NPS Form 10-900
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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 Engineering Societies' Building and Engineers' Club

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 23 and 25-33 West 39th Street; 28, 32-34 and 36 West 40th Street [ ] not for publication

city or town New York [ ] vicinity

state New York code NY county New York code 061 zip code 10018

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 [X] statewide [ ] locally. ([ ] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Ruth A Pierpont DSHPO 7/13/07
Signature of certifying official/Title 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:
[X] 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) _____

for Edson H. Beall 8-30-07
Signature of the Keeper date of action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

[X] private
[ ] public-local
[ ] public-State
[ ] public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

[X] building(s)
[ ] district
[ ] site
[ ] structure
[ ] object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
3	1	**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)

SOCIAL: club
DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling
COMMERCE/TRADE: organizational, professional
EDUCATION: library

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling
COMMERCE/TRADE: business
VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals
Other: Neo-Renaissance

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation
walls Brick. Marble. Limestone. Terra cotta.
roof
other

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

DESCRIPTION

Setting

The neo-Renaissance-style Engineers' Club (Whitfield & King, 1905-07) is located on the south side of West 40th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues directly across the street from Bryant Park and the New York Public Library (NR-listed) in Midtown Manhattan. Also located on this block is the Beaux-Arts-style Knox Building at 452 Fifth Avenue (John H. Duncan, 1901-02; NR-listed), the Gothic-inspired American Radiator Building at 40 West 40th Street (Raymond Hood, 1923-24; NR-listed), and the Bryant Park Studios at 80 West 40th Street (Charles A. Rich, 1900-01; NYC Landmark). The companion building to the Engineers' Club is the neo-Renaissance Engineering Societies' Building (Hale & Morse, 1905-07) which backs up to it on the south and fronts West 39th Street.

The nominated complex consists of three contributing buildings: the Club building at 32-34 West 40th Street (and its addition at 23 West 39th Street); the Societies' building at 25-33 West 39th Street; and an ancillary building at 28 West 40th Street. Another ancillary building at 36 West 40th Street is considered non-contributing.

Engineering Societies' Building, 25-33 West 39th Street

Exterior (photos 1-7)

As originally built, the Engineering Societies' Building was 115' wide by 90' deep. Its central entrance is no longer in use as a primary entry; instead, the western entrance, originally described as a "side door leading to the elevators"[1] is now the primary entry. As the building occupied only 85% of its lot, it was possible to surround it with a "broad driveway which encircles it completely, so that carriages can enter by the eastern covered arch, set down their occupants at a side entrance and emerge by the western gate." The eastern covered arch has been replaced by a narrow, six-story-tall commercial building (at 23 West 39th Street) added to the Engineers' Club (see below) in 1913; a one-story tall service gate has replaced the western gate.

The principal façade on West 39th Street is organized on the "base-shaft-capital" analogy of a classical column. The three-story base consists of a rusticated basement, above a stone watertable, with five rectangular openings. The opening at the west is today the principal entry, while the original central entrance is now a garage door entrance; there is a square-headed window between the two entrances, and two square-headed windows to the east of the central entrance. Each opening is deeply recessed, and each is capped by a row of voussoir blocks with a taller central keystone. A decorative frieze marks the top of the basement. The upper two stories of the base are arranged as a central, double-height triple arcade flanked by slightly projecting pavilions (the portions of the basement directly below these sections also project slightly). Each arch includes a giant window with an elaborate iron enframement and glass panes, sitting above a one-story aedicular stone doorway at its base

[1] *American Architect and Building News* (AABN).

(including a frieze and console brackets beneath a triangular pediment) flanked by stone panels; the doorway opens onto a narrow balcony with a metal railing. Each arch has a large console bracket at its apex, and the spandrels are filled with carved fronds. The central arch is separated from the arches to either side by a pair of plain Doric columns; the side arches are flanked by a column paired with a flat pier. These columns and piers carry an entablature with a frieze interrupted by dentilled brackets above each column, each bracket with a carved wreath at its top. The brackets in turn support a projecting dentilled cornice. The projecting pavilions flanking the arcade consist of a tall aedicular window with a short tripartite window above; each aedicular window includes a paneled sill, and a dentilled cornice supported on console brackets. The tripartite window above has a footed sill, and three narrow rectangular openings.

Above the base rises a seven-story "shaft," which continues the division of the façade into three central bays with a projecting pavilion bay at either side. The fourth story is transitional in design; in each of the three central bays there is an aedicular window with a balustrade at its base and a dentilled cornice supported on console brackets, similar in design, though not identical, to the second story windows flanking the central arcade. These three windows are both separated and flanked by a stone roundel under a miniature cornice with the sculpted head of a lion holding a swag in its mouth. The windows at either side are simple rectangular openings topped by a shallow stone cornice.

The windows in the upper six stories in the central three bays are set in iron frames, and grouped together in three giant six-story stone-framed openings. Each individual window bay consists of a three smaller sections, a narrower one to either side of a wider central one; a crossbar separates each section of the window into a lower section with a double-hung window and an upper section with a fixed window. The vertical elements separating the smaller sections from each other are in the shape of very slender columns. Each window bay is separated from the one in the next story by a decorative metal pattern suggesting a balustrade. At the top of each of the three central six-story window groupings, the stone enframement has a central bracket; the three groups are separated and flanked by stone roundels encircled by wreaths held in the jaws of a lion's head. The windows in the flanking pavilions are simpler – similar nine-part windows in iron frames but each set within individual square-headed brick openings with a stone panel under a sill separating each from the one above it.

The top two stories reprise the double-height arcade in the base, with tall arched windows set between columns supporting an architrave, and individually framed square-headed windows topped by tripartite windows in the flanking bays. A projecting dentilled cornice with lion heads above each column marks the top of the original building. Two stories added to the original in 1916 (architect Henry G. Morse) are sufficiently set back that they are not visible above the façade as seen from the street.

Two secondary facades are visible, one on the east and one on the west. The eastern façade, visible above the three-story base, repeats exactly the design of the principal façade. The western façade, by contrast, is much plainer, with simple rectangular windows with stone sills. The additional stories are just visible on either of the secondary facades. They are faced simply in brick with square-headed windows.

Interior (photos 8-11)

Elevator lobby

The elevator lobby is a long, narrow corridor approached by two short flights of steps from an entrance vestibule. Surviving detail includes a set of flat piers forming wall panels across from three elevator bays, and various classically-inspired moldings where the walls meet the ceiling. At the rear of the elevator lobby a short flight of steps descends to a glass door that originally "communicate[d] across the ten-foot areaway, in the open, with the café of the Club-house."[2] Close by is a bronze letter-box attached to a single Cutler mail-chute. Opposite the letter-box, a grand staircase rises up through several stories. At the lobby level, it has flat piers, flanking a niche, and carrying an entablature; it also has an ornamental metal railing.

Main floor

The main floor to the east of the elevator lobby, once the principal entry to the building, has been converted to garage space.

Third and fourth stories

These stories originally housed an auditorium, with a raked floor, seating 1,000; they have since been converted into individual floors. The double-height arched windows with aedicular doorways on the 39th Street façade are equally visible on the third story. The upper portions of those windows are visible on the fourth story, which is otherwise now plain.

Fifth story

The fifth story originally housed "two spacious assembly-rooms" plus "two smaller rooms." Some classical detailing appears to survive in the larger rooms: paired piers set between the windows on the wall facing 39th Street, though they and the walls of which they are part have been covered in fabric. Wall paneling, doorway moldings and recessed ceiling panels also appear to survive from the original.

Upper stories

The upper stories were originally divided into offices and meeting rooms as follows: the sixth story had small lecture rooms, the seventh and eighth stories had offices for "associate societies that have engineering or some department of science as their principal object,"[3] and the ninth, tenth, and eleventh stories were devoted to offices of three "Founder Societies," respectively the American Institute of Mining Engineers, the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. The twelfth and thirteenth

[2] AABN
[3] AABN

stories were operated as a joint engineering library, with stacks on the twelfth story. The double-height windows at the top of the 39th Street façade correspond to these stories, and are visible within. Some original moldings appear to survive in all these stories, but in general they have been rebuilt or redesigned in the years since the Engineering Societies vacated the building. The fourteenth and fifteenth stories which are later additions to the building are now in use as office space.

