

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

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

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

For HCERS use only

received MAY 27 1982

date entered

## 1. Name

historic Former New York Life Insurance Company Building

and/or common Building at 346 Broadway

## 2. Location

street & number 346 Broadway \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town New York \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of congressional district 17

state New York code 036 county New York code 061

## 3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Vacant

## 4. Owner of Property

name Robert Litke, Commissioner, Department of General Services

street & number 1800 Municipal Building, 1 Centre Street

city, town New York \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of state New York 10007

## 5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number 31 Chambers Street

city, town New York \_\_\_\_\_ state New York 10007

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

(LP-1125)  
title Landmarks Preservation Commission has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_\_\_ yes ☒ no

date January 1980 \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ county ☒ local

depository for survey records Landmarks Preservation Commission

city, town 20 Vesey Street, New York \_\_\_\_\_ state New York 10007

## 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 former New York Life Insurance Company Building occupies the entire block bounded by Broadway on the west, Leonard Street on the north, Lafayette Street on the east, and Catherine Lane on the south. It is located at the northern edge of New York's Civic Center area. In the immediate vicinity are low-scale mid-nineteenth century commercial buildings.

This office building, visible on all four sides, is twelve stories high at the western end and becomes thirteen stories at the eastern end in conformity with the slope of the street. It is 26 bays wide on its north and south elevations, but only three bays deep on the west elevation and five on the east elevation, reflecting the long, narrow, irregular proportions of the block. The north and south elevations are emphasized by end pavilions of three bays at the west end and four bays at the east end, and a central pavilion of three bays (only on the north elevation). The pavilion at the western end also incorporates the Broadway facade. This entire section of the building is faced with rusticated marble. The three-story base is set off by a modillioned cornice with bronze railing. The main entrance on the Broadway facade takes the form of a modified portico with two-story columns and pilasters supporting a balustraded entablature. A recessed section with two arched openings and entrance set within an elaborate enframing curves in behind this. Originally the portico had all freestanding columns supporting the entablature. It was modified to its present form (described above) in 1912. The section above the base is subdivided by bandcourses above the fourth, sixth, seventh, ninth, and tenth stories. Decorative panels accent the wall sections at the seventh and tenth stories. The upper two stories are organized into a single unit by arched openings which extend the height of the two stories. This is crowned by a heavy modillioned cornice. Rising above this is an attic story surmounted by a balustraded parapet with eagles which sets off the clock. This rises an additional two stories with a rusticated base and a four-faced clock. Originally the clocktower was surmounted by four figures supporting a globe; this element was removed sometime after 1928.

The north elevation, faced with marble, and the south elevation, faced with gray brick except in the end pavilions, are organized into a regular series of bays with paired windows separated by pilasters. The series is interrupted only by the end pavilions and a central pavilion on the north elevation. The ground floor is rusticated. Cornices and bandcourses are continued at the same levels from the western end pavilion. On the north elevation there are arched openings at the third, fourth, and tenth floors (which become the fourth, fifth, and eleventh floors), but on the south elevation the openings on these floors are rectangular except in the eastern end pavilion. In addition, on the north elevation to the east of the central entrance, the second and third floor windows are organized into two-story arches. Arched openings accenting the two-story upper section may be seen on both the north and south elevations. A balustraded parapet rises above the modillioned roof cornice. The base of the central pavilion on the north elevation incorporates another entrance with three two-story arched openings flanked by pilasters. The center one with foliate spandrels contains the doorway.

The east elevation continues the fenestration, cornice, and bandcourse pattern as seen on the north and south elevations. The five bays are subdivided with paired openings, and the central bay projects slightly and also contains another columned entrance porch with arched openings. A one-story secondary clock tower rises above the roof parapet at this end. The clock has only one face and the tower is crowned by a copper dome.



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

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date entered

Continuation sheet Former New York Life Insurance  
Company Building item number 7  
New York County

Page 2

Noteworthy interior spaces include the Leonard Street entrance hall with its double staircase and curved elevator lobby; the former banking room with marble walls, free-standing columns, and coffered ceiling; and several former executive offices with marble walls, decorative pilasters, coffered ceilings, and mantelpieces with Adamesque motifs.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1894–97

**Builder/Architect** Stephen D. Hatch; McKim, Mead & White

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The former New York Life Insurance Company Building, an impressive neo-Italian Renaissance office building, is the work of two architectural firms. Stephen D. Hatch designed the eastern section, built in 1894–96. Following Hatch's death, the firm of McKim, Mead & White designed the western section, built in 1896–97. Dominated by its clock tower, the building exemplifies the palazzo mode as used for skyscrapers in the late nineteenth century and is a striking symbol of the New York Life Insurance Company.

