# Form 10-306

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

**FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES**

*(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)*

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### 1. NAME

**COMMON:** Federal Hall National Memorial

**AND/OR HISTORIC:** U. S. Customs Building; Subtreasury Building

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### 2. LOCATION

**STREET AND NUMBER:** 26 Wall Street

**CITY OR TOWN:** New York

**STATE:** New York

**COUNTY:** New York

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### 3. CLASSIFICATION

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<td>□ Unoccupied</td>
<td>□ Unrestricted</td>
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<td>□ Object</td>
<td>□ Both</td>
<td>□ Preservation work in progress</td>
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**PRESENT USE:** (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- □ Agricultural
- □ Commercial
- □ Educational
- □ Entertainment
- □ Government
- □ Industrial
- □ Military
- □ Museum
- □ Park
- □ Private Residence
- □ Religious
- □ Scientific
- □ Transportation
- □ Other (Specify)
- □ Comments

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### 4. AGENCY

**National Park Service**

**REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS:** (If applicable)

**North Atlantic Region**

**CITY OR TOWN:** Boston

**STATE:** Mass.

**CODE:** 036

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### 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

**COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:**

**New York City Register's Office**

**STREET AND NUMBER:** 31 Chambers St.

**CITY OR TOWN:** New York

**STATE:** New York

**CODE:** 36

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### 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

**TITLE OF SURVEY:** HABS

**DATE OF SURVEY:** Jan. 1975

**DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:** Library of Congress

**STREET AND NUMBER:**

**CITY OR TOWN:** Washington

**STATE:** D.C.
A national memorial since 1955, Federal Hall stands on the site of the historic Federal Hall that disappeared in the early 19th Century. Begun in 1834, the building known as Federal Hall today was designed in part by Architect John Frazee and completed in 1842 as the United States Custom House. Built totally fireproof, the structure was made of marble, limestone, granite, brick, and iron. It consists of six levels: sub-basement, basement, three stories, and attic. Since 1842 the building has undergone numerous interior physical changes, but aside from the erection of a heroic bronze statue of George Washington on the Wall Street steps in 1833, the elimination of the sunken areaway along Nassau Street in 1954, and the addition of gun turrets on the roof and two windows on the Wall Street side, the exterior of the building has actually changed very little.

Boundary:

Commencing at the intersection of Wall and Nassau Sts. and
Running north along Nassau St. for 197.6 ft. and
Running east and parallel with Wall St. for 90.2 ft. and
Running south and parallel with Nassau St. for 194.5 ft. and
Running east along Wall St. for 90.3 ft to Nassau St.
**B. SIGNIFICANCE**

**PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)**

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**SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)**

**AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)**

| Aboriginal | Prehistoric | Historic | Agriculture | Architecture | Art | Commence | Communications | Conservation | Education | Engineering | Industry | Invention | Landscape | Architecture | Art | Literature | Military | Music | Political | Religion/Philosophy | Science | Sculpture | Social/Humanitarian | Theater | Transportation | Urban Planning | Other (Specify) | Government | Finance |
|-----------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------------|------|----------|--------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|------|------------|----------|------|-----------|-------------------|---------|------------|---------------------|---------|-------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Federal Hall National Memorial stands on the site of original Federal Hall, our nation's first capitol under the Constitution. It was in that historic building that Washington was inaugurated our first President on April 30, 1789, our present Government established, and our basic institutions developed.

As our nation's first capitol, Federal Hall housed the Executive offices and the first Congress. Here the enabling acts creating the Departments of State, Treasury, War, and Justice, the Post Office (made a cabinet department in 1829), and the Judiciary Act establishing the Supreme Court and lower Federal courts were all passed in 1789. At this time the Congress also adopted the Bill of Rights (first 10 amendments to the Constitution) and submitted them to the States for ratification. It was also here that Washington established the Presidency on firm ground by initiating many precedents calculated to give dignity and authority to that office.

Federal Hall, itself, had originally served since its completion in 1699 as New York's second City Hall before being remodelled in 1788 by Pierre L'Enfant as the nation's capitol. New York's colonial, Revolutionary, and Confederation history took place in Federal Hall. Here John Peter Zenger was imprisoned and tried in 1735, whose vindication established the principle of Freedom of the Press. The Stamp Act Congress of 1765 deliberated here. After the Revolutionary War, the Confederation Congress held its sessions in the building, where it passed the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 and in the same year called for a Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. With the removal of the capital to Philadelphia in August 1790, Federal Hall reverted to its former use as the City Hall. When the present City Hall was finished in 1812, old Federal Hall was abandoned and razed.