Engineers' Club, West 40th Street

Exteriors (photos 12-17, 30 and 31)

The Club Building, 32-34 West 40th Street

Though designed by different architects than the Engineering Societies' Building, in a somewhat different mode, and using different materials – and though the Engineering Societies' Building is five bays wide while the Engineers' Club is only three bays wide – nevertheless, the designs of the two buildings have much in common. In particular, like the Societies' Building, the Club is organized on the base-shaft-capital model; its three-story base is likewise comprised of a rusticated basement with a two-story triple arcade above; there are six stories in the shaft, with the lowest of those designed as a transitional story; and there is a double-height triple arcade in the topmost stories.

The three-story base is entirely faced in stone. Its rusticated basement story includes a central entranceway flanked by a round-arched window on either side. Above the entrance is an entablature supported on two console brackets. The second- and third-stories are organized as three bays set between four fluted pilasters with ornamentally carved capitals. Each bay comprises a large window in an eared surround topped by an entablature with a carved swag, and a round-arched window above with ornamental carving. The four pilasters carry an elaborately ornamental entablature with a dentilled cornice which supports four stone urns.

The intermediate seven stories are faced mostly in brick, with stone quoins at either edge. The first story is marked as transitional by the four urns mentioned above and the stone facing behind them. Each window in each story is square in shape, with a simple stone surround including a single console bracket at the top center. At the uppermost of these stories, the windows are separated by large double console brackets with carved shields below; these console brackets in turn support the projecting stone balustrade that marks the bottom of the top-most section.

Unlike the design at the Societies' Building, the top-most section is not an exact repeat of the base. It is a triple arcade, with arched windows, but without a lower set of rectangular windows. The wall behind the stone columns is brick, only the arches themselves are stone. Each arch has a large console bracket at its apex which, along with the columns, supports an attic story with short rectangular windows separated by stone ornament; above this story there is a projecting dentilled cornice with a stone balcony above.

The secondary elevations of the Club building are visible above the fifth story. On the east, the façade is plain brick, with simple windows punched in at various points; a recessed airshaft is also visible. On the west, the elevation is similar, but includes a metal fire-escape running the length of the airshaft.

No. 28 West 40th Street (adjoining the Club to the east)

This contributing ancillary building was purchased by the Club before 1920, and is now interconnected with the Club building. Four stories with an attic, it has a modern storefront, but is faced in brick and brownstone in the upper stories. The upper stories appear almost unchanged as compared to a 1939 Finance Department photograph of the building (see attached), including a projecting section at the second story on the west and a single column separating windows in the recessed portion on the east. The third and fourth stories are faced in brick with horizontal strips of brownstone. The attic story appears to have been refaced; the balustraded balcony capping the building has been altered.

No. 36 West 40th Street (adjoining the Club to the west)

Though it is now interconnected with the Club building, this is a non-contributing ancillary building. The original brownstone on this site has been altered, enlarged by one story, and refaced in brick over a stone-faced storefront

No. 23 West 39th Street (addition to the Club, but adjoining the Engineers' Society Building on the east)

Though designed in 1913 by Beverly S. King – of Whitfield & King, the original architects of the 40th Street Club building – No. 23 West 39th Street was designed to harmonize with the adjoining Engineers' Societies Building. The addition has a simple brick-faced, five-story-tall, two-bay wide façade; ornament is limited to a stone voussoir block in the flat arch of each window opening, and a simple brick frieze and stone cornice that match and link up with the frieze and cornice topping the base of the Societies Building. There is a modern ground-floor storefront in use by a restaurant.

Interiors (photos 18-29)

The Club building

Main floor and staircase

A small vestibule opens on a long, wide lobby space supported by tall wooden piers and wooden Ionic columns with marble capitals. The plaster ceiling is recessed, with restrained plaster moldings. The walls are faced with marble. In the center, to the west, the lobby opens onto a stairhall with an elegant, grand staircase, with carved newel posts and decorative metal banisters. Above the lobby level it becomes a dual staircase with landings on the second and third stories. At the third story, the stairhall rises to a paneled plaster ceiling with a central oval

leaded-glass skylight; the walls at that level are comprised of a blind arcade supported on pairs of wooden Ionic columns.

To the rear of the main floor are rooms which have been carved out of the former Grille Room. Details surviving from that original use include a leaded glass transom and window, a wood-beamed ceiling, and two fireplaces.

Second and third stories

The various club rooms and the billiard room on these stories have been carved up into apartments; some of the original detail survives inside.

Fourth through tenth stories

The 66 bedrooms maintained by the club have been reconfigured into apartments.

Eleventh and twelfth stories

The grand banquet hall on these floors has also been carved into separate apartments, but much original detail survives, including double-height carved wooden piers and columns; elaborate floor-to-ceiling fireplaces with wooden Ionic columns and elaborately carved wooden mantels and paneling; and elaborate plaster ceiling moldings. A mezzanine story has been inserted into one such apartment to provide sleeping quarters.

No. 28 West 40th Street (adjoining the Club to the east)

This interior connects to the lobby of the main building. It has a handsome wooden staircase rising to a wooden dome, with an arcade supported on fluted wooden Ionic columns. The staircase includes polygonal newel posts and a banister with slender spiral supports; the stairhall has a leaded glass window. Several apartments in the building have original fireplaces, wooden beamed ceilings, carved moldings and sliding "pocket" doors.

No. 36 West 40th Street (adjoining the Club to the west)

The interiors of this non-contributing building are considered non-historic. The only portion accessible from the main part of the club is the reconfigured first-floor hallway leading to a secondary entrance from West 40th Street.

No. 23 West 39th Street (addition to the Club, but adjoining the Engineers' Society Building on the east)

This interior is simple and utilitarian, and considered non-historic.

Engineering Societies' Building and Engineers' Club
Name of Property

New York County, New York
County and State

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.)

[X] **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.

[X] **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)

Engineering

Social History

Architecture

Period of Significance:

1905-1957

Significant Dates:

1907

1913. 1925

1957

Significant Person:

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect/Builder:

Hale & Morse (Societies' building)

Whitfield & King (Club building)

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
[ ] Other repository: _____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

The engineering profession has played a major role in the industrial and economic development of the United States over the past two centuries. New York City itself is inconceivable without the engineering triumphs of its bridges, subways, water works and skyscrapers. The city and state have been central to the development of the engineering profession in this country. Many of the major engineering organizations have had their headquarters in New York, and the country's first engineering social club was formed in the city. A number of these organizations -- the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, the American Institute of Mining Engineers, and the Engineers' Club – joined together at the turn of the 20th century and, with the financial backing of industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, created two back-to-back buildings: a new home for the Engineers' Club on West 40th Street, and an Engineering Societies' Building on West 39th Street.

Following an architectural competition, two firms won the commissions – Whitfield & King for the Club, and Hale and Morse for the Societies' Building. Though distinct designs by different architects, the two buildings reflected a classical approach to architecture, and also exemplified the tripartite "base-shaft-capital" model of early skyscraper design. That tripartite division also served to express the interior organization of each building. Both buildings have since been converted to other uses, and have suffered some interior alterations, but by and large they survive as monuments to the impact of the engineering profession on the country, and the place of New York City in the history of that profession. They meet Criterion A in the areas of social and engineering history and Criterion C as examples of early-twentieth-century neo-Renaissance design. The period of significance spans from 1905 up to 1957, the date when the engineering groups of the Societies' Building moved to new headquarters. The Engineers' Club continued to occupy their building up until 1979.

SIGNIFICANCE

The engineering profession in the United States at the end of the 19th century

The engineering profession is intimately connected with the growth of the United States over the past two centuries into a major industrial and economic power. During most of that time, New York City and State were major foci of the engineering world.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the country's economy was largely agrarian, but over the course of that century engineering and industry transformed both the country and its economy. Early in the century, the growth of road and bridge construction stimulated the growth of the engineering profession. New York State's huge Erie Canal project resulted in a doubling of the number of engineers in the country.[4] Later in the century,

[4] John Rae and Rudi Volti, *The Engineer in History* (New York and Oxford: Peter Lang Publishing), p. 137.

the growth of enormous organizations devoted to steel, petroleum, electricity and construction both led to and depended on growing numbers of engineering professionals.

New York State has been called "the birthplace of professional engineering in the United States."[5] The first academic class in civil engineering was offered at West Point in 1801, and the first degree in civil engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic in 1835. The impact of engineering on New York can hardly be overstated: the city's emergence as a grand metropolis would be inconceivable without such engineering triumphs as the Erie Canal, the Croton Reservoir, the Brooklyn Bridge, the subway system, and the great skyscrapers.