Founded in 1845, the company occupied a series of rented offices until it moved into its first building (a French Second Empire structure designed by Griffith Thomas) on the present site in 1870. That building had the distinction of having one of the first Otis passenger elevators installed in a New York City office building.

The company promoted many life insurance reforms including the elimination of suicide clauses, the introduction of non-forfeitable policies, and the introduction of policies with restrictions on occupation, residence, travel, habits of life, or manner of death.

As the company continued to expand its business, more office space was needed and Stephen D. Hatch was commissioned to extend Thomas's building to the east. Hatch (1839–1894), born in Swanton, Vermont, entered the architectural office of John B. Snook as a draftsman. Establishing his own practice in 1864, Hatch began an active career as a designer of commercial buildings, among them the Robbins & Appleton Building (1871; rebuilt 1879), 1–5 Bond Street; the Gilsey Hotel (1869–71) at 1200 Broadway; the U.S. Army Building (1886) on Whitehall Street; and the Fleming Smith Warehouse (1891–92), 451–453 Washington Street. These buildings reflect the popular styles of the period ranging from Second Empire to Romanesque Revival to neo-Flemish. With the increasing popularity of Renaissance-inspired designs in the early 1890s, it was not surprising that Hatch would look to such sources for the new New York Life Insurance Building.

Following Hatch's death, the building commission passed to the firm of McKim, Mead & White. Established in 1879, the firm played a leading role in promoting the popularity of classically inspired forms and the neo-Italian Renaissance style in the last decades of the nineteenth and first decades of the twentieth centuries. By 1894 such commissions as the Villard Houses (1882–86), the Boston Public Library (1887–95), and several works at the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, had established the firm's reputation. Stanford White of the firm is credited with the design of the New York Life Insurance Company Building. White chose to continue the palazzo mode which had been established by Hatch and completely replaced the Thomas building, designing the present Renaissance-inspired entrance pavilion crowned by a clocktower.

The palazzo mode had been established in the years after the Civil War for tall office structures because the regular rhythm of bays, string courses, belt courses, and cornices offered a logical way to organize the facades of ever taller buildings. In the New York Life Insurance Company Building, the emphasis on regular bays accented by pavilions and cornices grouping the floors into several levels places the building in the palazzo mode. White also sought to accent the tower-like aspects of the building through his design of the Broadway pavilion with its rich materials, intricate detail, and soaring clocktower.



## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property under one acre \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name Jersey City, N.J.-N.Y.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A 

1	8	5	8	4	1	6	0	4	5	0	7	5	2	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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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property occupies Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 170, Lot 6, which is 60x400x83x402 feet, and is outlined on the attached map.

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

NA

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

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

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marjorie Pearson, Director of Research

Contact: Anne B. Covell, Div. for Hist. Pres. (518)474-0479

organization Landmarks Preservation Commission

date February 1982

street & number 20 Vesey Street

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

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 5/12/82

For HCRS use only

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

Bruce Van Mangel

date 6/28/82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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Continuation sheet Former New York Life Insurance Company Building  
New York County Item number 8

Page 2

White's interiors with marble walls and intricate plasterwork are notable examples of his Renaissance-inspired design. Although the Board of Directors room was removed in 1928 when the company moved to Madison Square, such grand rooms as the Leonard Street entrance hall and the former banking room survive.

The building is now owned by the City of New York and houses municipal offices and courtrooms for the family court. The clock tower is occupied by an art gallery of that name. The clock was restored to working order in 1979 and is a visual landmark which may be seen for blocks along Broadway.



**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

Former New York Life Insurance

Item number 9

Page 2

Company Building  
New York County

Abbott, Lawrence F. The Story of New York Life Insurance Company: A History of the Origin and Development of the New York Life Insurance Company from 1845 to 1929.  
New York: The New York Life Insurance Co., 1930.

