United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only received FEB 2 9 1980 date entered SEP 2 198

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Nam	е			
nistoric				
and/or common	Parachute Jump			
2. Loca	tion Core	Island		
treet & number		er of the block b West 16th Street		
ity, town New	York	vicinity of	congressional district	13
tate New Y	ork cod	le 036 county <sup>K</sup>	ings	<b>code</b> 047
3. Class	sification			
X structure	Ownership  X public private both Public Acquisition in process being considered	Status occupied work in progress Accessible yes: restricted x yes: unrestricted no	Present Use agriculture commercial educational entertainment government industrial military	museum park private residence religious scientific transportation x other: closed
I. Own	er of Prope	rty	₩	
ame Mr. Go	rdon Davis, Comm	missioner Dept.	of Parks & Recre	eation
treet & number	830 Fifth Av			
ity, town New	York	vicinity of	state	New York
5. Loca	tion of Leg	al Description	on	×
ourthouse, regis	try of deeds, etc. K	ings County Regi	ster's Office	
treet & number		ding, 210 Jorale		
ity, town Br	ooklyn		state	New York
	esentation	in Existing		
	ks Preservation LP-0922	Commission	perty been determined ele	egible? _X_yes r
ate July l	2, 1977		federal stat	e county <u>x</u> _ loc
epository for sur	vey records Landma	rks Preservation	Commission, 305	Broadway
ity, town New	York		state	New York

### 7. Description

Condition excellent	_X_ deteriorated	Check one X unaltered	Check one original site		1041
good fair	ruins unexposed	altered	_x_ moved o	date _	1941

#### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Parachute Jump at Coney Island, sometimes referred to as the Eiffel Tower of Brooklyn, was first constructed for the New York World's Fair in 1939. In 1941, the structure was dismantled and reassembled in Steeplechase Park in Coney Island. Located midway between West 16th and West 19th Streets along the Riegelmann Boardwalk near the base of the old Steeplechase pier, the Parachute Jump towers over the other rides and amusements lining the Coney Island waterfront.

In order to construct a tower that would support twelve drop points for the parachutes and yet resist wind pressure, the Parachute Jump was designed as an intricate structure of steel framing and bracing. The result was a gossamer web of steel work rising 250 feet above the ground, tapered in the middle to allow for proper clearance, and topped with a crown of radiating arms 120 feet in diameter. The flared bottom of the tower is enclosed by a concrete base structure which gives the appearance of weight to this otherwise airy structure. The drop point for each parachute is at the end of each cantilevered arm and attached to these end points are octagonal subframes. From each subframe, guidelines are suspended to hold the parachute open and guide the participant safely to the ground.

The Parachute Jump was described in the Official New York World's Fair Guide Book:

Eleven (sic) gaily-colored parachutes operated from the top of a 250-foot tower, enable visitors to experience all the thrills of "bailing out" without hazard or discomfort. Each parachute has a double seat suspended from it. When two passengers have taken their places beneath the chute, a cable pulls it to the summit of the tower. An automatic release starts the drop, and the passengers float gently to the ground. Vertical guide wires prevent swaying, a metal ring keeps the chute open at all times, and shock-absorbers eliminate the impact of landing. One of the most spectacular features of the Amusement Area, this is also a type of parachute jump similar to that which the armies of the world use in early stages of training for actual parachute jumping.<sup>2</sup>

Although Steeplechase Park was closed down in 1964, the Parachute Jump remains as a beacon for airplanes and ocean-going vessels.

1 The text of this report was taken almost in its entirety from the New York Landmarks Preservation Commission Designation Report, Parachute Jump (LP-0922), July, 1977, by Marjorie Pearson.

2"International Parachuting, Inc.," The Offical Guide Book of the New York World's Fair 1939 (New York: The Fair Corporation, 1939), No page.

### 8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 1800–1899 X 1900–	Areas of Significance—C	community planning landscape architecture religion conservation law science economics literature sculpture education military social/ x engineering music humanitarian exploration/settlement philosophy theater industry politics/government x other (specify) Recreation
Specific dates	1939 1941	Builder/Architect Michael Marlo & (Coney Island)

#### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Although conceived as an amusement for the New York World's Fair of 1939, the Parachute Jump is also a splendid feat of engineering and an object of great beauty. In 1941, it was moved to Coney Island, and today it serves as a reminder of Steeplechase Park, the largest and most popular of the Coney Island amusement areas. The Parachute Jump is undoubtedly the only structure of its type to remain standing.

