

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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 Park Row Building

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 15 Park Row [] not for publication

city or town New York [] vicinity

state New York code NY county New York code 061 zip code 10038

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.)

Michael C. Castle
Signature of certifying official/Title

9/2/05
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) _____

Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

11.16.05
date of action

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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)

n/a

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: business; specialty store

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: business; specialty store

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals: Classical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls granite, brick

roof copper (cupolas)

other

Narrative Description

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

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7. Description

The Park Row Building is located on an irregularly-shaped lot, with its front facade facing onto Park Row between Ann and Beekman streets, and secondary facades facing Ann Street between Park Row and Theatre Alley and Theatre Alley between Ann and Beekman streets, in New York City, New York County, New York. The building extends for 103'11" on Park Row, twenty feet on Ann Street, and 47'10½" on Theatre Alley. The building is located in a heavily built up area across Park Row from City Hall Park. Surrounding buildings are almost all commercial structures, including a large concentration of early skyscrapers, dating from the final decades of the nineteenth century. Immediately to the south of the Park Row Building, on Park Row, is a construction site on which a new building is being erected. To the north, on Park Row, are a series of low-rise buildings, ranging from three to six stories. Each of these buildings extends through the block to Theatre Alley. To the east of the Ann Street wing are two Federal style rowhouses that have undergone extensive commercial alterations. At the corner of Ann Street and Theatre Alley, adjoining the Theatre Alley facade of the building, is a vacant lot. City Hall Park is located to the northwest of the Park Row Building, with City Hall (National Register listed) itself, farther north. Elsewhere in the immediate vicinity of the Park Row Building are several significant early skyscrapers, including Temple Court at 3-9 Beekman Street, the Potter Building at 35-38 Park Row, the former New York Times Building, at 39-41 Park Row, the former Morse Building, at 140 Nassau Street, and the former American Tract Society Building, at 150 Nassau Street. Nearby are several buildings that are listed on the National Register, including St. Paul's Chapel and the Woolworth Building, both on Broadway, and the New York County Lawyers Association Building on Vesey Street. On the ground floor, the Park Row Building occupies its entire irregular lot; on upper floors there is a U-shaped light court on the south side of the building. The building retains its integrity to a very high degree and has been designated as an individual landmark by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.

The Park Row Building has an irregular footprint created by the angles of the three streets on which the building faces and by the fact that the original developers were unable to acquire adjoining sites. The north portion of the building extends from Park Row through the block to Theatre Alley. The south side of the building extends into the block and then has a short extension extending to Ann Street. In the center of the southern facade is a rectangular light court. Thus, the upper floors are shaped like a somewhat warped "E" with the spine along the northern portion of the lot.

The Park Row Building is a thirty-one-story building (thirty-two stories if the lanterns atop the cupolas are counted as floors) facing onto Park Row. The first two stories of the building were originally clad in granite, with rusticated limestone on the third and fourth stories, smooth limestone on the fifth story, and beige brick ornamented with beige terra cotta on the upper stories. On the two story ground level, original granite Doric pilasters are extant at either end. Originally additional Doric pilasters and Doric columns articulated this level, but they were replaced in 1930 by the present bronze and glass facade with its stylized Art Deco-inflected detail. The building is entered through a portal of black Belgian granite (the same stone employed on the entrances to the Chrysler Building). Within the granite portal are three bronze-framed glass doors above which are three bronze-framed windows. The remainder of the lower-story facade is slightly asymmetrical, with three stylized

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fluted pilasters with Art Deco capitals to the south and two to the north. Each pilaster is flanked by attenuated colonettes capped by stylized anthemias. The first and second stories are separated by gridded bronze spandrels. The second story is capped by the original granite Doric entablature, including metopes ornamented with alternating roundels and rosettes, all flanked by anthemias, and a cornice with its soffit ornamented with guttae and rectangular panels alternating between unadorned diamonds and diamonds inset with anthemias.

The third and fourth stories are nine bays wide. These floors are separated by a beltcourse with an undulating band and foliate ornament. Flanking the third window from each side are pairs of enormous console brackets, each with a garland attached to rams' heads. Each garland supports an enormous female figure; these figures flank the fourth-story windows. On the fifth story and on all of the floors above, the center of the facade is slightly recessed. The end pavilions are articulated by three windows each, while in the center there are five pairs of windows. The end pavilions on the fifth story are flanked by recessed panels, with similar panels between each window in the central section. A cornice caps the fifth story.