A Monograph of the Works of McKim, Mead & White, 1879-1915 with an introductory essay by Leland M. Roth. New edition. Four vols. in one. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1973.

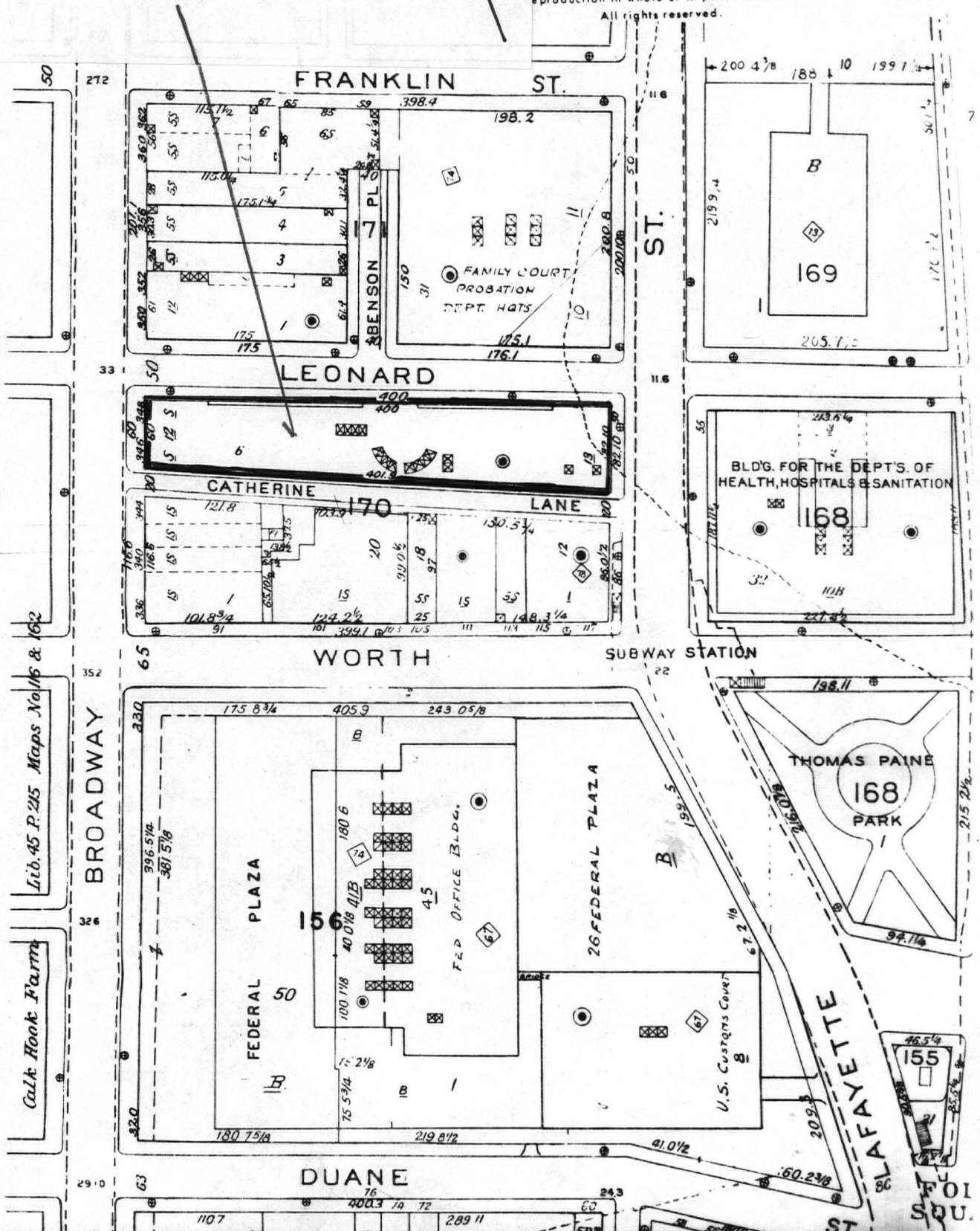
New York Landmark Preservation Commission files: New York Life Insurance Company Building.

Weisman, Winston. "A New View of Skyscraper History." The Rise of an American Architecture.  
Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., ed. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970.

