Former Jones & Laughlin Steel Headquarters Building

City of Pittsburgh Historic Landmark Nomination

Prepared by Preservation Pittsburgh

412.256.8755
1501 Reedsdale St., Suite 5003
Pittsburgh, PA 15233
www.preservationpgh.org

April, 2020.

HISTORIC REVIEW COMMISSION
Division of Development Administration and Review
City of Pittsburgh, Department of City Planning
200 Ross Street, Third Floor

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY HISTORIC NOMINATION FORM

1. HISTORIC NAME OF PROPERTY:
   Jones & Laughlin Building
2.

HRC Staff Use Only

Date Received: .....
Parcel No.:.....
Ward:.....
Zoning Classification: .....
Bldg. Inspector:.....
Council District:.....

Fee Schedule

Please make check payable to *Treasurer, City of Pittsburgh*

Individual Landmark Nomination:	$100.00
District Nomination:	$250.00

2. CURRENT NAME OF PROPERTY:
   John P. Robin Civic Building

3. LOCATION
   a. Street: 200 Ross Street
   b. City, State, Zip Code: Pittsburgh, PA 15219
   c. Neighborhood: Downtown

4. OWNERSHIP
   d. Owner(s): City of Pittsburgh/Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh/Housing Authority of Pittsburgh
   e. Street: 414 Grant St./200 Ross Street, 10th floor
   f. City, State, Zip Code: Pittsburgh, PA 15219 Phone: (412) 255-

5. CLASSIFICATION AND USE – Check all that apply

Type		Ownership		Current Use:
Structure	X	Private – home		City of Pittsburgh agency offices
District		Private – other		
Site		Public – government	X	
Object		Public - other		
		Place of religious worship		

NOMINATED BY:

a. Name: Matthew W.C. Falcone for Preservation Pittsburgh

b. Street: 1501 Reedsdale St. Suite 5003

c. City, State, Zip: Pittsburg, PA 15233

d. Phone: (412) 417-4190 Email: mfalcone@preservationpgh.org

6. DESCRIPTION

Provide a narrative description of the structure, district, site, or object. If it has been altered over time, indicate the date(s) and nature of the alteration(s). (Attach additional pages as needed)

If Known:

a. Year Built: 1907, 1917

b. Architectural Style: Jacobean Revival

c. Architect/Builder: MacClure & Spahr

Narrative: see attached

7. HISTORY

Provide a history of the structure, district, site, or object. Include a bibliography of sources consulted. (Attach additional pages as needed.) Include copies of relevant source materials with the nomination form (see Number 11).

Narrative: see attached

8. SIGNIFICANCE

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. Describe how the structure, district, site, or object meets one or more of these criteria and complete a narrative discussing in detail each area of significance. (Attach additional pages as needed)

The structure, building, site, district, object is significant because of (check all that apply):

1. Its location as a site of a significant historic or prehistoric event or activity;

2. 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;

3. Its exemplification of an architectural type, style or design distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship;

4. Its identification as the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose individual work is significant in the history or development of the City of Pittsburgh, the State of Pennsylvania, the Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States;

5. Its exemplification of important planning and urban design techniques distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design or detail;

6. Its location as a site of an important archaeological resource;

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;

8. Its exemplification of a pattern of neighborhood development or settlement significant to the cultural history or traditions of the City, whose components may lack individual distinction;

9. Its representation of a cultural, historic, architectural, archaeological, or related theme expressed through distinctive areas, properties, sites, structures, or objects that may or may not be contiguous; or

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.

Narrative: see attached

10. INTEGRITY

In addition, the ordinance specifies that "Any area, property, site, structure or object that meets any one or more of the criteria listed above shall also have sufficient integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship to make it worthy of preservation or restoration". (Attach additional pages as needed)

Narrative: see attached

11. NOTIFICATION/CONSENT OF PROPERTY OWNER(S)

1.3(a)(2) *Community information process.*
Preceding submission of a nomination form for a District, the Historic Review Commission shall conduct at least one (1) public information meeting within or near the boundaries of the proposed district, which shall include at least one (1) member of the Department of City Planning and one (1) Commission member, to discuss the possible effects of designation. Notice shall be given to the owners of property in the proposed district in accordance with Section 1.3(b) below. The final public information meeting shall be held no more than six months before the nomination form is submitted.

1.3(a)(1)(a) *Subsection F.*
In the case of a nomination as a Historic District, by community-based organizations or by any individual, but in either event the nomination shall be accompanied by a petition signed by the owners of record of twenty-five (25) percent of the properties within the boundaries of the proposed District.

- Please attach documentation of your efforts to gain property owner's consent.-

** The nomination of any religious property shall be accompanied by a signed letter of consent from the property's owner.

12. PHOTO LOGS: *Please Attach*

13. BIBLIOGRAPHY: *Please Attach*

14. NOMINATION FORM PREPARED BY:

a. Name: Angelique Bamberg, Clio Consulting

b. Street: 233 Amber Street

c. City, State, Zip: Pittsburgh, PA 15206

d. Phone: (412) 956-5517 Email: clioconsulting@me.com

e. Signature:

HISTORIC NOMINATION – INSTRUCTIONS

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILLING OUT THE NOMINATION FORM

1. Indicate the original name of the property if it is currently known by a different name; e.g. Union Station.

2. Indicate the current name of the property

3. Indicate the street address for the property. For districts, attach a separate sheet listing the street address of each property included in the nomination and a clear street map of the area showing the boundaries of the proposed district.

4. Indicate the owner of the property and his or her mailing address. For districts, attach a separate sheet listing the owner of each property and his or her mailing address.

5. Check the classification as indicated.

   a. **"Historic Structure"** means anything constructed or erected, the use of which requires directly or indirectly, a permanent location on the land, including walks, fences, signs, steps and sidewalks at which events that made a significant contribution to national, state or local history occurred or which involved a close association with the lives of people of nations, state or local significance; or an outstanding example of a period, style, architectural movement, or method of construction; or one of the last surviving works of a pioneer architect, builder or designer; or one of the last survivors of a particular style or period of construction.

   b. **"Historic District"** means a defined territorial division of land which shall include more than one (1) contiguous or related parcels of property, specifically identified by separate resolution, at which events occurred that made a significant contribution to national, state, or local history, or which contains more than one historic structure or historic landmarks, or which contains groups, rows or sets of structures or landmarks, or which contains an aggregate example of a period, style, architectural movements or method of construction, providing distinguishing characteristics of the architectural type or architectural period it represents.

   c. **"Historic Site"** means the location of a significant event, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure whether standing, ruined or vanished, where the location itself maintains historical or archaeological value regardless of the value of any existing structures.

   d. **"Historic Object"** means a material thing of historic significance for functional, aesthetic cultural or scientific reasons that may be, by nature or design, moveable yet related to a specific setting or environment.