American engineers began to organize along professional lines in the mid-19th century: the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), 1852; the American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical, and Petroleum Engineering (AIME), 1871; the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) 1880; the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE), 1884; the American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE), 1908. Their principal aims were educational, through publications and conferences.[6] These organizations were national in scope, but much of their activity centered in New York City. Not surprisingly, when, in September of 1888, a group of engineers meeting at the ASCE's New York offices organized the country's first Engineers' Club, its location was in this city.[7] Nor was it surprising when, sixteen years later, three of the country's major engineering societies formed a Union and built a combined headquarters building, the location chosen was also New York City.

The Engineers' Club

American social clubs on the model of the English gentleman's club formed early in the 19th century in New York City.[8] Towards the end of the century, the city counted more than one hundred such clubs, with some 50,000 members – making New York second in number of such organizations only to London. Such clubs often organized around professional interests – the Union Club for the law, the Lambs Club for the theater, the Friars Club for comedians. Others were organized around university affiliation, or ethnicity, or politics, or a common interest.

From the beginning, the membership of the Engineers' Club was

> ...composed of gentlemen connected with the engineering professions or having business relations with engineering enterprises... It is said to be the first club of its kind organized in this country, but such clubs have been successful abroad, particularly in London.[9]

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[5] Kenneth T. Jackson, editor, *Encyclopedia of New York City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), "Engineering," entry by Joanne Abel Goldman, pp 376-7.

[6] A.A. Harms, B.W. Baetz, R.R. Volti, *Engineering in Time: The Systematics of Engineering History and its Contemporary Context* (London, UK: Imperial College Press, 2004) Chapter 6, section 6.13, "Engineering Organizations," p. 135.

[7] "A New Club Incorporated," *New York Times,* September 9, 1888 p.13; "Club for Engineers," *New York Times,* December 6, 1888, p.3; "The Engineers' Club Opened," *New York Times,* April 28, 1889, p.6.

[8] Jackson, *Encyclopedia of New York City, op. cit.*, "Social Clubs," entry by James E. Mooney, p. 1082.

[9] "Club for Engineers," *New York Times,* December 6, 1888, p.3.

The club's founding officers included James A. Burden of the Burden Iron Works in Troy, NY; Henry R. Towne of the Yale & Towne Manufacturing Company in Stamford, Conn.; James C. Bayles, president of the Spiral Weld Tube Company; A.C. Rand of the Rand Rock Drill Company; and David Williams, publisher of *Iron Age*.[10] The club got started with a membership of 350, with a planned limit of 1000.

> The club is in no sense local, but embraces all the States of the Union, as well as Canada and Mexico.[11]

The Club's first home was in rented space at 10 West 29th Street. Unlike the professional engineering societies, the club's purpose was mainly social. As described in the *New York Times* in 1889:

> One of the most enjoyable social events of the season was the reception last evening tendered the visiting gentlemen of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers by their sister society the Engineers' Club at their well-appointed clubhouse, 10 West Twenty-ninth-street. About 400 engineers were present... [12]

In general, the Engineers Club was considered a success from the start. According to the *Times* in 1891:

> Class clubs are quite the order of the day in New-York City just now, and the success which has attended the comparatively useful Engineers' Club is typical of the success which has crowned the organization of most of the clubs of this sort. Prior to the creation of the Engineers' Club the metropolis was well supplied with associations and organizations of engineering bent, but up to that time the men of engineering turn of mind had no purely social organization. The associations of mining, civil, and mechanical engineers were essentially trade organizations in which "shop" was uppermost..... So rapidly has [the Club] since grown and prospered that to-day it has nearly 600 [members]. The clause of the constitution defining eligibility is broad enough to admit all desirable men directly or indirectly interested in engineering, being couched in these words: "The Engineers' Club shall be composed of engineers and others who may be interested in or connected with the engineering profession." Under this clause no end of prominent men have secured admission.... The Engineers' Club is purely social and in no sense a trade club. No technical papers are ever read at its meetings, and no technical business is transacted. The club is run on precisely the same lines as are all social clubs, its round of monthly meetings being diversified by occasional receptions and other social events. Receptions have been given to civil engineers, mechanical engineers, officers of the army and navy, and to the delegates to the recent international convention of steel and iron workers. ...In previous years bi-monthly subscription dinners have been a feature of the club's Winter life. The series of dinners for 1891-2 will shortly be instituted.[13]

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[10] *Ibid.*
[11] "The Engineers' Club Opened," *New York Times,* April 28, 1889, p.6.
[12] "Engineers' Reception," *New York Times,* September 21, 1889, p.4.
[13] "Club News and Gossip," *New York Times,* October 11, 1891, p.11.

The Club soon outgrew its original rooms, and in 1896

> ...leased the Coleman-Drayton residence, at Fifth Avenue and Thirty-fifth street, and will soon move into it. The building will be remodeled on a somewhat extensive scale. There will be a restaurant and probably a roof garden, and the library of the club will also find a place in the new quarters.[14]

Within a few more years, however, the Club planned yet another move, this time to the block of West 40th Street between Fifth and Sixth avenues, just across the street from Bryant Park and the new home of the New York Public Library. A number of social clubs were already located on this block – clubs with not just meeting rooms and dining rooms, but also with bedrooms. These include two clubs in tall buildings which have since been demolished: the Republican Club at No. 5 (York & Sawyer, 1904), and the New York Club at No. 20 (Henry J. Hardenbergh, 1906). Historian Robert A.M. Stern has called these two, along with the building that would soon rise for the Engineers' Club, the "most architecturally distinguished" of such tower clubhouses in the city.[15]

The Engineers' Club moved to acquire the West 40th Street property. Before the project could get underway, however, it became subsumed into a larger project involving a union of the major professional engineering societies, financed by a major gift from industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie.

Andrew Carnegie

Andrew Carnegie, a Scottish immigrant, made one of America's largest fortunes in the steel industry.[16] In the latter years of his life, he focused on giving his money away.

Carnegie initially struggled with the decision of how best to spend his philanthropic dollars. Early on he gave money for libraries and church organs, and in 1885 he gave $50,000 to establish the United States' first medical laboratory at Bellevue hospital. But he also considered other avenues. As his name and wealth were so publicly known, many people and institutions took an interest in his plans. A newspaper in the United Kingdom published a large advertisement for a contest sponsored by the makers of Mother Siegel's Syrup: "How Mr. Carnegie Should Get Rid of His Wealth." The contest generated more than 45,000 suggestions.

Carnegie eventually narrowed the focus of his philanthropy to education – including libraries, colleges and universities, scientific institutions, and teachers' grants and pensions. Eventually he helped fund 2,814 libraries – generally known today as Carnegie libraries – 1,946 of them in the United States. Realizing that the job was greater than any one person could effectively handle, in 1911 he created the Carnegie Corporation of New York – one of the first modern charitable foundations – which, along with the Carnegie Trust in the United Kingdom, took over the enterprise. But Carnegie's focus on education had already formed – his personal philanthropy in

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[14] "Engineers' Club's New Home," *New York Times,* November 5, 1896, p.9.
[15] Robert A.M. Stern, Gregory Gilmartin and John Montague Massengale, *New York 1900: Metropolitan Architecture and Urbanism, 1890-1915* (New York: Rizzoli, 1983), p.240.
[16] For Carnegie see Joseph Frazier Wall, *Andrew Carnegie* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

the years prior to the creation of the Corporation included the Carnegie Institution in Washington, D.C., the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh, and the Carnegie Teachers Pension Fund.[17]

Given his interest in education and his own experience in the steel industry, Carnegie was a likely figure to be approached for financial aid for a project involving engineering societies.

Engineering Societies Union

In 1895, W.D. Weaver of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers (AIEE) approached Carnegie about a plan to create a joint headquarters for the various engineering societies.[18] Nothing came of that first suggestion, but in 1903 another proposal had more success. Carnegie had contributed to a library fund for the AIEE, and was invited to attend the organization's "Library Dinner" on February 9th, 1903. Carnegie spoke at this dinner about "co-operation among engineers," while the organization's president spoke of

> ...the need of a building for engineering societies. The next day Mr. Carnegie sent for Mr. C.F. Scott, president of the Institute, and Mr. Calvin W. Rice, chairman of its building committee, and discussed with them broadly the idea of a union engineering building. He said that a scheme of that kind should embrace the social as well as the technical interests of engineering.[19]

Scott and Rice told Carnegie of the existence of the Engineers' Club, noting that the Club had acquired the site on West 40th Street.

> The locality appealed to Mr. Carnegie as highly suitable, and on February 14...he wrote a brief letter, saying: "It will give me great pleasure to give, say, $1,000,000 to erect a suitable union building for you all, as the same may be needed."[20]

One year later, following many meetings and negotiations, Carnegie increased the amount of his proposed gift to $1,500,000, offered to four organizations: The American Institute of Electrical Engineers, the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, the American Institute of Mining Engineers, and the Engineers' Club. (A fifth organization, the American Society of Civil Engineers, initially intended to be part of the group, declined to participate.[21]) The gift was meant to pay for a building; the various institutions would acquire the land.