FORMER NEW YORK LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY  
BUILDING  
New York County, New York  
Manhattan Land Book, Plate 8  
New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1981

## PART OF SECTION 1

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Substantive Review

## EVALUATION / RETURN SHEET

Property: former N.Y. Life Insurance Co. Bldg.  
State, County: NY / New York  
Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Working No. 5/27/82-1550  
Fed. Reg. Date: 2.1.83  
Date Due: 6-28-82 / 7-11-82  
Action: ☒ ACCEPT 6/28/82  
☐ RETURN  
☐ REJECT

photos \_\_\_\_\_  
maps \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Reviewer's comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Recom. / Criteria ACCEPT / C  
Reviewer MAK DAVIS  
Discipline ARCH. HIST.  
Date 6/28/82  
☐ 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
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- ☒ summary paragraph NOT IN FIRST BUT 2ND P  
☒ 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

NA justification of exception

ND other

*> GOOD EXPLANATION OF WHY IT IS SIGNIFICANT AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE PALAZZO MODE SKYSCRAPER.*

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

## 10. Geographical Data

Address of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

USIT 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. Former New York Life Insurance Co. Building  
New York County: New York

Photo by:	Andrew S. Dolkart, 1981
Neg. at:	New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

View from the southwest





2. Former New York Life Insurance Co. Building  
New York County: New York

Photo by: Andrew S. Dolkart, 1981  
Neg. at: New York City Landmarks  
Preservation Commission

