

**NOMINATION OF THE PITTSBURGH WASH HOUSE
TO BE DESIGNATED AS A CITY HISTORIC LANDMARK**

CITY COUNCIL REPORT



PETERSON HOUSE - HISTORIC NOMINATION STAFF REPORT

Name of Property Peterson House
Address of Property 172 46th Street
Property Owner City of Pittsburgh
Nominated by:..... Matthew Falcone
Date Received:..... March 16, 2018
Parcel No.: 80-P-160
Ward:..... 9th
Zoning Classification:..... R1A-VH
Neighborhood..... Lawrenceville
Council District:..... 7 – Gross

FORMAL ACTION REQUIRED BY THE HISTORIC REVIEW COMMISSION:

1. Act on the Preliminary Determination of Eligibility for Historic Designation (4 April 2018)
2. Conduct a public hearing for the Historic Designation (4 April 2018)
3. Review the Report prepared by staff for the property in question, and make a recommendation to the City Council on the Historic Designation (2 May 2018)

FORMAL ACTION REQUIRED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION:

4. Conduct a public hearing for the Historic Designation (29 May 2018)
5. Review the recommendations of the Historic Review Commission and make a recommendation to the City Council on the Historic Designation (29 May 2018)

FORMAL ACTION REQUIRED BY THE CITY COUNCIL:

6. Conduct a public hearing
7. Review the recommendations of the Historic Review Commission and the City Planning Commission and take action on the Historic Designation

FACTS

1. On March 16, 2018 the staff of the Historic Review Commission received an application for the nomination of the Peterson House to be designated as a City Historic Structure.

2. **Description of the Peterson House**(as extracted from the nomination form)

172 46th Street is a two-story residential row house that fronts 46th Street in Pittsburgh's Lawrenceville neighborhood. The building is situated in a dense residential neighborhood which is primarily comprised of single-family, row homes embodying architectural styles, such as Second Empire, Queen Anne, Italianate, Richardsonian Romanesque, popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The house was constructed with the influence of the Italianate style, which is seen in the overall symmetry of the primary façade, the one-over-one double-hung windows, decorative brass door hardware, and stone lintels that are flush with the brick facade. Interior Italianate details include flared newel posts and spindles, marble and wood mantels with arched openings, four-panel doors with porcelain knobs and ornamented cast iron hinges, and non-symmetrical door and window trim with diagonally mitered corners.

The primary façade is divided into three distinct bays, each containing a double-hung, one-over-one window crowned by limestone lintels and sills. The roofline is delineated by a cornice comprised of saw-tooth molding, uninterrupted horizontal registrars, and decorative corbels. The entrance to the house is denoted by double, three-paneled wooden doors and a small, clear-glass transom approached by a set of four concrete steps. The exterior of the house is comprised of unpainted, brick arranged in a stretcher bond pattern. The windows, brick mold, doors, cornice, and dormer window are all made of wood. The house has a pitched roof comprised of an unknown material as it is not visible from the street. One masonry chimney rises from the roof on left side of the house.

A set of concrete stairs with an iron-pipe railing, non-germane to the period of the house's construction, on the right side of the house leads from the entranceway doors to the street. Two small, wooden basement windows interrupt a small hewn-stone course that defines the basement. Each single, operable sash divided into four panes, are obscured by metal latticework screens.

The rear of the building fronts Cotton Way and is divided into three segments - the first of which is main building visible on right, which has a bay of one, two-over-two windows on the first and second floor. The second segment appears on left and matches the height of the building minus the roof space. The third segment is a wooden porch that is partially enclosed by clapboard siding on left, and a small, two-over-two wooden dormer window rises from the roofline. A small masonry chimney is engaged in the roofline on the right side of the house. Two of the three windows are covered by exterior wooden shutters. Those on the first floor window are paneled wood while the shutters on the second floor addition are wood sashes paneled with single panes of glass.

3. **History of the Peterson House** (as extracted from the nomination form)

David and Elizabeth Sisk commissioned construction of 172 46th Street in 1886, shortly after David Sisk purchased the lot on which the house stands.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the present site of 172 46th Street was part of the grounds of a mansion at what is now 186 Home Street, its grounds extended from Butler Street to the Allegheny River. Anna H. Irwin died while owning the mansion, in or before the early 1880s. After her death, her executors subdivided the property into building lots that fronted on 46th Street and other streets. The subdivision of the property included the demolition of a large rear section of 186 Home Street between 1890 and 1893.