On the upper floors, the brick of the end pavilions is laid to resemble the effect of rusticated stone. The windows are capped by terra-cotta splayed lintels with large keystones. Balconies, each supported by four brackets, project in front of the windows on the tenth, eighteenth, and twenty-seventh floors. The brackets are ornamented with anthemias, as are panels on the balconies. Above the tenth floor windows are keystones ornamented with caducei dangling from the mouths of lions. The lion heads are part of a beltcourse ornamented with anthemias. In the central section, the windows of the sixth story are flanked by terra-cotta pedestals that support three-story tall Doric pilasters rising from the seventh through the ninth stories. Similar three-story pilasters extend from the eleventh to the thirteenth story and from the fourteenth to the sixteenth stories, and four-story pilasters extend from the eighteenth through the twenty-first stories. Below the windows of most floors are terra-cotta bands ornamented with anthemias or guilloche detail. Below the eleventh-story windows is a band stretching across the central section of the building that is ornamented with anthemias and heads. The central windows of the seventeenth story are separated by rectangular panels, each with a head, while an ornamental molding runs below and a Doric frieze extends above. Below the twenty-third story is a band with foliage and cartouches that extends across the entire facade of the building. Angled balconies with terra-cotta balusters extend across the center of the facade at the eleventh and twenty-third stories. The balconies are supported on four brackets; each of those supporting the eleventh-story balcony has a vertical bead molding running down its center. The central windows of the twenty-third story are flanked by tall pedestals that support terra-cotta, fluted, Doric columns that rise from the twenty-fourth through the twenty-sixth stories. The columns support a Doric entablature with a cornice ornamented with lion heads. At the side pavilions, the line of the cornice is extended by the use of balconies, each supported by six brackets – two pair and two single. The central section is crowned by a twenty-seventh story capped by sheet-copper balls.

Each side pavilion is crowned by a striking round tower consisting of three stories (twenty-eight through thirty) clad in brick, a single story in a cupola (thirty-one), and a lantern. The corners of the towers are anchored by polygonal turrets, each with a copper cornice and small octagonal domed roof that once supported a finial. Each facade of the tower is three-bays wide, with the bays separated by brick Corinthian pilasters with terra-cotta capitals. The floors are separated by terra-cotta spandrels with Greek fret design. The pilasters support an

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ornate frieze with ocular openings and volutes and a copper cornice. The domed cupola is also articulated by copper oculi. The octagonal domed lanterns are supported by eight caryatids (a bracket capped by a woman's head) of sheet copper.

The narrow Ann Street facade is largely intact. It has a ground-level service entrance flanked by two-story granite Doric pilasters with egg-and-dart moldings in their capitals. A wave molding runs above the entrance. On the second story are two windows separated by a Doric pilaster. Above the second story is a projecting cornice with a Doric frieze ornamented with roundels in the two outer metopes and rosettes in the two inner metopes. The soffit has rectangular panels with unadorned diamonds. The third through fifth stories are two bays wide and are clad in rusticated limestone. A molding above the fifth story separates the base from the upper floors with their brick cladding laid to resemble rusticated stonework. Each of the upper floors is articulated by a group of three windows. As on the side pavilions of the front elevation the windows have terracotta lintels and there are projecting balconies at the tenth, eighteenth, and twenty-seventh stories. The Ann Street facade is capped by a modest ogival tower with corner turrets. The north facade is visible above the low-rise buildings on Park Row and Theatre Alley. This facade is clad in a utilitarian brick and has simple window openings. Utilitarian brick facades are also visible along the lot line on Ann Street, along Theatre Alley, and in the light court at the south side of the building. These facades are articulated by single, double, and triple windows. The most notable feature is a series of steel beams that span the light court.

The building retains several interior features from the original construction and others that date from the 1930 alteration of the lower floors. From the street, one enters into an outer lobby, largely dating from 1930. The lobby has a terrazzo floor composed of alternating squares of black and putti-colored terrazzo with silver frames. The walls are pink marble with black marble baseboards. A plaster cornice is detailed with acanthus leaves (possibly original) with a ceiling border ornamented with an Art Deco zig-zag pattern (1930). An octagonal lamp hangs from the center of the ceiling. Two pairs of glass doors with bronze frames lead into the main lobby. Above these doors are bronze spandrel panels and bronze frames that hold translucent glass panels.

The main lobby is an unusual shape with a rectangular section extending from the entrance to a stair at the southeast corner of the space. To the north is a semicircular elevator waiting area with nine elevators. A tenth elevator (the service elevator) is located immediately to the west. A second stairway rises from the northwest corner of the lobby. The floor and walls of the main lobby are the same material as in the outer lobby and date from 1930. A row of square piers with chamfered corners runs east-west through the space. Each of these has pink marble cladding (1930) and a capital with a cartouche on each face (probably original). The ornate plaster ceiling, dating from the original design, has been restored. It consists of deep coffers each with anthemion decoration and a central rosette that was originally a light socket. The moldings between the coffers are ornamented with decorative roundels. There are now lights at each corner of these moldings. Heavy beams extend from the columns. Near the elevators, the ceiling has large unornamented panels. The lobby space is bordered by a cornice ornamented with a Greek fret. The staircase at the southeast corner of the lobby contains Neo-classical style bronze ornament, including an elegant railing with columnar balusters capped by pinecone-like forms, a newel post, and handrails. The stairs have black marble risers and terrazzo treads. The 1930 stair extends up to the second story. A second stair in the northwest corner also extends to the second story and has

