

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



6608

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Beaver Building

other names/site number Cocoa Exchange; Wall St. Court

2. Location

street & number 82-92 Beaver Street [] not for publication

city or town New York [] vicinity

state New York code NY county New York code 061 zip code 10005

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements as set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide [X] locally. ([] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official/Title

5/8/05
Date

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- [] entered in the National Register
[] see continuation sheet
[] determined eligible for the National Register
[] see continuation sheet
[] determined not eligible for the National Register

[] removed from the National Register

[] other (explain) _____

Signature of the Keeper

date of action

Beaver Building

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	TOTAL

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade/business

Commerce/Trade/financial institution

Commerce/Trade/restaurant

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade/business

Commerce/Trade/restaurant

Commerce/Trade/specialty store

Work in progress

Domestic/multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals

Italian Renaissance

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Granite

walls Limestone

Brick

roof Gravel

other Terra cotta

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

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7. Narrative Description

The Beaver Building (later known as the New York Cocoa Exchange Building), designed in the Neo-Renaissance style by the firm of Clinton & Russell, was built in 1903-04 (**Photograph 1**). The fifteen-story (plus basement) steel-framed structure occupies a narrow quadrilateral lot at the juncture of Beaver and Pearl Streets near Wall Street, created by the colonial street plan, in the heart of the lower Manhattan business district. Original plans called for offices on the upper stories with a bank in the double-height first story and a restaurant in the basement. While the building was originally taller than many of its neighbors, it is currently surrounded by late 19th-/early 20th-century commercial and office buildings in similar scale as well as much taller modern office towers. The building is shaped like a flatiron in plan; the nearly identical Beaver and Pearl Street facades are joined at the narrow end of the lot by a rounded corner. The building's design has the tripartite arrangement of base-shaft-capital common to many of New York's early skyscrapers, and features a granite, limestone, and brick exterior with lavish polychrome terra cotta ornament. Although the offices and retail space have been altered many times over the years, the exterior is largely intact and retains a high degree of architectural integrity.

Exterior

The first three stories and a partial basement story, which have been painted gray, are faced in Indiana limestone ashlar with a three-course base of large granite ashlar (**Photograph 2**). Historic photos show windows, areaways, and a continuous iron railing at the basement level. In the 1980s, basement-level windows were covered over with ornamental stucco panels and the areaways filled in. A probe conducted in June 2004 revealed a kalamein pivot window behind one of the ornamental panels. The railing is not extant. On the Pearl Street side, there are two basement openings covered in ventilation louvers. One of these openings features ornamental iron colonnettes at the center. The 2004 probe revealed that these spaces had probably been used for ventilation from the time of the building's construction.

The base's primary cornice is ornamented by cartouches above beaver heads amidst foliation. The third story features incised ornamental panels, now painted green. A steel fire escape on the Pearl Street side, added to the building in 1916, was altered in 1988 with rounded balcony ends and new railings. In the 1980s, large metal sconces were added to the first story on the Pearl and Beaver Street facades.

The basement story features two entrances with modern double wood doors, each down a short flight of stone steps with iron railings, located on the Beaver and Pearl Street facades directly on either side of the building's rounded corner. These entrances lead to a restaurant located in the basement. While photos of the building when it was new show the Beaver Street basement entrance, Department of Building records indicate that the Pearl Street basement entrance was cut into an existing window opening in 1972 and a new exterior stair added at that time. In the mid-1980s, new railings were added to the basement entrances.

The centerpiece of the base is a double-height entrance in the rounded corner, reached by a high stoop with flaring stone cheek walls and framed by pilasters supporting an entablature with a sign band reading "New York Cocoa Exchange, Inc." The cheek walls are painted. In the 1980s, new doors, transom, and stoop railing were added to this entrance, which leads to the first story and mezzanine.

The Beaver Street entrance, which was historically the main entrance to the building because the Pearl Street entrance was originally obscured by an elevated rail line, is the more prominent of the two, with a bossed

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enframement and a segmental pediment with two carved beavers flanking a cartouche (**Photograph 3**). An historic image shows metal-and-glass doors and transom flanked by Ionic columns and sidelights. The original spandrel panel, mezzanine railing, and window frame visible in this image are intact, but a 1980s renovation added new louvers and three metal freight doors. The Pearl Street entrance features a large rounded metal door surround, metal canopy, signage, and revolving doors, all dating from a 1980s renovation, but retains the form of its historic entry stair, now covered with a stone veneer.

The nine-story midsection of the building is clad in buff-colored brick laid in bands of plain and iron-spot face brick (**Photograph 4**). Each of the window openings in the midsection is trimmed in green-glazed terra cotta molded surrounds and reveals.

The building's capital, or top three stories, are richly ornamented with glazed terra cotta in shades of green, cream, and russet (**Photographs 5 and 6**). The russet terra cotta was originally sandblasted to mute the color.¹ The paired windows have double-story neoclassical bossed window surrounds and recessed spandrel panels with rosettes; vertical panels with rondels, squares, and rams' heads; and a terra cotta cornice featuring a continuous swag-and-rondel band. The base of the fourteenth floor is bound by a frieze of a Greek fret motif in green and cream terra cotta. Copper cresting ornamented with anthemias, described in *Architects' and Builders' Magazine*² and visible in early photos, was removed sometime after 1940 (the cresting is visible in a 1940 New York City tax photo).

The overall affect of the fenestration pattern emphasizes the vertical thrust created by the base-shaft-capital design approach. The Beaver and Pearl Street facades have six sets of paired windows on each floor, plus a central pair of windows at the rounded corner flanked by single windows on either side that mark the transition from the Beaver and Pearl Street facades. The first-story windows are single panes of double height, plus transoms, to accommodate a mezzanine above the first floor, except at either side of the corner, where the double-hung windows have curved glass. Second-story windows above the curved windows have six lights each. The rest of the second-story windows have four lights and transoms. Both the first- and second-story pairs are ornamented by their original central colonettes; the first-story windows retain their original spandrel panels. On the western (rear) façade, each floor including and above the fifth has seven identical single windows: the central windows are paired. In addition, a smaller window (originally for the lavatory on each floor) is located between the central pair and the single windows closest to the Pearl Street side.

Department of Building records indicate that all the original windows in the building were kalamein; photographic evidence shows one-over-one double-hung windows. All existing windows are contemporary anodized aluminum, except for isolated historic kalamein windows in the west lot line elevation, behind ornamental stucco panels at the base, and at the first-story rounded corner, where there are windows with curved glass. All historic limestone sills are intact.

The flat built-up roof is surfaced in gravel. At the southeast there is a metal stair leading to the fire escape. Department of Building records from the building's construction point to a 36' by 6' skylight of galvanized iron and wire glass. The existing skylight at the center of the roof to the west is approximately 37' long by 12' wide, faced with corrugated aluminum and double-paned safety glass. On either side of the skylight are HVAC units

¹ "The Beaver Building," *Architects' and Builders' Magazine* 2 (Aug. 1904), 520.

