

624 East Ohio Street – Historic Designation Removal

November 17, 2026

ura

Urban
Redevelopment
Authority
of Pittsburgh

Historic Preservation Ordinance

Planning Commission's role in the historic designation process

Per §1101.03(g), The Planning Commission shall consider the effects of designation [or revocation] on adjoining properties and surrounding neighborhoods within the framework of established planning, development and land use objectives for the City of Pittsburgh.

Intro

PROPERTY AT A GLANCE

- Historic Name: Hefty House (Built 1825-1840)
- Location: 624 E. Ohio Street
- Structure: 2.5-Story Wood Frame / Brick Façade
- Current Status: Vacant, Deteriorated, Unsafe
- Ownership: Publicly Owned (URA)

THE CORE PROBLEM

Prolonged vacancy and severe water infiltration have compromised the structural system, stripping the building of its original historic material integrity.

Independent review shows the property no longer meets the criteria of the Historic Preservation Ordinance. The building, in its current condition, is preventing future development and contributing to the blight along a neighborhood's main street.



Site Map and Ownership History



HOW WE GOT HERE

- URA has owned the property since 2005
- City of Pittsburgh owned the property between 1998-2005
- The URA managed two unsuccessful public RFP processes in 2016 and 2021
  - Neither RFP was able to identify a viable development project
- In 2025, the URA conducted a structural analysis of the 624 & 628 East Ohio Street
- The URA applied for a Main Street Matters grant through DCED
  - URA was not awarded grant
- URA currently has a hold from market with a development team

THE REASONING FOR REMOVAL

1. Preservation is no longer feasible

An 80%+ loss of primary structural framing means reconstruction would be prohibitively expensive for any future redevelopment

2. Public Life-Safety Hazard

The property stands condemned and cited under multiple building maintenance violations. The building is in danger of collapsing.

3. Preventing Future Development

Maintaining designation locks a blighted asset in place.

4. Façade Lacks Historic Character

After years of vacancy and renovations, the building has no remaining features that are original to its mid-nineteenth century construction.

Original Designation: Why the Threshold is No Longer Met

CRITERION 3

Architectural Significance - Greek Revival Style

Originally nominated as a modest small-scale example. Extensive physical alterations over time (masonry façade additions, window changes) paired with current structural collapse leave zero original style elements left to communicate significance.

CRITERION 8

Pattern of Neighborhood Development

Originally cited as representing early neighborhood patterns. While geographic location remains, the actual building fabric is so degraded and non-functional that it cannot convey historic commercial patterns.

CRITERION 10

Physical Appearance

Originally deemed a familiar, positive feature of East Ohio Street. Today, the board-and-plywood infill and visible exterior decay detracts from the surrounding building environment and adversely affects the appearance and perception of streetscape.



DPLI Citations

PLI CITATIONS

2015 IPMC Section 108.5 — Prohibited Occupancy

Condemned and placarded by code officials. Deemed an active hazard to public health and safety.

2015 IPMC Section 108.1.3 — Unfit for Human Occupancy

Advanced state of disrepair, complete lack of utilities, and broken/missing upper-level windows.

Mandated Action Issued by City

Official enforcement mandates to either immediately repair or completely demolish the structure.

Loss of Integrity

The Historic Preservation Ordinance requires that buildings retain physical integrity of design, materials, and workmanship.

Because stabilization requires replacing over 80% of the building fabric, rehabilitation would result in a structural replica made of completely new materials, rather than the preservation of authentic history.



Brace Engineering: Structural Review Findings

STRUCTURAL FAILURES

- 80% of second-floor structure requires replacement.
- 12-foot area collapse in rear corner.
- 25% of first-floor framing and gable roof completely failed.

