

PRESS RELEASE
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Allegheny Cemetery to repair and partially remove a portion of the Penn Avenue Tower

The Allegheny Cemetery Historical Association (A.C.H.A) announces that the Penn Avenue Tower will undergo restoration and partial removal.

Allegheny Cemetery President and Chief Executive Officer, David Michener, announced today that the Penn Avenue Tower, located at the entrance to Allegheny Cemetery on Penn Avenue, will undergo a restoration project over the next year which will involve the removal of the upper roof, turrets and arched columns to a secondary roof level already in place below. The lower roof will also undergo restoration which will better protect the remaining structure from erosion and weathering in the years ahead. The granite arches, turrets and columns slated for removal will be photographed, catalogued and stored in the event that the Allegheny Cemetery Historical Association decides to return the tower to its original form.

The Penn Avenue Tower was designed by Philadelphia architects Dull & Macomb and was constructed in 1887- 1889. Research has shown that numerous restoration efforts and stone pointing work were completed at different time intervals throughout the 1900's. The most recent pointing and mortar repair was completed in the late 1980's when it was noted that significant masonry repair on the interior of the structure would be needed in the future. Due to the unique method of the tower's construction, the aging of original building materials, and the number of subsequent repair methods over the past century, it was determined that extensive reconstruction work is needed at the top of the structure, including replacement of the roof structure, and rebuilding of the turrets and arches at the top of the tower. This extensive reconstruction work will come at a significant and yet undeterminable cost. It was therefore determined by the ACHA, in consultation with construction and engineering experts, to remove the top quarter of the tower including the open arches, turrets and upper roof, down to the existing roof currently in place below and subsequently rebuilding the turrets with the intent to restore and preserve as much of the remaining original structure as possible. The sidewalk adjacent to the structure along Penn Avenue will be closed off to pedestrians due to the placement of the scaffolding for the restoration of the tower.

The Allegheny Cemetery Historical Association was established in 1980 to raise and manage funds for preservation, restoration and conservation of the historic Cemetery. Over the last five years more than \$2 million dollars has been raised through the generosity of individuals, the board of trustees and numerous local foundations. This financial support has been applied to the restoration of the historic administration building, the gate house on Butler Street, the greenhouse, and the Penn Avenue entrance complex. The ACHA concluded that due to the numerous historic buildings on the property, the focus of the association's efforts and financial resources should be prioritized on the historic structures utilized by the public. Although the tower is majestic in appearance it served no purpose other than its imagery at the Penn Avenue gateway. The tower has rarely been utilized or accessible to the public since its original construction.

Michener said, "While we regret to have to alter the appearance of the top of the tower the focus of the Association's efforts and financial resources are being applied to the restoration and preservation of the many historic structures, sculptures and landscape that encompass our 300 acres that are primarily used by the public, the cemetery's administration and the families we serve."