View from the southeast





3. Former New York Life Insurance Co.  
Building  
New York County, New York

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

View from the northwest





4. Former New York Life Insurance Co.  
Building  
New York County, New York

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

Broadway elevation, entrance detail  
View from the west





5. Former New York Life Insurance Co.  
Building  
New York County, New York

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

Broadway elevation, entrance detail  
View from the west





6. Former New York Life Insurance Co. Building  
New York County, New York

Source: New York Life Insurance Co.  
archives, photo c. 1900

Neg. at: New York Landmarks  
Preservation Commission

Leonard Street entrance hall, view from the  
south



7. Former New York Life Insurance Co.  
Building  
New York County, New York

Source: New York Life Insurance Co.  
archives, photo c. 1900

Neg. at: New York Landmarks  
Preservation Commission

Broadway entrance hall, view from the  
east

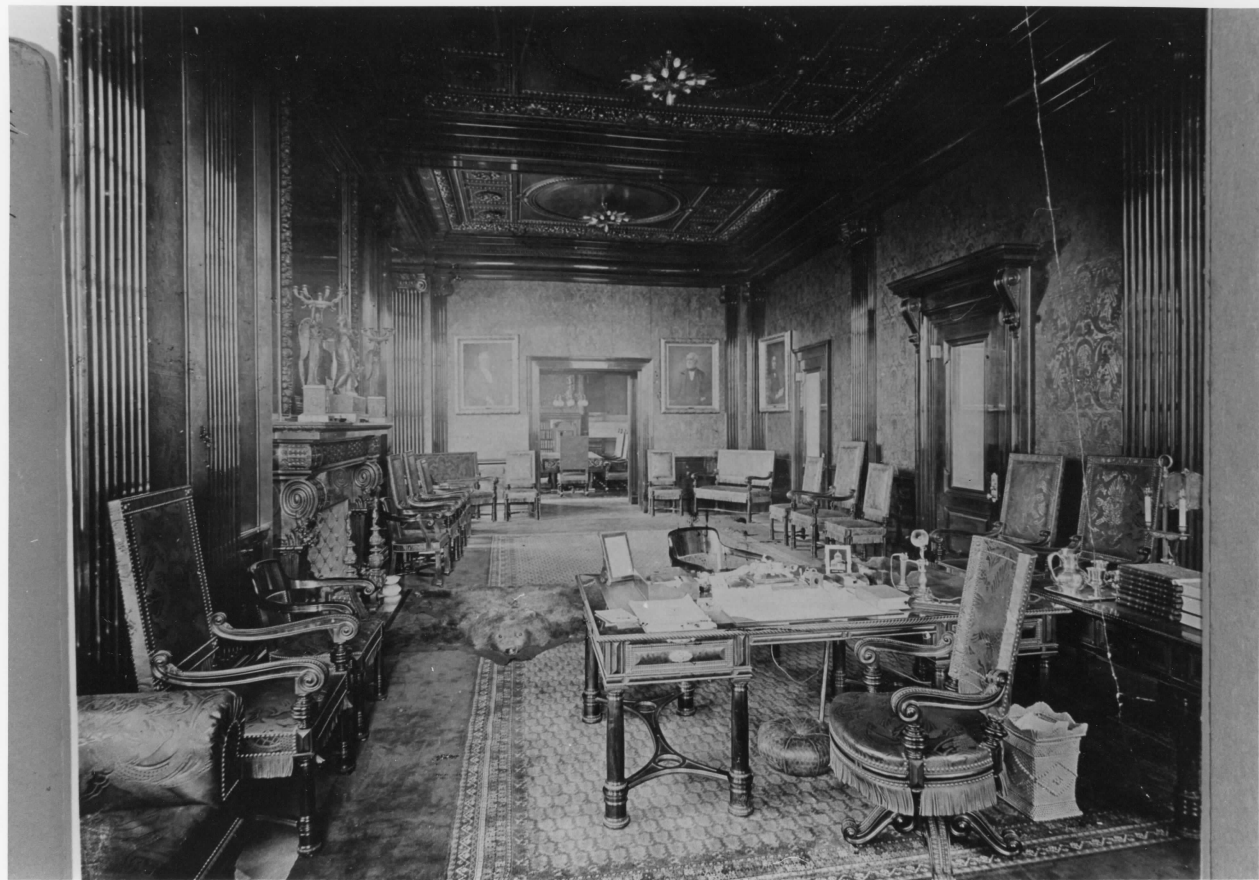




8. Former New York Life Insurance Co. Building  
New York County, New York

Photo by: Carl Forster, 1980  
Neg. at: New York Landmarks  
Preservation Commission

President's suite, fourth floor  
View from the southwest



9. Former New York Life Insurance Co. Building  
New York County, New York

Source: New York Life Insurance Co.  
archives, photo c. 1899  
Neg. at: New York Landmarks  
Preservation Commission

President's office, fourth floor (before  
partition)