WATER & MOISTURE DAMAGE

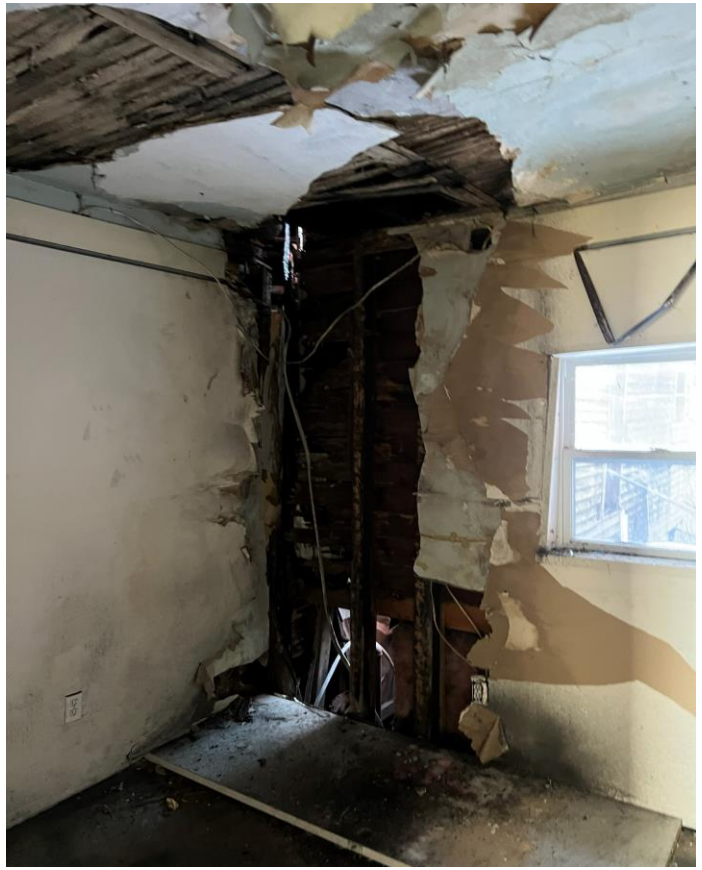
- Severe sagging of interior tin ceilings due to prolonged retention.
- Widespread mold growth and active rot in primary framing.
- Roof, gutter, and downspout failures causing progressive collapse.

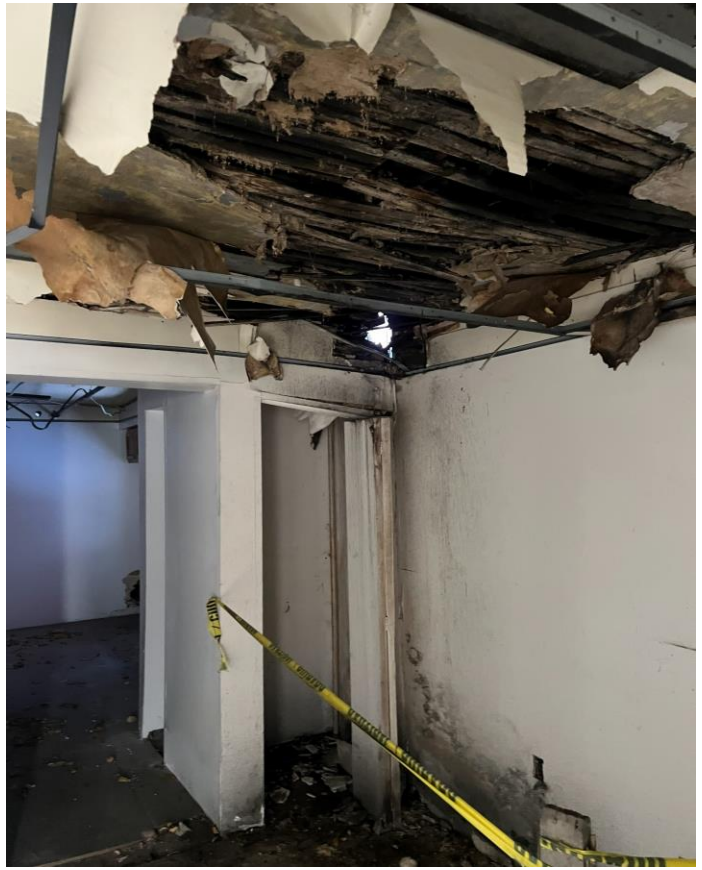
LOGISTICAL & COST BARRIERS

- Zero rear or basement access; sandwiched by adjacent buildings.
- All work must occur from street face, driving up staging costs.
- Restoration cost officially exceeds the value of a total rebuild.



