniences of a Schenley Farms house in his sales brochure: "Cemented cellar finished and plastered, Laundries with three trays and laundry stove. Toilet in cellar. All cellar walls water-proof...".<sup>12</sup>

Utilities were particularly impressive in Schenley Farms; in fact, they are impressive even today. All pipes were brass, arranged so that every fixture in the house could be shut off separately and the pipes drained into the sewer. Houses were heated with hot water, with the radiators recessed beneath the windows. The lighting system featured combination fixtures for both gas and electric. Closets featured lights which went on automatically when the door was opened. Houses were piped for vacuum cleaners. A Scaife filter with a 500-gallon capacity filtered all water. Each house had four telephones and electric bells. McCrea refrigerators lined with tile and glass were in each house, with an entrance door from the outside porch, "making it unnecessary to bring ice through the kitchen."<sup>13</sup> Houses could be purchased before or after decoration. Finally, and probably most importantly, all wires were buried, brought into the house through the cellar. (The absence of overhead wires, Nicola notes, "makes a small rate of insurance."<sup>14</sup>) Most houses have free-standing garages. Though many of these were later additions, nearly all match the houses in material and roof type. In short, Nicola's development was designed to epitomize style, comfort, and modernity for the upper-middle class.

The "inner" residential streets (Parkman, Lytton, Tennyson, and Bigelow) were the first to be built up. By the time of the construction of the Cathedral of Learning, the bulk of residential construction was occurring in the Schenley Farms Terrace area, north of Centre Avenue. Though these houses are not individually as impressive as

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11. This is not especially surprising, since the average estimated cost of a Schenley Farms house was \$9-20,000, according to building permit docketts.

12. "Description of Twelve Houses for Sale by Schenley Farms Co.", brochure, c.1906.

13. "Description of Twelve Houses for Sale by Schenley Farms Co.", brochure, c.1906.

14. IBID.

## 7. Description (Continued)

the larger ones below Centre, they are nevertheless a charming and intact group. The houses sited directly on Centre Avenue--a heavily-trafficked road--have not retained their integrity as well. However, due to their siting, scale, and materials, they remain an integral part of the District.

### Landscaping:

The landscaping of Schenley Farms was an important element of its design and is noteworthy in its own right. It functions importantly to unify the stylistically diverse neighborhood. In his sales brochure, Nicola notes that "the lots about the houses will be neatly graded, lawns planted and shrubs artistically placed, as planned by J.W. Elliott, the well-known landscaper." Descriptions of the individual houses for sale include specifications for the placement of shrubs. On the lower streets, houses were uniformly terraced back from the sidewalks. Along Lytton Avenue, lot sizes are a uniform 163.36 feet deep, with widths ranging from 50 to 63 feet. (Residential lots on Tennyson, Parkman, and Bigelow are similarly sized). Granolithic sidewalks and steps were put in from sidewalk to front porches, "with walks to servants porch as necessary." Streets themselves were 50 feet wide, and sloped by design for proper drainage. Much was made of the curbing, which was continuous concrete banding. The streetlamps, another unifying detail, were copies of those concurrently on Fifth Avenue in New York. In general, the landscaping takes full advantage of the hilly site, with the lower streets sloping gradually up to the hillside, and then Parkman Avenue, Centre Avenue, and Schenley Farms Terrace layered one above the other as the hill rises steeply up from the Oakland plain. The houses on these three streets all have a southeastern orientation (those on Centre Avenue, in fact, have their backs to the street), and those on Centre Avenue and Schenley Farms Terrace have an exceptional view over Oakland.

The most dramatic landscaping feature of the district is the magnificent retaining wall at Parkman Avenue as that street curves NE, on the western edge of the district. As architectural historian James Van Trump puts it, the wall is "one of those heroic pieces of engineering masonry that a hilly city like Pittsburgh forced into being."<sup>15</sup> Towering over the houses below it, it seems also to serve as a bulwark against unsympathetic institutional encroachment on the west.

