

**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 HCRS use only

received JUN 18 1982
date entered

1. Name

historic New York Public Library: Yorkville Branch

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 222 East 79th Street _____ not for publication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	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	___ private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
	N/A	___ no	___ military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: library

4. Owner of Property

name See continuation sheet

street & number

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number 31 Chambers Street

city, town New York state New York 10007

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Landmarks Preservation Commission
title LP-0425

has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes ☒ no

date January 24, 1967 ___ federal ___ state ___ county ☒ local

depository for survey records New York City 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 NA

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Situated on the south side of East 79th Street in Manhattan, this three-story Italian Renaissance structure was designed by architect James Brown Lord in 1902.¹ Its limestone facade displays the symmetrical ordering of its members and the restrained ornament which characterize the Italian Renaissance style.

The architect has divided the facade into three bays, announced at first floor level by three round-arched openings set in the rusticated stonework. Lion-heads, a popular motif at the turn of the century, emphasize the keystones of the arches. A belt course, incised with a Greek fret motif, marks the transition to the upper floors. Here Ionic columns separate the three windows. Each window has a triangular pediment above which is a small oblong window framed with swags. At this level, pilasters define the outer ends of the building. Finally, a strong entablature capped with a low balustrade crowns the facade. Balusters interspersed with solid parapet blocks, aligned with the pilasters, lend a sense of rhythm, while balusters with small central solid blocks in front of the second story windows restate the rhythmic theme of the library's design. All of the ornamental members of the facade are Palladian motifs.

While the exterior of the library remains intact, the interior shows some modernization. Both the first and second floors have new fluorescent lights and acoustical tile ceilings. New check-out desks and partitions have also been added. A row of original Tuscan columns supports the ceiling on both floors. The most striking interior feature is the three-story staircase on the right side of the building which still retains its decorative iron railing and wooden banisters. A final pleasing touch is provided by small plates attached to each bookcase. They are topped by an anthemion leaf and other detailing and give the catalogue numbers for each section.

1. The text of this report was taken almost in its entirety from the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission Designation Report, The Yorkville Branch of the New York Public Library (LP-0425), January 24, 1967.

EXP. 12/31/84

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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

New York Public Library: Yorkville Branch

Continuation sheet New York County, NY

Item number 4

Page 2

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Robert M. Litke, Commissioner
Department of General Services
1800 Municipal Building
New York, NY

Gerald Gold
Business Manager
New York Public Library
Fifth Avenue at 42nd Street
New York, NY 10018

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 checked="" 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 1902

Builder/Architect James Brown Lord

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Yorkville Branch of the New York Public Library is one of New York's most elegant adaptations of the Palladian style to a modern public building and is one of the few examples of this phase of Italian Renaissance architecture in New York. It was designed in 1902 by architect James Brown Lord (1859-1902), who, a few years earlier, designed the Appellate Division of the New York State Supreme Court, a richly ornamented marble palace in the English Palladian tradition. The library was one of Lord's last works as he died in 1902.

The Yorkville branch is also significant because this branch was the first library to be built as a result of Andrew Carnegie's gift to the city of \$5,200,000 to construct sixty-five branch libraries. The educational possibilities of the free public library appealed greatly to steel baron Carnegie. While he felt great wealth should be distributed for the public good, he had no desire to keep the poor dependent by giving them charity. Instead, he favored projects which provided opportunities for self-improvement. In this way he believed that those who were ambitious would rise through their own efforts.

A second tenet of Carnegie's philanthropy was never to fund any project completely. When he offered money to construct branch libraries, he made it clear that the city must provide sites and maintain the completed buildings. It was also the city's responsibility to fund the original stock of books for each branch.

When the Yorkville Branch opened on December 13, 1902, the event was marked by appropriate ceremonies, including a speech by Carnegie. An interesting historical sidelight -- it was here that Thomas Masaryk did the research which led to the founding of the Czechoslovak Republic after World War I.

9. Major Bibliographical References

A more complete bibliography may be found in the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission research file: New York Public Library: Yorkville Branch

Dain, Phyllis. The New York Public Library - A History of its Founding and Early Years. New York: New York Public Library, 1972.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than 1 acre

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

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	8
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5	8	8	0	3	0
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4	5	1	3	9	5	0
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Zone

Easting

Northing

B

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Zone

Easting

Northing

C

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E

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Property occupies Manhattan Tax Map Block 1433, Lot 37, as outlined in black on the attached map. The building fills most of the lot.

