

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED FEB 29 1980

DATE ENTERED

APR 23 1980

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Town Hall

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

113-123 West 43rd Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

New York

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

18

VICINITY OF

STATE

New York

CODE

036

COUNTY

N.Y.

CODE

061

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☐ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ MUSEUM☐ COMMERCIAL☐ PARK☒ EDUCATIONAL☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☒ ENTERTAINMENT☐ RELIGIOUS☐ GOVERNMENT☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ MILITARY☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mr. John O'Mara, Vice President for Institutional Facilities

STREET & NUMBER

Bobst Library, New York University 70 Washington Square South

CITY, TOWN

New York

VICINITY OF

STATE

New York 10012

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. New York County Register's Office-Hall of Records

STREET & NUMBER

31 Chambers Street

CITY, TOWN

New York

STATE

New York

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Town Hall Designation

DATE

1978

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☒ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Has this property been determined eligible? ☒ yes ☐ no

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

—EXCELLENT
☒ GOOD
—FAIR

—DETERIORATED
—RUINS
—UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

—UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE

—MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Centrally located on the north side of 43rd Street, Town Hall is a four-story adaptation of a neo-Federal design.* Laid up in Flemish bond brick with contrasting limestone trim, the facade is divided horizontally into three sections by limestone belt courses decorated with a Greek fret. The base is punctuated by a seven-bay blind arcade outlined in limestone. Double doors are set into the arches at the base while the tympana are lighted by lunettes. Theatrical canopies are suspended over the doorways and are anchored to the spandrels by tie rods. The middle section of the facade is distinguished by a large limestone plaque reading: "The Town Hall. Founded by the League for Political Education, 1894-1920. Ye Shall Know the Truth and the Truth Shall Make You Free." The plaque is flanked by two empty niches. A band of sash windows is placed above the three main features of the central section. The attic is characterized by sash windows of a larger dimension which are surmounted by limestone flat-arch lintels secured by a keystone. Recessed panels marked with a limestone lozenge separate the bays. Two oculi pierce the end panels. The building is crowned by an Adamesque frieze and a roof balustrade, both rendered in limestone.

The entrance lobby of Town Hall is a longitudinal space adorned with pilasters and a terrazzo floor. A tripartite columnar screen with engaged Ionic columns separates the lobby from the auditorium beyond, and the interstices of the screen are filled with double doors. The screen is flanked by broad staircases leading to the first mezzanine floor with its promenade and reception room. The stairs have slender cast-iron balusters, walnut handrails and a marble face string.

The auditorium, which has a rough semi-circular plan, has two levels--a main floor and a cantilevered balcony. The walls are composed of a marble base with torus molding which supports rusticated artificial stone. It is interesting to note that McKim, Mead & White used a similar rusticated effect in the main auditorium of the Eastman Theater in Rochester, New York, which also dates from this period. The angles of the hall are accented by monumental gilded pilasters with Composite capitals. A gilded cornice incorporating dentils and acanthus leaves joins a plaster guilloche and fretwork band at the ceiling level. Crystal chandeliers hang from a panelled plaster ceiling which is centrally adorned by an Adamesque ceiling ornament. The shallow stage is set behind an ornamented elliptical proscenium arch which is supported by pilasters decorated with a neo-Classical arabesque pattern. The arch treatment is similar to that used by the firm at Kilbourn Hall in the Eastman Theater complex. The proscenium arch is echoed by a shallow relief in the hall's lateral walls. Perhaps the most decorative features of the hall are the arched organ grilles which flank the stage on the diagonal walls. Here a tabernacle motif is suggested and the carved screen is patterned with arches and garlands reminiscent of the work of the 17th-century English wood-carver Grinling Gibbons. The neo-Classical architectural ornament, while typical of that used in many auditoriums and theaters of the period, adds to the visual ambience of Town Hall. Such factors as the plan of the auditorium, the types of materials, and the placement and design of architectural detail are important in determining the acoustics of the space.

*The text of this nomination form is taken in its entirety from Landmarks Preservation Commission, Town Hall Designation Report by Ruth Seldon-Sturgill, New York, 1978.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
☐ PREHISTORIC	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING	☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	☐ RELIGION
☐ 1400-1499	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	☐ CONSERVATION	☐ LAW	☐ SCIENCE
☐ 1500-1599	☐ AGRICULTURE	☐ ECONOMICS	☐ LITERATURE	☐ SCULPTURE
☐ 1600-1699	☒ ARCHITECTURE	☒ EDUCATION	☒ MILITARY	☒ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
☐ 1700-1799	☐ ART	☐ ENGINEERING	☒ MUSIC	☒ THEATER
☐ 1800-1899	☐ COMMERCE	☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	☐ PHILOSOPHY	☐ TRANSPORTATION
☒ 1900-	☐ COMMUNICATIONS	☐ INDUSTRY	☒ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)
		☐ INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1919-21

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

McKim, Mead & White

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Town Hall was built in 1919-21 under the auspices of the League for Political Education as a meeting hall for the city of New York. It was designed in a neo-Federal style by the prominent architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White to meet the varied needs of the League and it was originally used as a forum to educate the city's men and women in political issues. It hosted speakers of international fame and gained national importance for 21 years through its radio program "America's Town Meeting of the Air." Through the intimacy and excellent acoustics of its auditorium, Town Hall has achieved international prominence as the favored concert hall of many notable soloists, jazz musicians and chamber music groups.

Characterized by one contemporary observer as "an idea with a roof over it," Town Hall was built in 1919-1921 as a meeting hall for the city of New York. The architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White was asked by the League for Political Education to design a structure to accommodate the organization's needs for a speaker's auditorium, a concert hall, a movie theater and a clubhouse. A versatile and functional design was demanded, not an architectural conceit. Because of the versatility of its design, Town Hall, as perhaps no other hall in the city, has been able to keep pace with changing needs. Following its beginning as a forum to educate the city's men and women in political issues, Town Hall attained national importance in 1935 when radio spread "America's Town Meeting of the Air" across the country. Concurrently, the auditorium became highly acclaimed for its excellent acoustics and intimate atmosphere. For these reasons Town Hall was selected for most New York musical debuts. One music critic explained:

Both to the ear and to the eye Town Hall remains unrivalled among New York's auditoriums. Artists singing or playing there start with an advantage-- heard at their best, seen at their best, and in close, easy contact with an audience predisposed to enjoyment by the pleasant ambience.¹

Begun as an outgrowth of the defeat of the women's suffrage amendment to the New York constitution in 1894, the League for Political Education was founded by six prominent New York women who had lost in their effort to obtain suffrage, but who were determined to educate more women in political issues so that they might not continue to be excluded from town meetings and other forms of government. The idea of a political education program had originated with Dr. Mary Putnam Jacobi, the daughter of George Palmer Putnam the publisher, and the first woman to be admitted to the French Ecole de Medicine. Dr. Jacobi's address before the Albany constitutional convention in 1894 was reprinted and used as a document in the successful suffrage efforts in 1915. The other founders of the League included: Lucia G. Runkle, a member of the editorial staff of the New York Tribune; Adele M. Fielde, a missionary and translator; Catherine A.B. Abbe, President of the City History Club; Eleanor B.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See attached sheet

UTM NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre.