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1930 bronze detail, although simpler than that of the southeast stair. The walls of this stair appear to retain some of the lobby's original grayish marble. Both of these stairs appear to have crossed over portions of the lobby and to have originally had balconies (these have been enclosed). The northwest stair crosses over the lobby above the main entrance; the low ceiling of the lobby at this location has an octagonal light fixture from 1930. The lobby also retains a bronze directory board on the south wall and a bronze letter box and mail chute, both manufactured by the Cutler Mail Chute Company; these date from 1930. The original elevators have been replaced, but it is thought that some of the original metal cagework may survive behind the marble (c.1990) that now cover the wall of the semicircular elevator waiting area.

Above the second story, the building has two stairs with extremely handsome original stairways. The cast-iron stair frames have cast-iron risers and marble treads. Complex wrought-iron railings contain ornate rosettes and other details. The newel posts are cast-iron, each capped by an acroterion. The handrails are wood. The stairway walls have plaster moldings with roundels and bead moldings. The upper floors of the building were originally divided into a large number of small offices with no significant detail. These floors have been altered many times as office tenants have changed. The elevators opened into a lobby on each floor. These lobbies and the public halls were originally paved with multi-colored round mosaic tile. At the elevator lobby, the number of the floor was written out in these tiles; several of these are known to survive and others may be extant beneath later flooring.

The south tower retains a substantial amount of original detail. A cast-iron spiral stair winds up the center of this tower from the twenty-seventh to the twenty-ninth floors. The stair wound around an elevator core. The elevator has been removed (its winch is extant on the thirtieth story), but the original cast- and wrought-iron curved elevator door is extant on the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth floors. The thirty-first story is located within the cupola and retains visible arched steel beams and terra-cotta blocks. A cast-iron stair leading into the lantern is designed with steps large enough only for a single foot. The design alternates between steps for the right and left foot.

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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

Areas of Significance:

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Engineering

Period of Significance:

1899-1908

Significant Dates:

1899

1908

Significant Person:

n/a

Cultural Affiliation:

n/a

Architect/Builder:

Robertson, Robert Henry

Narrative Statement of Significance

(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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal Agency
- ☒ Local Government
- ☐ University

Name of repository: _____

NYC Landmarks Preservation
Commission

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8. Statement of Significance

The Park Row Building is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under criterion C as an important late nineteenth-century skyscraper specifically planned and designed to be the world's tallest building. Using innovative structural techniques and elevator technology, the thirty-story building rises on one of the most prominent locations in Lower Manhattan, on Park Row opposite City Hall Park and Broadway. It is one of the most visible buildings in Lower Manhattan and was planned to attract potential tenants with its prominent design and central location. The building is a major work of R.H. Robertson, a leading New York City architect and one of the pioneers in the design of skyscrapers, and it is among his most notable buildings. In addition, the facade contains architectural sculpture by the prominent Scottish-American sculptor J. Massey Rhind. The building has housed several illustrious tenants, including the Associated Press and the headquarters of August Belmont's Interborough Rapid Transit Company, which built the city's first subway system.

The Park Row Building is an important example of a first-generation steel-skeleton frame skyscraper and stands in the area where many of the earliest experiments in skyscraper construction were erected. The building that is generally considered to be the first skyscraper is the Equitable Life Assurance Company Building, erected in 1868-70 on the corner of Broadway and Pine Street (demolished). Although only eight stories tall and built of traditional masonry bearing walled construction, the Equitable was the first office building that incorporated passenger elevators. This permitted the owner to rent floors higher up than in previous buildings and also reversed the hierarchy of stories, since now, for the first time, the upper floors, with their light and views, were more valuable than the lower floors. The Equitable was soon followed by other tall elevator office buildings with traditional construction, notably the Western Union Building (1872-75; demolished), located on Broadway and Dey Street, diagonally across Broadway from the future site of the Park Row Building, and the Tribune Building (1873-75; demolished), on Park Row north of the Park Row Building's site.

During the 1880s many tall office buildings incorporated iron and steel into the traditional bearing wall construction. Architect R.H. Robertson, who would later design the Park Row Building, was responsible for several of these buildings erected of "cage construction," including the Lincoln Building (1889-90; National Register listed) on Union Square. Dramatic change began to occur in New York's skyscrapers with the construction in 1888-89 of the Tower Building (demolished), the first New York City skyscraper (and possibly the first such skyscraper in the world) designed with a steel skeleton frame. With the advent of the steel skeleton frame, coupled with improved elevator technology, and new developments in foundation engineering and wind bracing, skyscrapers rose ever taller.