6. Indicate the person(s) responsible for the nomination. Please note: According to the Historic Preservation Ordinance:
   "Nomination of an area, property, site, or object for consideration and designation as a Historic Structure, Historic District, Historic Site, or Historic Object may be submitted to the Historic Review Commission by any of the following:

a. The Mayor of the City of Pittsburgh
b. A Member of the Historic Review Commission
c. A Member of the City Planning Commission
d. A Member of the Pittsburgh City Council
e. The Owner of Record or any person residing in the City of Pittsburgh for at least one year (for the nomination of a Historic Structure, Site or Object)
f. A signed petition of 25% of the owners of record (for the nomination of a Historic District)

7. Write a physical description of the nominated property or district. Include the following information as applicable:
   - architectural style(s)
   - arrangement of architectural elements
   - building materials
   - method(s) of construction
   - visual character
   - street pattern
   - density
   - type and arrangement of buildings
   - topography
   - history of the development of the area

8. Provide a narrative history of the structure, district, site, or object. Include the following information when available:
   - History of the development of the area;
   - Circumstances which brought the structure, district, site, or object into being;
   - Biographical information on architects, builders, developers, artisans, planners, or others who created or contributed to the structure, district, site, or object;
   - Contextual background on building type(s) and/or style(s);
   - Importance of the structure, district, site, or object in the larger community over the course of its existence.
   - Include a bibliography of all sources consulted at the end. Where historical information is uncertain or disputed, reference sources in the text.

9. Listed below are the categories and criteria for historic designation as set forth in the Pittsburgh Historic Preservation Ordinance. Describe in detail how the structure, district, site, or object meets one or more of the criteria. According to that legislation in Section 1.4 of the Pittsburgh Historic Preservation Ordinance, *Criteria for Designation*, a building must meet at least one of the following criteria in order to be designated:

   1. Its location as a site of a significant historic or prehistoric event or activity;

   2. 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;

   3. Its exemplification of an architectural type, style or design distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship;

   4. Its identification as the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose individual work is significant in the history or development of the City of Pittsburgh, the State of Pennsylvania, the Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States;

   5. Its exemplification of important planning and urban design techniques distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design or detail;

6. Its location as a site of an important archaeological resource;

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;

8. Its exemplification of a pattern of neighborhood development or settlement significant to the cultural history or traditions of the City, whose components may lack individual distinction;

9. Its representation of a cultural, historic, architectural, archaeological, or related theme expressed through distinctive areas, properties, sites, structures, or objects that may or may not be contiguous; or

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.

10. In addition, the ordinance specifies that "Any area, property, site, structure or object that meets any one or more of the criteria listed above shall also have sufficient integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship to make it worthy of preservation or restoration."

11. The nomination must be accompanied by evidence that the nominator has made a good-faith effort to communicate his or her interest in the historic designation of this landmark or district to the owner(s) of these properties. Describe how this was done, and attach evidence that the owner(s) of the nominated landmark or of the properties within the nominated district have been informed of the nomination. This may include a copy of a notification letter with a mailing list, a letter confirming phone calls, or a petition signed by affected property owners.

12. Clear photographs of the nominated buildings or districts should accompany the nomination form. The applicant shall include photographs of all elevations of an individual building and its setting, or the front elevation of each building in a district. In the case of closely spaced buildings or rowhouses, several buildings may be included in one photograph. Each photograph must be labeled with the street address of the building(s) and the month and year the photograph was taken.

13. Copies of major supporting documents should accompany the nomination form. Such documents may include, but are not limited to:

- historic photographs;
- historic and contemporary maps;
- historic or contemporary texts describing the subject property or district;
- historic or contemporary texts describing people, places, or events that comprise the historic context of the subject property or district.
- Oversized materials (such as architectural drawings) and materials too fragile to copy may be accepted.

PLEASE NOTE: It is the responsibility of the nominator to provide the Historic Review Commission and its Staff with information sufficient to fairly evaluate the nomination. **Incomplete nomination forms will not be accepted. Fee must be included. Nominations must be submitted in both electronic and hard-copy format.**

#1-6 Nomination Form: Address, Ownership, Classification, Nominator Info.

#7: Description

#8: History

#9: Significance

#10 Integrity

#11 Consent of Property Owners

#12 Photographs of Property: numbered and labeled

#13 List of Supporting Documents

Fee

Hard-Copy nomination

Electronic nomination (Word Format for text).

Former Jones & Laughlin Building Historic Nomination Form Addendum

Physical Description

Setting and Site

The Jones & Laughlin Building stands at 200 Ross Street in the southeastern section of downtown Pittsburgh, approximately three blocks north of the Monongahela River. It occupies an L-shaped parcel, 2-J-164-02, spanning a block of Ross Street between Second and Third avenues. The building is built to the sidewalk on all three of these streets. At the rear, the parcel adjoins a large surface parking lot, which occupies a separate legal parcel. The one-story concrete block parking structure behind the Jones & Laughlin Building is part of the building site, but does not contribute to the Jones & Laughlin Building's historical or architectural significance.

The building's neighbors are predominantly low- to mid-rise office and commercial buildings, including two survivors of a small Chinatown which occupied this part of downtown during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Most of the other buildings of Pittsburgh's Chinatown were destroyed by the construction and expansion of the Boulevard of the Allies in 1921. A ramp for the Boulevard of the Allies rises immediately alongside the Jones & Laughlin Building's south facade, above the alignment of Second Avenue. Several other government buildings, including the Pittsburgh City-County Building, Allegheny County Building, and the Allegheny County Courthouse, Family Court Center (former County Jail), and County Morgue, are located within one or two blocks.

Exterior

The Jones & Laughlin Building is rectangular in plan, seven bays wide and three bays deep. It is 12 stories tall when viewed from the front and 13 stories at the rear. The first eight stories were completed by 1908. The upper stories are an addition of 1917. Both the original building and the addition were designed by MacClure and Spahr in the Jacobean Revival style.

The building is of steel frame construction, clad in red brick with sandstone trim. A dressed ashlar foundation rises in height as the grade of Ross Street descends toward the south and terminates with a moulded water table.

Its primary facade faces Ross Street and has a symmetrical arrangement with the main entrance in the central bay. A stone arch leads into a small, square, vaulted exterior vestibule. Three granite steps ascend a landing before a revolving oak door surmounted by a divided transom. A pair of wrought-iron gates at the entrance to the vestibule can be closed to secure it, and there is a large, ornate wrought-iron sconce light fixture on each side. Framing the vestibule entrance arch is a stone relief with the numerals "19" and "07" in heraldic shields, one in each upper corner, representing the date of the building's construction.

On each side of the entrance are three broad arched window openings framed in stone. Stone mullions divide each into three windows and transoms. The arrangement is original, but the windows throughout the building are aluminum replacements.

A stone belt course divides the first from the second floor. Above this is a stone sill course. From it, pilasters rise between the bays to the original building cornice at the eighth floor. The second-floor window arrangements are similar to the first, but the lintels are flat instead of arched and have simple stone Tudor drip moulds. The openings on the end bays are two windows wide instead of three.

Another stone sill course demarcates the transition from the second to the third through sixth floors. Each of these floors is detailed identically to the second floor, except the windows do not have transoms.

A third sill course is found at the seventh floor level. The seventh floor is detailed identically to the third through sixth floors below, but decorative spandrels connect the seventh floor windows to those on the eighth floor. The arched eighth floor window openings in bays two through six echo those on the first floor. An eighth-floor cornice of stone with subtle Tudor ornamentation terminates the original composition.

The ninth through twelfth floors, added ten years later, show only minor variations. The pilasters and tripartite window groups, framed in stone, continue with brick spandrels or blind transoms. At the twelfth floor, rather than three windows under one broad arch in each bay, each of the three windows in each group is arched, and the trio is capped with a squared Tudor drip mould. A narrow stone cornice above the twelfth floor mimics the cornice at the eighth floor below. At the very top of the building is a brick parapet, capped in stone, with articulated stone ornamentation above each pilaster. Further ornamentation and raised, rounded parapet walls emphasize the first and seventh end bays.