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[17] Wall, Chapter 22, "Philanthropy Becomes a Business, 1901-1911."
[18] *The Engineering Societies Building, West Thirty-Ninth Street New York City – Historical and Descriptive* (prepared for the Dedication Exercises April 16-19, 1907).
[19] *Engineering Societies Building*, *ibid.*, p. 3.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 4.
[21] "Carnegie's Offer Refused," *New York Times,* March 3, 1904, p.1.

The initial thought was to combine the Societies' building in the proposed 40th Street club,

> ...but owing to the difficulties involved in the purchase of as much land as would be necessary and in combining under the one roof all the social and technical functions exercised by these organizations, it was decided to erect two separate buildings, one for the Club on Fortieth street and one for the professional societies on Thirty-ninth street, the two buildings to be placed in such relationship and contiguity that access from one to the other would be easy and the underlying common purpose thus be subserved to the full extent.[22]

The four organizations formed a joint Conference Committee, which took the project to completion.

The architectural competition

Although the two buildings were meant to be complementary, they were not designed by the same architect. Instead, the Conference Committee organized an architectural competition to identify an architectural firm for each building. As described in the pamphlet prepared for the dedication exercises for the Societies' Building:

> The worldwide fame of the donor, the magnitude of his gift, the national character of the engineering societies, and the great cost of the contemplated edifice, made the selection of an architect a semi-public matter of more than ordinary importance. The plan of selection adopted was that of a "mixed competition," in accordance with what was understood to be the wish of Mr. Carnegie....[23]

Six prominent firms were invited to submit a plan, each firm to be paid $1000. The six were: Ackerman & Partridge, Carrere & Hastings, Clinton & Russell, Lord & Hewlett, Palmer & Hornbostel, and Whitfield & King. Other architects were also invited, and in addition the competition was thrown open to any architect "who for two or more years had been in the actual practice of their profession, under their own name." Four prizes of $400 were given to the best of the non-invited group.

> All plans were submitted anonymously, and the Committee associated with itself as professional adviser Dr. W. R. Ware, Professor Emeritus of Architecture in Columbia University.

The results: Whitfield & King, one of the six invited firms, won the commission for the Engineers' Club. One New York firm, Trowbridge & Livingston, won one of the $400 prizes for the group of "other invited architects." None of the six firms, however, won the commission for the Engineering Societies' Building. Instead, the commission went to another of the $400-prize-winning non-invited architects: Boston-based Herbert D. Hale, in association with Henry G. Morse.

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[22] *Engineering Societies Building, op. cit.*, p.4
[23] *Ibid.*

The architects

The firm of Whitfield & King was formed by Col. Henry D. Whitfield (d.1949) and Beverly S. King (1879-1935). Their partnership did not last past 1910. After that date, King moved to White Plains, working there until 1933 when he was appointed Deputy Administrator of the National Recovery Administration (NRA), one of the "New Deal" agencies created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. He died two years later in Washington, D.C., hit by a car. Whitfield, who graduated Harvard in 1898, continued his practice in New York independently from 1910 to 1924.[24]

Both in partnership with King and separately, Whitfield appears to have benefited from the coincidence of being the brother of Louise Whitfield – Andrew Carnegie's wife. Besides winning (anonymously, according to official accounts) the competition for the Engineers' Club, Whitfield & King also designed a neo-Federal garage for Carnegie – one of the first private garages in the city – in 1904, and the model tenement Phipps Houses at West 63rd-64th Street in Manhattan (1906, underwritten by Henry Phipps, a former partner of Carnegie's). Both in practice with King and later on his own, Whitfield designed a number of Carnegie libraries[25], including the Tufts College Library (Medford, Mass.[26]), the Carnegie library at White Plains (1908[27]), and a library in Cleveland (1909[28]). Other Whitfield & King commissions included a police station in the Bronx on White Plains Road at East 229th Street.[29] Whitfield's other independent work included the Flatbush Congregational Church at East 18th Street, and the Heads and Horns Building at the New York Zoological Society (the Bronx Zoo) in 1922.[30]

Herbert D. Hale (1866-1909), born in Boston, was the son of clergyman and writer Edward Everett Hale – a literary celebrity at the time, best known as the author of "The Man Without a Country." Hale graduated Harvard in 1888, and continued his studies in Paris at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. He was briefly in partnership with James Gamble Rogers in the firm of Hale & Rogers. Hale died unexpectedly at the age of 42, just a few years after the completion of the Engineering Societies Building, which counted as one of the highlights of his short career. Other work included high school buildings in Orange, NJ[31], Plainfield, NJ[32], Winchester, Mass[33], and East Boston[34]. In 1908 Hale was associated with the design of the Baltimore & Ohio Railway Office

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[24] Obituary, *New York Times,* February 14, 1949, p.19.
[25] *New York Times*, March 13, 1910, p.C12.
[26] *Western Architect*, June 1908, p. 74.
[27] *Western Architect*, June 1908, p.74.
[28] *American Architect and Building News (AABN)*, 4/28/09 p.6.
[29] *AABN*, August 8, 1903, p.X.
[30] *New York Times, May* 28, 1922.
[31] *AABN,* March 10, 1906, p.VII.
[32] *AABN,* 10/17/03 p.X.
[33] *AABN,* July 9, 1904, p.15.
[34] *AABN,* November 13, 1897, p. XII.

building in Baltimore.[35] At the time of his death Hale had just won a competition to design a major post office in New Orleans.[36]

Henry G. Morse (d.1934), besides being an architect, was also a member of the Engineers' Club.[37] Morse studied at MIT, and did most of his work as a partner in the firm of Hawes & Morse, and later independently. His work, besides the Engineering Societies' Building, included the Carnegie Institute in Camden, NJ, the YMCA in Camden, NJ, and the Warwick Priory and Agecroft Hall outside Richmond, Va.[38] He also designed a clubhouse for the Quaker Ridgefield and Country Club in New Rochelle.[39]

At the dedicatory exercises held for the buildings on April 16, 1907, Carnegie spoke about the architects:

> "Who are the architects?" he said. "Are they a well-known firm? No. They are two young men who perhaps were never heard from before in New York, and there is the proud father of one of them, [pointing to Dr. Hale,] and there is a proud lady sitting up there in the gallery, [pointing to Mrs. Carnegie,] for the other one was Mrs. Carnegie's brother. There's democracy for you. No social influence in determining the architecture of this building, but twenty-eight sets of plans out of which this one was selected by unanimous choice."[40]

The designs – complementary, interconnected, but distinct

The two buildings were designed in such a way as to make clear that they were interconnected in purpose and function, but at the same time two distinct buildings. As reported in the *New York Times*:

> The programme of competition for the selection of an architect for the Engineering Building and the Engineers' Club followed roughly the fundamental requisites laid down by Mr. Carnegie, whose main thought was to have erected a structure in two parts, similar in exterior treatment and properly connected in the spirit of architecture, at the same time absolutely separate and distinct in the interior arrangement...[41]

In particular, Carnegie desired that the two buildings be

> ...above all simple and dignified in the matter of decoration. His requirements were few, and he interjected no others during the entire time of the preliminary work, leaving the several organizations absolutely free to carry out his ideas in their own way.

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[35] *AABN,* September 30, 1908, p.4.
[36] *AABN,* April 29, 1909, p.17.
[37] Obituary, *New York Times,* May 29, 1934, p.19.
[38] Obituary, *New York Times.*
[39] *AABN,* November 5, 1916, p. XX4.
[40] "Engineers Open Their New Home, *New York Times, April* 17, 1907, p.18.
[41] "Palatial Home and Workshops for New York Engineers," *New York Times,* September 4, 1904, p.SE8.

The Engineering Societies' own pamphlet describes the building as being "designed in the latest French Renaissance style," while the Engineers' Club's pamphlet described *that* building as designed in "simple classic design." The Engineering Societies' Building was, in fact, somewhat subdued in its ornamental treatment. The Engineering Club, on the other hand – in the words of the *Times* account – "strikes even the layman as sumptuous in the extreme. It is doubtful if anywhere in this country so luxurious a club dwelling exists."

Each building's facade is organized on the tripartite "base-shaft-capital" model typical of early skyscrapers, but beyond that formal basis, each exterior – in the words of the respective organizations – expressed the interior division of building functions.