During the 1890s, enormous skyscrapers, adapting the new technologies, were erected in New York, largely in Lower Manhattan. Park Row was an especially popular area for skyscraper construction because the presence of City Hall Park on the southwest side of Park Row guaranteed that light and air would flow into the new buildings and that tall buildings would not be constructed across the street that would block light and views. Among the most prominent of the buildings was the Park Row Building, erected on an irregularly-shaped plot of land and specifically planned to be the world's tallest building. The thirty-story Park Row Building rises 391 feet to the top of its eye-catching twin towers. At the time of its completion, the Park Row rose 76 feet higher

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than the nearby St. Paul Building, located on the corner of Broadway and Ann Street (demolished), which was then the city's tallest building. The investors in the construction of the Park Row Building wished to build the world's tallest building because they realized that their building would be highly visible on the skyline and because they understood the marketing potential of advertising the world's tallest office building.¹ Since the Park Row Building was entirely a speculative venture in which profits would be determined by the ability to rent office space at the highest possible price, such marketing was extremely significant. The Park Row Building remained the world's tallest until the completion of the Singer Building in 1908. The site chosen for this tall building is especially prominent. The Park Row Building rose on a plot across from the southern end of City Hall Park and visible to the tens-of-thousands of people who traveled along Broadway and the west side of City Hall Park (the site was somewhat less visible at the time of construction than it is today, since the southern end of City Hall Park was occupied by the U.S. Post Office, which would have blocked the view of the Park Row Building's lower floors).

In 1896, William M. Ivins began purchasing land on Park Row, Ann Street, and Theatre Alley for the construction of a skyscraper. Ivins was a prominent and politically well connected local lawyer.² Ivins was apparently the front-man for a syndicate of investors led by August Belmont, one of New York's wealthiest businessmen and a leading society figure. Because of Ivins involvement in the venture, the building was occasionally referred to, in early discussions, as the Ivins Syndicate Building; at other times it was simply called the Syndicate Building, a reference to the fact that it was erected by a syndicate of investors. However, even before its completion, the skyscraper was being referred to as the Park Row Building. The site that the syndicate purchased is highly irregular in shape. It has a 103'11" frontage on Park Row, but due to the inability of the syndicate to acquire lots at the corner of Park Row and Ann Street and of Ann Street and Theatre Alley, its rear elevation on Theatre Alley is only 47'10½" long, and the structure has a narrow, twenty-foot wide wing extending to Ann Street. August Belmont actually purchased one lot on Park Row, between the Park Row Building and the corner of Ann Street, in order to prevent the assemblage of the corner site and the construction of a tall building that would block the windows on the Park Row Building's southern facade.

The architect chosen syndicate to design its new skyscraper was Robert Henderson Robertson. R.H. Robertson (1849-1919) was one of the most prolific architects of the final decades of the nineteenth century and first years of the twentieth century and an important figure in the early history of the New York skyscraper. Born in Philadelphia and a graduate of Rutgers College, Robertson's earliest architectural training was in the Philadelphia office of Henry Sims, a designer of country houses and Gothic churches. In about 1870, Robertson briefly worked in the New York office of George B. Post, another pioneer in skyscraper design (Post designed the Western Union Building and many other early skyscrapers), before opening his own office. In 1874 or 1875,

¹ The Park Row Building was the world's tallest building, but not the world's tallest structure; the Eiffel Tower in Paris was taller.

² "William Mills Ivins," *Dictionary of American Biography* vol. 5 (NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), pp. 522-23; "William Mills Ivins," *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* vol 3 (NY: James T. White & Co., 1943), pp. 10-11.

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Robertson formed a partnership with William Potter, an architect with similar design sensibilities. The Potter & Robertson firm was active until 1880. Working independently during the 1880s, Robertson's designs show the influence of the Romanesque Revival style popularized by Henry Hobson Richardson. Among the Romanesque Revival style buildings designed by Robertson during this decade was the Lincoln Building, his first skyscraper. The Lincoln Building was soon followed by other skyscrapers, including the McIntyre Building (1890), on the corner of Broadway and East 18th Street, the Corn Exchange Bank (1893-94; demolished), at Beaver and William streets, and the American Tract Society Building (1894-95), on Nassau and Spruce streets. Robertson was also a leading designer of ecclesiastical and institutional buildings, including St. Luke's Episcopal Church (1891-92; National Register listed in the Hamilton Heights Historic District) on Convent Avenue and West 141st Street; St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church (now the Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew, 1895-97) on West End Avenue and West 86th Street; and the former headquarters of the YWCA (1885-87), at 7-11 east 15th Street, and the adjoining Margaret Louisa Home (1889-91), at 14-16 East 16th Street. He also designed a few commercial buildings, notably the New York Savings Bank (1896-97, now Central Carpet; National Register listed). During the 1890s, Robertson's work followed the general stylistic development in American architecture and he began to employ Renaissance and Classical motifs. This is especially evident at St. Paul's Methodist Church, with its use of motifs from various European sources, at the Classical Revival New York Savings Bank, and at the Park Row Buildings.

