

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination FormSee instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NPS use only

received JUN 18 1982

date entered

1. Name

historic The Century Association Building

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 5-7 West 43rd St.

not for publication

city, town New York

vicinity of

congressional district

state New York

code 036

county New York

code 061

3. Classification

Category

district

☒ building(s)

structure

site

object

Ownership

public

☒ private

both

Public Acquisition

NA in process

NA being considered

Status

☒ occupied

unoccupied

work in progress

Accessible

☒ yes: restricted

yes: unrestricted

no

Present Use

agriculture

commercial

educational

entertainment

government

industrial

military

museum

park

private residence

religious

scientific

transportation

☒ other: Private Club

4. Owner of Property

name The Century Association

street & number 7 West 43rd Street

city, town New York

vicinity of

state

New York

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. New York County Register's Office

street & number 31 Chambers St.

city, town New York

state

New York

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Designation Report (LP-0257)

title Landmarks Preservation Commission has this property been determined eligible? yes ☒ no

date January, 1967

federal state county ☒ local

depository for survey records Landmarks Preservation Commission, 20 Vesey St.

city, town New York

state

New York

7. Description

Condition

☒ excellent

☐ good

☐ fair

☐ deteriorated

☐ ruins

☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered

☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site

☐ moved

date

NA

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Century Association Building stands in a busy area of midtown Manhattan, overshadowed by the numerous tall office buildings constructed in more recent years. Within a radius of a few blocks are a number of other club buildings, built in the years following the construction of the Century building. The building fills its entire lot.

The four-story building has a facade of granite, terra-cotta and brick which is presented as a flat plane along the street. It is symmetrically disposed with the center being emphasized by a massive arch on the lower floors and a palladian window above it. This large arch, housing the main entrance, is decorated by delicate ironwork which fills its upper portion and an iron lantern which hangs from it. A large console bracket marks the keystone of the archway. Two bays flank both sides of the central arch and are characterized by small, square windows at the lowest level with larger, rectangular ones above them. Four elaborate iron fixtures are mounted on the rusticated walls at this second level, two flanking the arch and two near the outside corners of the building.

A protruding entablature with a delicately ornamented frieze divides the building horizontally between the second and third floors. Above the central arch is a grand and richly decorated palladian window which was originally an open loggia with an iron balustrade. Square plaques, garlands and foliate-covered console brackets are located above this opening and support another entablature bearing the date of construction. Two large windows flank each side of the central palladian window. Integrated with them by a complex decorative scheme are small, handsomely wreathed round windows. A series of fluted pilasters, both single and in pairs, runs across the upper half of the building separating the windows and forming a colonnade to support the full entablature above. The entablature consists of a richly decorated frieze and an elaborate cornice topped by a stone balustrade. A central cartouche surrounded by volutes and surmounted by an urn is located at the center of the balustrade.

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/
☐ 1700–1799	☐ art	☐ engineering	☐ music	☐ humanitarian
☒ 1800–1899	☐ commerce	☐ exploration/settlement	☐ philosophy	☐ theater
☐ 1900–	☐ communications	☐ industry	☐ politics/government	☐ transportation
		☐ invention		☐ other (specify)

Specific dates 1889–1891 **Builder/Architect** McKim, Mead & White

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The clubhouse for the Century Association is the first of many buildings of this type designed by the eminent firm of McKim Mead & White for New York's exclusive men's clubs. During the last part of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, many of these associations moved from their brownstone buildings in lower Manhattan to new, exclusive areas on or near Fifth Avenue where they commissioned buildings meant to impress passersby with their splendor and beauty. This structure for the Century Association was such a building and still serves its original function.

The Century Association was formed in 1847 at a meeting of the well-established Sketch Club. Its constitution states its purpose to be "promoting the advancement of art and literature" by, among other things, the establishment of a library, reading room and art gallery. Its original membership was limited to 100 men, hence its name. Many prominent New Yorkers were among its early members including William Cullen Bryant, Asher B. Durand, William J. Hoppin, Cornelius Vanderbilt and all three principals of the firm of McKim, Mead & White:

The architects began to work in the Italian Renaissance mode during the 1880's, achieving great success with their designs for the Henry Villard Houses (1886) and the Boston Public Library (1887–95). Following the extreme diversity of mid-nineteenth century architectural styles, the classical tenants of the Renaissance were seen to offer an authoritative design solution which combined order, proportion, balance and urbanity. The Century Association building was their first clubhouse in New York to be completely constructed in this style. Some of its inspiration comes from San Michele's Palazzo Canossa in Verona although the scheme has been freely adapted and details from other palazzi have been included. In this building the architects juxtaposed a certain severity in the rustication of the lower floors, with ornateness and plasticity in the upper stories. Although the design of this facade has long been attributed to Stanford White, recent evidence suggests that most of the arrangement and details were worked out by Joseph M. Wells under White's direction.