The Parachute Jump is an excellent example of a form which follows its function and also achieves a beautiful end result. The problem was to design a high upright structure capable of supporting twelve drop points from which parachutes would descend along guidelines with proper clearance from the central upright. This high central upright had to be capable of resisting wind pressure and of permitting the dropping of any number of the twelve parachutes at different points and at different times, a condition which could produce an imbalance of stresses at the head. meet these requirements the upright or tower portion is flared outward at the base to give it lateral stability. The radiating arms at the top are counterbalanced cantilever trusses extending out at the top of the tower and connected to a ring base. An inner circle of trusswork, which is coupled to the tower at the top, is integrated with the cantilevers and provides stability. To further stabilize the arms laterally they are all interconnected at their outer ends by a light peripheral trusswork. The drop point for each parachute is centered beneath the end of each arm. Octagonal subframes are attached to these end points; from each subframe are suspended eight guide lines to hold the parachute open.

Inspired by the Century of Progress Exposition of 1933-34 in Chicago, New York planned a world's fair to take place in 1939-40 in Flushing Meadows. The emphasis of the fair was on the future and how new developments in technology and merchandise could contribute to a better life for the American citizen. Because of the large site, the fair was divided into seven zones. One of these, the Amusement Zone, was placed around Fountain Lake. Even here there was emphasis on the future, as was noted by August Loeb of the New York Times:

The Fair's stress on the future is accented even in the rides. There will be a big roller coaster to be sure and many of the other rides that go with all fairs. But there will also be a stratoship, an aerial joyride and a Parachute Jump which will give one a chance to join the "Caterpillar Club" in safety by descending in a parachute from a 250 foot tower.1

<sup>1</sup>August Loeb, "A City of Fun and Sport is Rising at the World's Fair," New York Times (March 12, 1939), p.1.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

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city or tov		DATE STO		state New You	
12.	State Histori	c Prese	ervation	Officer C	ertification
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665), I her	signated State Historic Prese reby nominate this property fo g to the criteria and procedure	or inclusion in th	e National Registe	er and certify that it ha	s heen evaluated
State Hist	oric Preservation Officer signification, Historic	ature Preservat	tion Field S	Services Burea	90 - 1
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	RS use only reby certify that this property	is included in th	ne National Regist		9-2 00
Keeper	of the National Register	ruce		date	72-80
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Chief of	Registration		11		

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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DATE ENTERED. SEP 2 1080

Parachute

CONTINUATION SHEET

Parachute

Jump Kings County NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

The Parachute Jump also captured a place in the popular imagination all over the country when it was featured in advertisements by the Lifesavers Candy Co. Following the close of the fair, it was acquired by Edward F. and George C. Tilyou, operators of Steeplechase Park in Coney Island. Steeplechase Park had been founded in 1892 by their father, George C. Tilyou (1863-1914), who later opened six more amusement parks around the country. Because of his efforts, Coney Island became the largest and most popular amusement area in the city. He especially promoted Coney Island as a place for family recreation. Steeplechase Park, which expanded greatly in size from the original steeplechase race track, was the forerunner and inspiration of both Dreamland and Luna Park, also at Coney Island. A prolific inventor, Tilyou devised almost all of the rides and other amusements in the park.

After an extensive fire at Coney Island in September 1939, Parks Commissioner Robert Moses hoped to remove many of the amusements and retain Coney Island solely as a beach with an extended and improved boardwalk. The improvements were complete by 1941, but the amusements remained. The Parachute Jump was erected in Steeplechase Park that year under the direction of architect Michael Mario and engineer Edwin W. Kleinert. It was an especially popular attraction during World War II when Coney Island attracted thousands of visitors. In 1943, the New York Times observed that: "While sailors on holiday like the water scooters in Luna, for paratroopers, the towering parachute jump in front of Steeplechase, is apparently 'a must'". 2

In 1964 Steeplechase Park closed; the twenty-five acre site had been sold for a housing project. The buildings and the rides were demolished, but the Parachute Jump still remains, towering over the boardwalk.