Construction began on the Park Row Building in October 1896 and took three years; the building was occupied in July 1899. The height and irregular shape of the building presented engineering challenges that were worked out by Robertson and engineer Nathaniel Roberts. The foundations are carried on approximately 3,900 spruce piles that were driven into the sandy soil. Concrete was poured around the tops of the piles and each was capped by a granite block that supported brick piers with granite capstones. The capstones held steel grillage beams which supported the skyscraper's structural columns. Because of the irregular shape of the building and the fact that each column and beam would support a different amount of weight, almost no two columns or grillage beams are the same shape. The builders of the Park Row Building attempted to introduce a system of concrete floor slabs rather than the more traditional hollow tile floors. The concrete system was less expansive than tile and considerably lighter. According to Sarah Landau and Carl Condict, the Roebling system of concrete-arch floors "consisted of a stiff perforated, rolled-iron or steel, sheet curved into a vault form and covered with fire-resistant concrete."³ The New York City Board of Examiners was opposed to the use of concrete floors and rejected the proposal to employ the Roebling system. The owners of the Park Row Building sued and eventually won in court, but construction had already begun; thus, the building contains both concrete and tile floors.⁴

³ Sarah Bradford Landau and Carl W. Condict, *Rise of the New York Skyscraper, 1865-1913* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), p. 254.

⁴ The engineering of the building is discussed in Landau and Condict, *The Rise of the New York Skyscraper*, pp. 252-56; "The Park Row Building, 30 Stories High: New York City," *Engineering News* 36 (October 8, 1896), pp. 226-229; New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, "Park Row Building Designation Report," (NY: Landmarks Preservation Commission), p. 4.

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The design of the elevators was also a challenge for the designers since the building had to be planned to efficiently move approximately 20,000 people per day, an estimated 4,000 office work as well as visitors. As *Engineering News* noted, the "transit or elevator problem of this great office building is fairly comparable to handling the surface traffic of a good-sized and enterprising city."⁵ Ten passenger elevators were installed, nine located in an unusual semicircular arrangement at the north side of the building. Two of the elevators extended as high as the towers.

The completed building is faced in beige brick with a stone base. It is extensively ornamented with terra-cotta detail. The facade has a vertical thrust, evident in the tall columns, but, in a manner typical of Robertson's high-rise designs, this verticality is balanced by a strong sense of horizontality, evident, for example in the use of projecting balconies and cornices. The detailing of the skyscraper's Park Row and Ann Street facades reflects Robertson's interest, during the 1890s, in Renaissance design. This is evident in the use of such Renaissance motifs as columns, console brackets, anthemion ornament, ornamental moldings, and the caryatids that support the tower lanterns. The facade of the Park Row Building employs these Renaissance motifs in a somewhat quirky, Mannerist manner; for example, enormous projecting console brackets appear as though they might slide down the facade. The design also exploits the visibility of the site. The main facade rises twenty-six stories along Park Row and is then crowned by a pair of highly-visible, eye-catching four-story round towers, each capped by a lantern with a finial. The towers provide such an unusual silhouette that the building is immediately identifiable in panoramic photographs of the New York skyline taken in the early decades of the twentieth century and, of course, it served as a symbol of the building that, the owners must have hoped, would attract high-paying tenants.

Among the most notable features of the Park Row facade of the building are four monumental figures set between the central windows on the fourth floor, each supported by an enormous bracket. This classically-garbed female figures, said to represent aspects of commerce, were the work of Scots-born sculptor J. Massey Rhind. Among Rhind's other architectural works are the female figures on the facade of the American Surety Building (Bruce Price, 1894-96), at 100 Broadway, which are similar to those on the Park Row Building, the north bronze doors at Trinity Church (1896), Broadway and Wall Street.

The Park Row Building was a successful commercial venture that attracted many small- and large-scale tenants to the offices. Most of the tenants were small law firms and businesses. Among the larger tenants was the Interborough Rapid Transit Company (I.R.T.), the firm that built and ran New York City's first subway line. The I.R.T. was a company established by August Belmont who was also the chief force behind the construction of the Park Row Building. Since the building is located near the southern end of what was known in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as "Newspaper Row," it is logical to expect that some tenants would be involved with news gathering. In fact, the Associated Press, founded in 1900, had its offices in the building.

⁵ "The Elevator Equipment of the Ivins Syndicate Building, Park Row, New York," *Engineering Record* 40 (April 27, 1899), p. 273.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 **Page** 5

Park Row Building
Name of Property
New York County, New York
County and State

Shortly after William Ivins acquired the site for the Park Row Building he retired from the controlling syndicate (his exact role remains a mystery). The property was transferred to the Park Row Construction Company and then, in 1901, to the Park Row Realty Company. The building underwent only minor changes until 1930 when the lower two stories and the lobby were extensively redesigned by the architectural firm of Clinton & Russell. Clinton & Russell had been an important New York City firm since the late nineteenth century and was probably responsible for the construction of more speculative skyscrapers than any other firm. Although both Charles Clinton and William Russell had died by 1930, the firm continued to be involved with skyscraper design and, in fact, at the time it received the commission to alter the Park Row Building, the firm was at work on its most prominent skyscraper, the soaring Cities Service Building at 70 Pine Street. The only later alterations have been the replacement of the original windows and alterations and later restoration of the original lobby ceiling. In 1999 work began on the conversion of the building into a mixed-use commercial and residential building with offices on the lower floors and apartments above.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 1

Park Row Building
Name of Property
New York County, New York
County and State

Major Bibliographic References

Dolkart, Andrew, *Forging a Metropolis: Walking Tours of Lower Manhattan Architecture*. NY: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1990.