The three bays of each of the Second and Third Avenue elevations are detailed identically to the front.

The rear facade is flush brick with individual punched window openings arranged singly, in pairs, or in groups of three. There is no stone ornamentation. The rear facade's top stories rise in a stepped formation to accommodate the thirteenth floor. There are two rear entrances: one located in the third bay from Second Avenue, reached via a short flight of steps, and one accessible via a ramp from the parking lot in the fifth bay from Second Avenue.

History

The Jones & Laughlin Building was constructed in 1907 as the headquarters of the Jones & Laughlin Steel Company, one of the largest steel producers in the United States. Founded in 1853 as an iron manufacturer on the South Side, the company transitioned into steel production and built blast furnaces and vast mills on both sides of the Monongahela River and in Aliquippa.

Much of the block between Ross Street, Second and Third avenues, and the Pennsylvania Railroad—whose tracks ran along Try Street at the rear of the block—had been owned by Jones & Laughlin since ca. 1880. Taking advantage of the railroad, the company erected a two-story, neoclassical, iron-clad office building and warehouse on what is now the parking lot behind 200 Ross Street by 1882. The company also held title to the northwest quadrant of the lot, which contained a 40' wide brick building with a central light well. On the southwest quadrant of the block stood several smaller brick buildings owned by various others.

By about 1900, the company had demolished the northwest building and acquired the southwest buildings except for a 3-story double house facing Second Avenue owned by members of the Robinson family. These hold-outs may have helped determine the height and footprint of the new Jones & Laughlin Building, which would not have been able to extend deeper into the bock due to the location of the Robinsons' houses. The previous Jones & Laughlin building was demolished after the new one opened; it appears together with the new building in a ca. 1908 photograph, but is not depicted on the Hopkins historic property map of 1910. By the 1920s, the Robinson houses had finally been cleared and three narrow sheds—one frame and two iron-clad—stood on the warehouse site behind the Jones & Laughlin office building.

Jones & Laughlin designed the steel structure of its office building at its Keystone Works structural plant, which moved from the South Side to Second Avenue in the Hazelwood portion of the facility in 1908. The company engaged architects MacClure and Spahr to design the building's exterior skin and interior spaces. MacClure and Spahr was founded by Boston architects Colbert A. MacClure and Albert H. Spahr, who came to Pittsburgh around the turn of the 20th century and designed many prominent commercial and residential buildings for wealthy Pittsburgh clients. The firm was active between 1901-1922. The builder of the Jones & Laughlin Building was the A. & S. Wilson Construction Company. The original, eight-story building was completed at 200 Ross Street by 1908.

In the first decades of the 20th century, the Jones & Laughlin Company underwent tremendous expansion of its steel mills and production. The company's prosperity and expansion were reflected in its office building, as well. The company commissioned five additional stories to be added to the Jones & Laughlin Building in 1916, and this addition—also designed by MacClure and Spahr with structural steel plans by the J&L Keystone Works—was constructed in 1917. The addition included the luxuriously-appointed paneled board room on the 13th floor, in which decisions about the future of the company were made.

Jones & Laughlin management relocated from 200 Ross Street to more modern accommodations at Gateway Center in 1952. In the meantime, the sector of downtown between Grant and Ross streets south of Fifth Avenue had become the government center of the Pittsburgh region. The trend began with the construction of the massive and highly-visible Allegheny County Courthouse and Jail, completed in 1886. The Allegheny County Morgue joined this complex in 1902 on the current site of the Allegheny County Building. The City-County Building was completed in 1917, and in 1929, the morgue was moved to its present location to accommodate the construction of the County Building, completed in 1931. Thus, the presence of government offices in the blocks near the Jones & Laughlin Building was well-established by the time the company vacated the building in 1952. City government had outgrown the City-County Building on Grant Street, and city officials saw the opportunity to purchase a ready-built office building nearby rather than acquire land and build a new one.

The City of Pittsburgh and a pair of quasi-governmental city agencies—the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA) and the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP)—purchased the building from the Jones & Laughlin Corporation in 1952. They renamed it the John P. Robin Civic Building, after the first executive director of the URA, who led the agency's efforts to implement Renaissance I in the 1940s and 50s. The URA and HACP occupied the upper floors of the building and shared the lower floors with city personnel and nonprofit agencies working for the betterment of the city's future. For some years, the building's other major tenants have been the Department of City Planning and Bureau of Building Inspection (now Department of Permits, Licenses, and Inspections). Past nonprofit tenants have included the United Way of Allegheny County (formerly Community Chest of Allegheny County) and the Jewish Philanthropies of Pittsburgh.

Significance

According to that legislation in Section 1.4 of the Pittsburgh Historic Preservation Ordinance, *Criteria for Designation*, a building must meet at least one of the following criteria in order to be designated:

1. Its location as a site of a significant historic or prehistoric event or activity: *The Jones & Laughlin Building meets this criterion for designation.*

   In interpreting this criterion, the preparers of this nomination are guided by the National Register of Historic Places, which holds that an "event" can be a "pattern of events or a historic trend that made a significant contribution to the development of a community, a State, or the nation." The Jones & Laughlin Building is directly associated with the activities of the Jones & Laughlin Steel Corporation and its impact on the economy, urban geography, and identity of Pittsburgh, the western Pennsylvania steel-producing region, and the nation.

   The Jones & Laughlin Steel Company formed officially under that name in 1902, but derived from parent companies, also run by the Jones and Laughlin families with interlocking management structures, founded half a century before. The earliest of these was Lauth and Brother, an iron-making concern founded by Bernard and John Lauth in 1850. In 1853, the brothers brought Benjamin Franklin Jones, a young entrepreneur from Washington County, and another man, Samuel Kiel, into the partnership, which was renamed Jones, Lauth, and Company. At the time, the Lauth brothers had established puddling and heating furnaces in Brownstown (now part of the South Side) and planned to build a rolling mill for the production of iron.

   In 1856, Kiel and John Lauth left the partnership and were replaced by James Laughlin. Laughlin was an Irish immigrant and banker who became interested in the iron industry while acting as a lender to Jones, Lauth. The new partnership "was a melding of entrepreneurial vision, managerial skill, technical expertise, and financial capital that would help make J&L the leader in iron-making in Pittsburgh and Pittsburgh the leading iron-producing region in the country."[1] Both Jones and Laughlin brought other family members into the partnership, and soon renamed it Jones & Laughlins. The partners called their South Side iron mill the American Iron Works. In 1861, Bernard Lauth left the partnership, selling his interests to B.F. Jones and James Laughlin.

   Meanwhile, the same set of partners along with three others (including two sons of James Laughlin) formed another company, Laughlin & Company, to produce pig iron. Pig iron was the source of the metal used by the American Iron Works. Unable to purchase enough pig iron from suppliers, Jones & Laughlins decided to manufacture it themselves, and formed Laughlin & Company for this purpose.

[1] David H. Wollman and John R. Inman, Portraits in Steel: An Illustrated History of Jones & Laughlin Steel Corporation (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1999), 12.