The handsome U. S. Customs Building, which now occupies the old Federal Hall site, has its own architectural and historical significance. It is a fine example of the Greek Revival Period in American architecture. The eight Doric columns at each end of the building, and the low triangular pediment, recall the Parthenon,
9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

| CORNER | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE/
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| Approximate Acreage of Nominated Property: | 0.45 |

| List All States and Counties for Properties Overlapping State or County Boundaries |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|

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<td>Ricardo Torres-Reyes, Historian</td>
<td>12/72</td>
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<table>
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<td>North Atlantic Region</td>
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<table>
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<td>223-3778</td>
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12. CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

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<tr>
<th>State Liaison Officer Signature</th>
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In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Liaison Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The recommended level of significance is: ☑ National □ State

<table>
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<th>Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</th>
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| ATTEST: |

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GPO 938-449
Item No. 8:

the temple of the goddess Athena on the Acropolis in Athens. In 1862, the Custom House was converted into a branch of the Independent Treasury System. It was the most important of six sub-treasuries because it was the repository for 70 percent of the Federal Government's revenues. After 1920, when the Independent Treasury System was discarded, several governmental organizations used the building. The wide bank of steps on the Wall Street side has always been a favorite place for public rallies, political and religious oratory, war-bond sales, and patriotic observances. In 1939 the building was designated a national historic site and in 1955 it was established as a national memorial.
The enclosed nominations are routed to you for your professional review and comment on the correctness and adequacy of the statements and evaluations contained therein, supplying additional or corrective information as appropriate. Reviewer will sign his name hereon for later reference if necessary. Use additional sheet for comment if needed and attach hereto.

Nomined Property: Federal Hall National Memorial

From Area of: _______________________

Chief Archeologist: The site is of first order, the building is of second order. I concur.

Signed: _____________________________

Chief Historian: OK. I suggest that the building also should be considered as second order significant.

Signed: _____________________________

Chief Historical Architect: I am inclined to agree with Smokey. This is a borderline case.

Signed: _____________________________

Registrar, LCS: _______________________

Keeper of the National Register: _______________________

Recommnended for the National Register: ______

Entered on the LCS: 03-24-1975

C. O. Meek
Registrar, LCS
Tel: 343-2532

INT: 4937-74 REGISTRAR LCS
The attached National Register Inventory-Nomination form is being returned to your office for clarification of the information indicated below. PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM WHEN THE NOMINATION IS RESUBMITTED.

7 Description: __________________________________________

8 Statement of Significance: __________________________________________

9 Bibliography: __________________________________________

10 Geographical Data -- Acreage: __________________________________________

   UTM Reference(s): __________
   Verbal Boundary Description: __________

12 Certification: __________

   Photographic Coverage: __________
   Map Coverage: __________

   Other: __________

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to __________ on the National Register staff, telephone __________

Thank you for your attention to the above items.

Chief, Branch of Registration: __________ Date: __________

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service WASO No. 8
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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service WASO No. 7
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Property Photograph Form

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

1. Name

Common: Federal Hall National Memorial
And/or Historic: The Old-Sub-Treasury Building

2. Location

Street and Number: 26 Wall Street
City or Town: New York
State: New York

3. Photo Reference

Photo Credit: National Park Service
Date of Photo: Approx. 1970
Negative Filed At: Unknown

4. Identification

Describe View, Direction, Etc.

Front view of Federal Hall
Since 1703, buildings on the site of Federal Hall in New York's financial district have witnessed momentous events in American history, including the Stamp Act Congress, the John Peter Zenger trial and inauguration of George Washington as President.
PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NPS Number 10.13-4

Title: Federal Hall National Memorial

Loc. ____________________________

2/2
PHOTOGRAPH FOR
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
by JACK E. BOUCHER, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240
DATE 10/75

PERSPECTIVE CORRECTION
WITHIN ONE DEGREE

N.Y.: NEW YORK CITY FEDERAL HALL
Originally built in 1700 as the City Hall, was remodeled in 1788-89 for the inaugurating of George Washington as Pres. on April 30, 1789 and the first Federal Congress of the U.S.
Federal Hall, ca. 1789.

Photography of engraving by Hatch & Spaulding after drawing by Diderick Knechtzbock.
Engraving by Cornelius Stadl.

National Archives.
**1. NAME**

**COMMON:** Federal Hall National Memorial  
**AND/OR HISTORIC:** The Old -Sub-Treasury Building

**2. LOCATION**

**STREET AND NUMBER:** 26 Wall Street  
**CITY OR TOWN:** New York

**STATE:** New York  
**CODE:** 36  
**COUNTY:** New York  
**CODE:** 061

**3. MAP REFERENCE**

**SOURCE:** U.S. Geological Survey (Jersey City Quadrangle) 7.5 Min. Series  
**SCALE:** 1: 24,000  
**DATE:** 1955–67

**4. REQUIREMENTS**

1. Property boundaries where required.  
2. North arrow.  
3. Latitude and longitude reference.

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**RECEIVED**

**AUG 11 1975**

**NATIONAL REGISTER**
Memorandum

To: Assistant Director, Park Historic Preservation, WASO

From: Associate Regional Director, Planning and Resource Preservation, North Atlantic Region

Subject: National Register Forms

We enclose the following National Register Inventory-Nomination forms with the additional information requested by the National Register Office. In some cases it was necessary to prepare a new form, but using the same 1972 forms, as previously arranged with the National Register Staff.