"The Elevator Equipment of the Ivins Syndicate Building, Park Row, New York," *Engineering News* 40 (April 27, 1999), 273-75.

Landau, Sara Bradford and Carl Condict, *Rise of the New York Skyscraper, 1865-1913*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996.

New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, "Park Row Building Designation Report," report prepared by Michael Kelleher. NY: Landmarks Preservation Commission, 1999.

"New York's Tallest Office Building," *Carpentry and Building* 20 (September 1898), 216-17.

"The Park Row," *Real Estate Record and Builders Guide* 62 (August 27, 1898), 287-88.

"The Park Row Building, 30 Stories High: New York City," *Engineering News* 36 (October 8, 1896), 226-29.

Schuyler, Montgomery, "The Works of R.H. Robertson," *Architectural Record* 6 (October-December 1896) 184-219.

Park Row Building
Name of Property

New York County, New York
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 1 8 5 8 3 7 6 1 4 5 0 6 9 5 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
organization New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Bureau of Historic Preservation date October 26, 2004
Peebles Island State Park
street & number PO Box 189 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 J & D Apts. LLC, c/o David Weldler, Broadway Management
street & number 80 Broad Street telephone 212-493-7000
city or town New York state NY zip code 10004

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

Park Row Building
Name of Property
New York County, New York
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of this nomination is outlined on the accompanying Sanborn map.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the building.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 1

Park Row Building
Name of Property
New York County, New York
County and State

11. Form Prepared by:

Ward Dennis
Higgins & Quasebarth
270 Lafayette Street
New York, NY 10012
212-274-9468

