

**NOMINATION OF SAL'S BARBER SHOP
TO BE DESIGNATED AS A HISTORIC STRUCTURE**
CITY COUNCIL REPORT



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SAL’S BARBER SHOP - HISTORIC NOMINATION STAFF REPORT

Name of Property Sal’s Barber Shop
Address of Property 712 Brookline Boulevard
Property Owner Sal and Lynn Bondi
Nominated by:..... Sal and Lynn Bondi
Date Received:..... October 17, 2023
Parcel No.: 97-C-280
Ward:..... 19th
Zoning Classification:..... LNC
Neighborhood:..... Brookline
Council District:..... 4 - Coghill

FORMAL ACTION REQUIRED BY THE HISTORIC REVIEW COMMISSION:

1. Act on the Preliminary Determination of Eligibility for Historic Designation (1 November 2023)
2. Conduct a public hearing for the Historic Designation (6 December 2023)
3. Review the Report prepared by staff for the property in question, and make a recommendation to the City Council on the Historic Designation (6 December 2023)

FORMAL ACTION REQUIRED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION:

4. Conduct a public hearing for the Historic Designation (12 December 2023)
5. Review the recommendations of the Historic Review Commission and make a recommendation to the City Council on the Historic Designation (12 December 2023)

FORMAL ACTION REQUIRED BY THE CITY COUNCIL:

6. Conduct a public hearing within 120 days of 12 December 2023 (10 April 2024).
7. Review the recommendations of the Historic Review Commission and the City Planning Commission and take action on the Historic Designation.

FACTS

1. On 17 October 2023 the staff of the Historic Review Commission received an application for the nomination of Sal's Barber Shop to be designated as a City Historic Structure.

2. **Description of Sal's Barber Shop** (as extracted from the nomination form)

712 Brookline Boulevard is a brick, two story, Minimal Traditional building that currently serves as commercial and domestic space. 712 Brookline Boulevard sits in a light, urban, and largely residential and commercial street in Pittsburgher's Brookline neighborhood, which was part of the larger South Hills, an area of largely residential and light commercial developed in the early 20th century. Today the neighborhood is still largely comprised of residential and small commercial buildings.

The north elevation of 712 Brookline Boulevard is the building's primary façade. The building rises two stories high off a basement delineated by a course of concrete and darker colored bricks. The façade is symmetric and divided into two bays that are defined by deep recesses and prominent awnings. The left bay (Alterations by Rina) has a central door recessed into two glass display windows that rest atop a knee wall of glass blocks and are crowned by transom windows. Framing and trim of these windows appears to be ornate wood. The recess on right (Sal's Barber Shop) houses the entrance and like the recess on left, the entryway door is recessed by a store window that sits atop a knee wall of glass block. Here too wood trim frames the windows and doors. The second floor holds two sets of two double hung windows, whose openings are accentuated by darker color brick. The roofline is capped with concrete coping.

The southern eastern façade is visibility accessible from Trelona Way, which is approximately a story lower than ground level of Brookline Boulevard. Here there is a small, concrete parking pad off Trelona Way, which a cinderblock and brick garage with a white metal garage door. A railing of red brick crowned with a concrete cope crowns the garage. A wooden and metal staircase to the right of the garage provides access to the second and third floor wooden balcony. The building façade is red brick and punctuated by two sets of double hung windows on the second and third floors. To the left of the garage, a small extension with a corrugated metal roof provides additional access.

The southeastern façade of 712 Boulevard of the Allies is partially visible from Brookline Boulevard. Comprised primarily of Flemish bonded red brick, this façade is interpreted by two casement windows that flank the chimney in the forward third section of the building. A stepped parapet wall is capped with terra cotta copping. The northwestern elevation of the building is not visibly accessible from a public right-of-way because it abuts the neighboring Carnegie Library Building.

3. History of the Sal's Barber Shop (as extracted from the nomination form)

It was the Holden family who constructed and became the first occupants of 712 Brookline Boulevard.

Site History – Construction

In 1928, the Holdens built 712 Brookline Boulevard and moved in, along with John's roofing business, which had been operating out of the small fabricating building at the rear of the property. The 1930 census was the first to show the Holden family living at 712 Brookline Boulevard, which was estimated to have a value of \$20,000.