Central Park, N.Y., N.J.

Scale: 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 18 58571010 451119410
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 996, Lot 21. See attached site map.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Contact: Elizabeth Spencer-Ralph 518-474-0479
Joan R. Olshansky, National Register Coordinator

12/13/78

ORGANIZATION

Landmarks Preservation Commission

DATE

12/13/78

STREET & NUMBER

305 Broadway

TELEPHONE

212-566-7577

CITY OR TOWN

New York

STATE

New York 10007

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL x

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

Director, Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau

DATE

2/26/80

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: Lynn A. Beebe

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

April 23, 1980

DATE

April 17, 1980

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Sanders; and Lee W. Haggin. The League, which was founded in 1894, drew experts in many fields to "town meetings" where the audience was encouraged to ask questions following the lecture. The programs were successful, and by 1899 the League boasted 600 members. Contacts at Harvard University were especially helpful in providing speakers and guidance to the program. After lecturing to the League for several years, Professor of Education Robert E. Ely decided to leave Harvard in 1901 and become Executive Director of the program. From the beginning, the League had been open to both women and men, but because of the routine of morning lectures, few men had been able to attend. In 1907 Ely and J.W. Beatson founded the Economic Club of New York which was an outgrowth of the League and which offered dinner meetings. Former President of the Economic Club, Wendall L. Wilkie, described it as "the foremost nonpartisan forum of men in the country."²

The early meetings of the League were held at the home of Eleanor B. Saunders but as the size of the group enlarged, it became necessary to rent space in different halls around the city for the lectures. Every morning from Monday through Saturday lectures were held in various locations: the Ladies Athletic Club, Aeolian Hall, Carnegie Hall and the Berkeley-Lyceum Theater. Following one such lecture in 1912 at the Berkeley Theater, formerly on 44th Street, Anna Blakslee Bliss made the point that the League needed a permanent hall of its own. Mrs. Bliss initiated the building drive with a generous check but it was not until 1917 that a site was selected. Several members of the League formed a corporation called the Societies Realty Co., and purchased the lot on the north side of 43rd Street for \$425,000. One reporter described the location as "the fastest-growing civic and commercial centre of the city..."³ but only as recently as the 1880s it was adjacent to the notorious district known as Hell's Kitchen. During the 1890s, however, such foresighted men as Charles Frohman and Oscar Hammerstein I had gradually built theaters in the area. By 1904 when the subway was built near Adolph Ochs' New York Times Building, the area became known as Times Square. Town Hall was built in a prime location. The hall moved onto a stretch of 43rd Street which was already distinguished by the George M. Cohan Theatre, the Henry W. Miller Theater, and the New York Elks Club.

The League's building committee, which was headed by Robert E. Simon, had selected the nationally prominent architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White to execute the design of the new headquarters and in April of 1919 the New York Times published an early rendering. In July, contractor Russell B. Smith set to work demolishing the six dwellings which occupied the site and construction was commenced on October 10, 1919. In January 1920 Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., laid the cornerstone of the building for his wife who was the grand-niece and name-sake of the original founder, Eleanor Butler Sanders who died in 1905.

By 1919, the architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White was being run by a younger group of designers. Stanford White (1853-1906) and Charles F. McKim (1847-1909) were dead, and William R. Mead had withdrawn from active practice. Four new partners were responsible for the work of the firm: William M. Kendall, William S. Richardson, Burt L. Fenner and Teunis J. van der Bent. New York City Building Department Records indicate that Van der Bent was responsible for the design of Town Hall. Teunis J. van der Bent (1863-1936) came to the United States from the Netherlands where he had studied architecture and engineering

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at the University of Delft. In 1887 at the age of 24, he secured work as a draftsman with McKim, Mead & White where he worked on such New York projects as the Hotel Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Terminal Station, Columbia University, the Metropolitan Museum additions, the old Madison Square Garden, and the Cornell University Medical School. In 1909 Van der Bent was made a partner in the firm, and in 1928 he officially succeeded Mead as head of the Office of Business Management.

Drawings published in 1921 and Building Department Records reveal that McKim, Mead & White was contracted for \$500,000 to erect the structure of the building and to finish the lobbies and the auditorium. On January 12, 1921, the auditorium was completed and opened to the public but the remainder of the building was left incomplete for lack of funds. It was estimated that \$1,100,000 was needed to finish the remaining interiors which were to be given over to a library, lounge and restaurant. In 1923 Mrs. Bliss again came to the rescue of Town Hall and gave \$500,000 towards its completion. New York architect Louis E. Jallade was retained to complete the job even before the remainder of the money had been raised. Born in Montreal, Jallade came to New York as a child, received his training at the Metropolitan Museum Art School and graduated from the École des Beaux-Arts in 1902. In 1923 he was a partner in the firm of Lindsay & Warren but later formed a partnership with his son at 597 Fifth Avenue. In 1924 he was the partner in charge of building the International House, 500 Riverside Drive. Finally in 1925 with the help of many loyal subscribers, Town Hall completed its mortgage payments.

From the beginning Town Hall became a popular forum for airing many of the nation's most pressing issues. Over the years, Director Ely had attracted such international speakers as: Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Henry James, Thomas Mann, Jan Masaryk, Booker T. Washington, Winston Churchill, Jane Addams and William Butler Yeats. Prominent international figures frequented the new hall. By virtue of its open forum, the events at Town Hall sometimes caused controversy. An early incident occurred when Margaret Sanger attempted to give a lecture on birth control. The New York Police stopped the lecture, arrested Mrs. Sanger, and took her to the 47th Street Police Station. Members of the League followed in pursuit and soon secured her release. In 1929 a memorial gathering for Sacco and Vanzetti brought much criticism to the hall.