Additional Documentation

Black and white photos

Park Row Building

15 Park Row

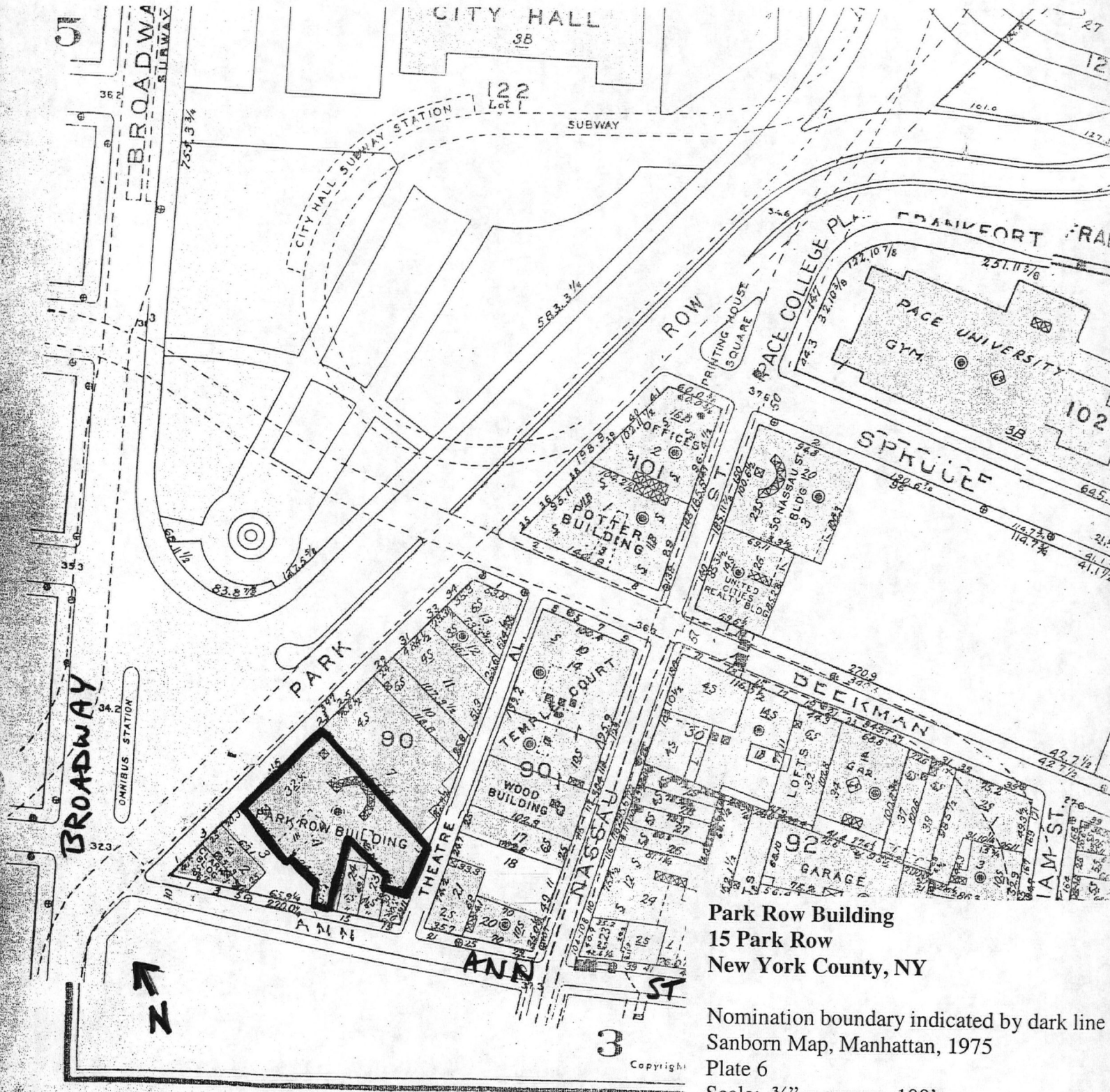
New York County, NY

Photographer: Ward Dennis

Date: October 2004

Negatives on file: Higgins & Quasebarth, 270 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10012

1. Park Row Building, north and east facades. Looking southeast from City Hall Park.
2. North and east facades. Looking southwest on Park Row towards Ann Street.
3. North façade, first and second floors, including storefronts and main entrance. Looking south.
4. North and west facades, 23rd through 29th floors, including towers. Looking east from Vesey Street.
5. East tower, 26th through 29th floors. Looking northeast.
6. Detail of west cupola. Looking southwest from east cupola.
7. Main lobby, looking southeast from front vestibule.
8. Ground-floor elevator lobby, looking east in main lobby.
9. Ground-floor elevator lobby ceiling, looking east in main lobby.
10. 5th-floor elevator lobby, looking southeast.
11. 5th-floor elevator lobby, detail of mosaic floor, looking west.
12. Detail of spiral staircase, west tower, 28th floor, looking west.
13. Fire stair detail, 28th floor, looking south.



Park Row Building
15 Park Row
New York County, NY

Nomination boundary indicated by dark line
Sanborn Map, Manhattan, 1975
Plate 6
Scale: 3/4" = approx. 100'

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Park Row Building
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, New York

DATE RECEIVED: 10/07/05 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 10/25/05
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 11/09/05 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/20/05
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 05001287

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 11.16.05 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.



[45]059 0171 N-1

Park Row Building
New York County, NY
1.



Park Row Building
New York County, NY
2.

143059 0171 N-1



Park Row Building
New York County, NY
3.

[55]059 0171 N-1



Park Row Building
New York County, NY
4.

1643059 0171 N-1



Park Row Building
New York County, NY
5.

1-N 1210 650001



Park Row Building
New York County, NY
Co.

1-N 1210 650101



Park Row Building
New York County, NY
7.

1121059 0171 N-2



121105
Park Row Building
New York County, NY
8.



Park Row Building
New York County, NY
9.

1153059 0171 N-1



Park Row Building
New York County, NY
10.

1253059 0171 N-1



5th
Floor

Park Row Building
New York County, NY
11.



Park Row Building
New York County, NY
12.