David Sisk purchased the lot on which 172 46th Street now stands on June 15, 1886. Sisk paid \$1000 for the lot, which measured 20' wide along 46th Street by 100' deep to Cotton Way. This purchase, at 50 cents per square foot, was comparable to prices paid for other undeveloped lots in Lawrenceville at the time, and indicates that 172 46th Street had not yet been built.

City of Pittsburgh building permit dockets show that on September 24, 1886, David Sisk received a permit for construction of a two-story brick house in Lawrenceville. The main section of the house was to measure 20' wide by 50' deep.

The 1887 Pittsburgh city directory listed David J. Sisk as living at 172 46th Street for the first time. The house was also depicted on plat maps and fire insurance maps published in 1890 and in later years.

Pittsburgh building permit records list Sylvanus W. McCluskey as the contractor of record for 177 46th Street. Pittsburgh directories published during the 1880s listed McCluskey as both a building contractor and an architect, suggesting that he both built and designed the house. In the mid-1880s, Sylvanus W. McCluskey lived at 188 47th Street in Lawrenceville.

4. Significance of the Peterson House *(as extracted from the nomination form)*

The *Pittsburgh Code of Ordinances, Title 11, Historic Preservation, Chapter 1: Historic Structures, Districts, Sites and Objects* lists ten criteria, at least one of which must be met for Historic Designation.

1) *Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the cultural, historic, architectural, archaeological, or related aspects of the development of the City of Pittsburgh, State of Pennsylvania, Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States;*

172 46th Street is directly associated with Carol Peterson, the architectural historian who made significant contributions to Pittsburgh's historiography and advanced historic preservation of the city's architectural resources.

On March 28, 2006 Jane Pokorski, Nancy DiFatta of Pittsburgh, John and Tammy Pokorski of Westmoreland County, Conrad and Claire Pokorski of Brecksville, Ohio, and Ronald Pokorski of Surprise, Arizona conveyed 172 46th Street to Carol Peterson for \$38,000.¹ What drew Carol to purchase the house was that the fully furnished interior was relatively unchanged since its construction, with the exception of minor renovations in the 1930s. As quoted in the Post Gazette, Carol Peterson said that what appealed to her about the house was that "I like that nobody ever messed with it very much at all..."²

It is at 172 46th Street, her home for nearly 16 years, that Carol Peterson completed the majority of her house histories, researched and wrote "Allegheny City: A History of Pittsburgh's North Side", completed her contribution to Lawrenceville's National Register nomination, landmarked several buildings locally, advocated for Pittsburgh's built environment, and would display the numerous awards and recognitions for her life's work. A more detailed description of these accomplishments can be found below:

- *Pittsburgh House Histories*

Over the course of the past three decades, Carol Peterson completed over 1,940 individual house histories. These house histories consisted of information taken from deeds, building permit records, newspaper articles, plat maps, and other resources that were compiled into a rich narrative that captured the story of an individual property and the people who worked, lived, and constructed the building. This body of work centered on individual residences but also included commercial and religious spaces. They exist within Pittsburgh in such a high quantity that individual neighborhoods within the city have collectively brought them together to help tell the story of their community.³ It

¹ (Deed Book 12815: 365)

² *Carol J. Peterson, the architectural historian who authored a book with Dan Rooney, dies at 58.* Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. December 18, 2017. Accessed: <http://www.post-gazette.com/news/obituaries/2017/12/18/Carol-Peterson-Pittsburgh-architectural-historian-North-Side-Dan-Rooney/stories/201705230158>

³ *Neighborhood History, Allegheny West.* Accessed: <http://alleghenywest.org/about/neighborhood-history/>

should be noted that while the individual house histories were presented to those that commissioned them, Carol Peterson regularly shared elements of her research over social media, specifically on her Pittsburgh House Histories page, which had a following just shy of 9,000 people. In accordance with her wishes, all of Carol Peterson's house histories will be made publically accessible so that the history, memories, and people she researched will continue to provide us insight Pittsburgh's past.⁴

- *“Allegheny City: A History of Pittsburgh's North Side”*

Carol Peterson co-authored “Allegheny City: A History of Pittsburgh's North Side” with celebrated Pittsburgher and North Sider, Dan Rooney and her significant contributions to its research and writing are evident throughout the book.⁵ Published in 2013, it remains one of the most comprehensive histories of Allegheny City, a culturally and historically significant political entity that would become Pittsburgh's North Side.