In 1930 Robert E. Ely brought some new, vital blood into the organization. George V. Denny, Jr., former head of the Institute of Arts and Sciences at Columbia University, was hired as associate director. Described as "a man with a passion for education and a flair for showmanship,"⁴ Denny was the creator of "America's Town Meeting of the Air" in 1935. The idea of a nationally broadcast presentation of many sides of a particular issue had come to Denny in 1934 after hearing a man say he would "rather be shot than caught listening to Roosevelt on the radio."⁵ Denny was shocked by this narrow-minded attitude. He took his idea to the National Broadcasting Company which agreed to test out his plan. Beginning on May 30, 1935, on Thursday evening from 9:30 to 10:30, the familiar sound of a town crier

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and his bell reminded the people of America to tune into the "town meeting" broadcast from Town Hall in New York City. The show was not set up as a two-sided debate, but offered the listener four points of view. As radio communications grew more sophisticated, questions from all over the country were relayed back to the speakers for their comments. For 21 years the program drew an enthusiastic audience. When Denny finally succeeded Ely as director of the organization in 1937, the name was changed from the League for Political Education to Town Hall, Inc.

In 1921 the firm of McKim, Mead & White wrote to Robert E. Ely that "The Town Hall was erected for public meetings, lectures and the like, with an educational purpose, and is designed to be rented for concerts, moving pictures, exhibitions and similar entertainments."⁶ There can be no doubt that one of the purposes for which the Town Hall auditorium was designed was that of musical production. One month after the auditorium was officially opened a young Spanish violinist, Juan Manen, was invited to give a concert and two weeks later Martin Lisan became the first pianist to use the hall.

Tradition has it that the internationally-famed acoustical engineer, Wallace C. Sabine of Harvard, was consulted in the design of the Town Hall auditorium. The League's strong connection with members of the Harvard faculty might suggest the likelihood of such an arrangement. However, at the time that the plans were being developed by McKim, Mead & White, Sabine was deeply involved with work in Europe during the war. In fact Sabine died in January of 1919, before the construction of Town Hall was commenced. However, a connection between Sabine's successful scientific analysis of acoustics and the auditorium at Town Hall undoubtedly exists. In 1900 the firm of McKim, Mead & White was the first architectural firm to follow Sabine's acoustical instructions in the design of a concert hall. Their design for Symphony Hall in Boston was the first based on scientifically-derived principles of acoustics, and it ranks among the three or four best auditoriums in the world for symphonic music. After years of painstaking experiments with various materials and shapes, Sabine had developed a precise formula for the building of an acoustically perfect hall. Sabine himself stated that "While the problem [of securing fine acoustics] is complex and, for the best results, extremely difficult, yet it is perfectly determinate, and the solution arrived at is the exact result of the architect's plans and specifications, if these are accurately followed in the building."⁷ Sabine had subsequently worked with the firm of McKim, Mead & White on many other projects. If any firm truly understood Sabine's acoustical principles and how to implement them, it was the firm which designed the auditorium at Town Hall. With this in mind it is no wonder that New York Times critic Harold C. Schonberg, following at least one piano concert, remarked that "Town Hall still provides some of the best listening in New York: its acoustics are exemplary."⁸

Soloists have flocked to Town Hall for the unique qualities of fine acoustics and intimacy it affords. During its first concert season Richard Strauss played a program of his songs and was accompanied by Elisabeth Schumann and Elena Gerhardt. Town Hall sponsored Sergei Rachmaninoff, Mischa Elman and Margaret Matzenauer in 1931-32. Eddie Condon's jazz concerts filled the years of World War II. The years of 1946-48 were the peak musical years

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at Town Hall. In October of 1947, 52 concerts were given. The "Town Hall debut" became a part of the country's vocabulary. Among the most memorable of the debuts were those of Lotte Lehmann, Elizabeth Schwarzkopf, Joan Sutherland and Marian Anderson.

The neo-Federal style and related neo-Georgian style had been frequently used by McKim, Mead & White. An earlier example, the Lambs Club of 1904-5, may be seen just a block away at 128 West 44th Street. Symbolically the neo-Federal style with its associations to the early years of the Republic of the United States, may be seen as particularly appropriate to such a democratic forum as Town Hall.

In 1958, Town Hall, Inc., merged with New York University. The university managed the hall and leased the auditorium for a variety of purposes for 20 years. Town Hall was one of the five most active concert halls in the city; others being Carnegie Hall, Carnegie Recital Hall, Avery Fisher Hall and Alice Tully Hall. In the summer of 1978, the university ceased its management and sought to transfer title to the property. The hall has previously served the people of New York with its fine facilities and offers its service to generations to come. The future use of the hall has not yet been determined.

FOOTNOTES

1. Andrew Porter, "Musical Events," The New Yorker, (December 2, 1974), 129.
2. Claire Courteol Deane, A Short Story of Town Hall (New York: Town Hall, Inc., 1946), p. 5.
3. "Time Square to Have a Million-Dollar Town Hall," New York Times, April 27, 1919.
4. Deane, p. 8.
5. Ibid.
6. McKim, Mead & White to Robert Erskine Ely, May 20, 1921, New York City Building Department Records.
7. Russell Sturgis, A Dictionary of Architecture and Building (New York: Macmillan Co., 1904), 1:23.
8. Harold C. Schonberg, "Music: Masselos's Ives Pianist Plays 'Concord' Sonata at Town Hall," New York Times, October 6, 1971.

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- "The Town Hall, New York City," American Architect, 119 (February 1921), plates and plans.

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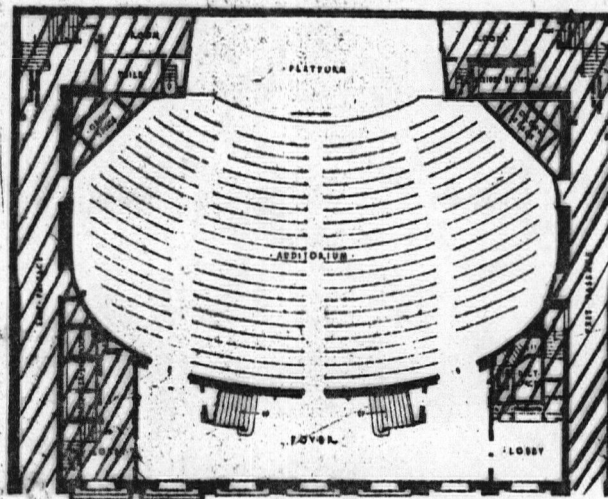
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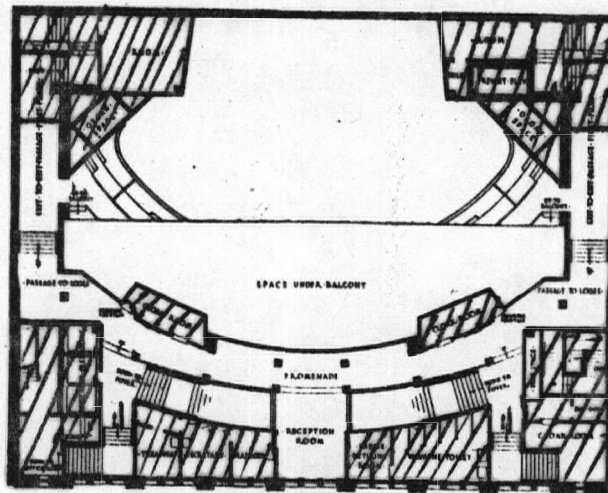
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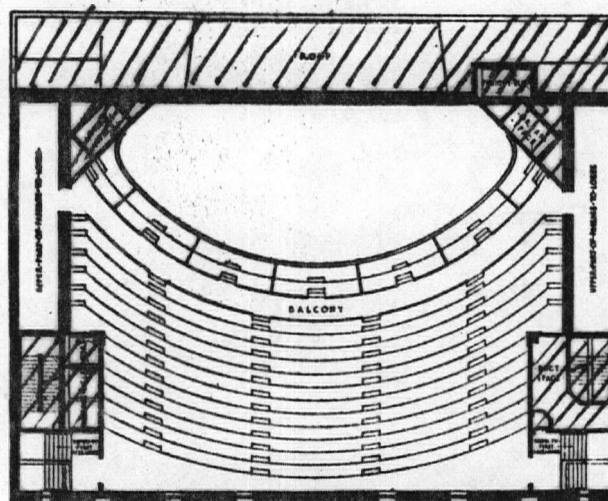
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FIRST FLOOR