John S. Holden was born in Pennsylvania on June 22, 1894 shortly after his parents and two older siblings immigrated to the United States from England. On December 15, 1917, Holden enlisted in the Navy and served overseas, working as a coppersmith from January to November of 1918. He was honorably discharged on March 12, 1919. Holden married Goldie D Linepensel in 1923. Goldie Dorothy Linepensel was born in Pittsburgh on April 10, 1905. She was the youngest of twelve children born to Charles Linepensel, a furniture salesman and his wife, Emma. When the 1940 census was enumerated, 712 Brookline Boulevard was rented to tenants, as the Holdens had lost the building to sheriff's sale earlier that year. City directories list John Holden's roofing shop as a tenant in the storefront. This transfer of ownership is recorded in the Allegheny County Recorder of Deeds:

May 18, 1940 (Deed Book 2569: 544): John Heinz, Sheriff of Allegheny County conveyed 712 Brookline Boulevard and another parcel located at 1123 Tennessee Avenue in Dormont to Keystone State Building and Loan Association for \$258.44.

December 30, 1940 (Deed Book 2682: 80): Keystone State Building and Loan Association conveyed 712 Brookline Boulevard to Joseph and Mary Garofalo for \$11,000.

At the end of 1940, Joseph and Mary Garofalo purchased 712 Brookline Boulevard. Joseph Garofalo had been born on October 11, 1898 in Pennsylvania and worked as a shoe repairman. His wife, Mary Galluze Garofalo had also been born in Pennsylvania on December 13, 1902. The Garofalos lived nearby in a building they had built at 928 Brookline Boulevard with their daughter, Josephine, and son Frank. Sadly, on February 19, 1945 Mary Garofalo passed away at the young age of 42, due to complications of diabetes. She was laid to rest in St. Michael's Cemetery.

After the death of his wife, Joseph moved into 712 Brookline Boulevard. City directories show him living there for the first time in 1946. Later that year his daughter, Josephine announced her engagement to Salvatore Biondi, and the two were married on February 18, 1947.

By 1948 all the previous tenants had moved from 712 Brookline Boulevard and the building was fully occupied by members of the Garofalo family. Joseph ran Garofalo's Fruit Market and also helped his son Frank with Star Shoe Service, and Salvatore opened a barber shop.

At the time of the 1950 census, Joseph Garofalo was listed as head of household. He was 51 and told the enumerator he was unable to work. He shared his apartment with his son, Frank, 21, who worked 48 hours per week as a shoe repairman for Star Shoe Service. Later that year, on August 15, 1950, Frank would marry Grace Tonzio.

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Josephine, now 25, also lived in the home with her husband and daughter. Salvatore, now 27, worked 48 hours per week as a barber. Josephine did not work outside of the home, but cared for her daughter, Agnes, 2. Salvatore was selected to answer some additional questions on the census and reported that he had not finished school past the eighth grade. He had not earned a paycheck the previous year, but members of his household had earned \$2,000 working for someone else, \$3,000 operating a business, and he had collected \$800 in rent, pension, or other income.

The second apartment at 712 Brookline Boulevard in 1950 was occupied by the Wuycheck family. Frank Wuycheck, 31, worked 44 hours per week as a baker. His wife Mary, 32, was a homemaker who cared for the couple's daughter, Maryann, 2. The following year in 1951, The Pittsburgh Press reported in their Stork Club column that the Wuychecks welcomed a second child, a son they named John, while living at 712 Brookline Boulevard.

The 1950 census is the last census that provides information on occupants of 712 Brookline Boulevard. Sometime in the early 1950s, Joseph married Laverna Young. However, that marriage would not last long as Joseph passed away from an intestinal obstruction on October 22, 1956. He was 58 years old. He was buried in St. Michael's Cemetery with his first wife. Members of the Biondi family own 712 Brookline Boulevard to this day, and Sal's Barber Shop is still open for business.

4. Significance of Sal's Barber Shop (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. The nominator is of the opinion that Sal's Barber Shop meets several of the criteria as follows.

7. Its association with important cultural or social aspects or events in the history of the City of Pittsburgh, the State of Pennsylvania, the Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States.

This Criterion corresponds with Criterion A of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). 712 Brookline Boulevard is associated with the important, though incredibly complex, historical narrative of Italian immigration to Pittsburgh and assimilation into American society. The building's unique connection to the Bondi and Garafalo families, whose histories illustrate part of this larger immigration narrative, should be viewed through its cultural relevance.

Key to understanding the significance of this building is contextualizing it with some of the contributions of Italian Americans to Pittsburgh's past and present. Pittsburgh has long been the center of Italian American immigration in Western Pennsylvania

By 1930, just a few years after the Bondi's purchased 712 Brookline Boulevard, the Italian population of Pittsburgh reached 34,000, roughly three times what it was in the previous census of 1920. This was roughly 15% of the overall Italian population in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. And while many Italian immigrants came to Pittsburgh as laborers, working in the mines, steel mills, and other industries. In fact, in 1900 over 40% of all Italian immigrants listed their profession as laborers.