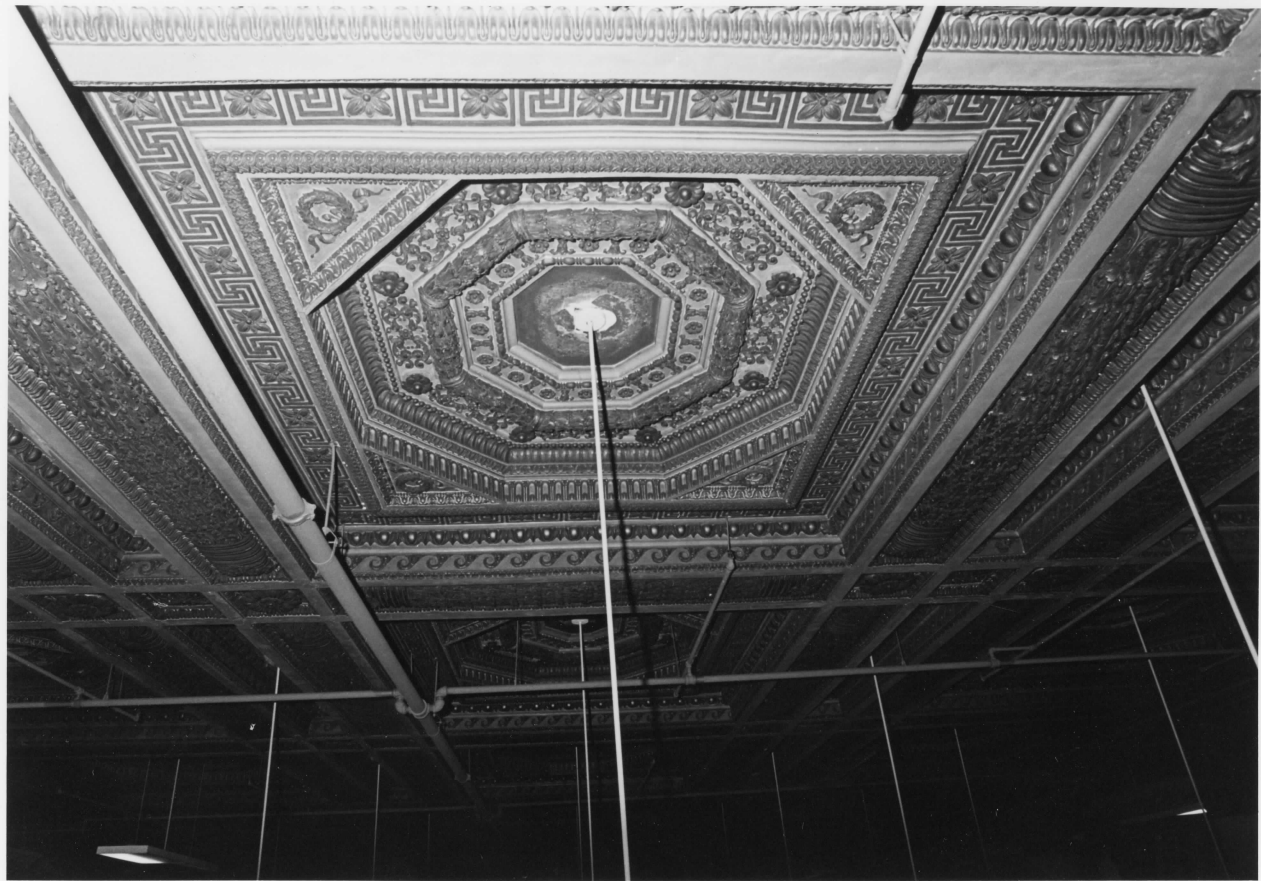




10. Former New York Life Insurance Co. Building  
New York County, New York

Photo by: Carl Forster, 1980  
Neg. at: New York Landmarks  
Preservation Commission

Counting room, second floor  
View from the east



11. Former New York Life Insurance Co. Building  
New York County, New York

Photo by: Carl Forster, 1980  
Neg. at: New York Landmarks  
Preservation Commission

Counting room, second floor, ceiling  
detail





12. Former New York Life Insurance Co. Building  
New York County, New York

Photo by: Carl Forster, 1980  
Neg. at: New York Landmarks  
Preservation Commission