- *Lawrenceville National Register Historic District*

Carol Peterson's work towards establishing a National Register Historic District in Lawrenceville spanned several decades and had two primary manifestations. The first was through the efforts of the Lawrenceville Stakeholders to conduct an architectural survey of the neighborhood as the first step towards completing an HRSF. Most recently, Carol Peterson also worked on a team commissioned and lead by the City of Pittsburgh to have the District listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

- *Individual Contributions to the City of Pittsburgh Register of Historic Places*

Over the course of Carol Peterson's work, she research, wrote, and nominated several historically significant properties (primarily in Lawrenceville) that were listed on the City of Pittsburgh's Register of Historic Places. These include 160 43rd St. (the Turney House), 4830 Hatfield St. (Bayard School), 4412-14 Plummer St. (the Walton House), and the Iron City Brewery.⁶

- *Historical, Preservation, and Neighborhood Advocacy*

Over the course of her life, Carol Peterson would serve on the board of several civic-oriented organizations in Pittsburgh, many of which are devoted to advancing the preservation of Pittsburgh's structural heritage and promoting a sense of place for neighbors. These include but are not limited to, Preservation Pittsburgh, the Lawrenceville Stakeholders, Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group. Carol Peterson also served on the City's Historic Review Commission and was an elected member of the Democratic County Committee for Pittsburgh Ward 9, District 2. Carol Peterson was also responsible for directly restoring over a dozen homes in Lawrenceville, Polish Hill, and the North Side that most others would have not deemed worth saving. Perhaps the most visually striking example of this is seen on the three houses she restored on Plummer Street.

- *Civic, Professional, & Preservation Awards*

For her work as an historian, author, preservationist, and outspoken community advocate, Carol Peterson was honored by several different local and state organizations. Some of these awards include a *Certificate of Recognition* from the City of Pittsburgh's

⁴ *Pittsburgh House Histories*. Accessed: <https://www.facebook.com/Pittsburgh-House-Histories-163356233687884/>

⁵ *Allegheny City: A History of Pittsburgh's North Side*. Dan Rooney & Carol Peterson. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2014.

⁶ *Historic Review Commission*. Accessed: <http://pittsburghpa.gov/dcp/hrc/preservation-references.html>

Historic Review Commission for her renovation of 160 43rd St., the Allegheny City Society's *William Rimmel Award*, Preservation Pittsburgh's *Mary J. Paradise Historic Preservation Award*, the Young Preservation Association's *Michael Eversmeyer Promise Award*, and Preservation Pennsylvania's *Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Award for Grassroots Advocacy*. Carol Peterson was also post-posthumously recognized for her work on March 20, 2018 by Pittsburgh's City Council and Mayor Peduto in addition to proclamation recognizing March 19, 2013 as "Carol Peterson Day" for her work and contributions.

Carol Peterson lived at 172 46th Street until she passed away, in the home, on December 17, 2017, at age 58 surrounded by her friends and her beloved orange tabby cat, Wee-Bey.