Existing Conditions







Existing Conditions



1 MP-02 Exterior Existing Conditions
Scale: Actual Size



2 MP-02 Interior Existing Conditions
Scale: Actual Size

Community Support

East Allegheny Community Council

The URA project team presented the request to the community at EACC's Development Activities Meeting on September 8, 2026.

Following the presentation and community discussion, those in attendance recommended that EACC support the request to remove the historic nomination.



Deutschtown
A NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

East Allegheny Community Council

October 6, 2026

Historic Review Commission
City of Pittsburgh, Department of City Planning
200 Ross Street, 4th Floor
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Re: Letter of Support for 624 East Ohio Street - DCP-HN-2026-00212

Dear Commissioners:

On behalf of the East Allegheny Community Council (EACC), this letter is to express our support for the request to remove the historic nomination associated with 624 East Ohio Street, commonly known as the Hefty House.

The Urban Redevelopment Authority presented the request to the community at EACC's Development Activities Meeting on September 8, 2026. Following the presentation and community discussion, those in attendance recommended that EACC support the request to remove the historic nomination.

Accordingly, EACC supports the request before the Historic Review Commission.

Thank you for your continued partnership with our neighborhood and your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Sarah Bailey
President, East Allegheny Community Council
info@deutschtown.org

415 East Ohio Street | Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15212 | www.deutschtown.org | 412.321.1204

The Alternative

A Transformative Vision for the 600 Block

Supported by the Buhl Foundation, the One Northside (ONS) initiative is driving the creation of a 'Community Engagement Center.' This project will unify vital public and private organizations into a single, highly integrated resource hub for local families, businesses, and prospective residents.

624 East Ohio sits directly in the center of this planned assemblage. Its physical footprint, lack of parking, and zero rear access make it a permanent barrier to development if left standing.



Adjoining property & neighborhood protection

- Development of 600 block elements a public life-safety hazard
- Resolves building maintenance and code violation Removes a blighted property from the main street corridor

Blight remediation – an example

Revitalization efforts along Larimer Avenue

Through the demolition of several deteriorated buildings and subsequent Redevelopment, the URA helped transform a once-blighted area into a vibrant, welcoming neighborhood with new:

- Housing
- Improved Streetscapes
- And, new opportunities for the community

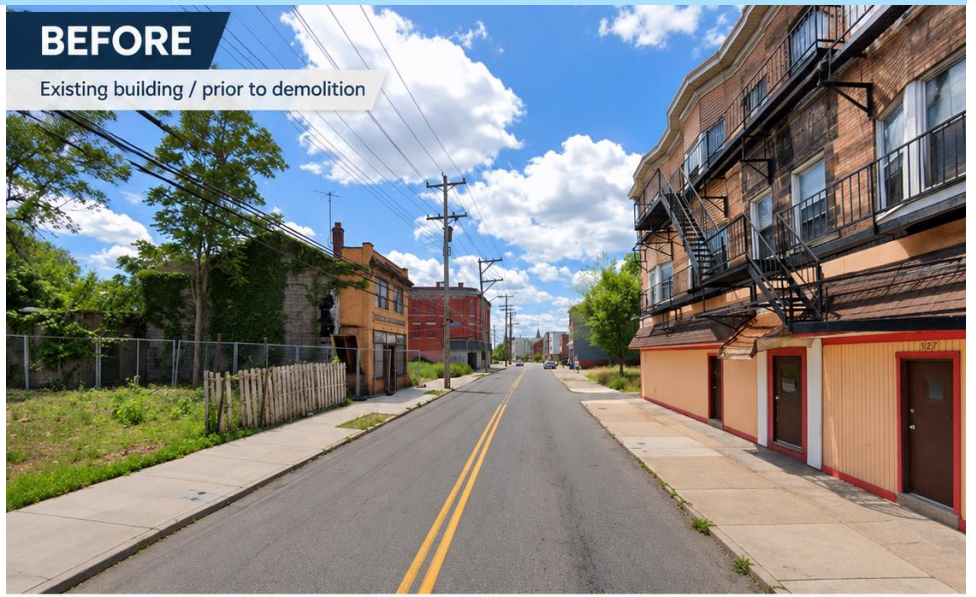




Photo Credit: Google maps (Street View)

Questions and Discussion



Contact

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