Through the early years of the twentieth century, McKim Mead and White continued to explore and refine these ideas of the Italian Renaissance in their numerous clubhouses and other buildings, combining them in a truly American manner. The Century Association building was the first and a very successful effort at this type of clubhouse.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Central Park, N.Y.-N.J.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	8
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5	8	6	0	1	0
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4	5	1	1	7	8	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Manhattan Tax Map Block 1259, Lot 29 which is as approximately 99x100 feet and is outlined as the thick black line on the attached map.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

NA

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Anne B. Covell

organization Historic Preservation
Field Services

date February, 1982

street & number Agency Building 1
Empire State Plaza

telephone 518-474-0479

city or town Albany, N.Y.

state New York 12238

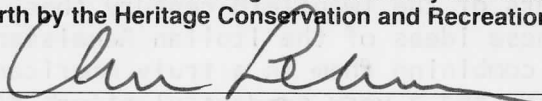
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title COMMISSIONER

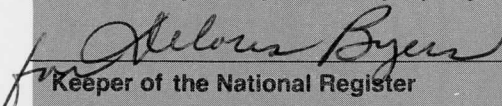
date 6/11/82

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 7/15/82

for 
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

The Century Association Building

Continuation sheet New York County

Item number 8

Page 2

1. New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission designation report, LP-1020, The Metropolitan Club, September, 1979, by Ruth Selden-Sturgill.
2. Leland M. Roth, The Urban Architecture Of McKim, Mead & White: 1870-1910, Yale University, Ph.D., 1973. (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1973), p. 293.
3. New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission research files: The Century Club.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
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The Century Association Building
Continuation sheet New York County

Item number 9

Page 2

The Century Yearbook. New York: The Century Association, 1980.

New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission research file: The Century Association.

New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission research file: The Metropolitan Club.

Roth, Leland M. The Architecture of McKim, Mead & White, 1870-1920: A Building List. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1978.

Roth, Leland M. The Urban Architecture of McKim, Mead & White: 1870-1910. Yale University, Ph. D., 1973. Ann Arbor, Mich: Univeristy Microfilms, 1973.

THE AMERICAS

AVE. OF

THE CENTURY ASSOCIATION BUILDING
New York County, New York
Manhattan Land Book, Plate 73
New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1980-81

Scale 1" = 120'

Casper Samler ST. March 15th 1800

AVE.

73



W. 45TH

ST.