² Ibid.

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for the 16th floor, and next to the HVAC unit at the north is a sixteenth-floor exhaust fan. To the far west of the roof is a penthouse machine room of corrugated metal, and to the southwest is a water tower. Vent pipes and drains are placed throughout the rooftop and there is a brick chimney at the far northwest corner that is no longer in use.

The western (rear) façade is faced in plain buff-colored brick (**Photograph 7**). From the fourth to the twelfth floors, the decorative brick banding returns onto both sides of this elevation. Terra cotta quoins mark either side of this elevation from the fourteenth floor to the roof. A large signband on the parapet is framed in bands of red brick and bears terra cotta letters spelling out "Beaver Building."

Interior

The basement houses a restaurant (which was the original intention for the space), with contemporary dining rooms, bar, kitchen, and storage areas. The first floor is divided into two primary spaces: on the east side, a double-height open area with a mezzanine for commercial space, and on the west side, the Pearl Street lobby entrance to the upper-story office space and a fire stair and freight lobby at the Beaver Street side. An elevator lobby for a bank of four elevators is located in the center of the west side. The first-floor commercial space is approximately four feet higher than the first-floor level of the lobbies and freight area. These two areas are joined by a short flight of steps accessed through a door in the wall opposite the elevator bank.

The commercial space comprises the majority of the first floor and was originally designed for a bank (it is unclear if a bank ever occupied the space). The rounded corner entrance has its original vestibule, with neoclassical door surrounds of metal and glass, and mosaic marble floor with Greek key trim (**Photograph 8**). The provenance of the vestibule light fixture is unknown. A contemporary wood revolving door with an ornamental ironwork dome, flanked by single doors, leads to contemporary interior double entry doors in a large-scale surround of paneled wood and glass. The floor covering (except in the historic vestibule) is marble tile.

An illustration of the original floor plan in a 1904 *Architects' and Builders' Magazine* shows that the first floor was divided, roughly in half across its width, by a partition wall forming two separate spaces: an open, double-height space at the east, and a similar space, but with a mezzanine, at the west. The eastern half of the commercial space was accessed through the corner entrance, and the western half was accessed through a door in the east wall of the elevator lobby (opening extant) leading to a short flight of stairs. The 1904 mezzanine extended to the building line on the north and south and west, and was only as deep as the first set of structural columns to the east.

Department of Building records and plans and an article in the *New York Times* (October 24, 1937) indicate that the first floor and mezzanine were extensively renovated in 1937 when the New York Cocoa Exchange, which had moved into the building in 1931, leased the entire first floor and mezzanine. Alterations included demolition of the partition wall that divided the first floor in half and erection of a new full-height partition farther to the west, new toilets on the west side of the first floor, and new showers on the mezzanine. A spiral iron stairway on the south side of the first floor that led to the mezzanine was removed and replaced with a new east-west straight-run metal and marble-tread stair in the center of the floor. It appears that the southernmost elevator stopped on the mezzanine. The 1937 drawings indicate that the mezzanine was divided from the space below by a full-height partition wall, which had an opening to the new stair.

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The first floor and mezzanine were extensively altered again at a later date (c. 1980s); their present appearance does not match the 1904 or 1937 plans. The existing first floor is a single double-height open space with mezzanine (no historic partition walls remain) punctuated by historic structural columns arranged symmetrically along the length of the plan (**Photograph 9**). Most of the columns are visible, and their simplified Doric capitals, along with the decoratively detailed ceiling beams that rest on them, forming an architrave, create an overall ornamental effect. Exposed modern ductwork and contemporary lighting fixtures hang from the plaster ceiling. A modern partition wall at the far west of the first-floor commercial space encloses modern restrooms on either side of a central stair leading to the elevator lobby. A large contemporary paneled wood bar is located under the mezzanine facing the restrooms (the most recent use of the first-floor commercial space was as a cigar bar). Another smaller wood bar is located in the northwest corner.

The contemporary U-shaped mezzanine covers approximately two-thirds of the first floor. The footprint of the existing mezzanine is entirely different from the 1904 and 1937 plans. The current mezzanine stair does not match the stair installed in 1937, and the washroom facilities added at that time are no longer extant. The mezzanine is reached by way of a straight-run iron stair at the center (west side) of the first floor. The mezzanine is closed off on the north and south to the first floor below with contemporary sheetrock walls. These walls are lined with wood bookshelves. The mezzanine space is undivided, save for contemporary wood doors and sheetrock partitions at the far east sides that create two small storage areas with wood shelving at each end of the "U." Two large exposed steel I-beams support the mezzanine and its underside is sheathed in corrugated steel.

Pearl Street and Beaver Street entrances (at the western end of the building) both lead to the elevator lobby, although the original continuous north-south passage linking these entrances was partitioned off at an unknown date to form a freight area at the Beaver Street side. Historic images of this main hall through the first floor show wood-and-glass doors, marble wainscoting, terrazzo floors, pendant light fixtures, and elevator doors of ornamental iron grillwork. The Pearl Street side, originally a secondary lobby, has been extensively modernized, with suspended sheetrock ceilings, marble and wood paneling, marble tile floors, and glass-and-metal entrance with revolving doors. Department of Building records for a 1952 lobby renovation indicate the removal of "deteriorated" marble wainscot from lobby walls at that time. The building was originally designed with four elevators, and the historic configuration remains, although the elevator mechanisms and cabs have been updated many times over the years. The elevator lobby has mirrored and wood-paneled walls, a contemporary barrel vault ceiling, and metal-and-wood elevator doors. A door in the east wall of the elevator lobby leads to the stair to the first-floor commercial space. A utilitarian stone stair leads from the rear of the elevator lobby to the basement. The fire stair, at the Beaver Street side, extends to the sixteenth floor and is currently divided from the freight area and lobby by sheetrock walls. This surviving historic winder stair is entirely made of white marble at the first floor (**Photograph 10**). Above the first floor, the balustrade is iron and oak, the treads are marble, the landings mosaic marble tile, and the baseboard iron (**Photograph 11**). Although damaged, the historic lobby ceiling of ornamental plasterwork with egg-and-dart detail remains in the historic fire stair lobby and freight area at the Beaver Street side.

