

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED MAY 3 1982

DATE ENTERED JUN 3 1982

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

Knox Building

AND/OR COMMON

Republic National Bank Building

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

452 Fifth Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

New York

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

18

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

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

NA

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

Republic National Bank

STREET & NUMBER

452 Fifth Avenue

CITY, TOWN

New York

VICINITY OF

STATE
New York

10018

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**

TITLE

Landmarks Preservation Commission LP-1091

has this property been
determined eligible? NO

DATE

September 23, 1980

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☒ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Landmarks Preservation Commission, 20 Vesey Street

CITY, TOWN

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

NR

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The ten-story Knox Building occupies the entire nominated area and is located on the southwest corner of Fifth Avenue and 40th Street opposite the New York Public Library¹ (Photo 1). To the south and east are lots which are vacant awaiting construction of a new building (to wrap around the Knox Building).

The exterior of the building retains a high degree of architectural integrity. The rusticated limestone facade rises virtually uninterrupted for the first six stories on the Fifth Avenue front, punctuated only by large window openings. Buff brick simulating rustication is used above the second floor on the 40th Street side. Originally, a hat store was located at the first floor which also incorporated a mezzanine level. Early photos show an iron and glass marquee and canopy shielding the Fifth Avenue show windows.² A simple cornice above the first floor helps define the base of the building. Above the second floor windows on the Fifth Avenue front is a palm branch motif with centered female head, while on the 40th Street side the second floor windows are defined by keyed blocks. This motif is repeated at the 40th Street windows up to the sixth floor, and quoins flank the end bays. A bold dentiled cornice carried on overscale console brackets, some with garlands, surmounts the sixth floor and provides a transition to the upper stories of the building. The cornice has lost its delicate metal railing. The seventh and eighth stories are handled as a unit with the windows flanked by brick piers and separated by ornamented spandrels. Those on the Fifth Avenue front and 40th Street end bays have lions' heads. Ornate cartouches flank the Fifth Avenue windows and those in the end bays on 40th Street just below the bracketed eighth story cornice. Decorative window guards are placed at the bases of the third through eighth story windows.

Above the eighth story rises the two-story mansard roof with a series of dormers. The Fifth Avenue facade has a triple dormer with a gabled two-story center opening flanked by smaller windows. A large female head surmounts the gable. The 40th Street side has two-story dormers in the end bays flanking a series of gabled one-story dormers. Rising behind the one-story dormers are three large window openings, each with a vertically arranged triple sash. Although these openings have a distinctly modern look, early photographs indicate that these openings were a part of the original design,³ but each was filled with nine narrow panes of glass. The mansard is crowned by an intricate torch and anthemion cresting with eagles. The south and west elevations, built as party walls, have plain brick facing. (photos 2&3)

In 1964-65 the mezzanine was removed, large plate glass windows were installed at the ground floor, and three ornamented piers on the 40th Street side were replaced by rusticated ones. The interior offices were completely modernized; an original interior staircase, now used as a service stair, still survives.

**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

Continuation sheet

Knox Building

Item number

8

Page

2

New York County, N.Y.

skillfully adapted to a large commercial building.

Knox retained ownership of the Knox Building until his death.

In 1903 he had split the company into the Knox Hat Manufacturing Company and the E.M. Knox Hat Retail Company. Offices for the companies and the main retail store were located in the building. Other offices in the building were leased out to various businesses.

In 1964-65 the Knox Building was converted by the architectural firm of Kahn & Jacobs, for use as the headquarters of the Republic National Bank.

**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

Continuation sheet

Knox Building

Item number

8

Page 3

New York County, N.Y.

FOOTNOTES

1. The text of this report was taken almost in its entirety from the New York Landmarks Preservation Commission Designation Report, Knox Building (LP-1091), September 1980, by Marjorie Pearson.
2. Architectural Record, 13 (May 1903), 454;
Kings Views of New York, 1911-1912, p. 68.
3. Ibid.
4. Kings Views, 1911-1912, p.68
5. New York Times, March 29, 1916, p. 11.

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/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1901-02

BUILDER/ARCHITECT John H. Duncan

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Knox Building, one of the finest Beaux-Arts style commercial buildings in New York City, was designed by the notable New York City architect John H. Duncan. Its location opposite the terraces of the New York Public Library allows Duncan's design to be seen to full advantage for a considerable distance on Fifth Avenue. Built in 1901-02 as the headquarters of the Knox Hat Company, it is a vivid reminder of the company and the prominent position it enjoyed among the retail shops of Fifth Avenue at the turn of the century.