1. Grant's Tomb NM
2. Sub-Treasury Building NM
3. Hamilton Grange NM
4. Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace NHS
5. John F. Kennedy NHS
6. Atwood-Higgins House, Cape Cod NS
7. Highland Golf Course, Cape Cod NHS
8. Statue of Liberty NM
9. Sagamore Hill NHS

Enclosures

F. Ross Holland, Jr.
Memorandum

To: Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Through: Federal Representative to the National Register, Department of the Interior

From: Federal Representative, National Park Service

Subject: Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places

Enclosed is a revised nomination of "Federal Hall National Memorial," in the North Atlantic Region of the National Park Service, submitted in confirmation of its inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Robert M. Utley

Enclosure
must be guarantees of liberty. The question of such guarantees had been debated during the Constitutional Convention, but since the members were unable to reach an agreement, they left it to the new Government to work out a bill of rights. James Madison, Representative from Virginia, was the leading spirit in the creation and adoption of such a bill. Not all members of Congress thought it necessary, arguing that since no repressive powers were granted to the Government, it would be impossible for it to infringe upon individual liberty. Alexander Hamilton was one of these. However, popular pressure in the form of demands from State legislators for a guarantee of rights during the process of ratifying the Constitution, as well as the theoretical arguments of men like Jefferson who felt strongly the necessity of such an explicit guarantee, combined to make the Bill of Rights a reality. Adopted by the Congress on September 25, 1789, the bill was sent out from Federal Hall to the States for ratification.

But Federal Hall as the seat of American Government was short-lived. After much discussion and debate over a site that would be more politically and geographically advantageous, Congress agreed to a location along the Potomac River for the permanent Capital. On August 31, 1790, the Government moved to Philadelphia, where it was to remain for 10 years while Washington, D.C., was being built. Federal Hall was used alternately for State and city offices during the next two decades. In 1812, the crumbling building was sold for salvage.

CUSTOMS HOUSE-SUBTREASURY PERIOD (1842-1920): The present building, completed in 1842 on the site of Federal Hall, served as a U.S. Customs House during a period of rapidly expanding economic activity in which New York was the leading commercial center. In 1862 the building became a branch of the U.S. Independent Treasury System, established during the administration of President Martin Van Buren. This system was essentially a compromise between the advocates of a National Bank and those favoring State banks as repositories of Federal revenue. Of the six subtreasuries, New York's was the most important, handling 70 percent of the Government money. Functioning much like the present Federal Reserve System, the subtreasuries had a stabilizing effect on the national economy by releasing or withdrawing funds whenever it was necessary.

Because this building had become identified with the financial establishment, Federal troops were posted here during the commercial and financial panic of 1857 to protect the then Custom House from mobs. Troops were again called in during the Civil War draft riots.

Traditionally a popular public and political meetingplace, the steps of Federal Hall were the scene of the dedication by President Chester A. Arthur of the statue of George Washington in 1883. During World War I, screen stars like Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., and Charlie Chaplin sold war bonds at the subtreasury. After the Independent Treasury System was abolished in 1920, several governmental organizations used the building. On May 26, 1939, through the efforts of patriotic and civic groups, the building was designated a national historic site. On August 11, 1955, it was established as a national memorial. Today it also serves as a museum where a motion picture, displays, and audio-visual exhibits depict the part it played in the history of our Nation.

HOW TO REACH THE SITE: Federal Hall is at the corner of Wall and Nassau Streets, just off Broadway. It is within convenient walking distance of South Ferry, the landing place for ferries from Staten Island, Governor's Island, and the Statue of Liberty. The site is easily reached by Broadway bus, IRT subway (Wall Street station), IND subway (Broadway-Nassau Street station), or BMT subway (Fulton Street station).

Five other areas of the National Park System are also in New York City:
- Castle Clinton National Monument, in Battery Park at the lower end of Broadway
- Statue of Liberty National Monument, on Liberty Island in New York Harbor
- General Grant National Memorial, in Riverside Park at West 122d Street
- Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace National Historic Site, at 28 East 20th Street
- Hamilton Grange National Memorial, on Convent Avenue between 141st and 142d Streets

ADMINISTRATION: Federal Hall National Memorial is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is 26 Wall Street, New York, N.Y. 10005, is in charge.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities for water, fish, wildlife, mineral, land, park and recreational resources. Indian and Territorial affairs are other major concerns of America's "Department of Natural Resources." The Department works to assure the wise use in managing all our resources so each will make its full contribution to a better United States—now and in the future.