Above the second floor, the Beaver Building has always had commercial office spaces. According to limited archival evidence, these spaces were very simple. A period plan of a "typical" floor (in the August 1904 *Architects' and Builders' Magazine*) shows the elevator lobby to the west. A lavatory was located south of the elevator bank and, to the north, the historic marble winder fire stair. The rest of the floor was divided up into eleven offices; five on either side of a central corridor and one large office in the corner space. The corridors

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were "mosaic and marble" and the office floors were cement. A 1937 article in the *New York Times* (October 24) describing plans for extensive renovations (there is no record of the proposed alterations in Department of Building records) refers to "old-fashioned glass panels which line the corridors" of the upper floors. All existing office floors have been extensively altered and feature suspended ceilings of sheetrock or acoustical tile, wall-to-wall carpeting, contemporary wood or vinyl flooring, sheetrock partition walls, modern light fixtures, and contemporary wood or metal doors (**Photographs 12 and 13**). No historic fabric of note remains in these spaces. The fifth floor is completely gutted. A machine room is located at the roof.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave
- ☐ **D** a cemetery
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by historic American Building Survey

- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Areas of Significance:

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce

Architecture

Period of Significance:

1903-1955

Significant Dates:

1903. 1904

1919

1931

Significant Person:

n/a

Cultural Affiliation:

n/a

Architect/Builder:

Clinton, Charles William

Russell, William Hamilton

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State agency

☐ Federal Agency

☒ Local Government

☐ University

☐ Other repository: _____

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8. Statement of Significance

Commissioned by the Century Realty Company as a speculative office building at a projected cost of \$600,000, the Beaver Building was designed by the well-known and prolific architectural firm of Clinton & Russell and built by the Remington Construction Company between June 1903 and October 1904. On February 13, 1996, it was designated an individual landmark building by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. The building's period of significance extends from 1903 to 1955.

The narrow, quadrilateral building site, at the juncture of Beaver and Pearl Streets near Wall Street, is created by the original colonial street pattern of Lower Manhattan. Much less well known than its famous predecessor, the Flatiron Building (1901-1903, Daniel H. Burnham & Co.; NHL 6-29-89) at Fifth Avenue and 23rd Street, the Beaver Building is one of just a few 19th- and early 20th-century flatiron-shaped buildings in lower Manhattan.

In July 1903, while construction was still ongoing, ownership was transferred to the Beaver and Wall Street Corporation. The building was the headquarters from 1904 until 1921 of the Munson Steamship Company, a prominent shipping line active in the Cuban and South American sugar and lumber trade; the company owned the building from 1919 to 1937, when the Bowery Savings Bank foreclosed on the property. From 1931 to 1972, one of the building's primary tenants was the New York Cocoa Exchange, the world's first and foremost cocoa futures market, amidst the United States' emergence as the world's largest cocoa consumer.

The Bowery disposed of the property in 1942, and the Beaver Building changed hands several times. 82 Beaver Company (with Harry B. Helmsley as a partner) owned the building from 1951 to 1981. In 1985, London & Leeds Realty Corporation, a British development company, began a renovation of the nearly vacant Beaver Building while simultaneously constructing the Barclays Bank Building at 75 Wall Street. This renovation resulted in some minor modifications to the Beaver Building's exterior, as well as the creation of a new address, 1 Wall Street Court. Since 1994, the building has been owned by Cocoa Partners of Cohasset, Massachusetts.

The Beaver Building is a notable example of a design solution for turn-of-the-century New York skyscrapers in which each section of the tripartite scheme is differentiated by color and materials. It is also a very early example of the use of boldly polychromatic glazed terra cotta, as well as a significant survivor of this period of terra cotta development. Despite extensive alterations to the simple office interiors, 1930s and later alterations to the first-floor commercial space, and some minor 1980s alterations to the exterior, the Beaver Building remains a notable example of a medium-height, turn-of-the-century skyscraper on the narrow streets of lower Manhattan.

The Beaver Building is significant under National Register Criterion A, for its association with events that made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history in the category of Commerce, and under Criterion C, because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of early 20th century design and construction of New York City skyscrapers.

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Significance under Criterion A: Association with Events that Contributed to History of Commerce

American Shipping History: The Munson Steamship Company, 1904-1937

The Beaver Building was occupied, in part, as headquarters of the Munson Steamship Company from May 1904 until 1921. Munson was a prominent steamship line that handled cargo between the United States and Cuba, as well as the eastern coast of South America. Walter D. Munson (1843-1908) emigrated to Havana in 1868 to enter the sugar and molasses business, and began to charter ships by 1873 to transport sugar to the United States. He moved his offices to New York City in 1882. After he acquired a fleet of steamships, and after the Spanish-American War fully opened Cuba to American commerce, Munson incorporated his company in 1899, hauling sugar along the New York-Mobile-Cuba route. (Until 1960, Cuba was the largest exporter of sugar to the United States.) With Walter Munson's death, the company was directed by his sons Carlos and Frank, who added South American lumber to the business in 1910. Amidst the large profits accumulated by American shipping companies during World War I, and "owing to the scarcity of office accommodations in the vicinity," according to the *New York Times* (May 8, 1921), the Munson Steamship Company purchased the Beaver Building in July 1919. The company constructed a new 25-story office tower across Beaver Street at 67-71 Wall Street (completed in May 1921 to the design of Kenneth M. Murchison) that represented the second largest investment in new construction by a shipping concern in this period (after that of the Cunard firm). Munson Building Corporation retained ownership of the Beaver Building until foreclosure by the Bowery Savings Bank in 1937. During the 1920s, the company suffered a decrease in its Cuban sugar trade due to increased competition, and neither the inclusion of South American passenger service in 1920, nor mail service in 1928, proved profitable enough to offset the losses. After a failed attempt to sell the line to the International Mercantile Marine Company, Munson entered bankruptcy protection in 1934 and was finally dissolved in 1939.

Commodities Trading: The New York Cocoa Exchange, 1931-1972

For over forty years, the New York Cocoa Exchange was one of the primary tenants in the Beaver Building, with the Trading Room on the first story and mezzanine. The Cocoa Exchange was established in New York in 1925 (at 124 Water Street) by cocoa users seeking to eliminate risk due to price fluctuations, as the world's first cocoa futures market. As the production and consumption of cocoa and chocolate expanded rapidly in the 20th century, and cocoa developed as a leading international commodity, the United States emerged as the world's largest cocoa consumer. When the Cocoa Exchange moved into the Beaver Building in April of 1931, the *New York Times* (April 26, 1931) noted that "the exchange has grown to be the largest market of its kind in the world, and transactions on its floor usually equal and frequently have exceeded the world's crop of coca." Many of the other commodities exchanges were also located in the immediate vicinity of Beaver and Broad Streets at this time, including the New York Coffee & Sugar Exchange (113-117 Pearl St.), New York Cotton Exchange (107-111 Pearl St.), Maritime Exchange (80 Broad St.), Commodity Exchange (81 Broad St.), Consolidated Stock Exchange (61-69 Broad St.), and New York Produce Exchange (2 Broadway). The Beaver Building additionally housed a number of commercial tenants and organizations associated with the cocoa industry over the years, including the New York Cocoa Clearing Association and Cocoa Merchants Association of America. The Cocoa Exchange moved from the Beaver Building to new quarters (127 John St.) in 1972; it merged with the New York Coffee & Sugar Exchange to form the Coffee, Sugar and Cocoa Exchange in 1979. (The Coffee Exchange of the City of New York was founded in 1882 by New York merchants after the market collapse of 1880. Sugar was added to the Exchange in 1916 when the sugar exchanges in Europe were closed due to World War I.)