For the Engineers' Club:

> Briefly stated, the architectural features comprise a stylobate that embraces the entire first story, and upon which rest four Corinthian pillars running up through two stories and supporting a rich entablature. This treatment enframes the windows of the clubroom and the billiard room; so that the whole of the first three stories is built of marble, insuring a beautiful and dignified effect.
> Above these first three stories rise the six stories devoted to bedrooms. These are treated in red brick, of bright and cheerful aspect. Marble quoins run up the sides of the building, accentuating the outline, and the windows have marble architraves, sills and lintels. At the level of the banquet hall floor, on the eleventh story, is an ornamental balcony the full width of the building, supported on brackets. Four engaged columns at this story separate the tall, round-arched windows of the banquet hall, or dining room. Above this the building is finished off with a marble cornice and balustrade.[42]

For the Engineering Societies' Building:

> The exterior is built of limestone up to the auditorium floor, and of gray mottled brick and terra cotta above; the whole having a cheerful cream tint on all four sides. The treatment is restrained and dignified, but without severity. As the lower portion is devoted to auditoriums, the middle section to offices, and the upper part to the library, an effort has been made to accentuate these three separate parts of the Building, with a happy result..... [43]

The building interiors reflect the different goals of the two buildings. The Club was a social institution, and its chief rooms were social – and residential – in nature. As described by the Club itself:

> [The entrance is through a small] but commodious vestibule, by which access is gained to the hall or foyer. On the left is the reception room for strangers; on the right is the writing room for members, fitted up with writing tables, mail boxes etc. Adjacent is the administration office, and across the hall is the

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[42] *The New Club House of the Engineers' Club, Being a Preliminary Description of the Plans and Details,* New York, the Trustees, 1905.

[43] *Engineering Societies Building, op. cit.*

> capacious coat room, equal to the care of no fewer than five hundred coats and hats. Passing along the hall to the center of the house, one comes to the grand main stairway, which leads up from the right-hand side to the third floor. At the end of the hall is a large, quaintly artistic café with a grille. A bar, cigar stand, four telephone booths, and a small lavatory are also provided on this floor. On the left of the foyer hall are the service stairs and three electric elevators....run from basement to roof....

Public rooms occupied by second and third stories:

> On the second story is the large clubroom at the front of the building, and the library is at the rear. Both rooms are of stately proportions and appropriately equipped. ... The billiard room is large enough to accommodate six tables, and around the sides is a luxurious platform, raised about eight inches from the floor, with broad benches, upon which spectators may sit and watch the game....[There is] open ornamental fireplace at each end. [At the rear of the floor are three large rooms for] cards, house committee and... board of governors.

The next six stories were given over to 66 bedrooms. Above those was a

> private dining-room floor....[on which] two large private dining rooms occupy the front. A spacious reception room opens off the larger room. Directly opposite the elevators on this floor, is the breakfast room.... [The 11th floor has a] comfortable but stately banquet hall, or main dining room, which will accommodate three hundred guests. A balcony corridor is thrown across the eastern court to facilitate service in the front part of the rooms...[a] musicians' gallery also provided.... [The 12th floor is devoted to service spaces.] About half of the roof is reserved for an open roof garden where meals and refreshments can be served in summer.... It will be evident to every member that he will have a club house in which he can take undivided professional pride.

The interior of the Engineering Societies' Building was organized with a main entrance foyer on the first floor:

> Access to the Building is gained by the central entrance on the street level to the first floor; by the western side door leading to the elevators; and by the broad driveway which encircles it completely, so that carriages can enter by the eastern covered arch, set down their occupants at a side entrance and emerge by the western gate.

A spacious auditorium with a gallery occupied the second and third floors, while the fourth, fifth and sixth floors were divided into meeting rooms of various size. The seventh and eighth floors were

> ...reserved for the Associate Societies that have engineering or some department of science as their principal object,

while the ninth, tenth and eleventh stories were set aside for the three "Founding Societies":

> The American institute of Mining Engineers has the ninth floor, the American Institute of Electrical Engineers has the tenth floor, and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers has the eleventh floor. These floors are all devoted to administrative and executive work.... Opposite the elevator shaft on each of the three Founder Societies floors, the emblem of the society occupying the floor has been executed in a heavy brass plate set into the terrazzo floor....

The twelfth and thirteenth floor were set aside for a "crowning detail" – the combined libraries of the three organizations:

> The Founder Societies entertain the ambition of creating and maintaining the finest collection of engineering literature in the world, supplemented by the current periodicals, and all the patents relating to invention in the arts and science. Provision is being made for special research accommodation, working alcoves, photographic reproduction, drawing and similar library work. Commanding magnificent views of Greater New York and vicinity in every direction, the Library is retired, quiet, free from noise and dust, an ideal haunt of the student and man of research; while open at all times to any reader. In view of the proximity of the New Public Library, the Engineering Societies Building with its unequalled collection of scientific and industrial data becomes at once a vital and important center of the highest value for the diffusion of useful knowledge, and the two Libraries supplement each other.

In general, the interior treatments were relatively simple, and wherever possible fireproof:

> The woodwork in the Building has been reduced to a minimum. The large windows are built of cast iron, and the other windows of wood covered with kalamined iron....All the walls and ceilings are painted in neutral tints, and the decoration is simple though carefully studied, especially with an idea to later development in the way of mural paintings, the setting of the names of distinguished engineers in plaques, niches for bronze or marble busts, panels for bronze tablets, etc.

Though separate, the two buildings were initially interconnected:

> At the first floor [of the Engineering Societies' Building], a rear door communicates across the ten-foot areaway, in the open, with the café of the Club-house, and on the ninth floor, a flying covered bridge connects with the breakfast room on the tenth floor of the club.

The *Times* concluded:

> It is doubtful if anywhere in the world there will be two buildings more perfectly fitted for their respective needs and more artistic in conception and execution than these two structures.[44]

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[44] "The Carnegie Engineering Endowment," *New York Times,* May 6, 1903, p.8

Adjoining buildings

In 1913, the club built an addition at 23 West 39th Street, directly abutting the Societies' Building on the east; it was designed by Beverly S. King (formerly of Whitfield & King, architects of the original club building).[45] The five-story addition, though designed for the Club, matches the Societies Building in some of its details – rising to the height of that building's third floor, its cornice appears to be a continuation of its neighbor's cornice. This building occupies the open space formerly used as a carriage entrance for the complex (the space on the west side still survives).

The Engineers' Club was concerned about maintaining daylight for the interior spaces of their buildings. At the time of construction, according to the *Times*:

> The top of the adjoining building on the east [of the Club] is less than 60 feet above the curb, while that on the west is 58 feet in height. Both these dwellings carry restrictions preventing their being higher. A glance at the perspective will show that this height reaches approximately to the beginning of the fourth floor of the Engineers' Club, each of the three lower stories being 19 feet in height. Thus the building is sure of light in abundance for the upper nine stories for all time to come.[46]

By 1925, however, the Club had bought both of the neighboring buildings. The four-story-and-basement building on the west, No. 36 West 40th Street (non-contributing), had belonged to Dr. E.G. Janeway. Photos taken in 1939 for the New York City Department of Finance show the building to the east as a brownstone and brick building with a projecting addition, and the building to the west as a brownstone with a commercial storefront. The contributing building at No. 28 was used for bedrooms and a lounge, while No. 36 remained used for offices and stores. The Club considered replacing No. 36 in 1936 with a sixteen-story office building, "for investment," to be designed by architect Thomas Lamb,[47] but the plan fell through.