<sup>2</sup>Burton Lindheim, "Coney Island was a War Boom," <u>New York Times</u> (June 27, 1943), Section II, p.4.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED FEB 2 9 1980
DATE ENTERED. SEP' 2 1980

Parachute Jump

CONTINUATION SHEET Kings County ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

Applebaum, Stanley. The New York World's Fair 1939/40. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1977.

Hazelton, Henry Isham. The Boroughs and Counties of Long Island. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing, Co., 1925.

Landmarks Preservation Commission. Parachute Jump Designation Report (LP-0922), by Marjorie Pearson. New York: City of New York, 1977.

New York Times. 1938-1942.

Silver, Nathan. Lost New York. New York: Weathervane Books, 1967.

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The Parachute Jump is significant on its association with the world's fact, as an example of a method of construction, which it revenue despite none i fa to a sociation with Coney Islands.
The State has a sound us that while somewhat deteriorated it retoins its phrushul integrity and the assurance photographs such this assurance (. 5hull 9-2-80 ISTOCKORIES, SELECTION OF THE PROPERTY OF SELECTION OF THE CHECK PORCH Shared of the Control of the State of the REVIEW CHIEF The state of the s 88 13 2 342 192 72 42 32 18 77 1. THE THE THE STATE OF THE STATE OF THE BRANCH CHIEF 5 to the same of the ask was and I can to the

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Mational Register Write-up Federal Register Entry

United States Department of the Interior - Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service



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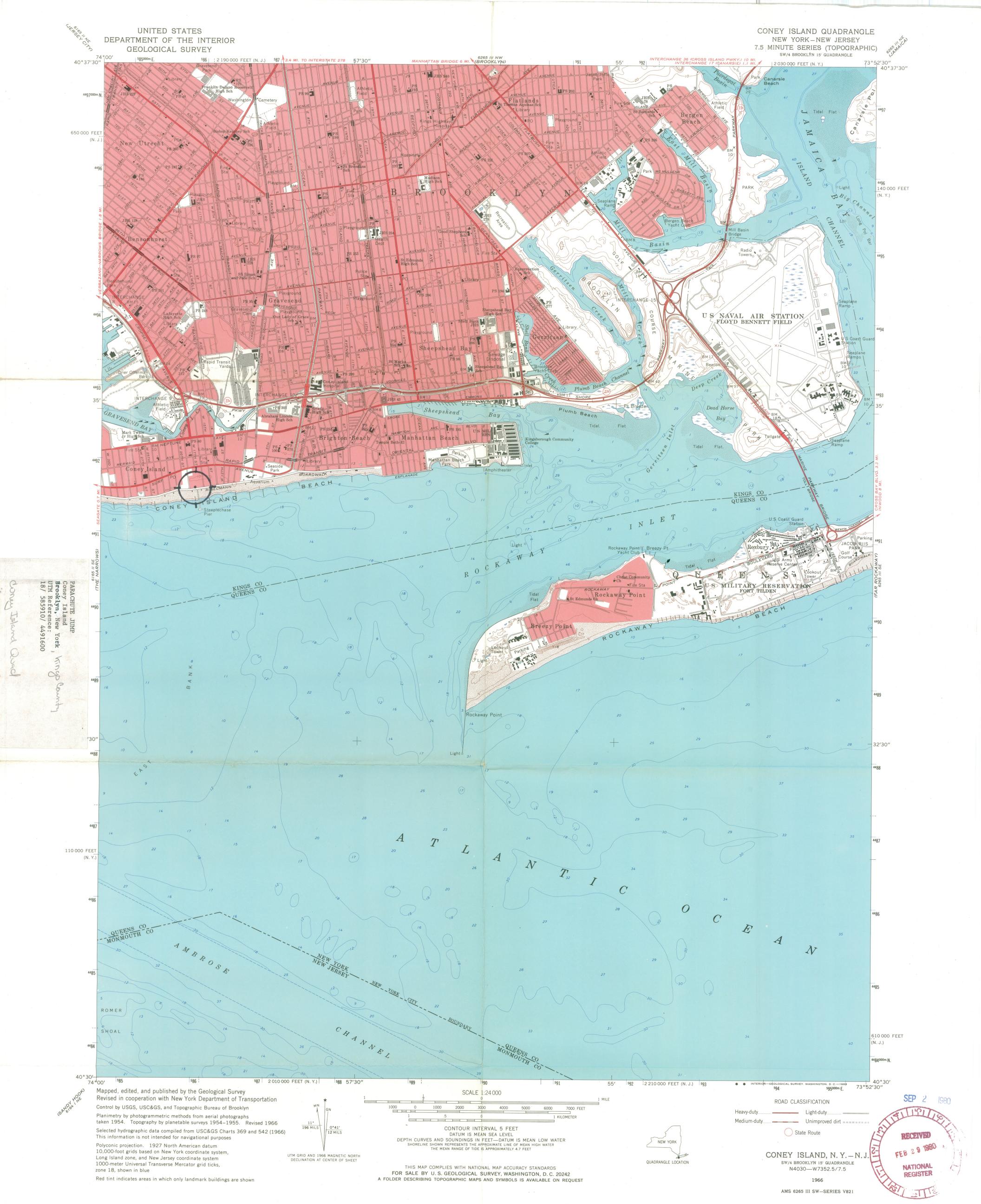
PARACHUTE JUMP
Riegelmann Boardwalk, Coney Island
Brooklyn, New York Kings County
Photo by: David Bishop, 1979
Neg. at: New York City Landmarks