Many others chose to open small stores, like groceries, retail, wholesale produce shops and other family-owned businesses to make a living. It is through this lens that the Bondi's and Garafalo's stories hold significance. In fact, in 1948 when the

building was entirely occupied by members of the Garafalo family it housed several small family-owned businesses: Garafalo's Fruit Market (run by Joseph), Star Shoe Service (run by Frank), and the Barber Shop (opened and operated by Salvatore). Sal's also stands out within this overarching narrative as it connects a neighborhood not typically associated with Italian-American immigration, like Bloomfield or Panther Hollow, with this larger history. The Garafalo-Bondi family history highlights the diversity of the Italian-American community and how its history can be traced throughout Pittsburgh's many neighborhoods and beyond. The story of the Garafalo and Bondi families is widely known in Brookline, where their family has been an integral part of the community for decades and

fortunately it will soon be added to the Heinz History Center's Italian Department's Oral History project.

10. Its unique location and distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City of Pittsburgh.

Sal's Barber Shop is a well-established, familiar, and beloved visual feature of Brookline Neighborhood. Although this can be a difficult criterion to illustrate, the overwhelming support from the neighbors and patrons, the strong support of community organizations, and the prominence of Sal (and Sal's) in local media over the years are excellent indicators of the special place that Sal's Barber Shop occupies in Brookline.

As an attestation to the significance and support landmarking Sal's Barber Shop, attached you will find a petition of over 250 members of the community, a letter of support from Brookline's community organization, Brookline Together, as well as from Councilperson Anthony Coghil, long-time customer of Sal. It is worth noting that though Sal's is a barber shop, it is often open to the public and has been a staple of neighborhood tours, food tours, and events and has a profile far beyond that of a simple business.

3. Integrity

- Location: the location of 712 Brookline Boulevard remains the same as when first constructed.
- Design: The original design of 712 Brookline Boulevard remains relatively unaltered from the date of the original construction. Though the architectural style employed is modest, the design of the first-floor commercial storefronts, whose glass construction emphasizes transparency and product display, is a character-defining feature of early 20th century commercial space. It is also worth noting that the modifications that have happened over time are a result of

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the improvements and changes made by Sal and his family over their ownership of 712 Brookline Boulevard.

- **Materials:** Brick and glass are the materials that overwhelmingly define the primary 712 Brookline Boulevard appear to date from the period of construction.
- **Workmanship:** Physical evidence of craftsmanship is resplendent throughout 712 Brookline Boulevard. The modest brickwork in the primary façade of the building, particularly in framing openings around windows, doors, and the parapet is indicative of Minimal Traditional architectural style.

4. Photos



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Sal's Barber Shop is now Sals'

BARBERS, FROM PAGE C-1

and "Little Sal."
The two Sals reopened in July.

Both say it's going great.

"I don't bother him and he don't bother me," is how Big Sal says it, but there's a smile in his shrug.

Little Sal says, "It's a dream come true."

Most mornings, Little Sal walks from home to open the shop around 9. He brings his Dad the newspaper and they read it together, talking about the sports pages and whatever — "How'd you sleep?" "How'd you sleep?"

As customers come in, they take turns cutting, unless one of the older regulars wants to stick with the original Sal. He keeps a eye on his son's work, sometimes telling him with a wink or a whisper, *For this guy, cut it shorter.*

Big Sal, who's been cutting hair here for 61 years now, still is steady with the electric clippers and with remembering his customer's names and cuts. But he'll turn 85 in February, and so he