Later history

For close to 60 years, the Engineers' Club and the Engineering Societies' Building served as the epicenter of the American engineering profession. National and international engineering conferences were held regularly in the buildings. In 1912:

> Four hundred of the world's well-known scientists and engineers representing twenty-five nations, and many of them wearing tokens of royal favor, met in the Engineering Societies Building in West Thirty-ninth Street yesterday morning to begin a week's discussion of the latest developments in the engineering

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[45] New York City, Department of Buildings, New Building Application No. 499-1913.
[46] "Palatial Home...," *op. cit.*
[47] "Engineers Club Plans Tall Office Building." *New York Times,* July 3, 1936, p.34.

world. It was the sixth congress of the international association for testing materials and the most important of its kind ever called together.[48]

In 1913:

> The Grashof Medal, the highest honor in the gift of the Verein Deutscher Inginieure, the German Society of Mechanical Engineers, was awarded to George Westinghouse last night. The award was made in the auditorium of the Engineering Societies Building in West Thirty-ninth Street....[49]

In 1925, a special committee convened to observe an eclipse:

> Officials of lighting companies conferred yesterday at the Engineers' Club and at the behest of several scientific bodies determined to attempt to locate exactly the southern border of the moon's shadow as it crosses New York City Saturday morning. On this point will depend the exactness of much of the calculation relating to the eclipse. The companies participating were the New York Edison Company, the United Electric Light and Power Company, the Westchester Lighting Company, the New York and Queens Electric Light and Power Company, the Bronx Gas and Electric Company, the Yonkers Electric Light and Power Company and the other lighting companies affiliated with the Consolidated Gas Company.....[50]

The next day,

> Twelve hundred members of the American Society of Civil Engineers filled the auditorium of the Engineering Societies Building...yesterday morning when Herbert Hoover, Secretary of Commerce, was made an honorary member of the society...[51]

By 1953, however, the engineers began to feel that they were outgrowing their two buildings. As reported in the *Times*:

> The sixteen-story Engineering Societies Building...which was constructed forty-five years ago, is growing too small for its needs. Its occupants are seeking larger quarters in any city that will provide them with a suitable site.... [The organization's president] declared that "because we are a national group, we have no particular ties binding us to New York."[52]

The proposal to leave the city caused a flurry of activity, in which the City government played a part:

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[48] "World's Engineers Welcomed by Dix – President Taft Sends Gen. Bixby, Chief of Army Engineers, to Speak for Him." *New York Times,* September 4/, 1912, p.5 .
[49] *New York Times,* December 4, 1913, p.2.
[50] *New York Times,* January 21, 1925, p.6.
[51] *New York Times,* January 22, 1925, p.18.
[52] "Engineering Groups Seek a New Center," *New York Times,* August 26, 1953, p.12.

> A last-minute attempt will be made to keep the headquarters of the nation's principal engineering societies in the city.... [A special meeting was held.]
> The theme of the meeting was expressed by former President Herbert Hoover, who deplored the efforts to move the engineering societies to other cities, like Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and Chicago, which have offered to donate $1,500,000 for a building.[53]

In the end, in 1957, the engineering groups acquired a site on the west side of First Avenue from E.47th to 48th streets and built a new headquarters there.[54] (That building was in turn sold in recent years, replaced by a 90-story apartment tower built for Donald Trump.) In 1960, the engineering groups sold the West 39th Street building to a developer who planned to convert it to offices for the textile industry.[55] Instead, however, in 1963 the building was converted for use as the "Photographic Arts Center":

> The principal change in the former engineering center will be the construction of a parking garage on the first four floors of the structure. The garage floors above the ground floor will be concealed by a gold-colored aluminum grill.... The building will have a new lobby, paneled in marble and walnut, with a luminous ceiling and three new passenger elevators. William B. Goldis designed the lobby renovation. The 12 floors above the garage are being converted into photographic studios. The building is particularly suited to studio use because of its high ceilings, which run from 12 to 24 feet, providing adequate space for complicated photographic and lighting equipment. Since much commercial photography is concerned with food and its preparation, most of the studios will be equipped with kitchens.[56]

The garage was built, but only in the first-story space, and there is no gold-colored aluminum grill on the floors above. The auditorium, however, was removed, and the spaces to some extent reconfigured. More recently, the building was owned by designer Tommy Hilfiger, who used it as his design headquarters. As of 2007 the building is under new ownership.

The Engineers' Club stayed in place for a decade longer, but finally moved out, in 1979. The building was sold to developer David Eshagin. In 1983 it was converted to cooperative apartments. The renovation architect, Seymour Churgin, divided up the former social rooms into apartments. As described by Christopher Gray in the *Times* in 1995:

> Whether for economy or for style, they left the giant open marble stair hall running from the first to the third floors and left several of the large central spaces as giant hallways. On the second floor, the main club room and the library have been divided into four apartments. A recent visit to one of these found a

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[53] *New York Times,* April 6, 1955, p.25.
[54] *New York Times,* August 1, 1957, p.50.
[55] *New York Times,* October 23, 1960, p. R1.
[56] "Center Is Opened for Photography- Old Engineering Building Under Renovation," *New York Times,* September 8, 1963, p.R1.

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[56] "Center Is Opened for Photography- Old Engineering Building Under Renovation," *New York Times,* September 8, 1963, p.R1.

mezzanine installed in a room that is at least as tall as it is wide and that retains its original mantelpiece and paneling.[57]

Much of the exterior marble was cracking, and some of it was replaced with fiberglass:

The projecting cornice at the fourth-floor level has been replaced and similar work is under way at the 11th floor.[58]

Despite the change in use and accompanying alterations – and the dispersal of the various engineering societies – both the Engineering Societies' Building and the Engineers' Club survive, more (the Club) or less (the Societies' Building) intact. As such, they form a pair of handsome turn-of-the-century buildings whose design is still an ornament to the streets of Midtown Manhattan, and also a monument to the remarkable history of engineering in the city and state.

[57] Christopher Gray, "Streetscapes," *New York Times,* August 13, 1995, p. RNJ7.
[58] Gray, *ibid.*

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September 30, 1908, p.4.
April 28, 1909, p.6.
April 29, 1909, p.17.
November 5, 1916, p. XX4.

Western Architect

June 1908, p. 74.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	585743	4511556
2	18		
3	18		
4	18		

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 Program Analyst

organization NYSOPRHP, Bureau of Historic Preservation date April 10, 2007

street & number Peebles Island, P.O. Box 189 telephone 518-237-8643, ext. 3266

city or town Waterford state NY zip code 12188

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 ____________________

street & number ____________________ telephone ____________

city or town ____________________ state ______ zip code ______

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated complex encompasses the following properties all of which are part of Manhattan Block 841:
28 West 40th Street – Lot 66
32-34 West 40th Street – Lot 69
36 West 40th Street – Lot 70
23 West 39th Street – Lot 21
25-33 West 39th Street – Lot 20
The boundary is outlined on the accompanying Sanborn map.

Boundary Description

The nomination boundary includes the four contributing and one non-contributing buildings that are historically associated with the Engineering Societies' Building and Engineers' Club properties.

Form prepared by:
Anthony Robins
Architectural Historian
Thompson & Columbus, Inc.
50 West 67th Street, Suite 1-F
New York, NY 10023
(212) 877-7637

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

Photo List

Engineering Societies' Building and Engineers' Club
New York County, NY
Photos by Anthony Robins
March 2007
.TIF files on CD-R on file at NPS.

1. Engineering Societies' Building, looking east along West 39th Street
2. Engineering Societies' Building, main façade, tower
3. Engineering Societies' Building, main façade, topmost stories
4. Engineering Societies' Building, main façade, second-story arcade
5. Engineering Societies' Building, main façade, second-story arcade, detail
6. Engineering Societies' Building, eastern elevation, looking north
7. Engineering Societies' Building, western elevation, looking north
8. Engineering Societies' Building, lobby, looking south to 39th Street entrance
9. Engineering Societies' Building, lobby, ceiling detail
10. Engineering Societies' Building, third story, window and door giving on 39th Street
11. Engineering Societies' Building, fifth story, paired columns and windows giving on 39th Street
12. Engineers' Club, West 40th Street facades, looking south, showing, from left to right, No. 28, the main club building at 32-34, and No. 36
13. Engineers' Club, West 40th Street, first story
14. Engineers' Club, West 40th Street, second and third stories
15. Engineers' Club, West 40th Street, upper stories and roofline
16. Engineers' Club, eastern elevation, looking south
17. Engineers' Club, western elevation, looking south
18. Engineers' Club, lobby, looking north towards 40th Street entrance
19. Engineers' Club, lobby, looking north, with grand staircase
20. Engineers' Club, skylight over grand staircase at third story
21. Engineers' Club, third story, elevator lobby
22. Engineers' Club, eleventh story, former banquet hall (now private apartment)
23. Engineers' Club, eleventh story, former banquet hall (now private apartment), detail
24. Engineers' Club, eleventh story, former banquet hall (now private apartment), double-height colonnade
25. Engineers' Club, former first-story grille room, leaded glass
26. Engineers' Club, No. 28 West 40th Street, north elevation, adjoining main club tower on the east, looking south
27. Engineers' Club, No. 28 West 40th Street, stairhall
28. Engineers' Club, No. 28 West 40th Street, stairhall detail

29. Engineers' Club, No. 28 West 40th Street, stairhall, apartment fireplace
30. Engineers' Club, No. 36 West 40th Street, adjoining main club tower on the west, looking south
31. Engineers' Club, No. 23 West 39th Street, behind Engineers' Club building, adjoining Engineering Societies' Building on the east, looking northwest

Supplemental documentation: Historic photos

NYC tax photos, ca. 1939. (Source: NYC Municipal Archives).