The Knox Hat Company had been founded in 1838 by Charles Knox at 110 Fulton Street, east of Broadway.⁴ Sometime after the Civil War the company was taken over by Col. Edward M. Knox (1841?-1916), son of the founder, who greatly expanded the business making his name known wherever a hat was sold.⁵

By the turn of the century, New York's retail trade was continuing its uptown move, establishing itself on Fifth Avenue between 34th and 42nd Streets. Among the prestigious merchants who located there were B. Altman (1906), Tiffany (1906), Gorham (1906), Lord & Taylor (1897-98), and Arnold Constable (1915-16). In 1901 Colonel Knox purchased land on the southwest corner of Fifth Avenue and 40th Street, across from the site of the recently vacated reservoir where the New York Public Library was under construction, and commissioned a building from the noted New York architect John H. Duncan.

Duncan (1855-1929), a founding member of the Architectural League of New York in 1881, had established his own architectural practice in 1886. Shortly thereafter he won the competition to design and build the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Arch in Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn, dedicated to the men who fought in the Union forces during the Civil War. In 1890 he also won the competition for and later built the General Grant National Memorial, more familiarly known as Grant's Tomb. Colonel Knox had extensive connections with Civil War veterans and was an officer in the Grant Monument Association; undoubtedly Knox had met Duncan in his capacity as architect for the two memorials. Following his work on the two monuments, Duncan began to acquire a clientele of affluent New Yorkers who commissioned him to design residences on the Upper East Side, in midtown Manhattan, and on West 76th Street.

While the use of the Beaux-Arts style was not uncommon for New York commercial buildings at the turn of the century, the style is more often associated with residences, such as those Duncan himself designed, hotels, and public buildings such as the contemporary New York Public Library. Duncan was able to take advantage of the prominent corner site enjoyed by the Knox Building to create a ten-story office building which would be striking in its own right and also be a major advertising statement for the Knox Hat Company. Full facade rustication, large scale ornament, and a two-story mansard roof are all features carried over from Duncan's residential designs but here they were

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED
UTM NOT VERIFIED

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY under 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES Quadrangle name: Central Park, N.Y.-N.J. Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

A 1 8 5 8 5 9 0 0 4 5 1 1 5 3 0
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property occupies Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 841, lot 49, which is approximately 33 x 110 feet and is outlined on the attached map.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
<u>NA</u>			
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Marjorie Pearson

ORGANIZATION

Landmarks Preservation Commission

STREET & NUMBER

20 Vesey St.

CITY OR TOWN

New York

Contact: Anne B. Covell

N.Y.S. Div. for Historic

Preservation
518-474-0479

DATE

March 1981

TELEPHONE

212-566-7577

STATE

New York

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

Commissioner

DATE

4/9/82

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Belorus Byers

Entered in the
National Register

DATE

6/3/82

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

**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

Continuation sheet Knox Building Item number 9 Page 1
New York County, N.Y.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Architectural Record, 13 (May 1903), 454.

Bonner, William Thompson. New York, The World's Metropolis. New York: R. L. Polk & Co., Inc. 1924.

King's Photographic Views of New York. Boston: Moses King, 1895.

King's Views of Brooklyn, 1895. New York: Arno Press, 1980 reprint.

King's Views of New York, 1911-1912. Boston: Moses King, 1911.

Knox, Edward M. Obituary. New York Times,
March 29, 1916, p.11.