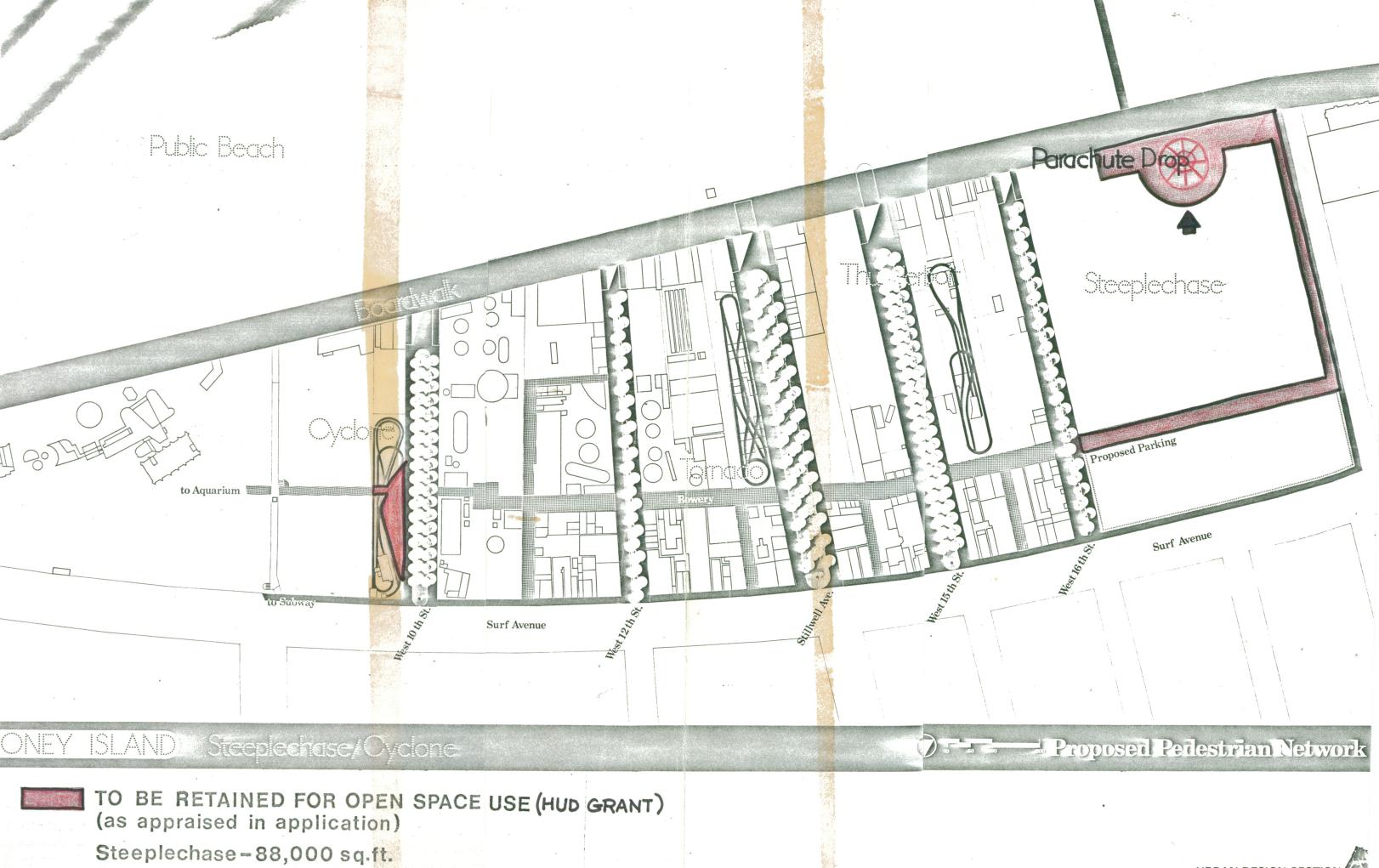
Preservation Commission.