FIRST MEZZANINE FLOOR

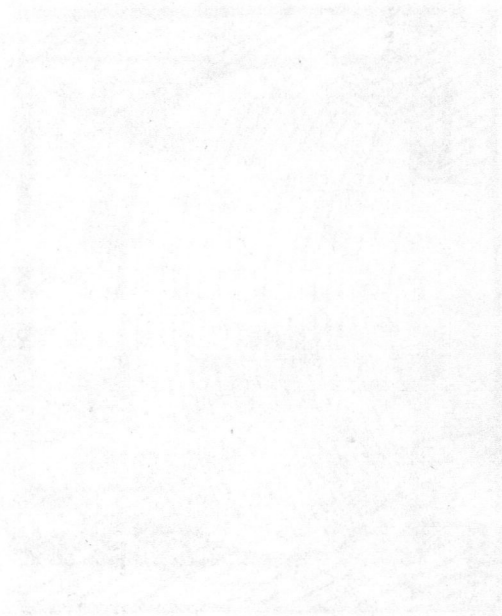
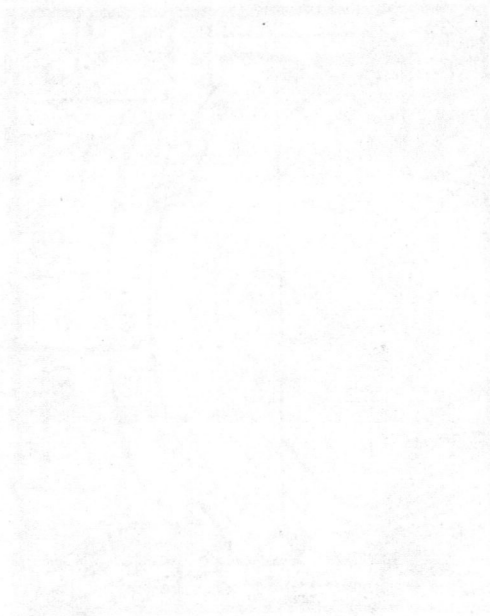
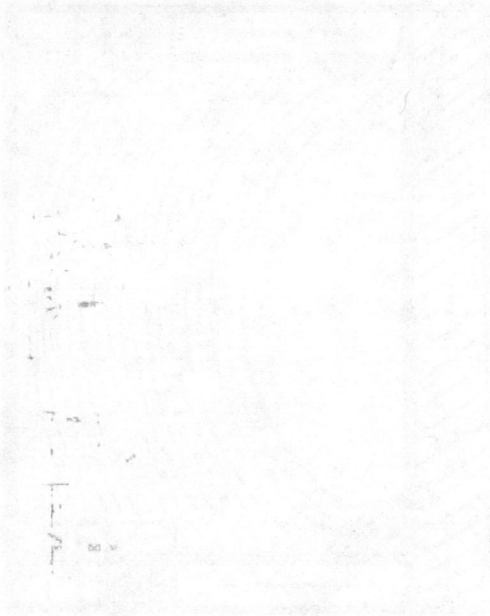
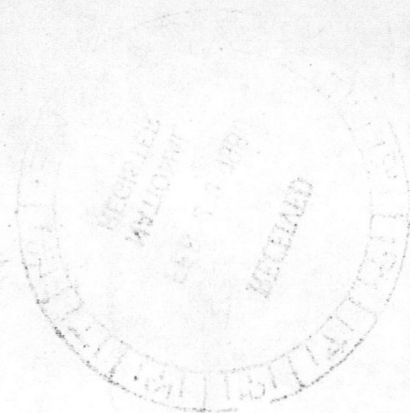


BALCONY FLOOR

From American Architect, XVII

TOWN HALL INTERIOR
113-123 West 43rd Street, Manhattan

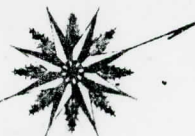
Town Hall
New York
New York County



APR 23 1980

New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1977

2



BLOOMINGDALE ROAD

AVE

SEVENTH

TIMES SQUARE

BROADWAY

W. 43RD

W. 44TH

W. 45TH

W. 46TH ST.

AVE. OF

THE AMERICAS

STERN BROS.
PARTMENT STORE

OFFICES & STORES

HIPDROME

P.D.C.

GARAGE

ROYALTON

14

NEW YORK BAR ASSOCIATION

FANCIER

FANCIER'S

MACHINE BLOCK

ALCOQUIN

IROQUOIS

12

7

1

2

3

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A detailed map of the San Rafael area, showing streets, buildings, and landmarks. The map includes labels for 'OFFICES', 'SAN RAFAEL', and 'SCHUYLER'. It also shows various street names and numbers, such as '125', '100.3', '107', '106', '105', '104', '103', '102', '101', '100', '99', '98', '97', '96', '95', '94', '93', '92', '91', '90', '89', '88', '87', '86', '85', '84', '83', '82', '81', '80', '79', '78', '77', '76', '75', '74', '73', '72', '71', '70', '69', '68', '67', '66', '65', '64', '63', '62', '61', '60', '59', '58', '57', '56', '55', '54', '53', '52', '51', '50', '49', '48', '47', '46', '45', '44', '43', '42', '41', '40', '39', '38', '37', '36', '35', '34', '33', '32', '31', '30', '29', '28', '27', '26', '25', '24', '23', '22', '21', '20', '19', '18', '17', '16', '15', '14', '13', '12', '11', '10', '9', '8', '7', '6', '5', '4', '3', '2', '1'.