Engineering Societies' Building and Engineers' Club
23 and 25-33 W 39th St
28, 32-34 and 36 W 40th St
New York Co, N.Y.

Zone 18
Easting 585743
Northing 4511556

USGS
Central Park Quad
1:24000

Produced by the United States Geological Survey

Topography compiled 1966. Planimetry derived from imagery taken 1977 and other sources. Photoinspected using imagery dated 1995; no major culture or drainage changes observed. Survey control current as of 1966. Boundaries, other than corporate, revised 1999

Selected hydrographic data compiled from NOS charts 226, 274, 745, 746, and 747 (1966). This information is not intended for navigational purposes

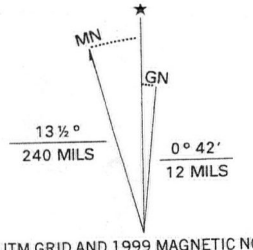
North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27)

Projection: New York coordinate system, Long Island zone (transverse Mercator)

10 000-foot ticks: New York coordinate system, Long Island zone and New Jersey coordinate system

1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 18

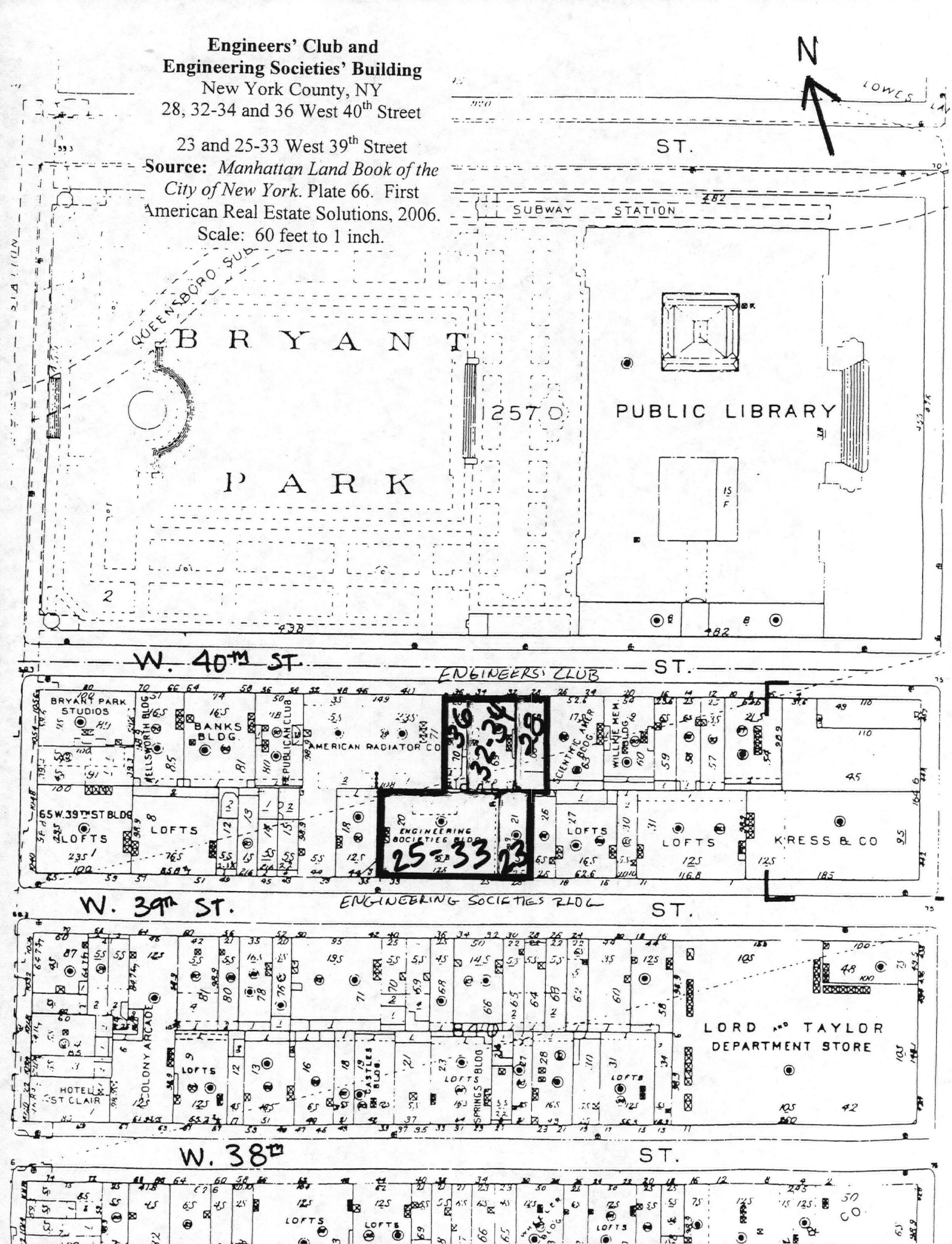
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83



UTM GRID AND 1999 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

Engineers' Club and
Engineering Societies' Building
New York County, NY
28, 32-34 and 36 West 40th Street

23 and 25-33 West 39th Street
Source: *Manhattan Land Book of the City of New York.* Plate 66. First American Real Estate Solutions, 2006.
Scale: 60 feet to 1 inch.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Engineering Societies' Building and Engineers' Club

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, New York

DATE RECEIVED: 7/20/07 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/06/07
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/21/07 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/02/07
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 07000867

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 8-30-07 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.

Engineering Societies' Building and Engineers' Club New York Co, N.Y.

1.

Engineering Societies' Building and Engineers' Club New York Co, N.Y.

2.

Engineering Societies' Building and
Engineers' Club
New York Co, N.Y.

3.

Engineering societies' Building and
Engineers' Club
New York Co, N.Y.

4.

Engineering Societies'
Building and
Engineer's Club
New York Co, N.Y.
5.

5

Engineering Societies'
Building and
Engineers' Club
New York Co, N.Y.

6.

Engineering Societies
Building and
Engineers' Club
New York Co, N.Y.
7.


OUT OF SERVICE
PLEASE PARDON THE
INCONVENIENCE

Engineering Societies' Building and Engineers' Club New York Co, NY.

8.

Engineering Societies' Building and
Engineers' Club
New York Co, N.Y.
9.

Engineering Societies'
Building and
Engineers' Club
New York Co. N.Y.
10.

Engineering Societies Building
and
Engineers' Club
New York Co, N.Y.
11.


ROUND WORLD
CENTRAL
gold woman

Engineering Societies' Bldg
and
Engineers' Club
New York Co, NY.
12.

12


soho woman
32
32

Engineering Societies' Building and
Engineers' Club
New York Co, N.Y.

13.

Engineering Societies' Building and
Engineers' Club
New York Co, N.Y.
14.

14

Engineering Societies' Building
and
Engineers' Club
New York Co, N.Y.

15.

Engineering Societies' Building and Engineers' Club New York Co, N.Y.

16.

16

Engineering Societies' Building and Engineers' Club New York Co, N.Y.

17.

17

Engineering Societies' Building
and
Engineers' Club
New York Co, N.Y.

18.

Engineering Societies' Building
and
Engineers' Club
New York Co, N.Y.

19.

Engineering Societies' Bldg.
and
Engineers' Club
New York Co., NY.

20.


EXIT
3

Engineering Societies' Building
and
Engineer's Club
New York Co, N.Y.

21.

Engineering Societies' Building and Engineers' Club New York Co. N.Y.

22.

22

Engineering Societies' Building
and
Engineers' Club
New York Co, N.Y.

23.

Engineering Societies'
Building and
Engineers' Club
New York Co. N.Y.

24

24

Engineering Societies' Building and
Engineers' Club
New York Co, N.Y.

25.


AROUND THE WORLD
FASHION PUBLICATIONS · BOOKS · CIGARS & MORE
AROUND the WORLD

Engineering Societies' Building and Engineers' Club New York Co. N.Y.

26.

Engineering Societies' Building and Engineers' Club New York Co, N.Y.

27.

Engineering Societies' Building and Engineers' Club New York Co, N.Y.

28.

28

Engineering Societies' Building and Engineers' Club New York Co, N.Y.

29.

Engineering Societies' Building and Engineers' Club New York Cy N.Y.

30.

30


朵頤食府
SZECHUAN GOURMET
WINDFALL
Szechuan Gourmet 朵頤

Engineering Societies
Building and
Engineers' Club
New York Co, N.Y.