View of Parachute Jump Looking northeast.

SEP 2 1980 refuse FEB 2 9 1980







Cyclone - 7,400 sq.ft.

URBAN DESIGN SECTION
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TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION

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@ Molomber

SEP 3 0 1976

Mr. Stephen Raiche
Project Review Coordinator
Division of Historic Preservation
Office of Parks and Recreation
Agency Building No. 1 Empire State Plaza
Albany, N.Y. 12233

Dear Mr. Raiches

Subject: Steeplechase Farachute Jump
Open Space Land Project: OSA-83-DL
City of New York, N.Y.

Pursuant to 24 CFR 800.4(a)(2) of the "Procedures for the Protection of Eisteric and Cultural Properties in Accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act," etc., this office hereby requests your consultation with respect to the application of the National Register Criteria to the Steeplechase Parachute Jump.

HUD funded Open Space Land project CSA-S3-DL, as revised, proposes the development of a passive open space sitting and pictic area around the Stooplechase parachute jump. The Steeplechase cite including the jump was previously acquired under this grant. He redevelopment or demolition of the actual parachute jump is contemplated with federal funds.

We wish to establish whether this structure appears to be eligible for Estional Register listing. In order to acquaint you with the property I am enclosing a Duilding Structure Survey Form Completed by the City, a photograph of the structure and copy of the open space plan map indicating the location of the structure. In our opinion, the structure does not meet the Maticani Register Criteria set forth in 24 CFR 800.10.

If you have any questions, please contact Hs. Ginger Macouler of our staff at 212-399-5397.

We look forward to hearing from you within two weeks from the date of this letter. If we have not been contacted by this date, we will assume that the State does not consider the parachute jump to meet National Register Criteria.

cc: CF, Macomber, Kaplan, SPEIRS SKURMICK

	Joseph Mont			- DCP, BACCALYA		
CORRE- SPON-	Area Direct	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE
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NEW YORK STATE PARKS & RECREATION Agency Building 1, Empire State Plaza. Albany. New York 12238 Information 518 474-XXX

Orin Lehman, Commissioner 3176

November 29, 1976

Mr. Joseph Monticciolo, Area Director Department of Housing and Urban Development 666 Fifth Avenue

New York, New York 10019

Attention: Ms. Ginger Macomber

Re: Steeplechase Parachute Jump

Open Space Land Project: OSA-83-DL

Kings County

Dear Mr. Monticciolo:

It is the opinion of the State Historic Preservation Officer that the Steeplechase Parachute Jump meets the criteria for listing on the National Register because of its role as a visual landmark, because it is one of only three structures known to have survived from the 1939 World's Fair, and because of its contribution to recreational history (World's Fair and Coney Island). Built for the 1939 World's Fair whose theme was "The World of Tomorrow," the structure was one in a complex of exhibits and structures which were intended to express the most modern in technological achievements.