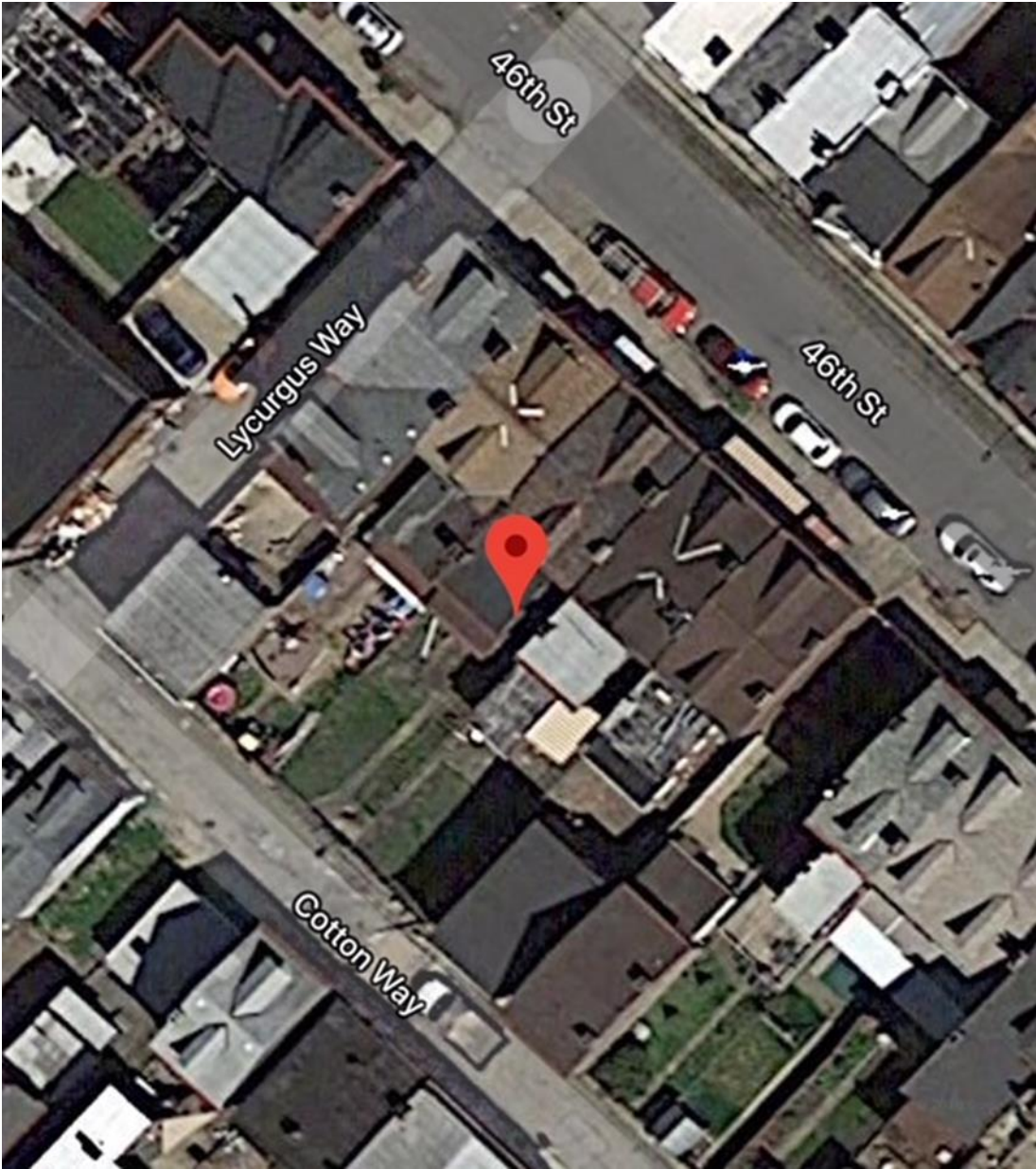
5. Integrity

The Peterson House, having recently benefited from an extensive exterior restoration effort and minimal alteration over the past century, enjoys a high degree of integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship.

6. Photos







8. Recommendation of the Historic Review Commission

The Historic Review Commission held a public hearing regarding the designation of the Pittsburgh Wash House. On May 2, 2018 the Commission voted to recommend to City Council that it designate the Peterson House as historic.

9. Recommendation of the City Planning Commission

The City Planning Commission held a public hearing regarding the designation the Pittsburgh Wash House. On May 29, 2018 the Commission voted to recommend to City Council that it designate the Peterson House as historic.

10. Meeting Minutes

HRC MINUTES – APRIL 4, 2018 – PRELIMINARY DETERMINATION HEARING

Carol Peterson House
172 46th Street

Historic Nomination

Owner:

Carol Peterson Estate
172 46th Street
Pittsburgh, Pa 15201

Ward: 9th

Lot and Block: 80-P-160

Inspector:

Nominator:

Matthew Falcone
417 Lockhart Street
Pittsburgh, Pa 15212

Council District: 7th

Nomination Received: 2/16/18

National Register Status: **Listed:** **Eligible:**

Proposed Changes: Nomination for historic designation.