31. 31

Historic photo of
Engineering Societies'
Building (in center)
New York Co, N.Y.

ca. 1939 tax
photo

Historic photo of
Engineers' Club
Building
New York Co, N.Y.

ca. 1939 tax
photo

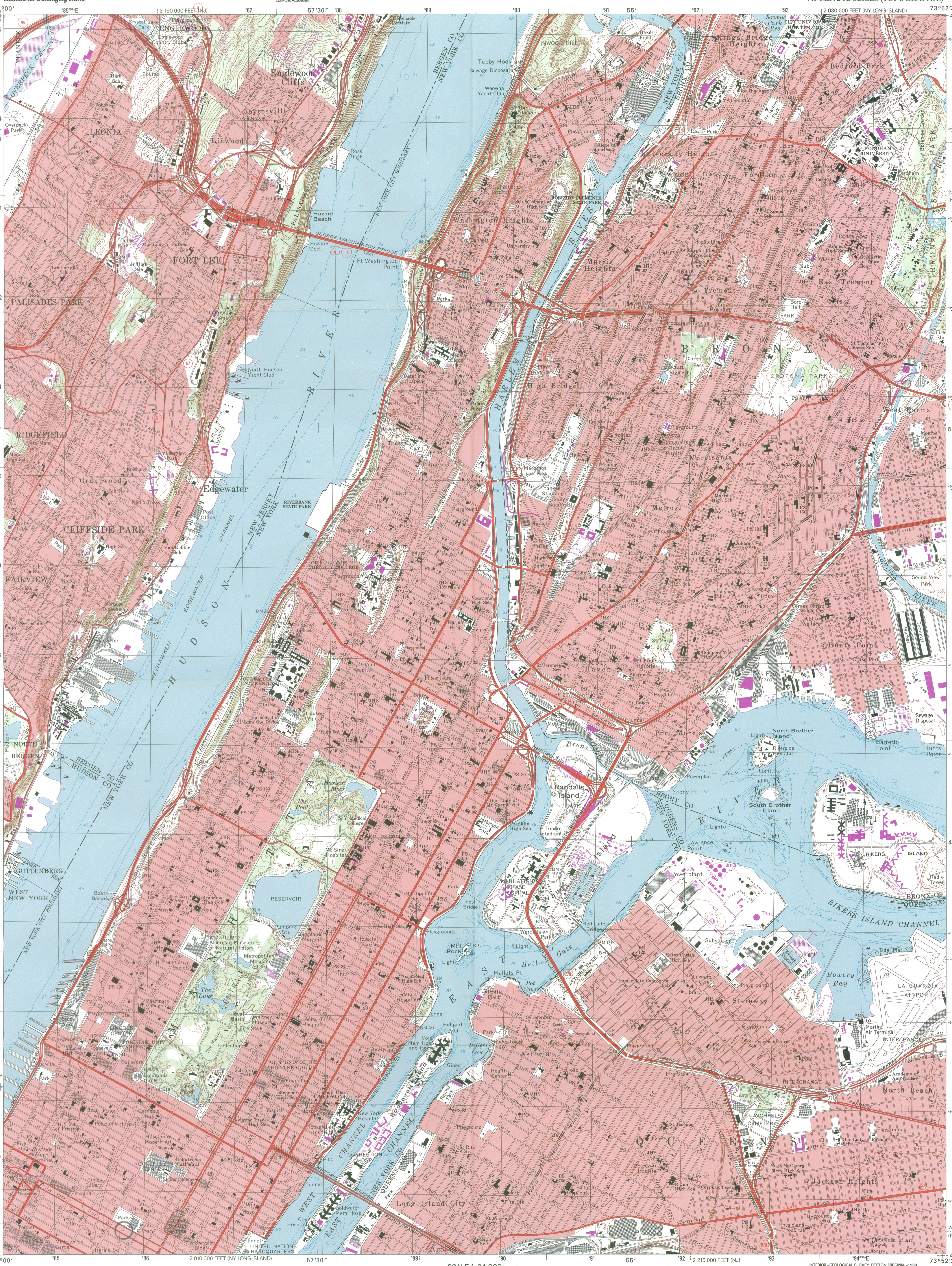
USGS
science for a changing world
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
150 U.S. Department of the Interior 1849•1999

CENTRAL PARK QUADRANGLE
NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY
7.5-MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

74°00′ 40°52′30″ — 2 190 000 FEET (NJ) — 57′30″ — 55′ — 2 030 000 FEET (NY LONG ISLAND) — 73°52′30″ 40°52′30″

740 000 FEET (NJ)

230 000 FEET (NY LONG ISLAND)



200 000 FEET (NY LONG ISLAND)

Engineering Societies' Building and Engineers' Club
23 and 25-33 W 39th St
28, 32-34 and 36 W 40th St
New York Co, N.Y.

Zone 18
Easting 585743
Northing 4511556

USGS
Central Park Quad
1:24000

40°45′ 74°00′ — 2 010 000 FEET (NY LONG ISLAND) — 57′30″ — 55′ — 2 210 000 FEET (NJ) — 700 000 FEET (NJ) — 40°45′ 73°52′30″

Produced by the United States Geological Survey

Topography compiled 1966. Planimetry derived from imagery taken 1977 and other sources. Photoinspected using imagery dated 1995; no major culture or drainage changes observed. Survey control current as of 1966. Boundaries, other than corporate, revised 1999

Selected hydrographic data compiled from NOS charts 226, 274, 745, 746, and 747 (1966). This information is not intended for navigational purposes

North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27)

Projection: New York coordinate system, Long Island zone (transverse Mercator)

10 000-foot ticks: New York coordinate system, Long Island zone and New Jersey coordinate system

1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 18

North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

Information shown in purple may not meet USGS content standards and may conflict with previously mapped contours

MN GN
13½° 240 MILS
0°42′ 12 MILS

UTM GRID AND 1999 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

20% TOTAL RECOVERED FIBER

SCALE 1:24 000

KILOMETERS 1 0.5 0 1 2
METERS 1000 0 1000 2000
MILES 1 0.5 0 1
FEET 1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 8000 9000 10000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
TO CONVERT FROM FEET TO METERS, MULTIPLY BY 0.3048
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET, DATUM IS MEAN LOWER LOW WATER
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY
4 FEET IN THE HUDSON RIVER AND 5.7 FEET IN THE EAST RIVER

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, P.O. BOX 25286, DENVER, COLORADO 80225
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

NEW YORK
QUADRANGLE LOCATION

1	2	3
4		5
6	7	8

1 Hackensack
2 Yonkers
3 Mount Vernon
4 Weehawken
5 Flushing
6 Jersey City
7 Brooklyn
8 Jamaica

ADJOINING 7.5′ QUADRANGLE NAMES

INTERIOR–GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA–1999

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway hard surface ....
Secondary highway hard surface ....
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface ......
Unimproved road ......

Interstate Route U.S. Route State Route

CENTRAL PARK, NY-NJ
1995
NIMA 6265 IV SW-SERIES V821

ISBN 0-607-92025-4

January 29, 2007

Ms. Kathy Howe
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
Field Services Bureau
P.O. Box 189
Peebles Island
Waterford, NY 12188

Re: The America Societies Building located at 32 West 40th Street, New York, NY

Dear Ms. Howe,

As the President of the 40th Street Tenants Corporation, the owner of the above referenced property, I am writing to you to express our unqualified support for its listing on the New York State and National Registers of Historic Places.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further comment on this matter.

Sincerely,

Ricardo R. Sobrevinas

Mr. Ricaldo Sobrevinas
President
40th Street Tenants Corp
32 West 40th Street
New York, NY 10018
212-221-1210

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

June 12, 2007

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

Re: Engineering Societies' Building and Engineers' Club, 23 and 25-33 West 39th Street; 28, 32-34 and 36 West 40th Street, New York, New York County

Dear Ms. Pierpont:

I write on behalf of Chair Robert B. Tierney in response to your request for comment on the eligibility of the Engineering Societies' Building and Engineers' Club for the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

The Commission supports the nomination of the Engineering Societies' Building and Engineers' Club. The Engineers' Club Building was identified as a building of interest in the Commission's survey of midtown Manhattan in 1979. This largely intact, clubhouse building, along with the Engineering Societies' Building on West 39th Street, was built as a result of a major architectural competition sponsored by Andrew Carnegie in 1905 and remains an important element in the south street wall of Bryant Park.

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 Engineering Societies' Building and Engineers' Club appear to meet the criteria for inclusion on the State and National Registers of Historic Places

Sincerely,

Ronda Wist

Ronda Wist

cc: Robert B. Tierney, Chair
Mary Beth Betts