In so doing, the company was among the first to engage in backward vertical integration, in which a company expands its role to include work products formerly purchased from businesses up the supply chain.

Laughlin & Company acquired land in Hazelwood on the north side of the Monongahela River, just opposite the South Side location of the American Iron Works. There the company erected two blast furnaces and beehive coke ovens. These furnaces, called the Eliza furnaces after family members of both Jones and Laughlin, were the second blast furnaces built in the Pittsburgh area. The Eliza furnaces began operation in 1860, just in time to meet the demands for iron products of the rapidly-expanding railroads and the Civil War. After the war, a building boom in bridges as well as buildings; demand for iron transportation and storage facilities for the emerging oil and gas industries; and the need for plows and other heavy equipment in the United States' westward expansion fueled ongoing demand for iron.[2]

Between 1859 and 1876, the American Iron Works grew from 31 puddling furnaces to 75 with a production output of 50,000 tons annually; by 1880, the output was 65,000 tons. The Eliza furnace manufactured 36,000 tons of pig iron in 1876 and, after an enlargement of the stacks, 50,000 tons in 1880. Barges transported the pig iron across the Monongahela River to the American Iron Works until 1887, when the Hot Metal Bridge was constructed to connect the Eliza blast furnaces in Hazelwood to the pudding furnaces on the South Side. The bridge got its name from its function of carrying railcars filled with hot pig iron.

The railroads also created demand for steel, which has a lower carbon content and is more malleable than iron. The Bessemer conversion process transformed the metals manufacturing industry in the post-Civil War United States by decreasing the cost of steel production while it increased efficiency. Patented in England in 1856, the Bessemer process was introduced to the United States in 1864. In Pittsburgh and elsewhere, iron mills began to invest in diversification into steel production.

B.F. Jones was the first ironmaker in Pittsburgh to construct a Bessemer plant in his works, but the experiment was initially unsuccessful, and Jones shut it down. It was Andrew Carnegie who demonstrated the economy of the Bessemer method at his Edgar Thompson Works, which began production in 1875. Competition drove B.F. Jones to try again at steel production in the 1880s. Between 1883-1886, he built two Bessemer converters at the American Iron Works and added a third blast furnace at the Eliza site in Hazelwood. In 1890, he replaced and enlarged one of the older stacks to increase production to 160,000 tons of Bessemer iron and 50,000 tons of pig iron. A new name marked the mills' transition: the American Iron and Steel Works.

[2] Ibid., 20, 22.

In 1895, an advertisement for the Jones & Laughlins American Iron and Steel Works listed its products as bar, hoop, and sheet iron and steel; I-beams, channels, and structural shapes; blooms and billets; fish bars, piston rods, and finger bars; and patent cold rilled iron and steel shafting. J&L was also known for its rails and nails. By 1900, J&L was one of the leading rollers of Bessemer steel rails.[3]

Also in this year, Jones & Laughlins formally acquired Laughlin & Company, consolidating the family firms under one administration led by B.F. Jones, Jr. In 1902, the partnership was reorganized as a corporation, Jones & Laughlin Steel Company. The company continued to grow. By 1904, the annual capacity of the American Iron and Steel Works had increased to over one million tons of ingots. A major expansion of the open hearth steelmaking capacity between 1904 and 1908 added nine 200- to 250-ton open hearth furnaces and an additional Bessemer converter, allowing the J&L mill to achieve an annual capacity of over 1,425,000 tons of steel ingots. Unable to physically expand its Pittsburgh plant, J&L bought land to build a new plant, along with an entire town to house and serve its workers, up the Ohio River at Aliquippa. In 1916 a sixth blast furnace was added to the Eliza Works, bringing ingot capacity to 1,740,000 tons per year in 1920, and two million tons in 1930. In 1923, the company was reorganized again, from a family-held private company to the publicly-held J&L Steel Corporation. Its Board of Directors was still filled largely with members of the Jones and Laughlin families.

From the beginning to the middle of the 20th century, J&L's operations were central to the economy and identity of Pittsburgh. It was during this period, when J&L was the second-largest producer of steel in America (after Andrew Carnegie's U.S. Steel), that the company constructed and expanded its office building at 200 Ross Street. The steel-framed high-rise replaced the two-story, iron-clad office and warehouse built when the mills produced only iron. J&L's Structural Department, known as its Keystone Works, designed the building's structural system of steel columns, beams, and girders. By taking its place in the skyline of 20th century Pittsburgh, J&L's new office building symbolized the company's rising fortunes as a result of its successful transition to steel manufacturing in the modern city.

J&L occupied its building at 200 Ross Street for 44 years, until decamping for even more modern offices in the new Gateway Center in 1952. In the 1960s and 70s, several factors brought about a nationwide decline of the American steel industry, including J&L. Analyses vary, but factors probably included overcapacity in a time of declining demand and increasing foreign competition; high labor costs; lack of diversification; and failure to streamline or restructure to meet changing market and technological demands. In 1974, Ling-Temco-Vought purchased Jones & Laughlin Corporation as part of LTV Steel. A merger of LTV and rival Republic Steel in 1984 ended the Jones & Laughlin name. All

[3] Ibid., 45.

production facilities were closed in 1989, and in the 1990s, the J&L mill sites on both sides of the Monongahela River were razed for redevelopment. Today the Jones & Laughlin office building at 200 Ross Street and the Hot Metal Bridge are the only resources still extant in the City of Pittsburgh with a direct association with the Jones & Laughlin Steel Corporation.

2. 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: *The Jones & Laughlin Building does not meet this criterion for designation.*

3. Its exemplification of an architectural type, style or design distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship: *The Jones & Laughlin Building meets this criterion for designation.*

   The Jones & Laughlin Building is a high-quality, high-integrity example of the Jacobean Revival Style of architecture applied to a major commercial building. A subtype of the Tudor Revival, the Jacobean Revival style in the United States recalled English residential architecture of the early Renaissance. In 17th century Great Britain, the style marked a transition between the more medieval Tudor and the pure Renaissance styles to come. During this period, Renaissance motifs were communicated to England through German and Flemish carvers, rather than directly from Italy, resulting in some influences from those countries, as well.

   Characteristics of the Jacobean Revival include columns and pilasters, round arches, and curved or scrolled, rather than stepped or peaked, gables and parapets. Authentic British examples of the Jacobean style from the 17th century are frequently of red brick with stone trim, especially around groups of multiple windows. All of these features are evident in the Jones & Laughlin Building, where they have been multiplied and repeated to apply to a building type which did not exist in early renaissance England, the high-rise commercial office building.

   Because the style was developed for large manor houses, it was most frequently applied to domestic architecture. The style also often mingled with the so-called Collegiate Gothic in a secular version of Gothic architecture characteristic of the older colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, and so became popular for school and university buildings in the early 20th century. MacClure and Spahr employed the style in this vein in their Langley High School. Colfax School in Squirrel Hill, designed by Edward Stotz and built in 1911, is another educational example of Jacobean Revival in Pittsburgh. At the Sarah Heinz House, built in 1915, architect R.M. Trimble used the style to impart a domestic character to a large institutional building.

The Jones & Laughlin Building is a distinctive example of the Jacobean Revival in commercial architecture. Its pre-industrial references were a curious choice for the Jones & Laughlin Company, whose steel provided the material for the framing of high-rise buildings, bridges, and other modern structures, including this one. But it probably set the company's headquarters apart from others, which tended to invoke Classical Revival during the first decades of the 20th century.