Discussion:

1. Ms. Quinn makes a short presentation on the nomination. She states that the property is significant under **Criterion 2**, identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the cultural, historic, architectural, archaeological, or related aspects of the development of the City of Pittsburgh, State of Pennsylvania, Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States, and **Criterion 3**, exemplification of an architectural type, style or design distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship, the State of Pennsylvania, the Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States. She states, however, that she feels that Criterion 2 is much stronger. She states that the property does also retain integrity. She recommends that the Commission vote affirmatively for determination of potential viability of the nomination.
2. The Commission discusses the nomination.
3. Ms. Aguirre asks if there are any plans on what will happen to the property.
4. Mr. Matthew Falcone steps to the podium; he is the nominator of the property. He states that the house is to be sold soon, and the potential buyer is aware of this process and is very supportive.

Motion:

1. Ms. Halderman moves to approve the viability of the nomination on the basis of Criterion 1.
 2. [Second is inaudible.]
 3. Ms. Aguirre asks for a vote; all are in favor and motion carries.
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HRC MINUTES –MAY 2, 2018 RECOMMENDATION

Carol Peterson House
172 46th Street

Historic Nomination

Owner:

Carol Peterson Estate
172 46th Street
Pittsburgh, Pa 15201

Ward: 9th

Lot and Block: 80-P-160

Inspector:

Nominator:

Matthew Falcone
417 Lockhart Street
Pittsburgh, Pa 15212

Council District: 7th

Nomination Received: 2/16/18

National Register Status: Listed: Eligible:

Proposed Changes: Nomination for historic designation.

Discussion:

5. Ms. Quinn states that the property is significant under **Criterion 2**, identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the cultural, historic, architectural, archaeological, or related aspects of the development of the City of Pittsburgh, State of Pennsylvania, Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States, and **Criterion 3**, exemplification of an architectural type, style or design distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship, the State of Pennsylvania, the Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States. She states, however, that she feels that Criterion 2 is much stronger. She states that the Commission will be making a recommendation to City Council.
6. Mr. Falcone asks for public comment.
7. Ms. Mary Coleman steps to the podium; she is in support of the nomination.
8. Ms. Mary Moses steps to the podium; she is in support of the nomination.
9. Mr. Falcone mentions two letters of support and over 100 petition signatures that were received.

Motion:

4. Ms. Halderman moves to make a positive recommendation to City Council.
 5. Ms. Loysen seconds.
 6. Ms. Aguirre asks for a vote; all are in favor and motion carries.
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PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES –MAY 29, 2018

May 29, 2018
Planning Commission Minutes

2. Hearing and Action: Historic Nomination: 172 46th Street, Peterson House

Ms. Quinn made a presentation in accord with the attached staff report. Ms. Quinn recommended approval of the proposal. The property is located at 172 46th Street. The Historic Review Commission recommended approval and recommendation to City Council. The property does meet the criteria based on its association of Carol Peterson an architectural historian who made significant contributions to Pittsburgh's historiography and advanced historic preservation of the city's architectural resources. 172 46th Street was Ms. Peterson's home for nearly 16 years.

The Chairwoman called for comments from the Public.

Matthew Falcone of Preservation Pittsburgh, the nominator of this home, spoke in full support of this nomination. In researching this project this is the first property to be nominated that was the home of a woman. There being no more comments from the Public, the Chairwoman called for questions and comments from the Commissioners.

Ms. Deitrick thanked the staff and Mr. Falcone and this is indeed an honor of the legacy of Carol.

Ms. Mingo stated that Ms. Peterson did her home and is in full support. There being no more questions or comments from the Commissioners, the Chairwoman called for the motion.

MOTION: That the Planning Commission of the City of Pittsburgh provide City Council with a positive recommendation for historic designation.

MOVED BY Ms. Deitrick; SECONDED BY Ms. Askey.

IN FAVOR: Mondor, Brown, Askey, Deitrick, Dick, Mingo

OPPOSED: None CARRIED