APR 23 1980

1-20-1 1-20-1
1-20-1 1-20-1

Property

Town Hall

State

NY - New York

Working Number

2-29-80 642

80002724

TECHNICAL

Photos 3Maps 2

CONTROL

HISTORIAN

A 1920s interpretation of the Federal Style, the ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN Town Hall is significant as an intact example of its period style and for its role as a forum for political education/information which grew out of the early 20th c. efforts to secure voting rights for women through awareness + participation in political issues. Continuous use for the exchange + dissemination of ideas + cultural activities.

Accept
L. Beebe
4/17/80

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

HAER

Inventory _____

Review _____

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

Accept
L. Beebe
4/17/80

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

National Register Write-up

Federal Register Entry

2.3.81

Send-back _____

Re-submit _____

Entered APR 23 1980



1. Town Hall
113-123 West 43rd Street
New York County, New York

APR 23 1980

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo, 1980
Neg. at: New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission

View from southwest

1083

FEB 29 1980



2. Town Hall
113-123 West 43rd Street
New York, New York

APR 23 1980

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo, 1980
Neg. at: New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission

View of front facade

2 of 3

FEB 29 1980



3. Town Hall
113-123 West 43rd Street
New York County, New York

FEB 29 1980

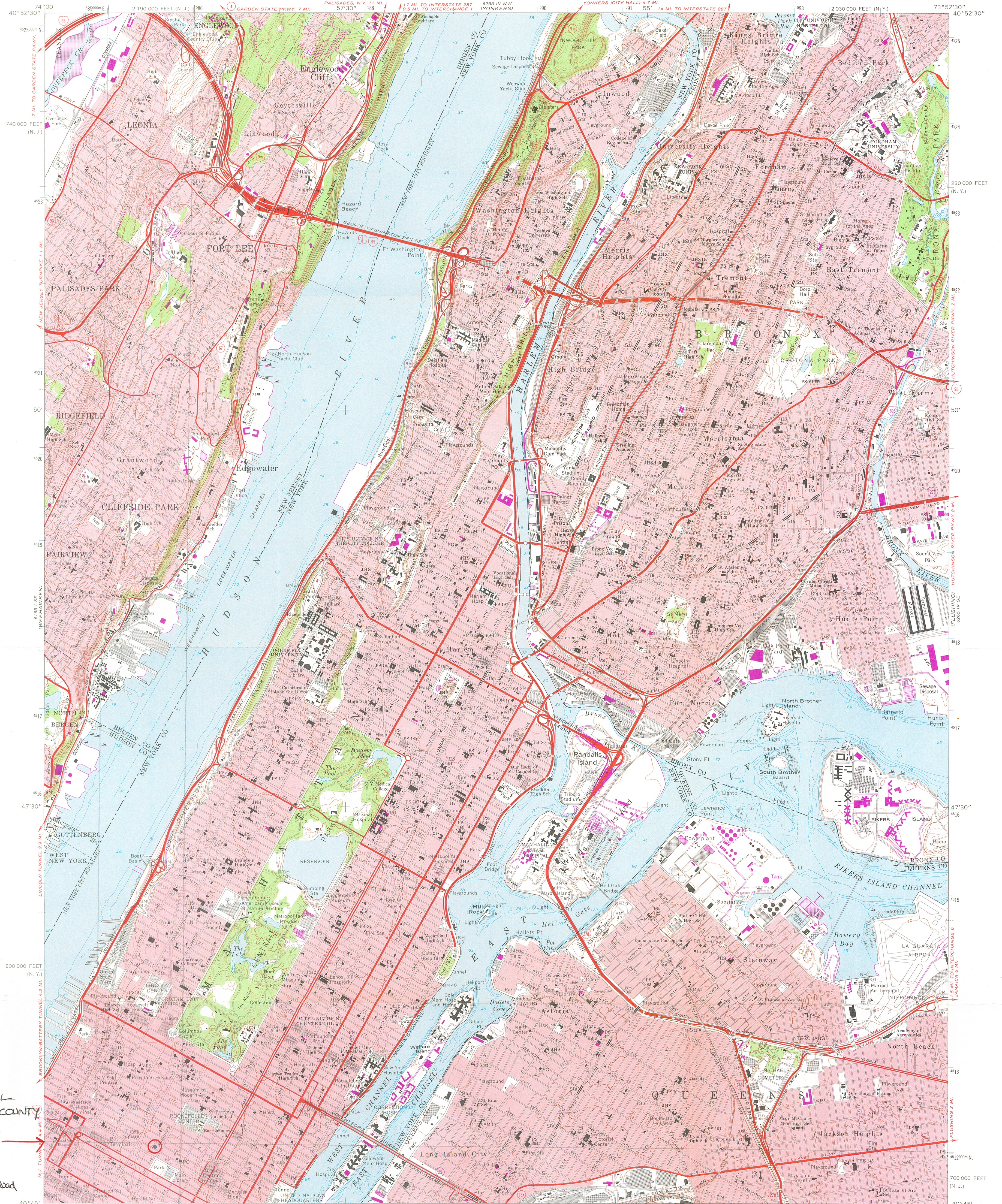
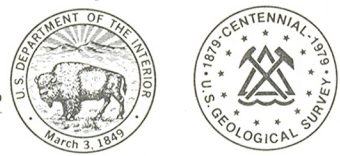
Photo by:
Neg. at:

Stephen L. Senigo, 1980
New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission

View of interior auditorium

3073

APR 23 1980



Town Hall
New York County
585 700
4511 940
Central Park Quad

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Revised in cooperation with New York
Department of Transportation

Control by USGS, USC&GS, and New Jersey Geodetic Survey

Planimetry by photogrammetric methods and from USC&GS Charts T-4567,
T-5099, T-5264, T-5278, T-5448, T-5449, T-5451, T-5452, T-5453, T-5458,
and T-5773. Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1954 and planimetric surveys 1956

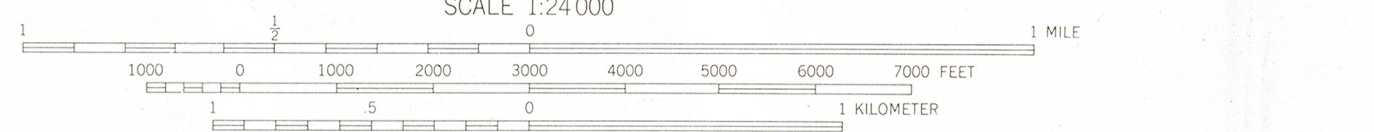
Revised from aerial photographs taken 1966. Field checked 1966