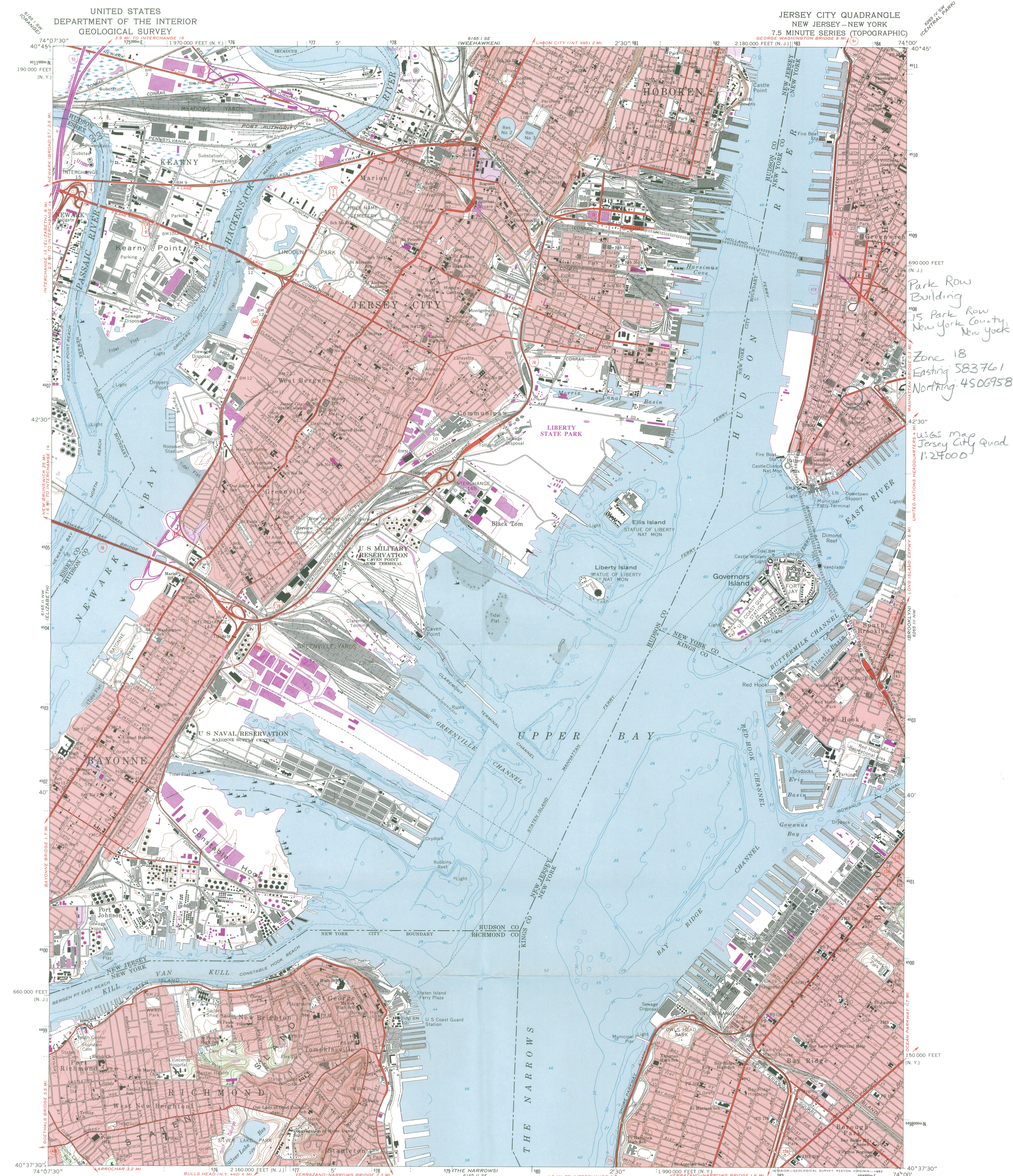
131059 0171 N-1



Park Row Building
New York County, NY
13.

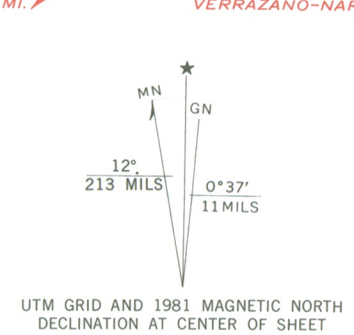
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

JERSEY CITY QUADRANGLE
NEW JERSEY-NEW YORK
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE 8 MI.



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Revised in cooperation with New York Department of Transportation
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, USCE, New Jersey Geologic 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 1956. 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



SCALE 1:24,000
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 SHOWN 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



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

JERSEY CITY, N. J.-N. Y.
N4037.5-W7400/7.5
1967
PHOTOGRAPHICALLY REPRODUCED
DMA 6165 II NE-SERIES V822

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





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

SEP - 3 2004

August 31, 2004

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: Park Row Building, 15 Park Row, 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 Park Row Building at 15 Park Row in Manhattan for the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

The Commission supports the nomination of the Park Row Building. On June 15, 1999, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission voted to designate 15 Park Row an individual New York City landmark. The 15 Park Row building is one of several surviving late nineteenth-century office towers on a street that became known as Newspaper Row, the center of newspaper publishing in New York City from the 1840s to the 1920s. Designed by architect R. H. Robertson, 15 Park Row was the tallest building in New York City and one of the tallest structures in the world between 1899, the year of its completion, and 1908.

Therefore, 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 Park Row 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

AUG-18-2005 THU 09:57 AM

FAX NO.

P. 03/03

PARK ROW REALTY, L.P

80 Broad Street
New York, NY 10004

October 13, 2004

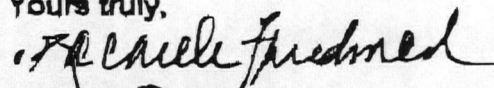
Ms. Kathy Howe
NYS Office of Parks Recreation
& Historic Preservation
Peebles Island
Waterford, NY 12108-0189

Re: **National Register Nomination**
The Park Row Building
15 Park Row
New York, New York County

Dear Ms. Howe:

As the owner of the Park Row Building, I am writing to express my enthusiastic support of the proposed listing of this building on the National Register of Historic Places.

Yours truly,


PARK ROW REALTY, L.P.