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Significance under Criterion C: Embodiment of the Distinctive Characteristics of Early 20th Century Skyscraper Design and Construction

During the 19th century, commercial buildings in New York City developed from four-story structures modeled on Italian Renaissance palazzi to much taller "skyscrapers." Made possible by the technological advances, tall buildings challenged designers to fashion an appropriate architectural expression. Between 1870 and 1890, nine- and ten-story buildings transformed the streetscapes of lower Manhattan between Bowling Green and City Hall. During the building boom following the Civil War, building envelopes continued to be articulated largely according to traditional palazzo compositions, with mansarded and towered roof profiles. New York's tallest buildings—the seven-and-a-half story Equitable Life Assurance Company Building (1868-70, Gilman & Kendall and George B. Post) at Broadway and Cedar Street, the ten-story Western Union Building (1872-75, George B. Post) at Broadway and Liberty Street, and the ten-story Tribune Building (1873-75, Richard M. Hunt) on Park Row, all now demolished—incorporated passenger elevators, iron floor beams, and fireproof building materials. Beginning in the later 1870s, tall buildings were characterized by flat roofs and a free, varied grouping of stories, often in the form of multi-storied arcades, within the facades. Ever taller skyscrapers were permitted by the increasing use and refinement of metal framing. In 1888-1889 New York architect Bradford Lee Gilbert used steel skeleton framing for the first seven stories of the eleven-story Tower Building at 50 Broadway (demolished). Around 1890, architects began producing skyscraper designs that adhered to the tripartite base-shaft-capital arrangement associated with the classical column, a scheme that became commonly employed in New York. The technology of steel framing, often used in conjunction with caisson foundations, advanced further during the 1890s, pioneered by engineers and by architects Francis H. Kimball and Bruce Price. This technology allowed for the construction of tall buildings on relatively small, awkwardly shaped sites, like that of the Beaver Building, designed by the firm of Clinton & Russell.

Clinton & Russell and the Early New York City Skyscraper

The well-known and prolific firm of Clinton & Russell, formed in 1894, was responsible for scores of buildings in New York City at the turn of the century, including many early downtown skyscrapers, notable luxury apartment houses and fashionable hotels and institutions, often designed according to Italian Renaissance prototypes.

Charles Willam Clinton (1838-1910), born and raised in New York, trained in the office of Richard Upjohn until 1858, when he left to begin an independent practice. The following year, he formed a partnership with Anthony B. MacDonald, Jr., which lasted until 1862; he was later associated with Edward T. Potter. For the next 32 years Clinton practiced alone; aside from the Seventh Regiment Armory (1877-81; NHL 2-24-86) at 643 Park Avenue, most of his important buildings during this period were office buildings designed in variations of the Renaissance Revival Style, including the New York Mutual Life Insurance Co. Building (1882-84; 1892, demolished), 30-40 Nassau Street, and the Continental Insurance Company Building (1894; demolished) at 44-46 Cedar Street.

William Hamilton Russell (1856-1907), also a native New Yorker, studied at the Columbia School of Mines before joining the firm of his great uncle, James Renwick, in 1878. Five years later he became a partner in the firm, then known as Renwick, Aspinwall & Russell; he remained there until 1891.

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Among Clinton & Russell's noteworthy hotel and apartment building commissions are the Graham Court Apartments (1899-1901; NR-listed 1-30-78) at 1923-1937 A.C. Powell Jr. Boulevard; the Astor Apartments (1901-1905) at 2141 Broadway; the Hotel Astor (1902-04, 1909-10, demolished) at Broadway and West 44th Street; and the Aphorp Apartments (1906-08) at 2201-2219 Broadway, all constructed for the Astor family, and the Langham Apartments (1904-07) at 135 Central Park West. Clinton & Russell was the architectural firm of choice for many of the early skyscrapers constructed in the downtown financial district of Manhattan in the 1890s and the first decade of the 20th century. The firm's many downtown office buildings, most in the range of 12 to 26 stories, included the Fahys Building (1894-96, demolished) at 52-54 Maiden Lane; Exchange Court Building (1896-98, altered) at 52-56 Broadway; the Hudson Building (1896-98) at 32-34 Broadway; the Franklin Building (1898) at 9-15 Murray Street; the Sampson Building (1898, demolished) at 63-65 Wall Street; the Woodbridge Building (1898, demolished) at 98-106 William Street; the Cheseborough Building (1898, demolished) at 13-19 State Street; the Broad Exchange Building (1899-1902) at 25-33 Broad Street (NR-listed 4-13-98); American Exchange National Bank Building (1901, demolished) at 128 Broadway; Atlantic Mutual Insurance Company Building (1900-01, demolished) at 49-51 Wall Street; Wall Street Exchange Building (1903) at 43-49 Exchange Place; 60-62 Wall Street (1905, demolished); U.S. Express Company Building (1905-07) at 2 Rector Street; the Consolidated Stock Exchange (1907, demolished) at 61-69 Broad Street; the Hudson Terminal Buildings (1907-08, demolished) at 30-50 Church Street; and the Lawyers Title Insurance & Trust Company Building (1908) at 160-64 Broadway.

After Russell's death and Clinton's virtual retirement around the same time due to poor health, the practice continued under the name of Clinton & Russell, and the firm remained in existence until 1940.

Beaver Building Design: Tripartite Skyscraper with Terra Cotta Ornamentation

At its completion, *Architects' and Builders' Magazine* noted that the building "rises eleven stories above adjoining structures."³ Further, the magazine pointed to the number of windows on the flatiron-shaped Beaver Building, noting that every office had direct light from the street: "The claim is made for this building that there is a larger window area relative to floor space than in any other office building in the city."⁴

The Beaver Building is a notable example of a turn-of-the-century New York skyscraper in which each section of the tripartite scheme is differentiated by color and materials. This design solution, exemplified by Cass Gilbert's Broadway Chambers Building (1899-1900, 273-277 Broadway), was promoted by architectural critic Montgomery Schuyler as the "next advance in the execution of the accepted scheme" [tripartite division].⁵ The building is also a very early example of the use of boldly polychromatic glazed terra cotta on a skyscraper in New York City, as well as a significant survivor of this period of terra cotta development.

In 1907 the New York Times reported that:

New York architects have discovered another medium of artistic expression. The monotony of dull gray and red buildings and miles of brown sandstone and marble are being broken into with colors of brilliant hue. Blues and yellows are appearing on the city's skyscrapers; green, rose, and gold tint her

³ "The Beaver Building," 514.

⁴ "The Beaver Building," 520.