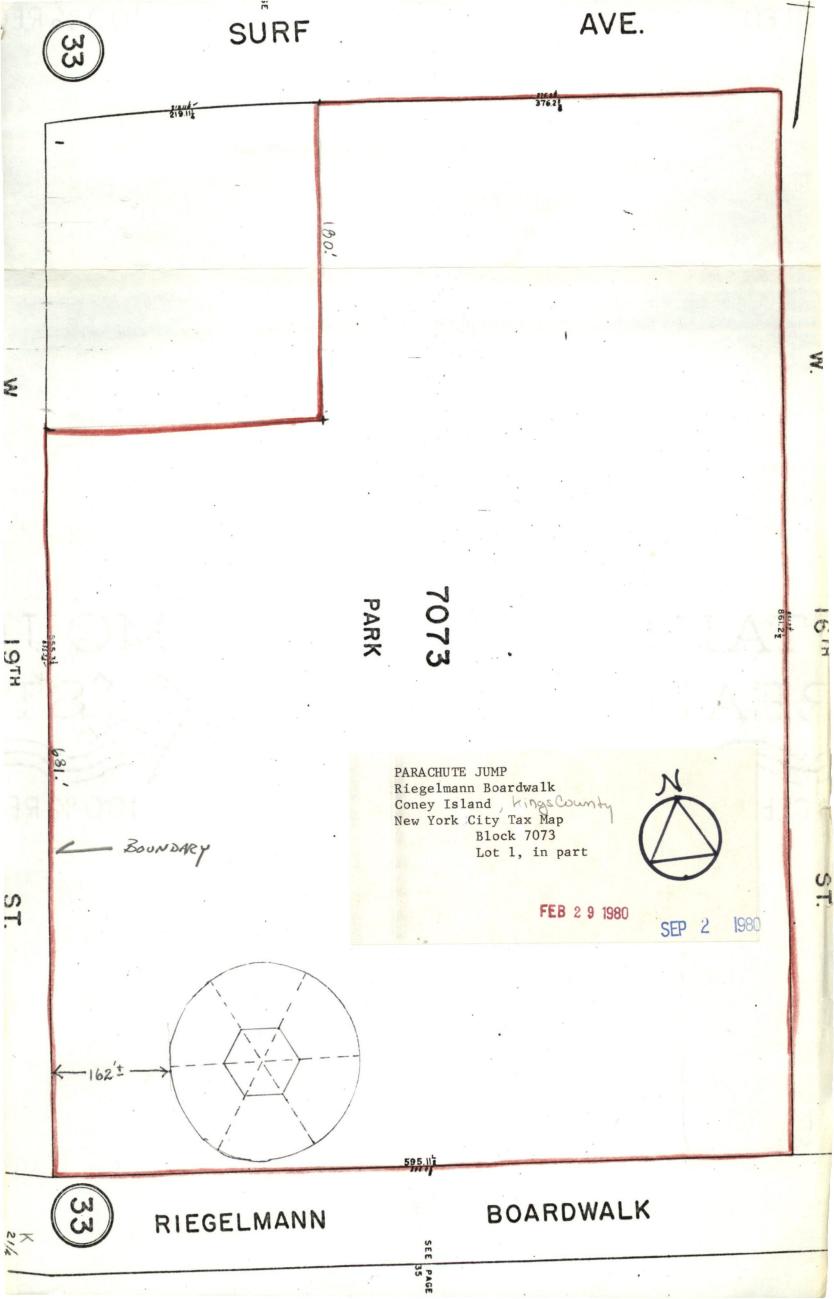
The Official Fair Guide Book described the ride as "one of the most spectacular features of the amusement area," going on to describe "eleven gaily-colored parachutes operated from the top of a 250-foot tower" enabling the visitor to experience "all the thrills of 'bailing out' without hazard or discomfort." Built during the initial period of commercial air travel, it offered the average citizen a chance to experience and respond to the relatively new sensation of flight.

In 1941 the jump was moved to Coney Island and became part of Steeplechase Park. Steeplechase was founded in 1897 by George Tilyou and operated by that family until the 1960's. Steeplechase was the first of the three major parks to open and of them it survived the longest. In 1939, Steeplechase covered 15 acres and featured a pavilion, ballroom and 31 rides. Today the parachute jump is the only major surviving object from that park and stands in close proximity to the center of the existing amusement area.

For many years the jump was the tallest structure on Coney Island, readily seen from land, sea and air. It thus became an important visual landmark, both as a recognized navigational point and as a highly visible symbol of Coney Island. This status is retained to a great degree today.

F.L. Rath

Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation



## TELEPHONE REPORT

Office of Archeology and Historic Presi	ERVATION
PROJECT: PARACHUTE JUMP	
To/FROM: Ann Covell	DATE: 8/29/80
ADDRESS: MY SHPO'S	PHONE:
STAFF MEMBER: L. FUNT Mcclelland	DIVISION: WZ

REPORT:

Condition of Pasachute Tump.