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
For 15 years the buildings associated with this site have

[Text continues on the right side of the page]
associated with this site have numerous events in American history. Built on the Hill of the Capitol, it was a central location for the growth and development of the nation. The Constitution was written here, and the Supreme Court was established. The building has housed many significant events in the nation's history, including inaugurations and key legislative meetings.

On the first floor, the visitors can explore exhibits related to the history of the Capitol, including the Old Senate Chamber, where John Quincy Adams was elected Speaker of the House in 1823. The Rotunda is a centerpiece of the building, with a large dome and columns symbolizing the nation's strength and democratic values.

The Rotunda is also the site of the Hall of Statuary, where statues of important figures in American history are displayed. The building's architecture is a blend of Neo-Classical and Renaissance styles, influenced by French and Roman design principles.

The Capitol is an iconic symbol of American democracy, and its history is a testament to the nation's commitment to freedom and justice.
For 165 years, the buildings associated with this site have witnessed some of the most momentous events in American history. City Hall, the original building constructed here, was the scene of the first victory in the struggle for freedom of the press, of the first united colonial protest against taxation, and of the first government of the independent Nation. Here, also, the decision was made to call the convention which created our present form of government.

In 1788, when the Confederation Congress designated New York City as the Capital of the United States, City Hall was renovated and renamed Federal Hall. Here the first Congress under the Constitution convened, and on its balcony George Washington was inaugurated as the country's first President. Here the Departments of State, War, and the Treasury were created, the Supreme Court was established by law, and the Congress wrote and adopted the Bill of Rights.

The present structure was built in 1842. It was first used as a U.S. Customs House. Later, in 1862, it became the U.S. Subtreasury building, demonstrating the central importance of New York in the financial life of the Nation. An example of Greek Revival architecture, this building contains exhibits and displays about the people and events which made history on this site.

**CITY HALL PERIOD (1703-88):** City Hall was the first public building to occupy this site. It was built in 1703 to accommodate the city and provincial governmental institutions. Here in 1735 John Peter Zenger, editor of the New York Weekly Journal, was tried for "seditious libels" against the royal government. His acquittal was one of the first legal victories in the struggle for freedom of the press in the Colonies.

The Stamp Act Congress which met in City Hall on October 7, 1765, continued the tradition of New York as one of the centers of opposition to what was considered British tyranny. This Congress was the first inter-colonial protest against a governmental act. Nineteen days of reasoned discussion produced a Declaration of Rights and Grievances which re-asserted the right of colonists to participate fully in English liberties. It was the first concerted enunciation of the principle of "no taxation without representation." This Declaration, coupled with the more direct tactic of boycotting stamps in the Colonies, prompted the British Government to abandon the tax.

During the Revolution, New York was a Tory stronghold, occupied by British troops with headquarters in City Hall. After the war, the government under the Articles of Confederation met here. The most outstanding accomplishment of that government was the passage of the Northwest Ordinance. Adopted on July 13, 1787, the Ordinance provided for the governing of the territory northwest of the Ohio River and established the machinery for achieving statehood. It guaranteed to the inhabitants of the Northwest Territory the same civil rights.

*I was summoned by my country, whose voice I can never hear but with veneration and love.*

George Washington's first inaugural address, 4 March, 1789.

Washington's Inauguration at Federal Hall. Engraving by Arms Balsillie.
associated with this site have numerous events in American history. A building constructed here, in the struggle for freedom and colonial protest against the actions of the independent colonies, was the first step in the creation of a new form of government.

In the late 1770s, the American colonies were facing a crisis. The British government had imposed a series of taxes on the colonies, and the colonies had responded by refusing to pay them. This led to a series of battles, known as the American Revolutionary War, which lasted from 1775 to 1783.

In 1787, a convention was called to discuss the future of the United States. This convention, which became known as the Constitutional Convention, resulted in the creation of the United States Constitution. The Constitution was signed on September 17, 1787, and it went into effect on May 7, 1789.

The Constitution established a federal government with three branches: the legislative, executive, and judicial. The legislative branch, which is made up of Congress, is responsible for making laws. The executive branch, which is headed by the President, is responsible for enforcing the laws. The judicial branch, which is made up of the Supreme Court and lower courts, is responsible for interpreting the laws.

The Constitution also established a system of checks and balances to ensure that no one branch of government became too powerful. This system is based on the idea that the three branches of government are independent of one another, but that each branch can check the power of the others.

The Constitution has been amended 27 times since it was adopted in 1787. These amendments have been added to the Constitution to address issues that have arisen since the country was founded.

Today, the Constitution is considered one of the most important documents in American history. It is a symbol of the principles of democracy and freedom upon which the United States was founded.