⁵ Cited in Montgomery Schuyler, *American Architecture and Other Writings 2* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 1961), 614.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 5

Beaver Building
Name of Property
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domes and towers...The materials used for this new ornamentation are colored terra cotta, tiles, and faience...one of the most imperishable of building materials...admitting of an infinite variety of color schemes...These advantages, the search for novelty, and the influence of modern steel-skeleton construction are responsible for the movement.⁶

Though polychromatic glazed terra cotta was employed in such designs as the Broadway Chambers Building (1899-1900, 273-277 Broadway) and the Madison Square Presbyterian Church (1903-1906, McKim, Mead and White, demolished), monochromatic and subtle shades, hues resembling masonry and "discreet" use of color were general rules for terra cotta in New York until the 1920s. Critic Herbert D. Croly in 1906, however, challenged architects in the use of polychromatic glazed terra cotta:

While the process of making glazed and colored terra cotta has not yet been entirely perfected, there can be no doubt that the manufacturers of the material are more successful about making it than the architects are about using it. American architects are, of course, very timid about adopting a material for the successful employment of which there are no good precedents. They are, of course, accustomed to using terra cotta in the ordinary way, and most of them appreciate fully the color values of rough or white glazed terra cotta. But the use of livelier colors is a very different thing...⁷

Despite this opinion, Croly was critical of Clinton & Russell's bold and novel use of polychromatic glazed terra cotta on the Beaver Building:

How far terra cotta that is both glazed and colored can be successfully applied to skyscrapers is still a doubtful matter, because no entirely satisfactory experiments have yet been made. Certain instances in which it has been tried are not worthy of unqualified commendations. The upper stories of the Beaver Building...are decorated with panels of glazed terra cotta in bright colors; and while the brightness of the color is in itself a praiseworthy characteristic rather than the reverse, they do not, in the present instance, harmonize with each other, nor do they constitute a pleasing scheme of decoration for the top stories of a tall building.⁸

On the other hand, *Architects' and Builders' Magazine*, writing in 1904, stated of the building's terra cotta that "the major part in tone [matched] the limestone below, while ornamental portions stand in bold relief strongly colored in green, buff, and red. The effect of this more or less brilliant color treatment is to strengthen the

⁶ "Color Spreads Glories on City's Architecture; New Decorative Movement Employing Colored Glazed Terra Cotta and Faience; Promises to Make Manhattan Blaze With the Loveliness of Azure and Ruby, Topaz and Gold," *New York Times*, January 27, 1907.

⁷ Herbert D. Croly, "Glazed and Colored Terra-Cotta," *Architectural Record* 19 (Apr. 1906), 313-323.

⁸ Croly, 322.

United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 6

Beaver Building
Name of Property
New York County, New York
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outline of the building and make it a more notable feature amid its surroundings.”⁹ The publication noted that the terra cotta had been sandblasted, “a process which takes off the natural high glaze of the terra cotta and totally eliminates any dazzling appearance.”¹⁰

⁹ “The Beaver Building,” 514.

¹⁰ Ibid., 520.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 1

Beaver Building
Name of Property
New York County, New York
County and State

Major Bibliographic References

"Bank Will Alter 15 Story Building," *New York Times*, October 24, 1937.

"The Beaver Building." *Architects' and Builders' Magazine* 2 (Aug. 1904): 514.

"Cocoa Exchange Moves to New Headquarters," *New York Times*, April 26, 1931.

"Color Spreads Glories on City's Architecture; New Decorative Movement Employing Colored Glazed Terra Cotta and Faience; Promises to Make Manhattan Blaze With the Loveliness of Azure and Ruby, Topaz and Gold," *New York Times*, January 27, 1907.

Croly, Herbert D. "Glazed and Colored Terra-Cotta," *Architectural Record* 19 (Apr. 1906): 313-323.

"Munson Building Opens; Steamship Company Completes Project Begun a Year Ago," *New York Times*, May 8, 1921.

New York City Department of Buildings. Records for Block 28, Lot 17; 1903-1975. Available at New York City Municipal Archives.

New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. "Beaver Building." New York: Landmarks Preservation Commission, 1996.

_____. Beaver Building research notes. Available at offices of Landmarks Preservation Commission.

Schuyler, Montgomery. *American Architecture and Other Writings* 2. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 1961.

Stern, Robert AM, Gregory F. Gilmartin, and John Montague Massengale. *New York 1900 : Metropolitan Architecture and Urbanism 1890-1915*. New York: Rizzoli: 1995.

Tunick, Susan. *Terra-Cotta Skyline*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997.

Beaver Building
Name of Property

New York County, New York
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 1 8 5 8 3 7 2 3 4 5 0 6 2 7 8
Zone Easting Northing

3 1 8
Zone Easting Northing

2 1 8

4 1 8

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By (See Continuation Sheet for author)

name/title Contact: Kathy Howe, Historic Preservation Specialist
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
organization Field Services Bureau date March 14, 2005
street & number P.O. Box 189, Peebles Island telephone 518-237-8643, ext. 3266
city or town Waterford state NY zip code 12188-0189

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name The Cocoa Partners LLP
street & number 82 Beaver St. telephone 212-809-1688
city or town New York state NY zip code 10005

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20503

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 10 Page 1

Beaver Building
Name of Property
New York County, New York
County and State

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of 82-92 Beaver Street are established by New York City Block 28, Lot 17, as shown on the Sanborn Map included in this nomination.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire footprint of the nominated property, as shown on the Sanborn Map included in this nomination.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

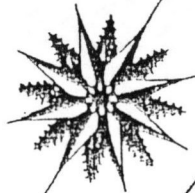
Section 11 Page 1

Beaver Building
Name of Property
New York County, New York
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