Ann colled NYC Fandmark Commission and leavned that the pimp is in fair condition, and leavned that the pimp is in fair condition, It has been und since before box or than normal expensioned any major damage other than normal determined eligible. determined eligible. It is intact and still-standing. State believes Integrity is definitely there,

#### ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE NEW YORK

Date Entered SEP 2 1980

Name

Location

Parachute Jump

New York Kings County

Also Notified

Honorable Jacob K. Javits Honorable Daniel P. Moynihan Honorable Stephen J. Solarz

State Historic Preservation Officer Mr. Orin Lehman Commissioner Parks and Recreation Agency Building #1 Empire State Plaza Albany, New York 12238

NR

Byers/mjd

9/8/80

For further information, please call the National Register at (202)343-6401.

WASO-1	56
(August	1971)

### U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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TIME OF CALL

TELEPHONE REPORT 1. CALL TO; FROM (Name) 2. ADDRESS (Tel. No. if needed) 212-399-5397 HUD-NY. Ms. Ginger Macomber 8-662-5397-FTS

Porachute jump

She will send us a copy of the comments of the N.Y. City Department of PARKS
and Recreation

ISION FOR HISTORIC PRESE (VATION NEW YORK STATE PARKS AND LECREATION ALBANY, NEW YORK (518) 474-0479	UNIQUE SITE NO
YOUR NAME: Dept. of City Planning	DATE:
YOUR ADDRESS: 185 Montague Street	TELEPHONE: 854-9633
OREWRYZWYMUKKOKKYKY Brooklyn, New York	11201
IDENTIFICATION  1. BUILDING NAME (S): Parachute Jump (Steep1	echase)
2. COUNTY: Kings TOWN/CITT. 223 3. STREET LOCATION: Boardwalk	
5. PRESENT OWNER: City of New York  6. USE: Original: amusement ride	Present:
	c. brick . d. board and batten .
9. STRUCTURAL  a. wood frame with interlocking b. wood frame with light mem	g joints 🗆
(if known)  c. masonry load bearing walls [ d. metal (explain) light st  e. other  b. good   c. masonry load bearing walls [ d. metal (explain) light st	eel Italiewolk
11. INTEGRITY: a. original site b. moved control b. moved	if so, when? 1941 known):
moved from 1939 World's Fair to present s	
12. PHOTO: See attached xerox copy of photo	13. MAP: See attached map

0
14. THREATS TO BUILDING: a. none known b. zoning c. roads
d. developers c. deterioration
f. other:
- 15. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS AND PROPERTY:
a. barn b. carriage house c. garage
d. privy e. shed f. greenhouse
g. shop h. gardens i. landscape features:
j. other:
16. SURROUNDINGS OF THE BUILDING (check more than one if necessary):
a. open land  b. woodland
c. scattered buildings
d. densely built-up e. commercial
f. industrial  g. residential
h.other: amusement parks, beach and boardwalk
17. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF PULL DING AND SUPPORTURE
17. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS:  (Indicate if building or structure is in an historic district)
。""我们们是一个自己的我们的,我们们的自己的一个的,我们也不是一个一个的人的,我们也就是一个我们的我们就不是一个的人的。""我们的,我们就是一个。"
Structure is a highly visible symbol of the amusement area, but is inoperative and is not in a historic distance.
tive and is not in a historic district
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18. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF PULL DING AND OUT.
18. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING AND SITE (including interior features if known):
none (except for deteriorated condition of
struction and site)
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SIGNIFICANCE
19. DATE OF INITIAL CONSTRUCTION: 1939
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BUILDER:
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어때를 하는 이렇게 보는 밤 그리는 하는 것 같아 다른 경우를 보고 있을 때를 했다.
이 2000년 이 경험 방법이 더 있었습니다. 등 속 200일 다시 가장 나를 처음하였다.
집 집 전 시는 경에는 시작하다. 그런 그래나 사고 있다. 그는 사람이 되는 것이 되었습니다.
I. SOURCES:
승규들은 함께 내는 이번 회사들에게 하고 있다. 경기가 되어 되었다고 보통되었다.
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