Another outstanding landscaping feature of the district is Fairfield Lane, originally a formal walk between the houses on Parkman and Centre Avenues. The lane rises up out of the Parkman retaining wall, which forms a massive stairwell, and runs NE to the upper section of Bigelow Boulevard. This lane was the original means of entrance to the houses on Centre Avenue. Elegant streetlights lined the path; sloping up from it on the northwest were the terraced front yards of the Centre Avenue houses, while on the southeast the ground dropped off sharply to the back yards of the houses on Parkman Avenue. Perched between, on the hillside, Fairfield Lane offered a fine view over the district. While residents still use it today, the lane has become a sadly deteriorated path, with iron gates at both ends restricting access to all but key-carrying residents. If restoration is needed anywhere in Schenley Farms, it is along this carefully planned lane which, more than any other feature, evokes the spirit of Nicola's plan for Schenley Farms in 1905.

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15. James Van Trump, OS 1976, PHLF files.

# 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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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  NA Builder/Architect Various

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Schenley Farms Historic District combines a City Beautiful civic center with one of the country's first successful planned suburban housing districts. The monumental civic center is a major example of City Beautiful planning, a planning movement of international significance, and the adjacent group of houses is an architectural museum of turn-of-the-century revival styles. The planned, mixed-use, semi-urban area of consistently high architectural quality--the conception of real-estate developer F.F. Nicola--is significant primarily in the areas of architecture and community planning. In an ancillary way, the district is distinguished by its engineering works, its landscape architecture, and its role as an educational center.

The boundaries of the District were chosen with several considerations in mind: the original design by F.F. Nicola, the topography of the area, and the siting, age, scale, and integrity of the extant buildings. Generally, the boundaries correspond to a map of Nicola's plan published in "The Builder" magazine in December, 1909. The western border has been altered somewhat to include only those intact structures which located in the area because of Nicola's development or, in the case of the Bellefield United Presbyterian Church, predated it. Along the southern border, a modern university library, the site of the now demolished Forbes Field, and a large parking lot have been deleted. On the eastern border, St. Paul's cathedral and Rectory and the Webster Hall Apartments have been included. Built in 1903 and 1925, respectively, both structures complement the civic center's diversity and are compatible in scale. The Cathedral of St. Paul's, especially, acts as a dramatic cornerstone of the district, in much the same way as the Bellefield United Presbyterian Church anchors the western portion of the District. Between them runs Fifth Avenue, lined by monuments to Nicola's grand design.

The architectural quality of the Schenley Farms area is unusually high and has been discussed in detail in the description of the district and on individual data forms. The majority of the buildings were designed by leading local and national architects; Henry Hornbostel, Alden and Harlow, and Benno Janssen are among the most notable. Buildings already listed on the National Register are the Cathedral of Learning, the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall, the Pittsburgh Athletic Association, and the Carnegie Institute.

Seen in a planning context, Schenley Farms is a landmark district. Though its conception by developer F.F. Nicola is more an example of planning practicality than of doctrinaire adherence to planning theory, the district was designed in the City Beautiful vein. Under considerable attacks and hardly in vogue today, the City Beautiful nevertheless has been an influential theme in American planning. Sparked in 1893 by the Columbian Exposition in Chicago (which ignored emerging architectural styles in favor of a Renaissance styled assemblage); City Beautiful emphasized a grand, orderly arrangement of civic buildings along a boulevard, isolated by scale and design from the surrounding city. The civic centers which resulted from City Beautiful thinking remain conspicuous components of many major American cities.

1. See Jane Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities, p 24ff. Random House, New York, 1961.



## 8. Significance (continued)

Of equal importance to Nicola was the residential enclave, a substantial speculative venture for his Schenley Farms Company. It, too, shows City Beautiful influence; architectural historian James Van Trump has described the residential portion of the district as "an example of City Beautiful formal planning applied to the rugged Pittsburgh terrain."<sup>2</sup> The wide streets, generous lot sizes, comfortable homes and careful landscaping were all derived from City Beautiful thinking.

The Schenley Farms Civic Association, which boasts 90-95% of the area's residents as members and has been in existence since 1920, voted to make Nicola's building restrictions and policies on care of trees, sidewalks, etc., a permanent code. Also congruent with that planning ideology was the distinct delineation of functional zones in the district. Early newspaper accounts vary, but refer to a number of such zones: public, semi-public, and residential; and monumental, residential, social and educational.<sup>3</sup> The construction of Carnegie Institute and the requisite "City Beautiful" boulevard in the 1890s laid the groundwork for the civic center or public zone; the Schenley Hotel, erected by Nicola's firm in 1898, firmly established the area as a desirable public space. Though the University of Pittsburgh did not move to Oakland until 1908, the move was predicted well before. Nicola, undoubtedly aware of the impact its presence would have on the area, used it as a selling point for land in the district. Eight major buildings were erected in the years 1910-1916,<sup>4</sup> as well as Forbes Field, another Nicola project, in 1909. The "semi-public" or "social" zone of Nicola's plan consisted of the clubs and private institutions which established themselves in the district in this period.