4. Its identification as the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose individual work is significant in the history or development of the City of Pittsburgh, the State of Pennsylvania, the Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States: *The Jones & Laughlin Building meets this criterion for designation.*

The Jones & Laughlin Building is a significant work of MacClure and Spahr, a Pittsburgh architecture firm formed in 1901 by Colbert A. MacClure (1879-1912) and Albert H. Spahr (1875-1966). Both founders came to Pittsburgh from Boston, where they had received architecture degrees from M.I.T., the oldest program in the USA. They met while working for the renowned Boston firm of Peabody and Stearns. That firm sent MacClure to Pittsburgh to supervise the construction of buildings it designed here, including the Joseph Horne Department Store and the homes of several affluent merchants and industrialists. MacClure soon secured enough independent commissions in Pittsburgh to start his own practice, and he summoned Spahr from Boston to be his partner.[4]

The firm was active from 1901-1922. Its first commission was the 15-story Keystone National Bank on Fourth Avenue between Wood and Smithfield streets (now part of the National Register-listed Fourth Avenue Historic District).[5] This and another bank, the Diamond Bank Building (1903) at Fifth and Liberty avenues, were early Classical Revival skyscrapers in downtown Pittsburgh.

Over the subsequent decade, MacClure and Spahr were busy. In 1904, the firm designed the lower (West Carson Street) station of the Monongahela Incline and the Spahr House, an Arts and Crafts Style residence for one of its principals, at 52 Cochran Street in Sewickley. In 1906, they designed the Grand Opera House (now Warner Center) and Union National Bank (now Carlyle Apartments) downtown. The following year, as the Jones & Laughlin Building was under construction, MacClure and Spahr were responsible for several houses, including one for John Walker in Sewickley, one in Schenley Farms, and the home of George M. Laughlin, Sr., on Woodland Road in 1907 (enlarged in 1917 after its purchase by Andrew W. Mellon). They designed the Meyer, Jonasson & Co. store at 606 Liberty Avenue in 1910 and the Julia and James Rea House on Woodland Road in 1912.

MacClure died in 1912, but Spahr continued to operate the firm under the MacClure and Spahr name for another decade, during which time he designed

[4] Robert Maurice Trimble, "Rambling Reminiscences." *The Charette* Vol. 16, no. 2, Feb. 1936, 3-4.
[5] "Contract Awarded. Thompson-Starrett Company, of New York, to Construct Keystone Bank." (Pittsburgh Daily Post, July 11, 1901).

the addition to 200 Ross Street for J&L. Another commission from this period of particular interest is the Oliver Bath House (1915) on Pittsburgh's South Side. The Jacobean Revival design of this municipal commission echoes that of the Jones & Laughlin Building on a smaller scale.

The firm's last commissions, in 1922, were Langley High School in the Sheraden neighborhood of Pittsburgh (NRHP 1986, City Historic Landmark 1999) and the gatehouse buildings for Homewood Cemetery at Dallas and Ayelesboro avenues in Point Breeze.

In *Pittsburgh's Landmark Architecture*, Walter Kidney described MacClure and Spahr's firm as "a favorite, in Sewickley and in Pittsburgh, for houses and business buildings." He assessed the firm's work as capable and conservative: "rarely innovative, rarely imitative, rarely tasteless."[6] In the oeuvre of MacClure and Spahr, the Jones & Laughlin Building stands out as a major office building in the Jacobean Revival style, which this firm and its peers more frequently applied to residences and other buildings of a more domestic scale, such as the Oliver Bath House, or to schools. MacClure and Spahr's comparable major commercial work tended strongly to the Classical Revival.

5. Its exemplification of important planning and urban design techniques distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design or detail: *The Jones & Laughlin Building does not meet this criterion for designation.*

6. Its location as a site of an important archaeological resource: *The Jones & Laughlin Building does not meet this criterion for designation.*

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: *The Jones & Laughlin Building does not meet this criterion for designation.*

8. Its exemplification of a pattern of neighborhood development or settlement significant to the cultural history or traditions of the City, whose components may lack individual distinction: *The Jones & Laughlin Building does not meet this criterion for designation.*

9. Its representation of a cultural, historic, architectural, archaeological, or related theme expressed through distinctive areas, properties, sites, structures, or objects that may or may not be contiguous: *The Jones & Laughlin Building does not meet this criterion for designation.*

[6] Walter Kidney, *Pittsburgh's Landmark Architecture* (Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation, 1997), 537.

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. *The Jones & Laughlin Building meets this criterion for designation.*

The Jones & Laughlin Building has been an established and familiar visual feature of downtown Pittsburgh for over 100 years. Its height has been exceeded by many subsequent buildings, but its location almost at the southern edge of downtown and adjacent to the Boulevard of the Allies ramp makes it highly visible from many vantage points. In addition, since its transition to city offices in the 1950s, a great many Pittsburghers have interacted with the building. This, and its occupation of a full city block, make it more of a reference point than a background building in the urban geography of downtown.

Integrity

In addition to significance, the ordinance specifies that "Any area, property, site, structure or object that meets any one or more of the criteria listed above shall also have sufficient integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship to make it worthy of preservation or restoration."

The Jones & Laughlin Building has excellent exterior integrity. The only major alteration has been the replacement of original windows throughout the building. The historic oak revolving doors have also been replaced, but with near-identical style and materials.

Former Jones & Laughlin Building

Historic Nomination Form

Bibliography

Bibliography

"Contract Awarded. Thompson-Starrett Company, of New York, to Construct Keystone Bank." *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, July 11, 1901

Historic Pittsburgh. https://historicpittsburgh.org

Jones & Laughlin Building Structural Steel Drawings, 1907-1916. Carnegie Mellon Architecture Archives

"The Keystone Works of the Jones & Laughlin Steel Company." *Iron Age* Vol. 81: Chilton Company, June 4, 1908

Kidney, Walter. *Pittsburgh's Landmark Architecture*. Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation, 1997

Pleskovic, Mackenzie, and Alexis Narotsky. Jones & Laughlin Building Historic Resource Survey Form. PA SHPO: 2018

Real Estate Plat Book of City of Pittsburgh. Philadelphia: G. M. Hopkins and Co. Various years

Trimble, Robert Maurice. "Rambling Reminiscences." *The Charette* Vol. 16, no. 2, Feb. 1936

Wollman, David H., and John R. Inman. *Portraits in Steel: An Illustrated History of Jones & Laughlin Steel Corporation*. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1999

Former Jones & Laughlin Building

Historic Nomination Form

Photo Log

Site Plan

Solid red line indicates the former Jones & Laughlin Headquarters Building (contributing resource). The dotted red line indicates a later parking structure (non-contributing resource) within the parcel boundary.

