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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TWO PITTSBURGH HISTORIC SITES LISTED ON 2020 PENNSYLVANIA AT RISK

Community rallies behind preservation of Pittsburgh historic places

Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA – The **Croatian Fraternal Union** (3441 Forbes Avenue) and **Firstside Historic District** (100-102 Market 104 and 106-108 Market Street, 209 First Avenue) have been named to Preservation Pennsylvania's annual list of endangered historic properties.

Local preservationists urge the University of Pittsburgh to incorporate the former Croatian Fraternal Union building into its plans for a new innovation center, rather than demolishing the ornate Flemish Gothic-style building.

The Firstside National Register Historic District represents Pittsburgh's wharf trade history. It's the target of development speculation that would demolish key buildings for high-rise development and diminish the district as a whole.

"Historic preservation is many things, including a tool for managing change and promoting economic revitalization," said Julia Chain, Associate Director of Preservation Pennsylvania, a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection of historically and architecturally significant resources. "Demolition of these buildings should not be the first alternative. Preservation Pennsylvania will work with local organizations to advocate for these distinctive properties."

The Oakland neighborhood where the **Croatian Fraternal Union building** is located is undergoing tremendous change. The ornate facade, decorated with figures representing the working man of the era, was once the national headquarters of an organization that supported and serviced Croatian immigrants. It was designed in 1927 by architect Pierre A. Liesch. Local advocacy organization Preservation Pittsburgh added the building to its Preservation Opportunities list and has encouraged the university to incorporate the building into its plans instead of demolishing it.

Called "Firstside" for the proximity to First Avenue, the commercial, warehouse and office buildings located in the **Firstside National Register Historic District** (Fort Pitt Boulevard, Boulevard of the Allies, and First Street bounded by Grant Street and Stanwix Street) help tell the story of the once-bustling trade at the Monongahela Wharf (no longer extant) during the mid-19th to early-20th centuries, until truck and rail superseded river transport as the primary means of shipping goods. In 1945, legislation paved the way for urban renewal projects that resulted in construction of a highway that cut off river access, office buildings and parking lots. This small pocket of human-scaled buildings survived. However, the potential demolition of additional buildings and high-rise development would gut the district, threaten its listed status and the benefits that go with it, such as historic preservation tax credits.

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2020 Pennsylvania At Risk

Preservation Pennsylvania has listed the following places to the 2020 Pennsylvania At Risk and will offer free preservation assistance throughout the year.

ALLEGHENY COUNTY

Croatian Fraternal Union, 3441 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh

Local preservationists urge the University of Pittsburgh to incorporate the former Croatia Fraternal Union building into its plans for a new innovation center, rather than demolishing the ornate Flemish Gothic-style building.

Firstside Historic District, 100-102 Market 104 and 106-108 Market Street, 209 First Avenue, Pittsburgh

A National Register Historic District that represents Pittsburgh's wharf trade history with architecturally significant buildings is threatened with the potential demolition of a block of buildings.

LEHIGH COUNTY

Lock Ridge Furnace, 525 Franklin Street, Albutis

A local park and its buildings tell the story of the region's industrial history and a town's founding, yet repairs to secure and reopen the buildings will be a budget strain.

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

Meadows Road Bridge, Meadows Road at Saucon Creek , Lower Saucon Township

A beloved and historic stone bridge provides an important connection to the past — and to two sides of a township. Locals want to see it repaired instead of replaced.

PHILADELPHIA COUNTY

John Coltrane House, 1511 N. 33rd Street, Philadelphia

National Historic Landmark designation can't save this jazz great's home from slow decline, but if the owners are willing to work with a caring community, it may be possible.

YORK COUNTY

Strickler Farmhouse, 1205 Williams Road, Springettsbury Township

National Register-listed farmhouse located on the county prison property needs to be moved or it may be demolished.

About Pennsylvania At Risk

Since 1992, Preservation Pennsylvania has published the *Pennsylvania At Risk* list to draw statewide attention to the plight of Pennsylvania's historic resources; promote and support local action to protect historic properties; and encourage funding and legislation that supports preservation activities.

Helping people to protect and preserve Pennsylvania's endangered historic properties is a top priority for Preservation Pennsylvania. The organization is committed to engaging with people interested in working to preserve and rehabilitate these significant historic places.

This year's list was chosen from nominations submitted by groups and individuals. Submissions are evaluated by several criteria, including historic significance, the extent of the threat and the community's commitment to preserving the resource.

Founded in 1982, Preservation Pennsylvania is the commonwealth's only statewide, private, nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection of historically and architecturally significant resources. For more information, visit the website at www.preservationpa.org or contact Preservation Pennsylvania at 717-234-2310.