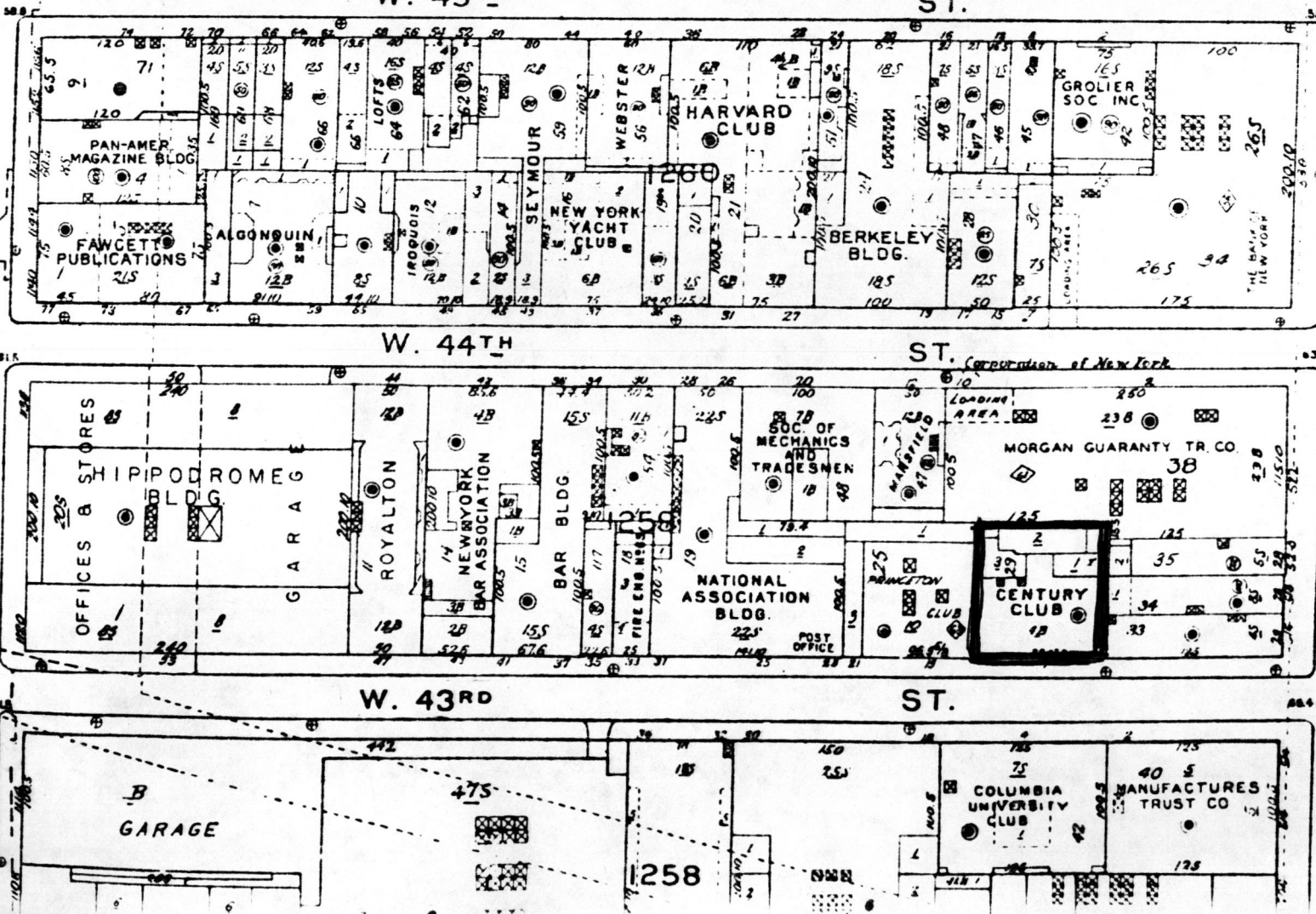
W. 44TH

ST.

W. 43RD

ST.

FIFTH



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Century Association Building, New York County, NEW YORK,

Working No. 6/18/82-1789

Fed. Reg. Date: 2.1.83

Date Due: 7/15/82 - 8/2/82

Action: ☒ ACCEPT 7/15/82

Entered in the ☐ RETURN

National Register ☒ REJECT

Federal Agency: _____

- ☐ resubmission
☐ nomination by person or local government
☐ owner objection
☐ appeal

Substantive Review: ☐ sample ☐ request ☐ appeal ☐ NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____

Reviewer _____

Discipline _____

Date _____

☐ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: ☐ technical corrections cited below
☐ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
☐ excellent	☐ deteriorated	☐ unaltered	☐ original site
☐ good	☐ ruins	☐ altered	☐ moved date _____
☐ fair	☐ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- ☐ summary paragraph
☐ completeness
☐ clarity
☐ alterations/integrity
☐ dates
☐ boundary selection

8. Significance

Period _____ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates _____ Builder/Architect _____

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

- _____ summary paragraph
- _____ completeness
- _____ clarity
- _____ applicable criteria
- _____ justification of areas checked
- _____ relating significance to the resource
- _____ context
- _____ relationship of integrity to significance
- _____ justification of exception
- _____ other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UMT References

Verbal boundary description and justification

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

_____ national _____ state _____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title _____ date _____

13. Other

- _____ Maps
- _____ Photographs
- _____ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: 202 272 - 3504

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



1. CENTURY ASSOCIATION BUILDING
New York County, New York

Photo by: Carl Forster, 1981
Neg. at: New York Landmarks
Preservation Commission

View from the south



2. CENTURY ASSOCIATION BUILDING
New York County, New York

Photo by: Carl Forster, 1981
Neg. at: New York Landmarks
Preservation Commission

Entrance detail, view from the south



3. CENTURY ASSOCIATION BUILDING
New York County, New York

Photo by: Carl Forster, 1981
Neg. at: New York Landmarks
Preservation Commission

Detail, view from the south



4. CENTURY ASSOCIATION BUILDING
New York County, New York

Photo by: Carl Forster, 1981
Neg. at: New York Landmarks
Preservation Commission

Detail, view from the south



The Century Association Building
New York County, New York
UTM Reference:
18 586010 4511780
Central Park, N.Y.-N.J. 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-5089, T-5264, T-5278, T-5448, T-5451, T-5452, T-5453, T-5458,
and T-5778. Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1954 and planetarium 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.
10,000-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.

UTM GRID AND 1979 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

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



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

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

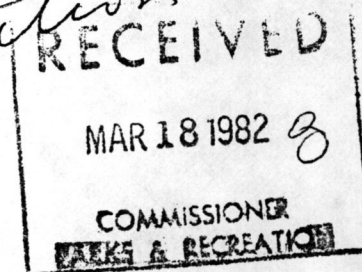
CENTRAL PARK, N.Y. — N.J.
SW/4 HARLEM 15' QUADRANGLE
N4045—W7352.5/7.5

1966
PHOTOREVISED 1979
AMS 6265 IV SW—SERIES V821

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.

Approved
OL *AWSP*

THE CENTURY ASSOCIATION
7 WEST FORTY-THIRD STREET
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10036



March 11, 1982

Dear Orin:

We have received your notice that the building of the Century Association at 7 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. is being considered for nomination to the National Register. The Century has no objection. Quite the contrary, we would be delighted, and should the designation occur I am prepared to celebrate the occasion on condition that you approve and that you and Ann Webster Smith will attend.

Cordially,

Eric Larrabee
President

EL:jcj

p.s. and that Fred Rath gets to be invited.

Mr. Orin Lehman,
Commissioner
New York State Parks and Recreation
1 Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12238



APR 9 1982

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
HISTORIC PRESERVATION