Photo Key

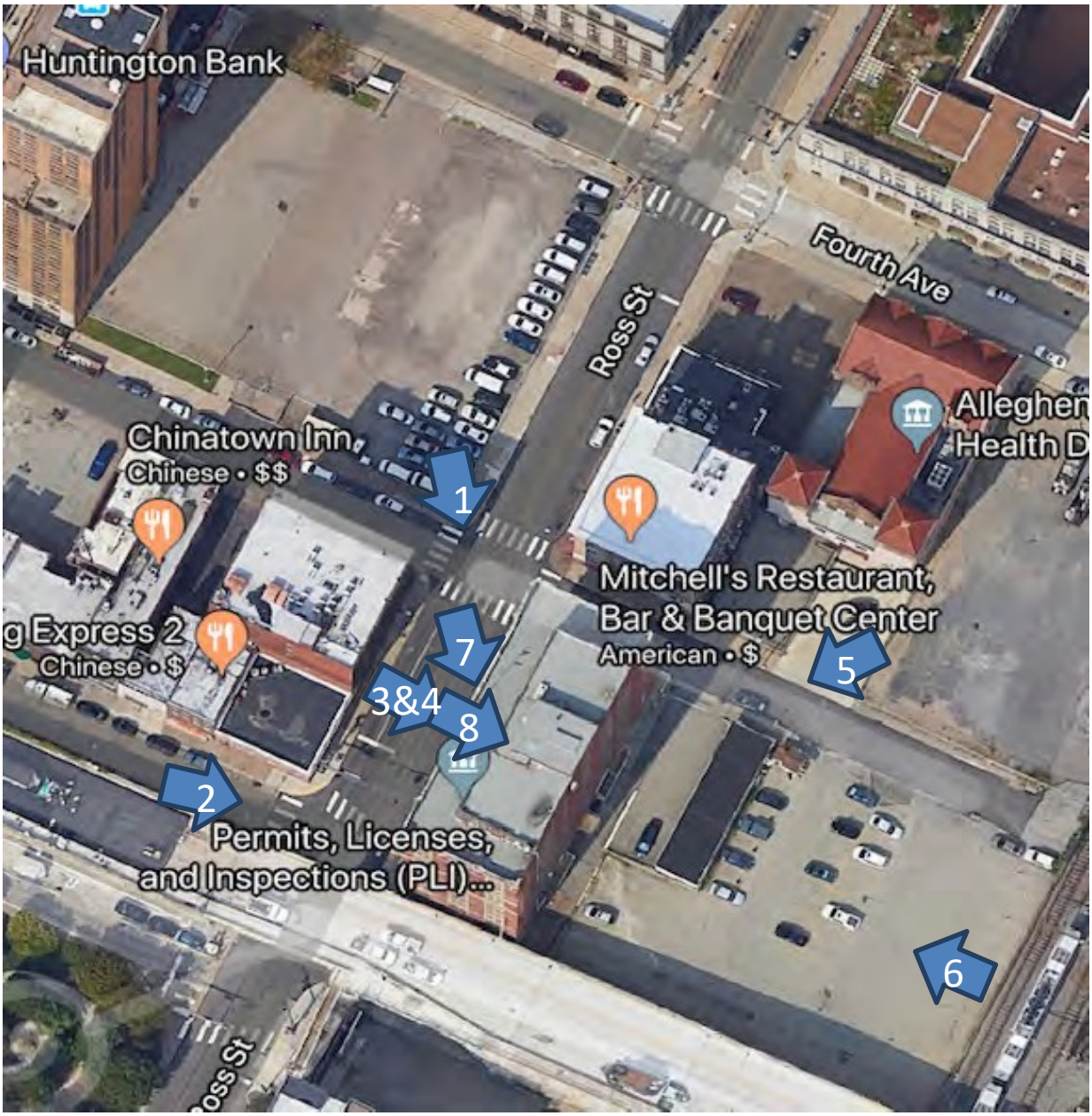
Huntington Bank
Fourth Ave
Ross St
Chinatown Inn
Chinese • $$
Mitchell's Restaurant,
Bar & Banquet Center
American • $
g Express 2
Chinese • $
Permits, Licenses,
and Inspections (PLI)...
1
2
3&4
5
6
7
8

Photo 1. Former Jones & Laughlin Building (now John P. Robin Civic Building), 200 Ross Street, view from Third Ave.

Photo 2. Former Jones & Laughlin Building (now John P. Robin Civic Building), 200 Ross Street, view from Second Ave.

Photo 3. Former Jones & Laughlin Building (now John P. Robin Civic Building), 200 Ross Street, 4th-12th stories

Photo 4. Former Jones & Laughlin Building (now John P. Robin Civic Building), 200 Ross Street, 1st-4th stories

Photo 5. Former Jones & Laughlin Building (now John P. Robin Civic Building), 200 Ross Street, rear and north (Third Ave.) elevations

Photo 6. Former Jones & Laughlin Building (now John P. Robin Civic Building), 200 Ross Street, rear elevation from parking lot. The 13th floor is visible only from the rear.

Photo 7. Former Jones & Laughlin Building (now John P. Robin Civic Building), 200 Ross Street, main entrance

Photo 8. Former Jones & Laughlin Building (now John P. Robin Civic Building), 200 Ross Street, main entrance.

Former Jones & Laughlin Building

Historic Nomination Form

Supporting Materials

Figure 1. Ca. 1908 photograph of previous Jones & Laughlin headquarters/warehouse building, labeled American Iron & Steel Works, with 200 Ross St. in background (Source: Wollman and Inman, *Portraits in Steel*)

Figure 2. Undated photograph of Jones & Laughlin Building, 200 Ross Street, after 1917 addition (Source: Historic Pittsburgh)