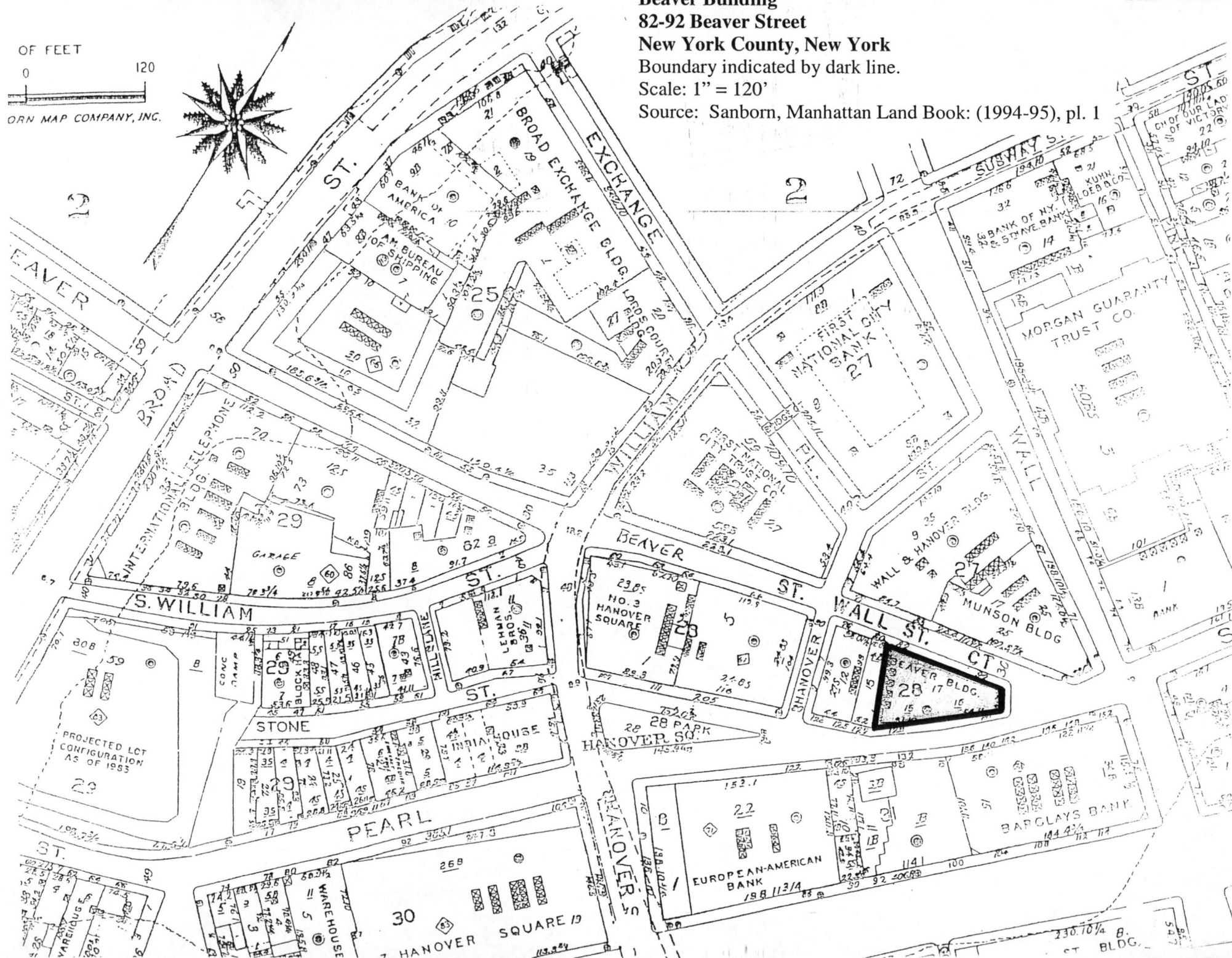
Michele Boyd, Preservationist
Building Conservation Associates
158 West 27th Street
New York, NY 10001
212-777-1300, ext. 43

OF FEET
0 120
ORN MAP COMPANY, INC.



Beaver Building
82-92 Beaver Street
New York County, New York
Boundary indicated by dark line.
Scale: 1" = 120'

Source: Sanborn, Manhattan Land Book: (1994-95), pl. 1



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Beaver Building
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, New York

DATE RECEIVED: 5/23/05 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 6/10/05
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/25/05 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 7/06/05
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 05000668

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 7/6/05 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the
National Register

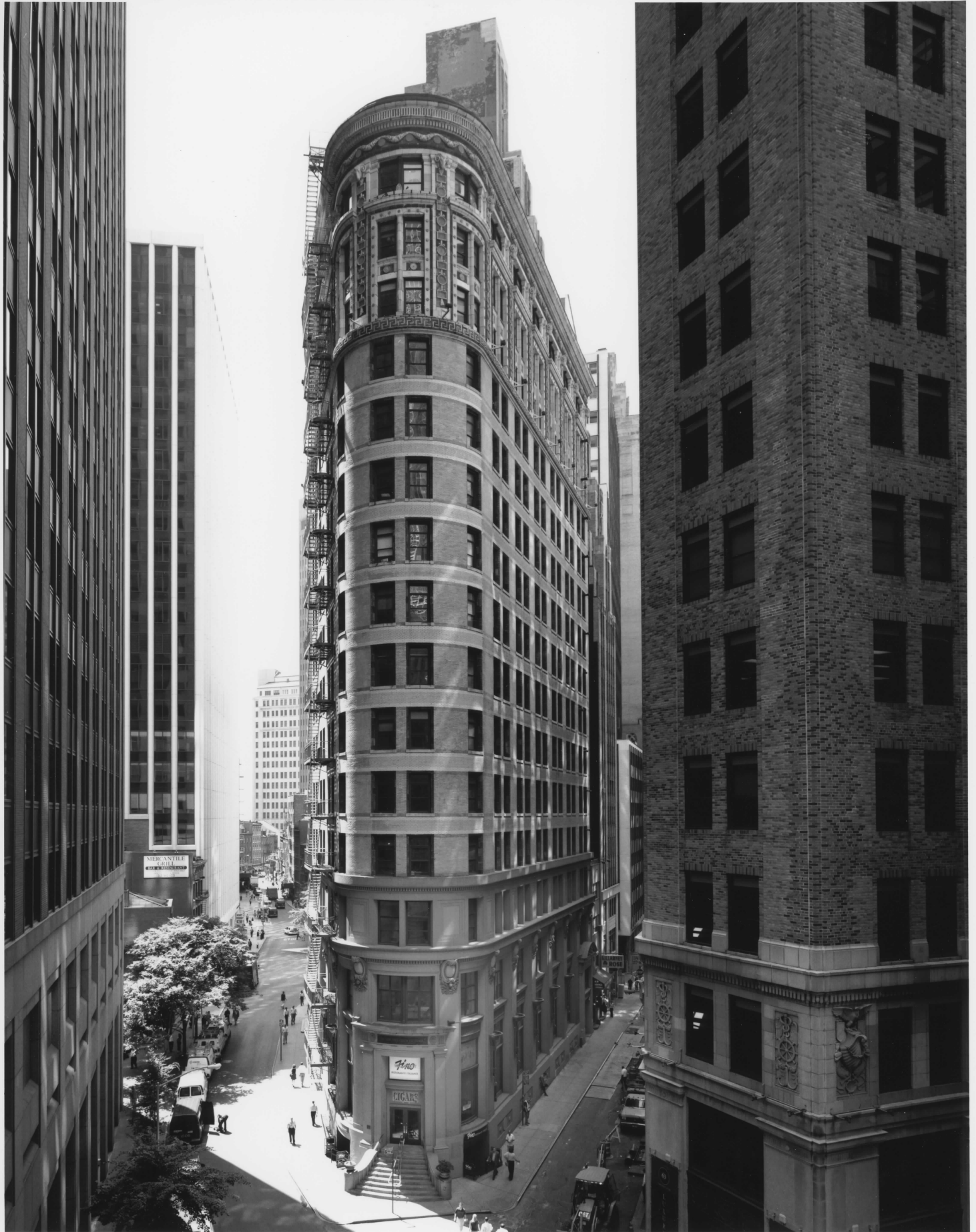
RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