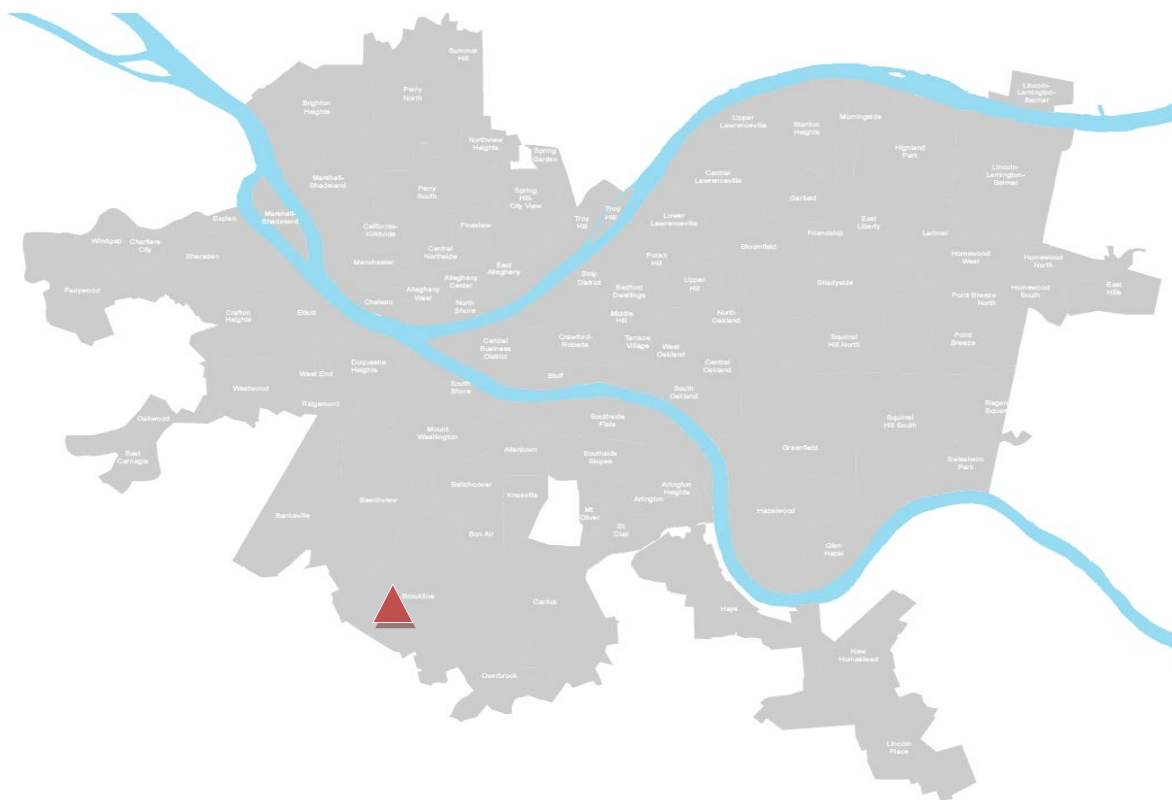


Steve Mellon/Post-Gazette.

"Little Sal" Bondi takes care of a customer while chatting with his dad, "Big Sal," who says, "I was real happy he was coming back" from California so they could work together.

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5. Maps



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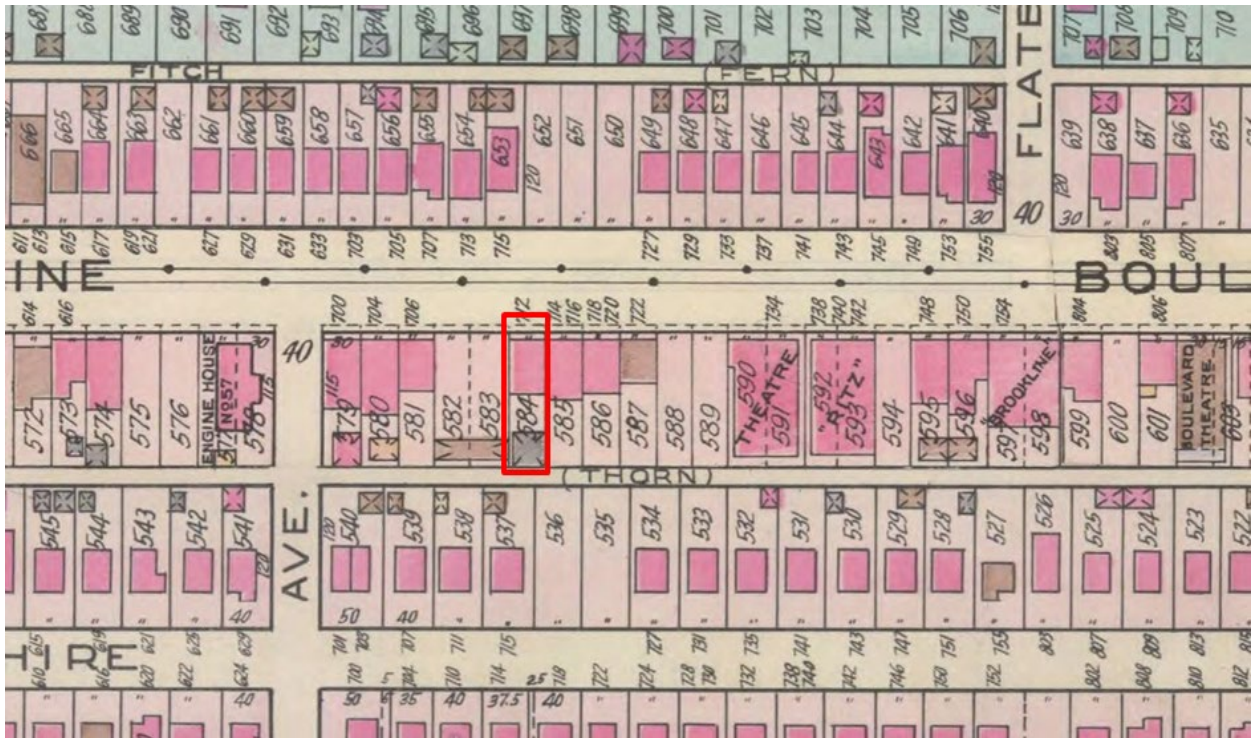