Counting room, second floor, detail of  
ceiling and column capital



13. Former New York Life Insurance Co. Building  
New York County, New York

Source: New York Life Insurance Company  
archives, c.1899

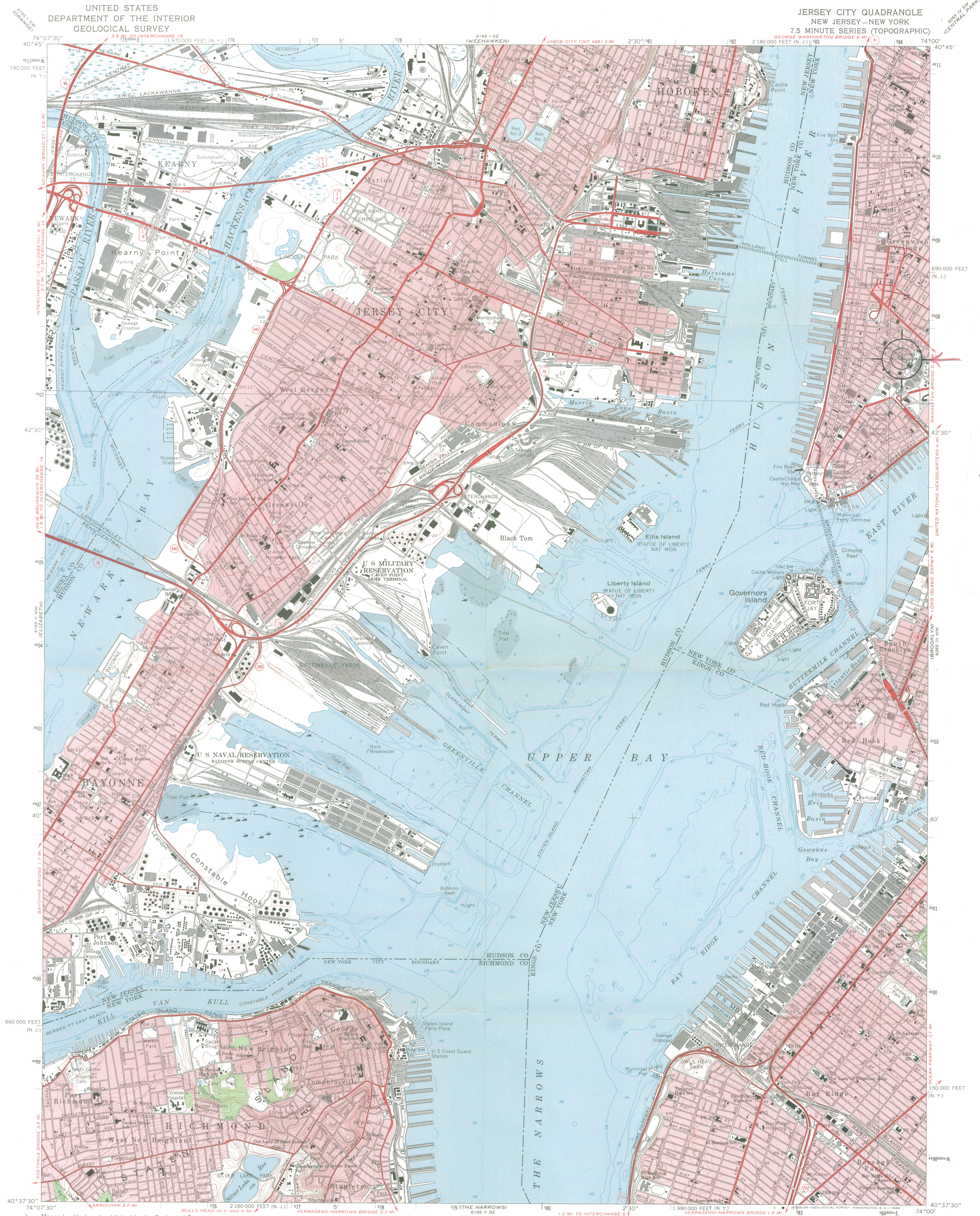
Neg. at: New York Landmarks  
Preservation Commission

Counting room, before installation of mezzanine, view from the west



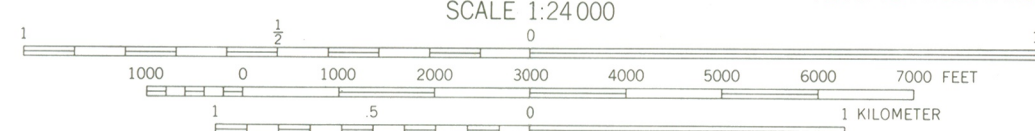
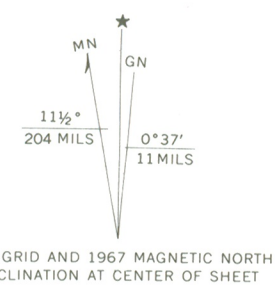
UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

JERSEY CITY QUADRANGLE  
NEW JERSEY—NEW YORK  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



Former NY Life Insurance Company Building  
346 Broadway  
New York, New York County  
Jersey City, N.J. New York County  
Zone 18 E/54460  
N/4507520

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Revised in cooperation with New York Department of Transportation  
Control by USGS, USC&GS, USCE, New Jersey Geodetic Survey,  
and City of New York Board of Estimate and Apportionment  
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods and from USC&GS  
Charts T-5111, T-5277, T-5332, T-5450, T-5453, T-5454,  
T-5460, T-5461, T-5466, T-5468, T-5469, and T-5470  
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial  
photographs taken 1954 and planetable surveys 1955  
Revised from aerial photographs taken 1966. Field checked 1967  
Selected hydrographic data compiled from USC&GS Charts 285, 287, 541,  
and 745 (1966). This information is not intended for navigational purposes  
Polyconic projection, 1927 North American datum, 10,000-foot grids based on  
New Jersey coordinate system, and New York coordinate system, Long Island zone  
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  
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL  
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER  
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER  
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 4.4 FEET IN  
UPPER BAY AND 4.8 FEET IN NEWARK BAY