Residential construction began in 1906 and continued concurrently with the civic expansion. Both components of the District benefitted from the partnership: the residences received the cultural benefits of the civic center, while the institutions enjoyed a spacious, almost pastoral setting adjacent to a "smart," upper-middle class neighborhood.

Schenley Farms includes two notable works of engineering, the Parkman Avenue retaining wall and Bigelow Boulevard. The retaining wall, a most dramatic example of masonry engineering, is a distinctive element of the residential neighborhood, and is listed on the Pennsylvania Inventory. Bigelow Boulevard, originally called Grant Boulevard, was authorized by, and later renamed for, the Director of Public Works E.M. Bigelow. Monumental in scale, the boulevard was the first of several great arterial traffic-ways to be constructed in Pittsburgh in the 1890s.

As discussed in the Description of the District, the landscaping of Schenley Farms reflects City Beautiful planning theory in remarkably successful form. It is a significant unifying element of the District, distinguishing it from the rest of Oakland. The underground utilities, in particular, are an unusual and progressive asset of the District.

As an educational center, the Schenley Farms Historic District boasts a wide variety of high caliber institutions. The Cathedral of Learning, in particular, is a landmark educational structure, the symbolic educational center of Pittsburgh and the outlying area.

The Schenley Farms Historic District was, by design, an area that is more than the sum of its individual buildings. True to its concept, the District remains an impressive example of successfully planned diversity.

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2. James Van Trump, Oakland Survey, 1976.

3. IBID.

4. The Twentieth Century Club, Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall, Pittsburgh Athletic Association, Western Pennsylvania Historical Society, First Baptist Church, Masonic Temple, Syria Mosque, and Schenley High School.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Oakland Survey, conducted by Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation in 1978.
2. PHLF Allegheny County Survey file for North Oakland, 1980.
3. "Description of Twelve Houses for Sale by Schenley Farms Co.," brochure, c.1906 (cont.)

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 113 acres

Quadrangle name East Pittsburgh

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

## UMT References

A 

1,7	5,88	6,40	4,7	83	0,0
Zone	Easting		Northing		

B 

1,7	5,8,90	5,0	4,4	7,7	82,0
Zone	Easting		Northing		

C 

1,7	5,89	2,00	4,7	7,7	1,6,0
Zone	Easting		Northing		

D 

1,7	5,8,91	2,0	4,4	7,7	06,0
Zone	Easting		Northing		

E 

1,7	5,88	5,50	4,7	7,7	18,0
Zone	Easting		Northing		

F 

1,7	5,8,83	0,0	4,4	7,7	84,0
Zone	Easting		Northing		

G 

1,7					
Zone	Easting		Northing		

H 

Zone	Easting		Northing		

## Verbal boundary description and justification

The southern boundary of the Schenley Farms Historic District starts at a point approximately 700 feet southwest of the junction of Forbes Avenue and Bigelow Boulevard. From this point it runs northeast along Forbes Avenue to the northwest corner of the property line of

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christina Mann, Survey Assistant

organization Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation date February, 1982