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

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
1000-foot grids based on New York coordinate system, Long Island zone,
and New Jersey coordinate system

1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 18, shown in blue

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
THE AVERAGE RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 2 FEET
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, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

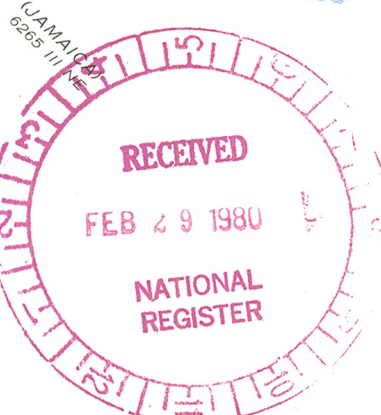
Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs
taken 1977 and other source data. This information
not field checked. Map edited 1979

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

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———
Interstate Route U.S. Route State Route

CENTRAL PARK, N.Y.—N.J.
SW/4 HARLEM 15' QUADRANGLE
N4045—W7352.5' 7.5

1966
PHOTOREVISED 1979
AMS 6265 IV SW—SERIES V821



ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE NEW YORK

Date Entered APR 23 1980

Name

Location

Old Colony Club

New York
New York County

Town Hall

New York
New York County

Old Grolfier Club

New York
New York County

Public Baths

New York
New York County

Also Notified

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

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE NEW YORK

Date Entered

APR 23 1980

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Belnord Apartments	New York New York County
Schinasi House	New York New York County
Ponckhockie Union Chapel	Kingston Ulster County
Addison Village Hall	Addison Steuben County
Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society	Buffalo Erie County
St. Jean Baptiste Church and Rectory	New York New York County
Bouwerie Lane Theater	New York New York County
Bowery Savings Bank	New York New York County
Chanin Building	New York New York County

Also Notified

Honorable Ted Weiss
Honorable Hamilton Fish, Jr.
Honorable Stanley N. Lundine
Honorable Henry J. Nowak
Honorable S. William Green

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

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE NEW YORK

Date Entered

APR 23 1980

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church	New York New York County
Moore-McMillen House	Staten Island Richmond County
Building at 85 Leonard Street	New York New York County
Reformed Church of Newton Complex	Elmhurst Queens County
New York, Westchester and Boston Railroad Administration Building	Bronx Bronx County
St. Bartholomew's Protestant Episcopal Church and Rectory	Brooklyn Kings County
Hanson Place Seventh Day Adventist Church	Brooklyn Kings County
Union Theological Seminary	New York New York County
Bailey House	New York New York County

Also Notified

Honorable Daniel P. Moynihan

Honorable Jacob K. Javits
Honorable John M. Murphy
Honorable Benjamin S. Rosenthal
Honorable Mario Biaggi
Honorable Frederick W. Richmond
Honorable Charles B. Rangel

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

4/30/80

Byers/bjr

NR

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

JOSEPH WESLEY ZEIGLER

NOT AN NHL LISTED IN NR
THIS IS IN . APR 23, 1980
NEW YORK CITY

62 Tuxedo Road
Montclair, New Jersey 07042
(201) 783-4229

New York (212) 868-9858

new y

FILE

January 12, 1981

Mr. George Emery, Chief
Historic Sites Survey Division
Heritage, Conservation, and Recreation
Department of the Interior
440 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Emery:

Enclosed are two sheets: one on my consulting in the arts, and another on a planning project which I am currently doing for Town Hall. For the project, I want to talk with you.

Town Hall is now officially designated a national landmark (it is also a New York City landmark). Surely, a major part of its future will involve how best it can take its rightly place in this select fraternity. Our planning must pay careful attention to this.

In early 1979, you met with Walter Anderson (of the National Endowment for the Arts) and Richard Torrence, when they were working on re-claiming Town Hall. My project came about through Anderson's office at NEA. Hopefully, we can meet again on this matter, to bring you up to date on Town Hall and also to seek your counsel.

I shall next be in Washington January 27-28, and Larry Zucker (manager of Town Hall) will be with me at least part of the time. May we come to your office on the 27th, at 1:30?

I shall call next week to see if this time is appropriate, or if another can be arranged instead. We look forward to meeting you.

With best wishes,

Cordially,

Joseph Wesley Zeigler
Joseph Wesley Zeigler

JWZ/ad

Music

Recital Hall can be rented at a four-wall cost of \$275. With personnel and other necessary costs, the price will extend almost to \$500. The Tully Hall four-wall rental is \$1,000. With the usual amenities, the cost to an artist at Tully Hall will run to \$2,100 at a minimum. An artist who wants to do things up brown at any New York Hall will be running far over the minimum. Giving a New York recital is no longer inexpensive.

The members of the Town Hall Foundation regard the future with guarded optimism.

"At this point," said Mr. Zucker, "we are 80-85 percent booked through next Aug. 1, which is the end of our fiscal year. There is a variety of events. In May George Wein will put on his 'Black Broadway' for three weeks, and he will also have some of the Newport Jazz Festival in Town Hall. Perhaps there are not so many important classical events, but we have to keep alive. We have to accept anybody who has the money to pay for the rental. In the future we hope to be in a position to attract important artists and organizations once again. Right now we are talking with several concert managers and producers. A chamber music series may be in the works. Up to now we have not started to try to re-establish Town Hall as a major concert hall, which we want to do and which we will do."

• • •

Mr. Leffler had a few words to say about the area.

"This street has never been bad," he pointed out. "Certainly nothing like 42d Street. Don't forget, too, that the rehabilitation of the Times Square area is something that is concerning the Mayor's office and the people of the city. Two new hotels are going up east of us, and there will be the Portman complex on the west side of the area. The bad reputation of the Times Square area hasn't had much effect on the theaters, has it? Business is fine there, and yet the theaters are in the Times Square area. We will do all right. Just pass the word along that Town Hall is back in business. Come and use us."

O.K. Word passed. ■

A Planning and Development Study for Town Hall

The article on the other side of this sheet looks back at the history of Town Hall, and also forward to its future. Importantly, it points out that there is new leadership in the Town Hall Foundation, which is currently maintaining the hall on a break-even basis and is beginning to formulate a new future for Town Hall - one of New York City's most illustrious auditoriums.

To aid in this effort, a feasibility study has been arranged, with joint funding by the National Endowments for the Arts and for the Humanities. Consultant Joseph Wesley Zeigler is heading the study, working with the Town Hall Foundation Board of Trustees and Administrative Director Lawrence Zucker.