Beaver Building
NY County, New York
Whitney Cox

8/9/2004

Neg. at Whitney Cox Photography
143 Duane St.
NYC 10013

Looking west
Photograph 1



THE NEW YORK COCOA EXCHANGE

Fino
WALL STREET
RISTORANTE ITALIANO

CIGARS

NO STANDING
ANYTIME

Fino RISTORANTE ITALIANO

Fino RISTORANTE ITALIANO

Fino

Fino

MILLARNEY
ROSE NYC

STOP

Beaver Building
NY County, NY
Whitney Cox

8/9/2004

Neg at Whitney Cox Photography
143 Duane St.
NYC 10013

Corner entrance looking west
photograph 2



Beaver Building

NY Conty, NY

Whitney Cox

8/9/2004

Neg at Whitney Cox Photography

143 Duane St.

NYC 10013

Beaver St. entrance

Photograph 3

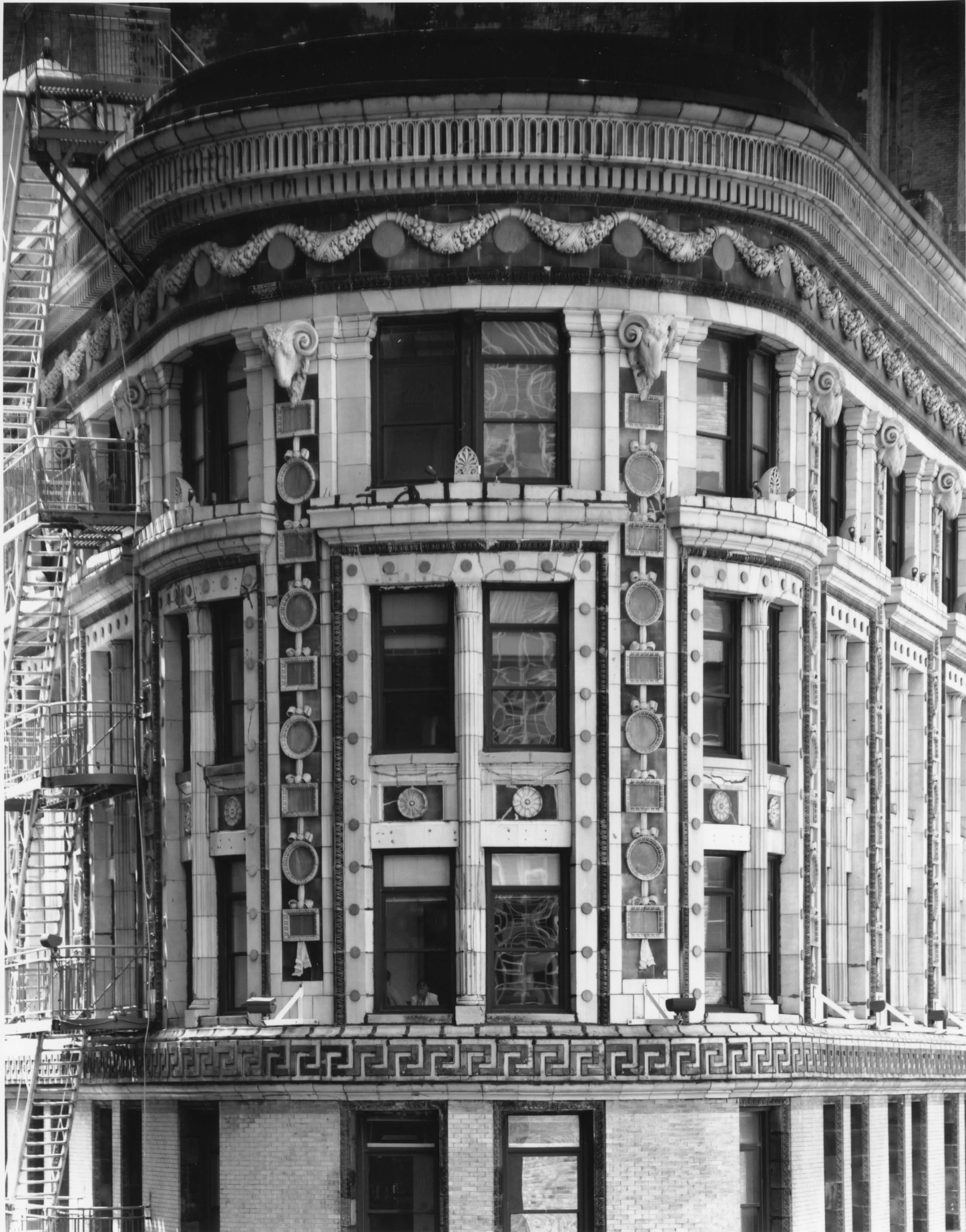


Beaver Building
NY County, NY
Whitney Cox

8/9/2004

Neg. at Whitney Cox Photography
143 Duane St.
NYC 10013

Pearl Street elevation, looking south
Photograph 4





BEAVER BUILDING









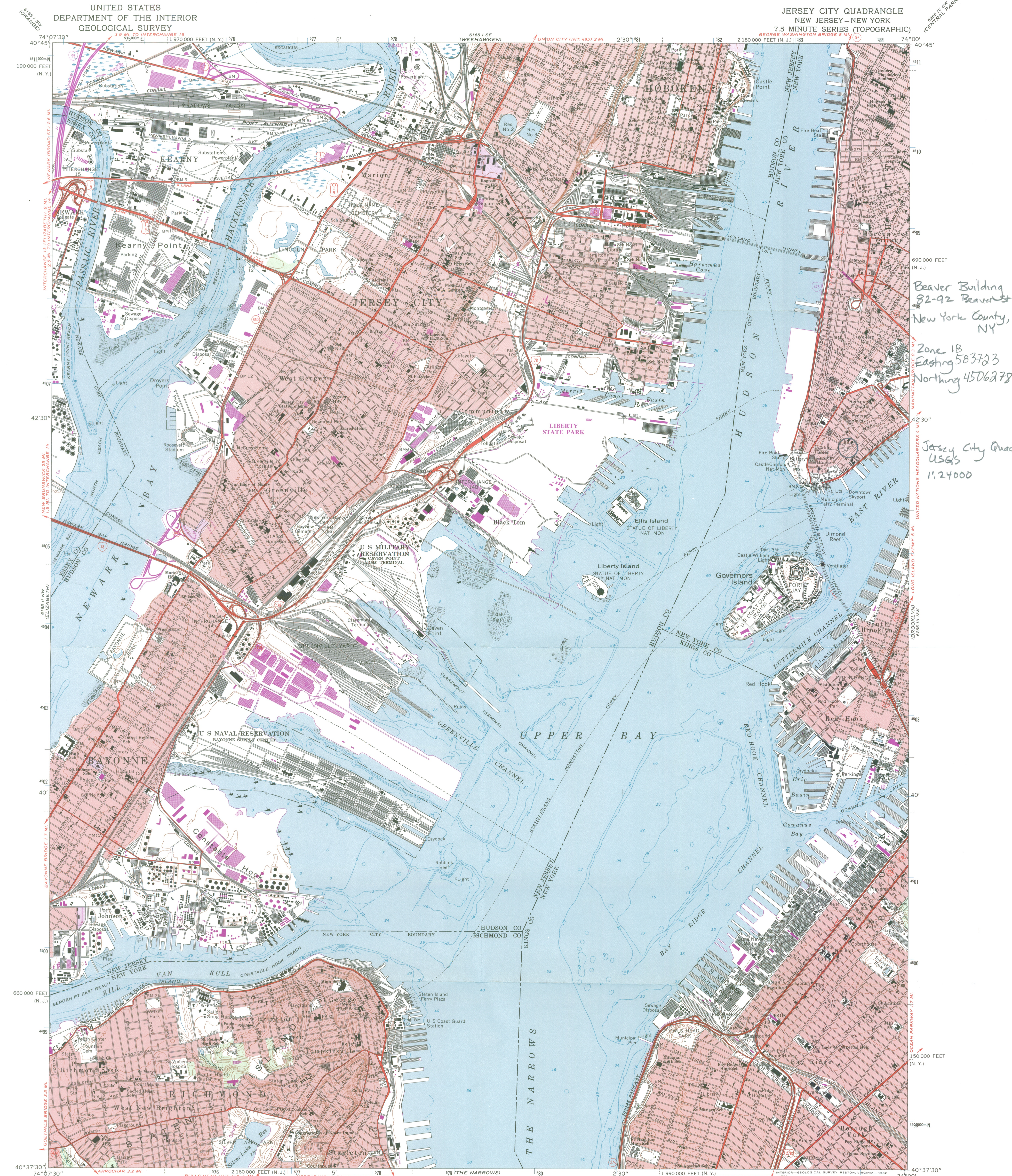






UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

JERSEY CITY QUADRANGLE
NEW JERSEY-NEW YORK
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



Beaver Building
82-92 Beaver St
New York County,
NY
Zone 18
Easting 583723
Northing 4506278

Jersey City Quad
USGS
1:24000

Maped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Revised in cooperation with New York Department of Transportation
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, USCE, New Jersey Geodetic Survey,
and City of New York Board of Estimate and Apportionment
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods and from NOS charts T-5111,
T-5277, T-5332, T-5450, T-5453, T-5454, T-5460, T-5461, T-5466, T-5468,
T-5469, and T-5470
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken
1954 and planimetric surveys 1955. Revised from aerial photographs
taken 1966. Field checked 1967
Selected hydrographic data compiled from NOS charts 285, 287, 541,
and 745 (1966). This information is not intended for navigational purposes
Polyconic projection, 10,000-foot grid ticks based on New Jersey coordinate
system, and New York coordinate system, Long Island zone, 1000-meter
Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 18, shown in blue, 1927
North American Datum. To place on the predicted North American Datum
1983 move the projection lines 6 meters south and 35 meters west as shown
by dashed corner ticks
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of
the National or State reservations shown on this map

UTM GRID AND 1981 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

SCALE 1:24000
CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE
SHORELINE REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 4.4 FEET IN
UPPER BAY AND 4.8 FEET IN NEWARK BAY

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs
taken 1976 and other sources. This information not
field checked. Map edited 1981
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Primary highway, all weather, hard surface
Secondary highway, all weather, hard surface
Light-duty road, all weather, improved surface
Unimproved road, fair or dry weather
Interstate Route
U. S. Route
State Route

JERSEY CITY, N. J.—N. Y.
N4037.5—W74007.5
1967
PHOTOREVISED 1981
DMA 6185 II NE-SERIES Y822

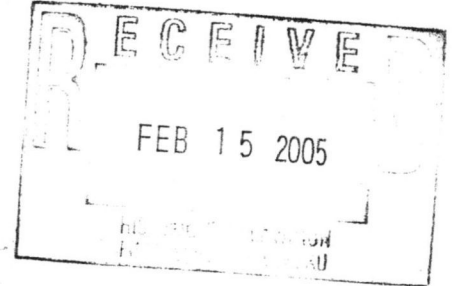
ISBN 0-607-36774-1
9 780607 367744

COCOA PARTNERS, LP

One Wall Street Court, New York, NY 10005 - Phone (212) 509-1688 Fax (212) 425-4041