street & number One Landmarks Square telephone (412) 322-1204

city or town Pittsburgh state Pennsylvania, 15212

# 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

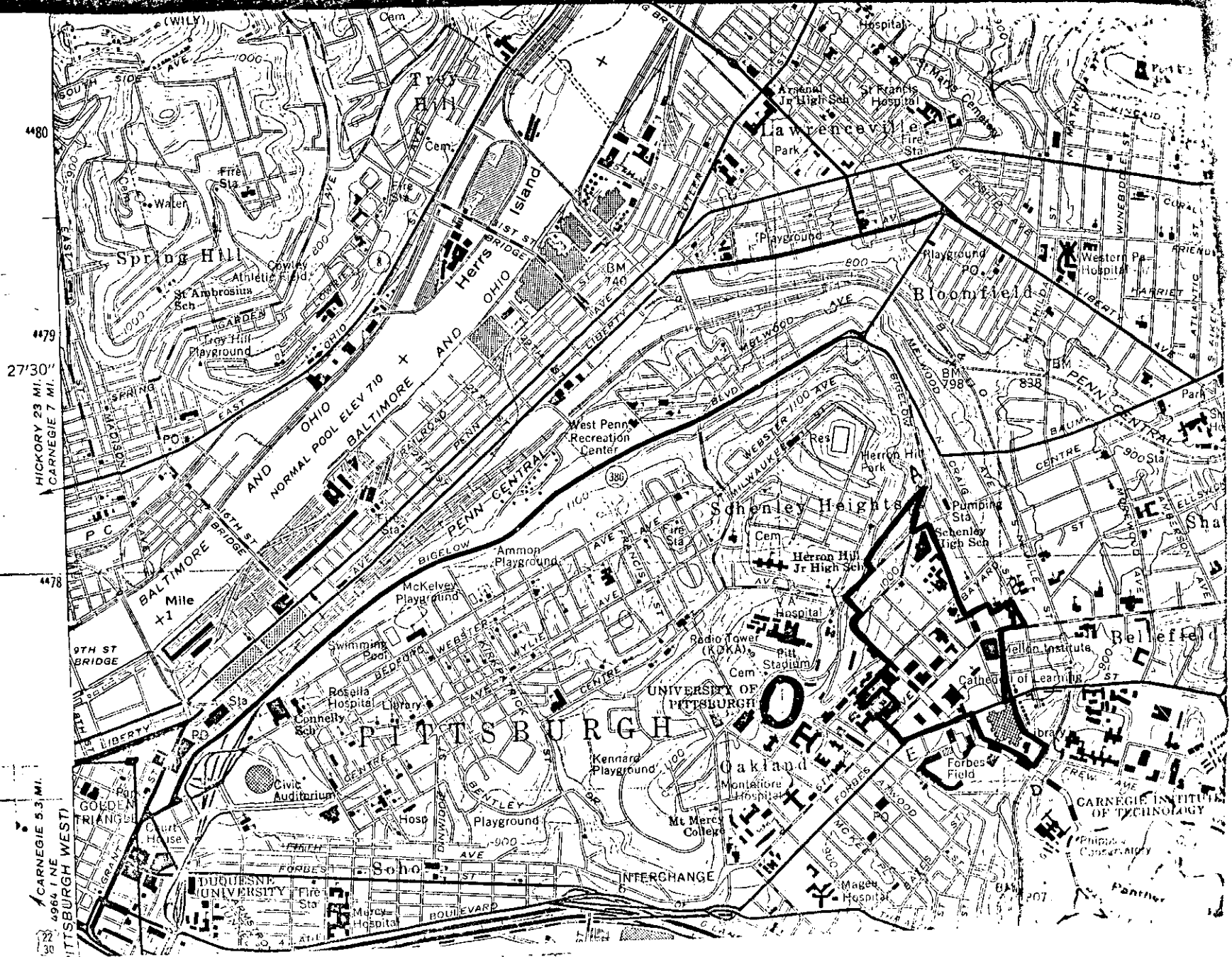
Attest:

date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

9. Bibliography (continued)

4. The Pittsburgh Builder, magazine, various issues 1907-1914.
5. Letters from Schenley Farms dwellers, unpublished manuscript of letters dating 1910-1914.
6. McDonough, Kitty M., "Schenley Farms: Mr. Nicola's Dream," Carnegie Magazine, May, 1968, p. 131-135.
7. Danforth, Elizabeth Nicola, Branches-Broker and Living, Pittsburgh; 1963.
8. The Sun Telegraph, Pittsburgh, various dates.
9. Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania magazine, articles in Vol 9, p 138,218; vol. 10, p. 197; vol 34, p. 24.
10. James Van Trump, "History of Oakland" manuscript, PHLF files.
11. Landmark Architecture of Allegheny County, by James D. Van Trump, and Arthur P. Ziegler, Jr. PHLF, Pittsburgh, 1967



Schenley Farms Historic District

(Pittsburgh East Quad)