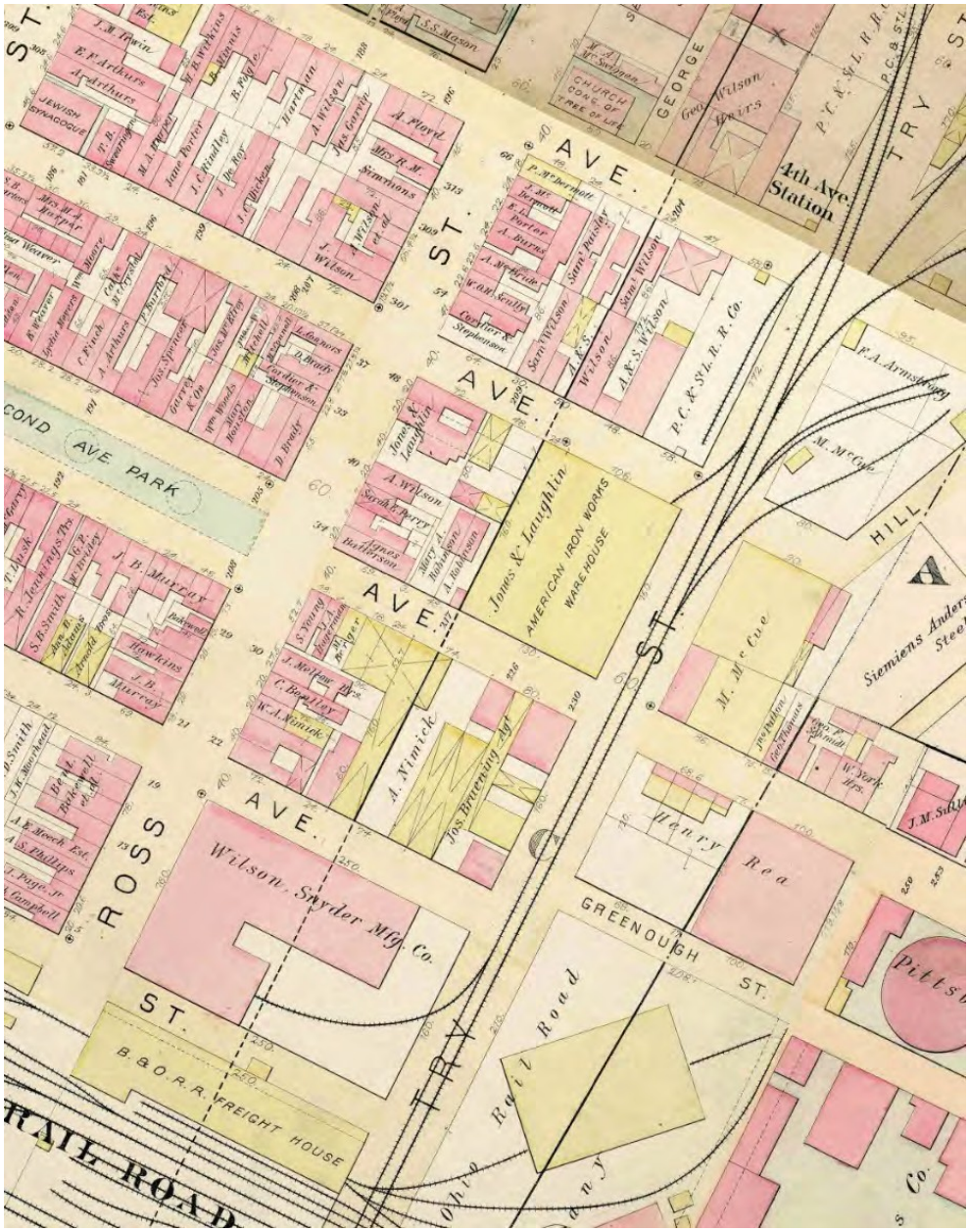

Figure 3. Excerpt, Hopkins Real Estate Plat Map of the City of Pittsburgh, 1890. Site of Jones & Laughlin Building at center. Jones & Laughlin owned 3/4 of the block bounded by Ross Street, Second Avenue, Third Avenue, and Try Street in this year and had erected an office building and warehouse on the rear half with ready access to the railroad.

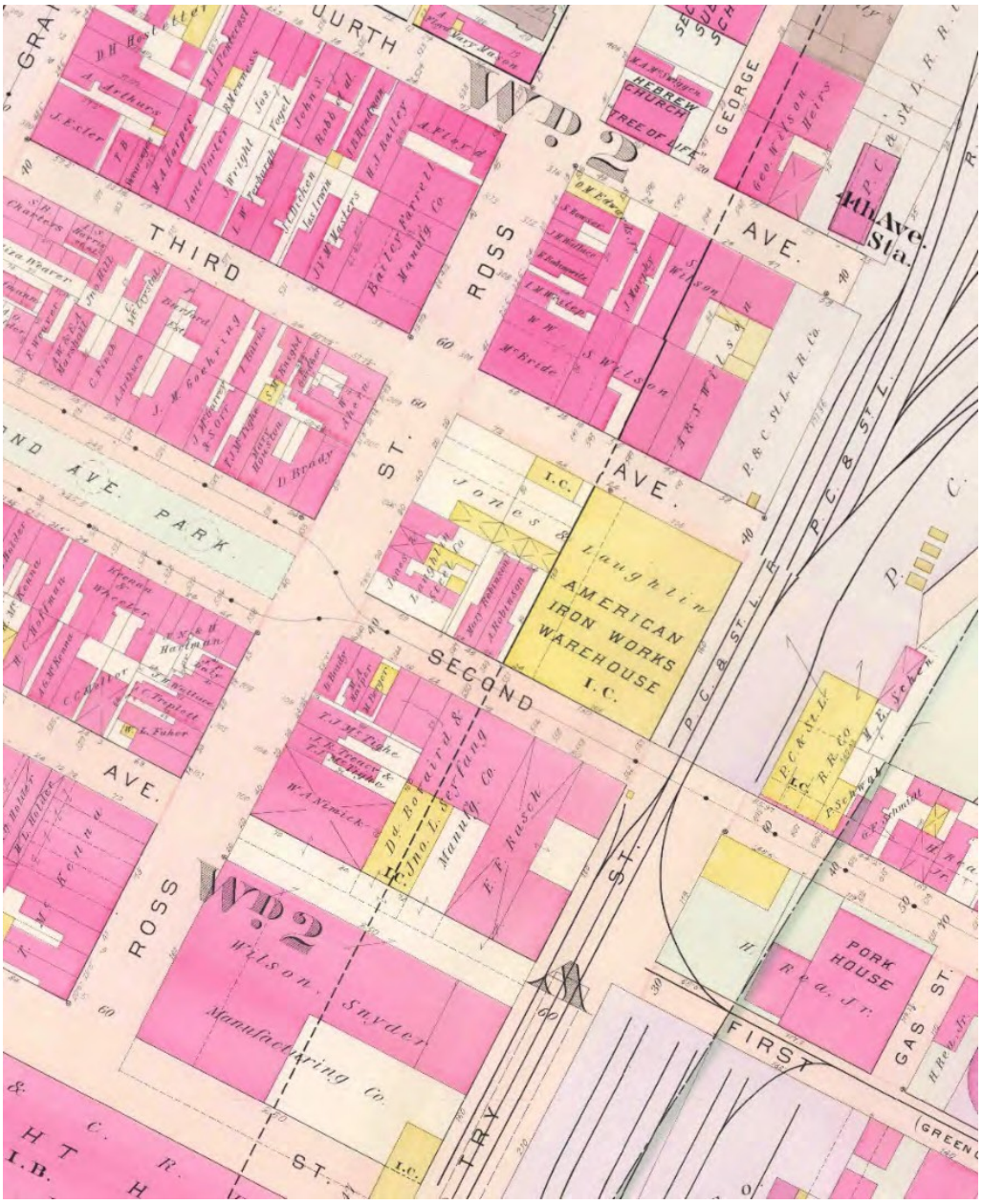

Figure 4. Excerpt, Hopkins Real Estate Plat Map of the City of Pittsburgh, 1903. Site of Jones & Laughlin Building at center. A few years before their office building was built, Jones & Laughlin owned all of the block except for the double houses of Mary and A. Robinson, which faced Second Ave.