February 11, 2005

Ms. Kathy Howe
New York State Historic Preservation Office
Peebles Island Resource Center
P. O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188-0189



RE: 82-92 Beaver Street

Dear Ms. Howe:

Cocoa Partners LP fully supports the listing of the New York Cocoa Exchange (Beaver Building) at 82-92 Beaver Street, New York, NY 10005 on the New York State and National Registers of Historic Places. Cocoa Partners LP owns the property.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Fownes'.

Richard Fownes

President, Realty Equity Partners, the corporate general partner of Cocoa Partners LP

Cc: Claudia Kavenagh, Michele Boyd/BCA



The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

1 Centre Street, 9th Floor North, New York NY 10007 TEL: 212-669-7922 FAX: 212-669-7797

<http://nyc.gov/landmarks/>



RONDA WIST
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
rwist@lpc.nyc.gov

February 24, 2005

Ms. Ruth Pierpont, Director
New York State Office of Parks Recreation
and Historic Preservation
Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau
Peebles Island
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, New York 12188-0189



Re: Beaver Building, 82-92 Beaver Street, New York, New York

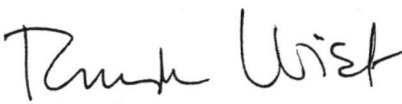
Dear Ms. Pierpont:

I write on behalf of Chair Robert B. Tierney in response to your request for comment on the eligibility of the Beaver Building in Manhattan for the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

The Commission supports the nomination of the Beaver Building. In 1996, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission voted to designate the Beaver Building a New York City landmark. The brick-clad structure—designed by Clinton & Russell, the leading architecture firm active in the design of speculative office buildings in New York at the beginning of the 20th century—was among the first skyscrapers ornamented with polychromatic glazed terra cotta.

Based on the Commission's review of the property and the materials submitted by the Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau, the Commission has determined that the Beaver Building appears to meet the criteria for inclusion on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

Sincerely yours,


Ronda Wist

cc: Robert B. Tierney, Chair
Mary Beth Betts



New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau
Peebles Island, PO Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189

518-237-8643

Ms. Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye St. NW
8th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

May 10, 2005



Re: Transmittal of National Register
Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to transmit six National Register nominations to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register as follows:

Marble Schoolhouse, Eastchester, Westchester Co., NY

Rochelle Park – Rochelle Heights Historic District, New Rochelle, Westchester Co., NY

Forks in the Road Schoolhouse, South Gilboa, Schoharie Co., NY

Oyster Bay Long Island Rail Road Station, Nassau Co., NY

Oyster Bay Long Island Rail Road Turntable, Nassau Co., NY

Beaver Building, New York, New York Co., NY

Please feel free to call on me at 518-237-8643 ext. 3258 if any questions arise.

Sincerely,

Mark L. Peckham
National Register
Program Coordinator

enclosures