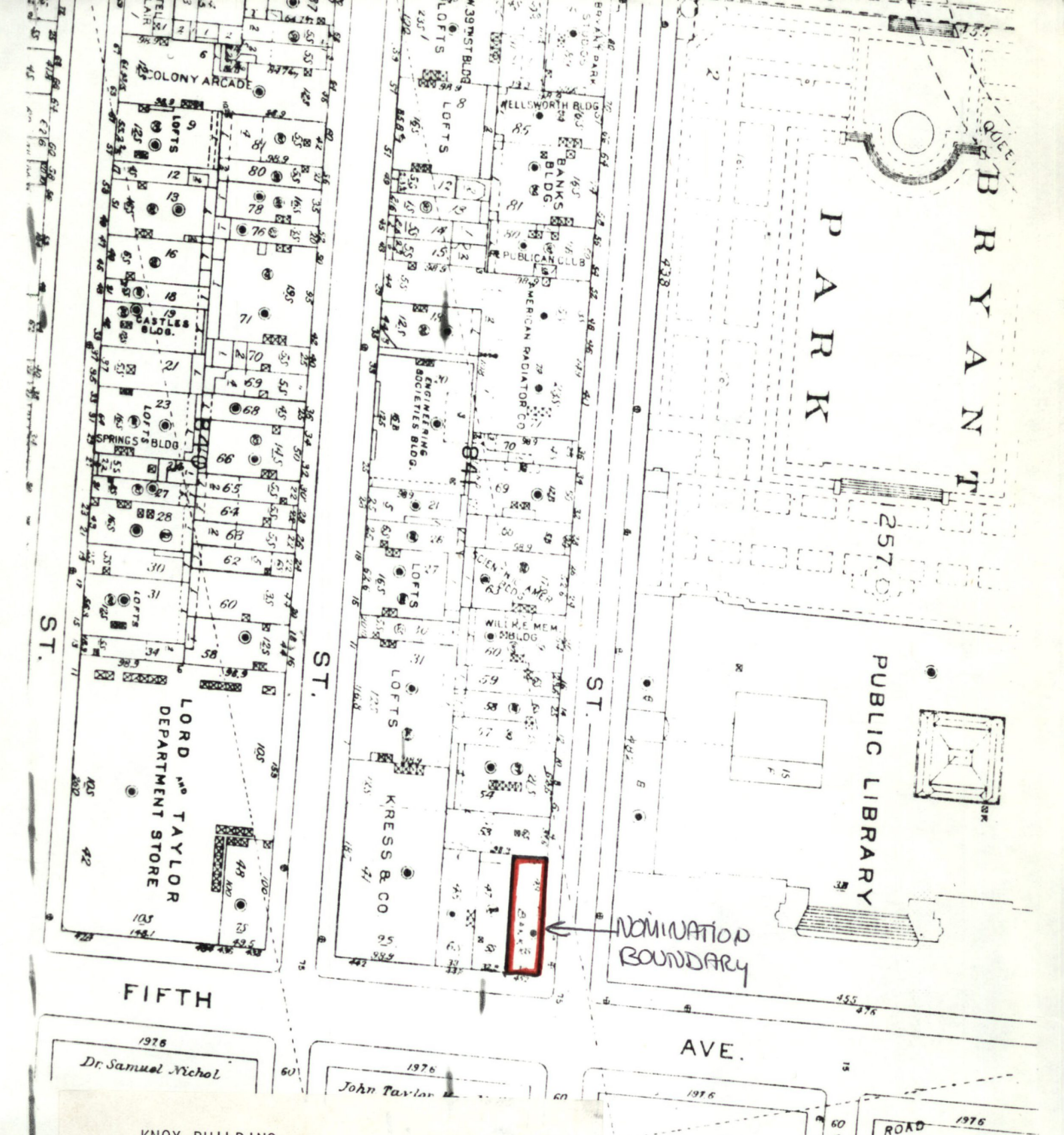
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. Midtown West Survey. Prepared by
the Community Development Staff. New York: City of New York, 1979.

New York City. Department of Buildings, Manhattan.
Plans, Permits and Dockets.

New York County. Office of the Register.
Liber Deeds and Mortgages.

New York Times, March 5, 1891, p.5; December 10, 1903, p.2; June 21, 1910
p. 18; May 18, 1912, p. 16; March 28, 1916, p. 13; April 8, 1916, p. 10.

Schuyler, Philip N., ed. The Hundred Year Book.
New York: A.S. Barnes and Co., 1942.



KNOX BUILDING
New York County, New York
Manhattan Land Book, Plate 66
New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1981

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

EVALUATION / RETURN SHEET

82003381

Property: Knox Building
State, County: NY, New York
Federal Agency: _____

Working No. 5/3/82-1301
Fed. Reg. Date: FEB 1 1983
Date Due: 6/3/82 - 6/17/82
Action: ☒ ACCEPT 6/3/82
☐ RETURN
☐ REJECT
Entered in the _____
National Register _____
photos _____
maps _____

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

Entered in the _____
National Register _____
photos _____
maps _____

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. Name2. Location3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property5. Location of Legal Description6. 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"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	<input type="checkbox"/> date