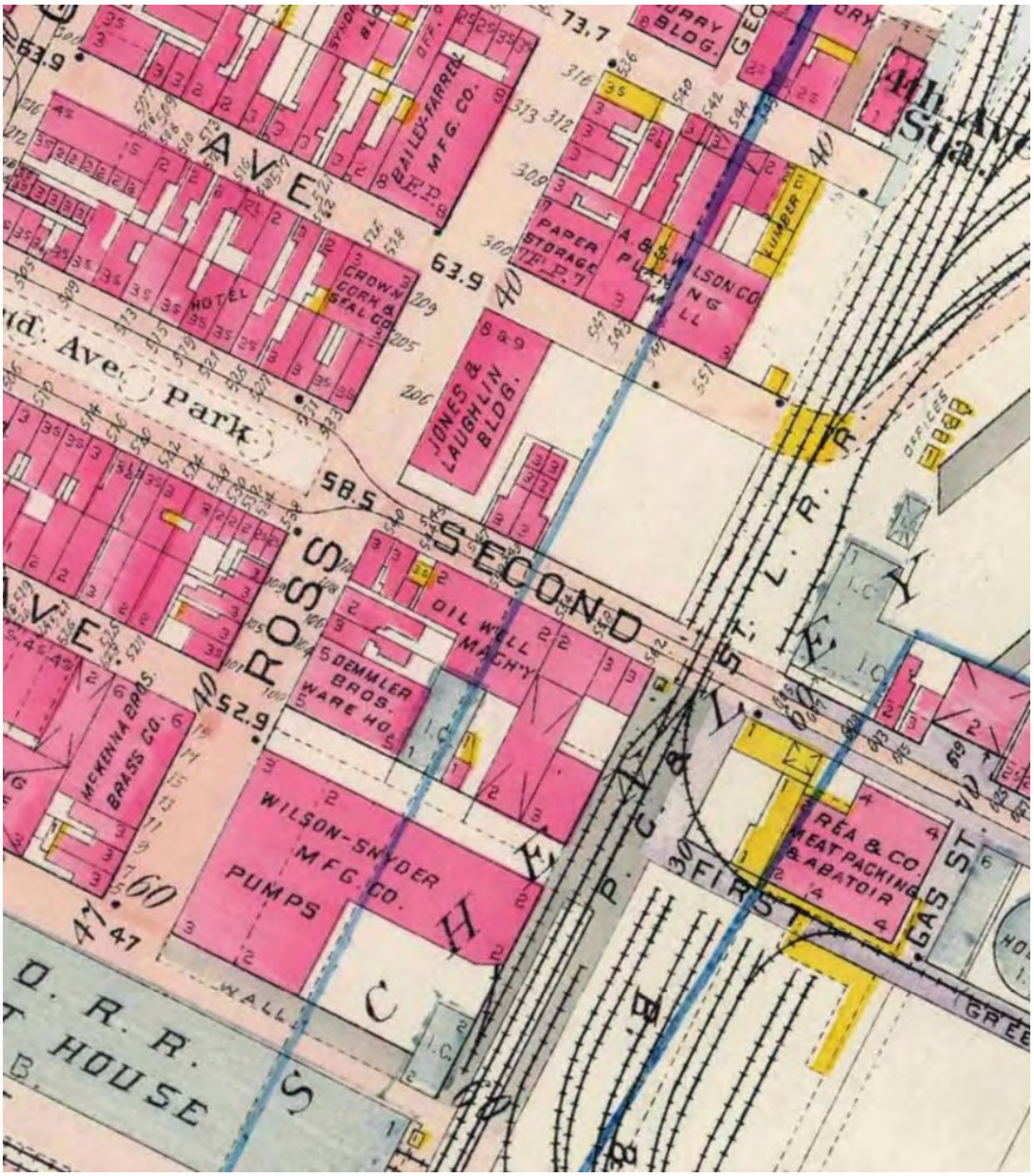

Figure 5. Excerpt, Hopkins Real Estate Plat Map of the City of Pittsburgh, 1910. Jones & Laughlin Building at center. The 8-9 story office building has been built, the old office building/warehouse facing try Street has been demolished, and the Robinson houses still stand at the center of the block.

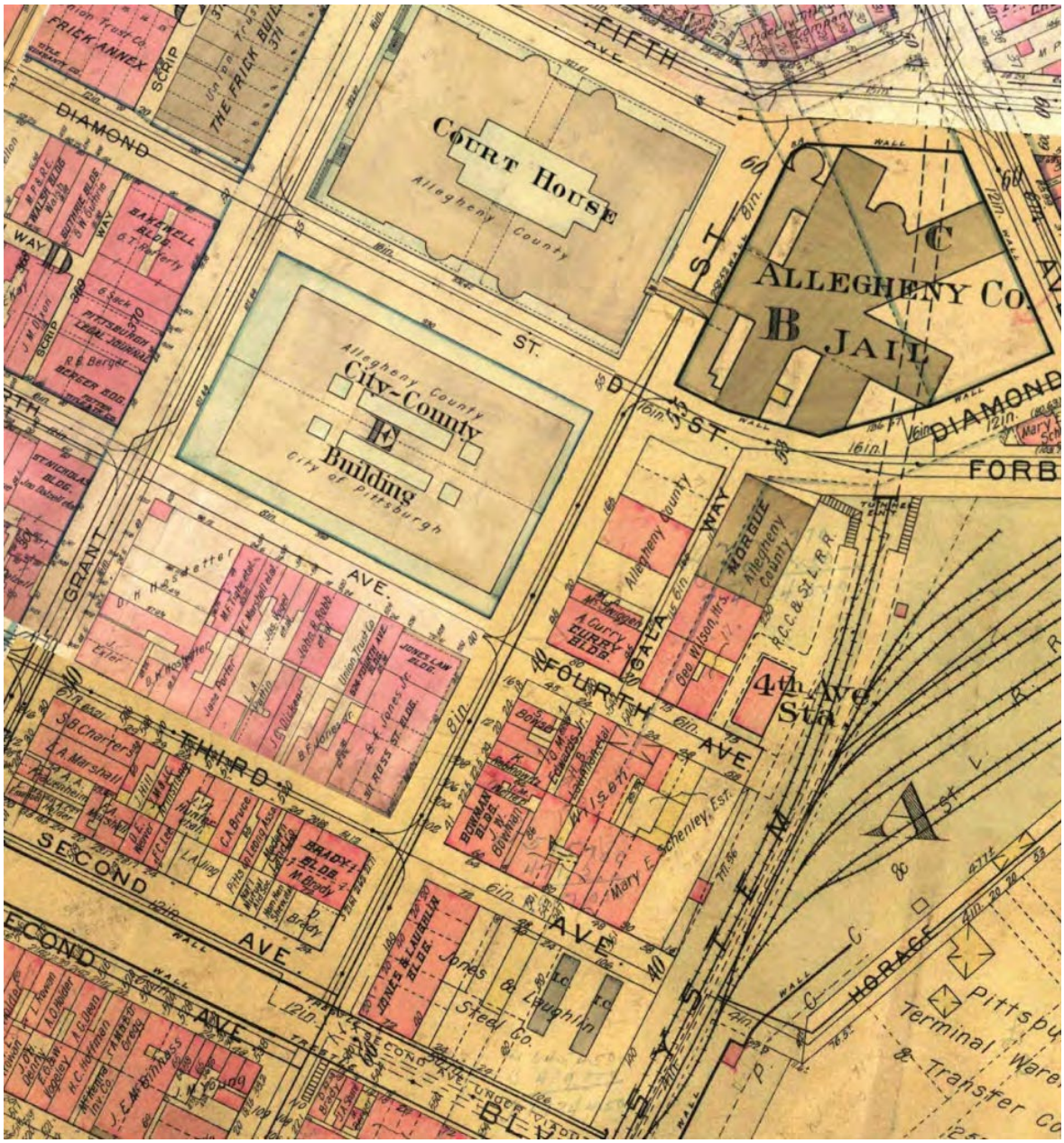

Figure 6. Excerpt, Hopkins Real Estate Plat Map of the City of Pittsburgh, 1923. Jones & Laughlin Building at bottom center. Jones & Laughlin now owned the entire block bounded by Ross Street, Second Avenue, Third Avenue, and Try Street, and had erected one frame and two iron-clad structures on the site of the current parking lot behind its office building. City and county government buildings are clustered nearby, presaging the J&L Building's future as a home for municipal agencies.

Former Jones & Laughlin Building

Historic Nomination Form

Notification of Property Owner