Fig. 5. G.M. Hopkins & Co. Brookline. Plate 14. 712 highlighted in red. 1939. Accessed: <https://historicpittsburgh.org/islandora/object/pitt%3A34v09p14/viewer>

6. Recommendation of the Historic Review Commission

The Historic Review Commission held a public hearing regarding the designation of Sal's Barber Shop. On December 6, 2023 the Commission voted to recommend to City Council that it designate Sal's Barber Shop as historic.

7. Recommendation of the City Planning Commission

The City Planning Commission held a public hearing regarding the designation Sal's Barber Shop. On December 12, 2023 the Commission voted to recommend to City Council that it designate Sal's Barber Shop as historic.

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8. Meeting Minutes

HRC MINUTES – NOVEMBER 1, 2023 – PRELIMINARY DETERMINATION HEARING

Pittsburgh HRC –November 1, 2023

Sal's Barber Shop
712 Brookline Boulevard

Historic Nomination

Owner:

Sal and Lynn Bondi
712 Brookline Boulevard
Pittsburgh, PA 15226

Ward: 19th

Lot and Block: 97-C-280

Neighborhood: Brookline

Nominator:

Sal and Lynn Bondi
712 Brookline Boulevard
Pittsburgh, PA 15226

Council District: 4th

Nomination Received:

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

Proposed Changes: Determination of nomination viability

Discussion:

1. Ms. Quinn gives a short presentation on the property. She states that this nomination is unusual because it is based more on culture than the built environment. The nominators believe this is significant under **Criterion 7**, association with important cultural or social aspects or events in the history of the City of Pittsburgh, the State of Pennsylvania, the Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States, and **Criterion 10**, unique location and distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City of Pittsburgh. She states that the application included a petition with over 250 signatures of community members, as well as a letter of support from Councilman Coghill's office.
 2. The Commission discusses the criteria for nomination. Mr. Falcone noted that this nomination had been delayed by the pandemic, but it is rare to see a nomination with this level of community support from the beginning. Ms. Aguirre is pleased to see the first nomination in the Brookline area. She also appreciates that nominators are recognizing that history is more than just a building and would like to see more similar nominations brought forward. Mr. Hill recognizes that there is much preservation and protection work to do in the southern neighborhoods.
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Motion:

1. Mr. Hill moves to affirm the viability of the nomination based on **Criteria 7 and 10**.
 2. Mr. Green seconds.
 3. Ms. Aguirre asks for a vote; 5 are in favor, 1 abstains. Motion carries.
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HRC MINUTES – DECEMBER 6, 2023 RECOMMENDATION

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Pittsburgh HRC –December 6, 2023

Sal's Barber Shop
712 Brookline Boulevard

Historic Nomination

Owner:

Sal and Lynn Bondi
712 Brookline Boulevard
Pittsburgh, PA 15226

Ward: 19th

Lot and Block: 97-C-280

Neighborhood: Brookline

Nominator:

Sal and Lynn Bondi
712 Brookline Boulevard
Pittsburgh, PA 15226

Council District: 4th Nomination

Received: 10/17/23

National Register Status:

Listed:

Eligible:

Proposed Changes: Determination of nomination viability.

Discussion:

1. Ms. Quinn gives a short presentation on the property. She states that the nominators believe this is significant under **Criterion 7**, association with important cultural or social aspects or events in the history of the City of Pittsburgh, the State of Pennsylvania, the Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States, and **Criterion 10**, unique location and distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City of Pittsburgh. She states that the application included a petition with over 250 signatures of community members.
 2. Ms. Aguirre asks for public comment; there is none. She enters for the record correspondence that was received.
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Motion:

1. Mr. Hill moves to provide a positive recommendation to City Council based on **Criteria 7 and 10**.
 2. Mr. Green seconds.
 3. Ms. Aguirre asks for a vote; all are in favor and motion carries.
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PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES – DECEMBER 12, 2023 RECOMMENDATION