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

Address of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

USGS 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: 202 272-3

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



1. KNOX BUILDING

New York County, New York

Photo: 1978

Neg. at: New York Landmarks
Preservation Commission

View from the northeast



2. KNOX BUILDING

New York County, New York

Photo: Carl Forster, 1981

Neg. at: New York Landmarks
Preservation Commission

View from the south



3. KNOX BUILDING
New York County, New York

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

View from the west



4. KNOX BUILDING
New York County, New York

Photo: 1978

Neg. at: New York Landmarks
Preservation Commission

VIEW: LOOKING SW



5. KNOX BUILDING
New York County, New York

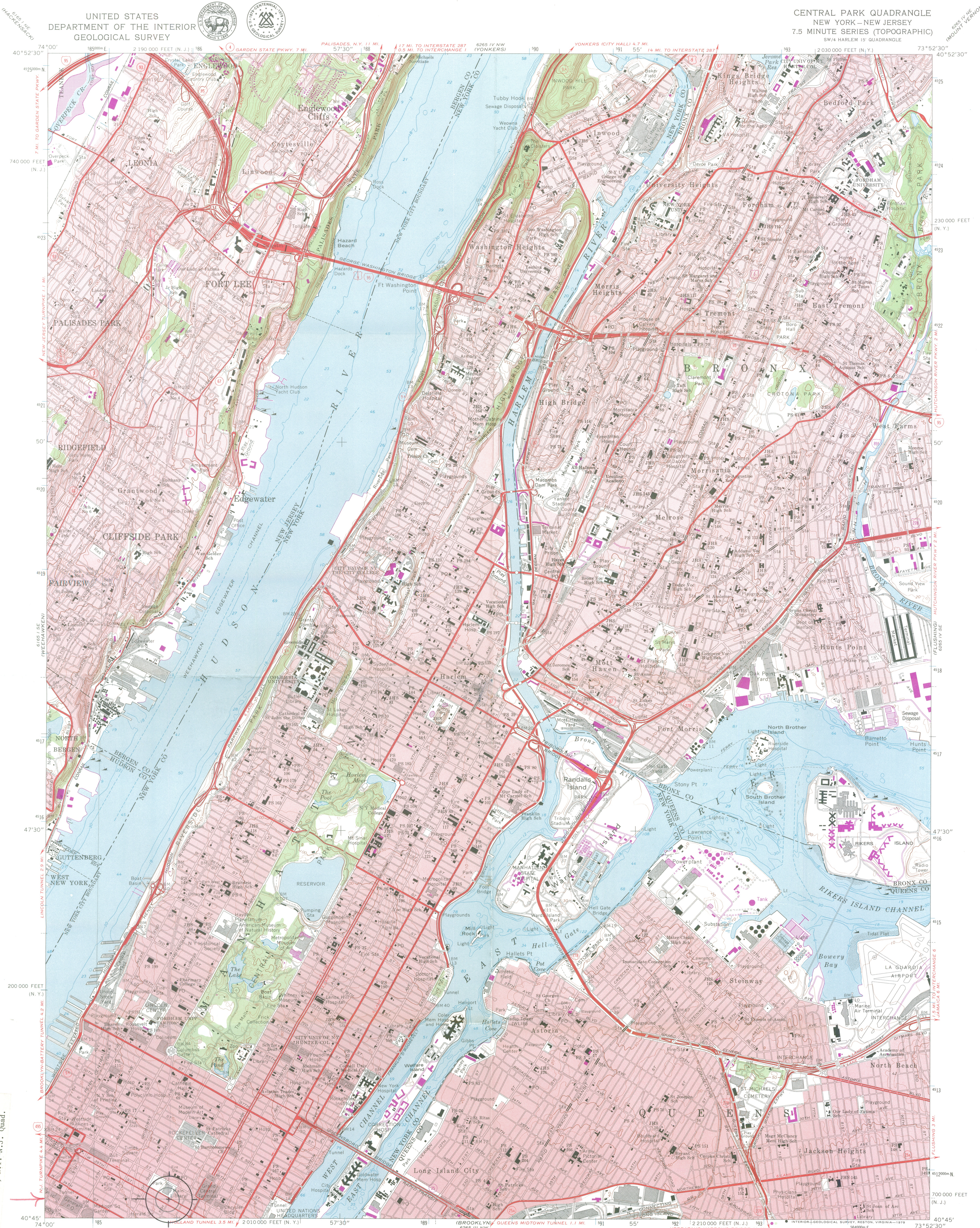
Photo by: Carl Forster, 1981
Neg. at: New York Landmarks
Preservation Commission

View from the east

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



CENTRAL PARK QUADRANGLE
NEW YORK—NEW JERSEY
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
SW/4 HARLEM 15' QUADRANGLE



Knox Building
New York County, New York
UTM Reference: 18 585900 4511530
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-5449, T-5451, T-5452, T-5453, T-5458,
and T-5778. Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1954 and planimetric surveys 1956

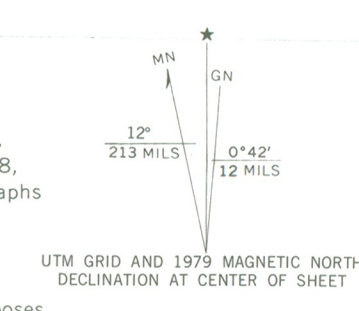
Revised from aerial photographs taken 1966. Field checked 1966

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
10,000-foot grid 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



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

QUADRANGLE LOCATION
NEW YORK

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

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