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

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

JERSEY CITY, N. J.—N. Y.  
N4037.5—W7400.7/5

1967

AMS 6165 II NE—SERIES V822

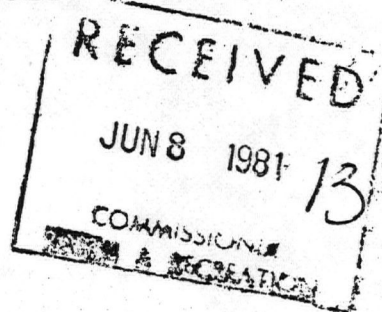




JAMES F. CAPALINO  
COMMISSIONER

CITY OF NEW YORK  
DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES

1800 MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10007



June 4, 1981

Honorable Orin Lehman  
Commissioner  
New York State Parks and Recreation  
Agency Building 1  
Empire State Plaza  
Albany, New York 12238

Dear Commissioner Lehman:

I must express my dismay at the process that is followed by your Department as it applies to historic landmark designations. As the City official responsible for the management of public buildings such as 346 Broadway, the subject of the enclosed letter from your office, it strikes me that I ought not to have to request a copy of the nomination papers; rather, they should be submitted to me as a matter of course so that I might properly consider the merits and demerits of the case.

At the present time, I am not in favor of any effort to have this building placed on the National Register of Historic Landmarks, but pending receipt from you of the draft nomination papers I will reserve final judgment.

Sincerely,

James F. Capalino  
Commissioner

Enclosure

RECEIVED

JUN - 9 1981

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
A W S

346 Broadway



June 12, 1981

Dear Commissioner Capalino:

I have received your letter of 4 June and regret that our procedures for handling National Register nominations are of concern to you.

In conjunction with the nomination of properties to the National Register of Historic Places (a process which is quite different from that for the designation of New York City landmarks), we send information to many interested individuals and groups about properties which are under consideration. Only rarely is there interest in reviewing the nomination form itself and, for this reason, we send the lengthy National Register nomination form only to those who specifically request to see it. This practice has been developed over the years in conjunction with more than 1100 nominations representing some 45,000 properties all over New York State.

I am pleased to enclose a copy of the National Register nomination for 346 Broadway. If you have further questions, please let me know.

Sincerely,

*Ann Lehman*

Honorable James F. Capalino  
Commissioner  
City of New York  
Department of General Services  
1800 Municipal Building  
New York, NY 10007

AWS:gc  
Enc.

cc: Field Services (A. Covell) ✓



AWS  
app'd  
ack'd

RECEIVED

JUN 17 1981

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
A W S

2126 East 23rd Street  
Brooklyn, New York 11229  
June 11, 1981

Mr. Orrin Lehman  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau  
New York State Office of Parks and Recreation  
Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza  
Albany, New York 12238



Dear Mr. Lehman:

I appreciate the opportunity to comment upon the proposed nomination of the former New York Life Insurance Co. Building at 346 Broadway, New York City, to the National Register of Historic Places.

My views on the matter are those of a private citizen who works nearby, and of a layman, untutored in any formal way in the study of Architecture.

When I first noticed the building in 1972, I considered it somewhat of a curiosity, but grimy and neglected like many other New York City buildings. Over the years, while waiting to cross Broadway I would scan the large clock tower and facade of the building. The non-working clock seemed typical of what was happening to New York City.

One day, during lunch hour, I mentioned the Broken Clock to a friend, with whom I share an interest in things mechanical. We visited the Tower to see why the clock was not working. That visit led to our restoration of a magnificent timepiece to its original state, as a gift to the City of New York. It further led to my appreciation of the beauty of this structure both within and without.

I have become convinced of the worthiness of preserving this building. Its flavor of a bygone era represents a measure of stability and continuity in our time. Its classical elegance is enhanced by the use of the highest quality materials and workmanship. Anyone who works in - or on - this building has already come to a similar conclusion, as my numerous conversations with New York City office workers and members of the various maintenance and repair crews have verified.

The property also gives the area a certain uniqueness. Because the Federal Building is set back from the street,

the Broadway end stands out majestically against the horizon when being viewed from the south. In conjunction with Federal Plaza, it makes up a sort of "town square". The effect of this is to enhance the "civic centerness" of the area.

There were many sites worthy of preservation which are now gone, of whose passing we speak with regret. Dominating this property to the National Register is the first step in ensuring that 346 Broadway does not become one more such case.

Sincerely,  
Marvin Schneider