The purpose of Zeigler's study is to examine a wide range of options that Town Hall can pursue. It concentrates on six areas:

- * Programming. What mix of programs best fits Town Hall? How can that mix combine music with other arts and humanities formats, and what are the cost implications of specific program choices? Most importantly, what programs can give Town Hall special distinction among the arts/humanities venues of the City? What gaps can Town Hall fill?
- * Operating Framework. Currently, Town Hall functions only as a hall for rental; it produces or presents no programs of its own. Should Town Hall mount its own events, and if so of what kind? Should it house arts and humanities groups in residence, and if so which ones? What should be their relationship to the Town Hall Foundation?
- * Audiences. What audiences represent Town Hall's natural constituency? What marketing and promotional strategies should be pursued? What alliances can be forged?
- * Structure and Staffing. Given answers to questions above, what structure and staffing will be needed in the 1980s? What table of organization is needed?
- * Operating Funds. What monies will be needed to maintain Town Hall and its programs? What portion of the budget will need to be raised, and what sources of public and private support can be tapped?
- * Development Funds. Recognizing Town Hall's significance in the 42nd Street community, and the vast changes expected in that community in the 1980s, what role should Town Hall play in community development efforts? What funds can be attracted to Town Hall for its development alone, and as part of the larger Midtown mix?

Zeigler's research will include several score interviews of arts and humanities leaders and others in New York and Washington; distribution of a questionnaire to audiences at Town Hall and other cooperating institutions; interviewing of members of the public in the TKTS line in Duffy Square, and elsewhere Midtown; and meetings of interested people as awareness grows. A major report in March will conclude the study.

At this time, Town Hall is on the edge of a potentially extraordinary future. Our study will arm the Town Hall Foundation with the information it needs to build that future.

MUSIC VIEW

HAROLD C. SCHONBERG

Wanted: Music at Town Hall

Town Hall, the once-famous concert auditorium on West 43d Street, wants it known that it is alive and, if not yet exactly thriving, well.

There had been a flurry of activity around Town Hall in the autumn of 1978. But it happened during the newspaper strike, and was not generally reported. So a recapitulation is in order.

Town Hall, which opened in 1921, was for many years one of New York's two major concert halls. Carnegie Hall, with its 2,760 seats, took care of symphony orchestras and big-name soloists — and also, of course, of anybody who wanted to give a concert there, basking in the cachet of its glorious name. Carnegie Hall also had, and has, the 300-seat Recital Hall, which was offered at a low rental and which attracted many debut recitalists or other artists or groups that commanded only a small audience. The 1,500-seat Town Hall was in constant use as a showplace for debut recitalists, and it also was an unrivalled ambience for chamber music. It, too, attracted some of the most important musicians of the last half century.

In addition, Town Hall was considered to be one of the world's finest acoustic installations. It was, to be sure, not perfect everywhere in the house. The large balcony overhang extended well over the parquet, blotting out some of the high frequencies. But upstairs the sound was wonderful — warm, with a solid bass and extraordinary presence.

And so Town Hall filled an important place in the musical life of New York. But after the war, things began to happen — slowly at first, then at an accelerated pace. Times Square went to pot, in more ways than one, and became one of the vice centers of the world. After 1962, with the opening of Philharmonic Hall, the first building of the Lincoln Center complex, it was clear that the musical life was following its traditional pattern of constantly moving more and more uptown. Alice Tully Hall opened. It was a little smaller than Town Hall (1,100 seats), had much more glamour, had the imprimatur of Lincoln Center, and recitalists rushed to perform there. Town Hall soon all but disappeared as a force in the city's musical life.

The building was taken over by New York University, which put the N.Y.U. Club into the premises and attempted to operate the hall. It was a losing proposition, and by 1978 the university was anxious to get rid of its white elephant, which was using up several hundred thousand dollars a year. There were those who maintained that with clever management Town Hall need not have lost its position as a viable concert hall. Perhaps they were right, perhaps not. But that is pure guesswork. The fact remains that New York University felt it necessary to unload. On Aug. 31, 1978, Town Hall suspended operations.

Enter Craig Anderson and his Hudson Guild Theater. He and his newly formed Town Hall Theater Foundation were willing to pick up the lease. Mr. Anderson wanted to convert Town Hall into a multi-purpose hall for drama, concerts and dance. His plans called for converting the interior of Town Hall into two theaters, one downstairs, the other in the balcony area. In his releases he paid lip service to music, but it was clear that if he took over, Town Hall would primarily be a theater.

Now enter the enraged citizenry. Mr. Anderson's plans aroused enormous opposition. Just as committees had sprung into existence to save Carnegie Hall, so committees were formed to save Town Hall from the "vandals." Community Board No. 5, the neighborhood advisory panel for the midtown Manhattan district, recommended landmark status for Town Hall. Meetings were held. Mr. Anderson's foes invaded City Hall. Finally, Town Hall was indeed granted landmark status. That meant the integrity of the building would remain inviolate. When Mr. Anderson proffered some structural changes affecting the stage, he was told that he could not do so. At that point Mr. Anderson withdrew and with him disappeared the Town Hall Theater Foundation.

New York University still wanted out. It turned the lease over to the Town Hall Foundation, with a \$70,000 sweetener to get things going. Now it is up to the Foundation to restore Town Hall to its former prestige, if such a thing is indeed possible. The officers of the Town Hall Foundation are Marvin Leffler (president), Al Horowitz (vice-presi-

dent), Stanley Lesser (secretary) and Michael Rosenberg (treasurer). They work without pay, as concerned citizens. Lawrence Zucker, who had worked with Mr. Anderson, has remained as booking agent, idea man and general factotum.

"Our present administrative staff consists of one," said Mr. Leffler the other week, pointing to Mr. Zucker. "Total personnel is about 10 — elevator operators, janitor and so on. We have to watch the budget very carefully. The present budget is around \$250,000, and the big costs are steam, electricity and housekeeping. Do I have to tell you how much costs have escalated in recent years?"

Even though important musicians have been avoiding Town Hall, it is not standing there idle. It even edged into the black for the last fiscal year, ending last August.

"We had the Shalom Musical Comedy Theater for about three months," explained Mr. Leffler. "Right now it is in Town Hall on a limited engagement, at a rental of \$4,000 a week. We have had children's repertory theater — 80 to 100,000 kids last year. We have had jazz concerts, opera. Anything to keep going."

The New York University Club has remained on the premises, paying rent. Some restoration work has been done in the auditorium, but Mr. Leffler concedes that a great deal more remains to be done. "We do things as we go along, and as money comes in. That means mandatory maintenance. We have no money for major refurbishing."

But now that Town Hall is at least a going concern, the Foundation is beginning to look ahead into possibilities for a much more important future. Feasibility studies will be made. The Town Hall Foundation will be looking for matching grants and volunteer work. "We hope," says Mr. Leffler, "that the people in the community who were so anxious to keep Town Hall alive will now support it."

For the time being, Town Hall will remain strictly a booking operation. That is, the hall will be available for those who can pay the rental. Town Hall will not inaugurate any programs of its own. "In the future," said Mr. Zucker, "there may be money for programming. Right now there isn't." The rental charge for Town Hall, he said, is \$1,200 (less in the morning hours). That is the price for what in the business is called "four walls," which means that the renter has to furnish just about everything: the ushers, the box-office operation, the publicity.

How does that \$1,200 price compare against the other halls? Carnegie Hall has a sliding scale. The four-walls price from Sunday through Thursday is \$1,625; for Friday and Saturday, \$1,900. But nobody can use any hall without personnel to operate it. What with the necessary personnel, a soloist or string quartet using Carnegie Hall has to think in the vicinity of \$3,700. For a symphony orchestra, the price goes up to about \$5,500 (rehearsal time included). The small

JOSEPH WESLEY ZEIGLER

62 Tuxedo Road
Montclair, New Jersey 07042
(201) 783-4229

New York (212) 868-9858

Selected Representative Clients, 1969 - 1980

- Affiliate Artists, Inc.
- Afro-American Museum (with Ruder and Finn Fine Arts)
- * Albany Symphony Orchestra
- * American Film Institute
- * American Film Theatre
- American Guild of Organists
- * Artpark
- Black Economic Union (Ford Foundation assignment)
- * Brooklyn Academy of Music
- Brooklyn Museum
- * Center Stage
- * Central Labor Council of New York City
- * Chautauqua Institution
- Citizens' Governmental Research Bureau (with Arts Development Associates)
- Empire State Performing Arts Center
- Ford Foundation: National Affairs Office and Office of the Arts
- Foundation for the State University of New York at Binghamton
- * Guthrie Theater
- Jamaica Arts Center (Ford Foundation assignment)
- Labor Institute for Human Enrichment
- * Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts: Education Department
- Meet the Composer
- * National Endowment for the Arts
- New Brunswick Tomorrow (with Arts Development Associates)
- New York City Department of Cultural Affairs
- New York Philharmonic
- * New York State Council on the Arts
- New York State Division of the Budget
- * New York University School of the Arts
- Opportunity Resources for the Arts (Ford Foundation assignment)
- * Peterborough Players
- Queens Cultural Association
- * St. Peter's Lutheran Church
- South Bronx Cultural Center Consortium (Ford Foundation assignment)
- Spoletto Festival
- * State University of New York
- * Theatre Yes
- Town Hall Foundation
- Yonkers Playhouse
- * Young Audiences

- * As Vice-President of Arts Development Associates, 1972-1976

See reverse side for descriptions of some representative projects.

The Brooklyn Museum's Education Department wanted to analyze the museum's public; I led the study. Our research included a questionnaire for people visiting the museum - and interviews of users, members, Brooklyn residents, and people leaving four major Manhattan museums. We sought to gain the opinions of current users, and learn the attitudes of other publics toward the museum. The work concluded with a report on demographics, attitudes, program preferences, and future potential for public service. (1977)

Sometimes an organization needs someone to come in and provide a different perspective, another point of view; this can be particularly helpful in fund-raising. Twice in 1980, I was called in for short assignments on this basis. Meet the Composer wanted help in thinking through, and writing, a major proposal for foundation funding of its national expansion effort. The development office of the New York Philharmonic had prepared brief descriptions of parts of its program that could be endowed in an \$18 million drive; these descriptions needed re-thinking and re-writing. In short, intensive periods, I fulfilled the two needs. (1980)

Civic leaders in Binghamton, New York were considering the creation of a Saratoga-like summer performing arts center; but they wondered whether audiences could be attracted. Through the Foundation for the State University of New York at Binghamton, they engaged me to survey the potential. Recognizing that feasibility depended upon being able to attract audiences from a wide area, I conducted the research not only in and around Binghamton, but also in communities up to an hour's drive away. Several score arts and community leaders were interviewed, and a questionnaire was fielded to 4,000 constituents of arts institutions and a public television station. The result was a report detailing why a Saratoga-like project in Binghamton could not attract the requisite audience, and offering an alternate plan more complementary to the community. (1979)

The Queens Cultural Association was looking for a new director and a new purpose for its Theater in the Park in Flushing Meadow. I was asked to administer the facility part-time over a nine-month period, while also putting together the future and finding an executive director. My work concentrated on Board development; relations with the City of New York, which provides primary funding; expansion of facilities; and a review of programming options. My report recommending new directions was accepted by the Board, and my work concluded with the appointment of a full-time executive director whom I identified and secured. (1977-78)

Four times in a 21-month period, the Ford Foundation provided my services as a consultant to organizations. For Opportunity Resources for the Arts, I studied long-range economic needs and options. The other three assignments were oriented to the needs of inner-city arts groups: for the Jamaica Arts Center, I examined potential for artists' housing and for a performing arts program in an abandoned church in downtown Queens; for the Black Economic Union of Greater Kansas City, I tested the program/audience/funding feasibility of a jazz arts center as a focus for redevelopment; and for the South Bronx Cultural Center Consortium, I analyzed what could happen through the arts to revitalize a ravaged but still energetic part of New York City. (1978-1980)

TOWN HALL

(Resource Name)

80002724

(Reference Number[s])

08 / 05 / 2016

(Date form completed)

NEW YORK

(County)

NEW YORK

(State)

WACC

(Completed by)

STATUS:

1. MISSING _____ 2. REMOVED/ _____ 3. NHL ☒ 4. TR _____ 5. MRA _____ 6. OVER- _____ 7. NPS - _____ 8. DOE - _____ 9. RESTRICTED _____
DEMOLISHED SIZED UNDOCUMENTED OWNER OBJECTION

EXPLANATION:

1. Missing Status: Entire Folder (); Nomination (); Map(s) (); Photos ()
Available on: Microfiche (); Optical Disk ()

2. _____
(Cause for removal)

_____/_____/_____
(Date Removed)

3. _____
(NHL Name, if different than NRHP Name)

03 / 02 / 2012
(Date Designated)

4. _____
(If multi-state/county TR, state/county where filed and location)

(TR or MRA Name)

5. _____
(If multi-state/county MRA, state/county where filed and location)

6. _____
(Location of oversize file)

7. _____
(Current source of partial documentation)

_____/_____/_____
(Target Date)

COMMENTS:

(Where found, or source of replacement)

_____/_____/_____
(Date Found/Replaced)