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

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Luella A. Adams, Landmarks Preservation Specialist Contact: Anne B. Covell
State Div. of Historic Preser.

organization New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission date February 1982 (518) 474-0479

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 4/16/82

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

Keeper of the National Register

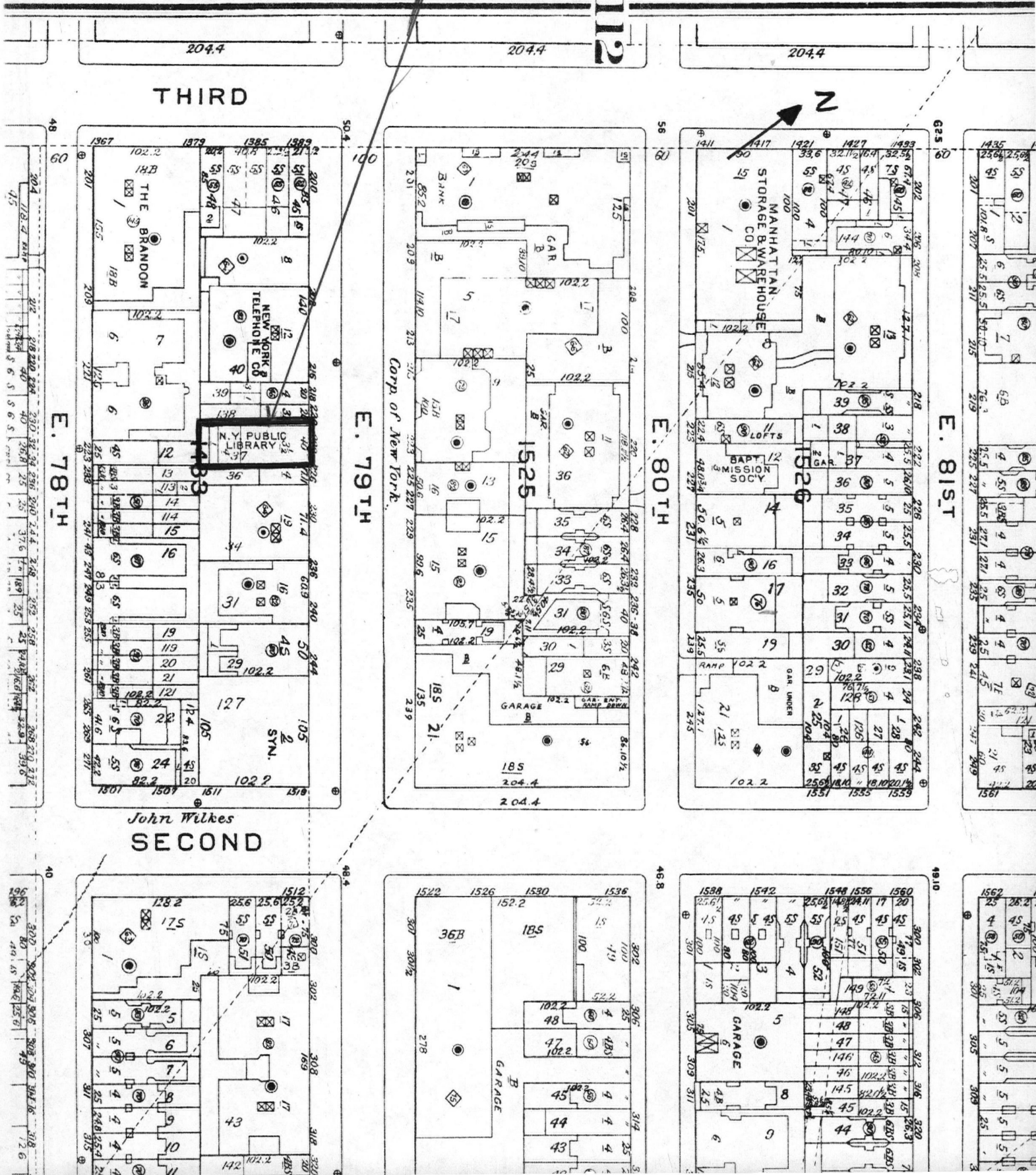
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

New York Public Library: Yorkville Branch
New York County, N.Y.
Manhattan Land Book, Plate 113
New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1977.

Scale 1" = 120'



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

EVALUATION / RETURN SHEET

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

YORKVILLE Branch
New York Public Library, New York County, NEW
YORK,

Working No. 4/18/82-17990Fed. Reg. Date: 2.1.83Date Due: 7/15/82 - 8/2/82Action: ☒ ACCEPT 7/15/82Entered 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. Name2. Location3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property5. Location of Legal Description6. Representation in Existing Surveyshas this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no7. 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 date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> 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

Acres 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. New York Public Library: Yorkville
Branch

222 E. 79th Street

New York, N.Y. *County*

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo, 1980.

Neg. at: New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission

Facade

View from the northeast



2. New York Public Library: Yorkville
Branch
222 E. 79th Street
New York, N.Y. *County*
Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo, 1980.
Neg. at: New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission.
Main floor reading room.



3. New York Public Library: Yorkville
Branch

222 E. 79th Street

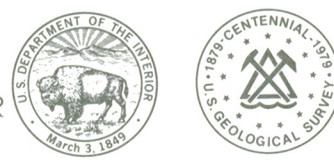
New York, N.Y. *county*

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo, 1980.

Neg. at: New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission.

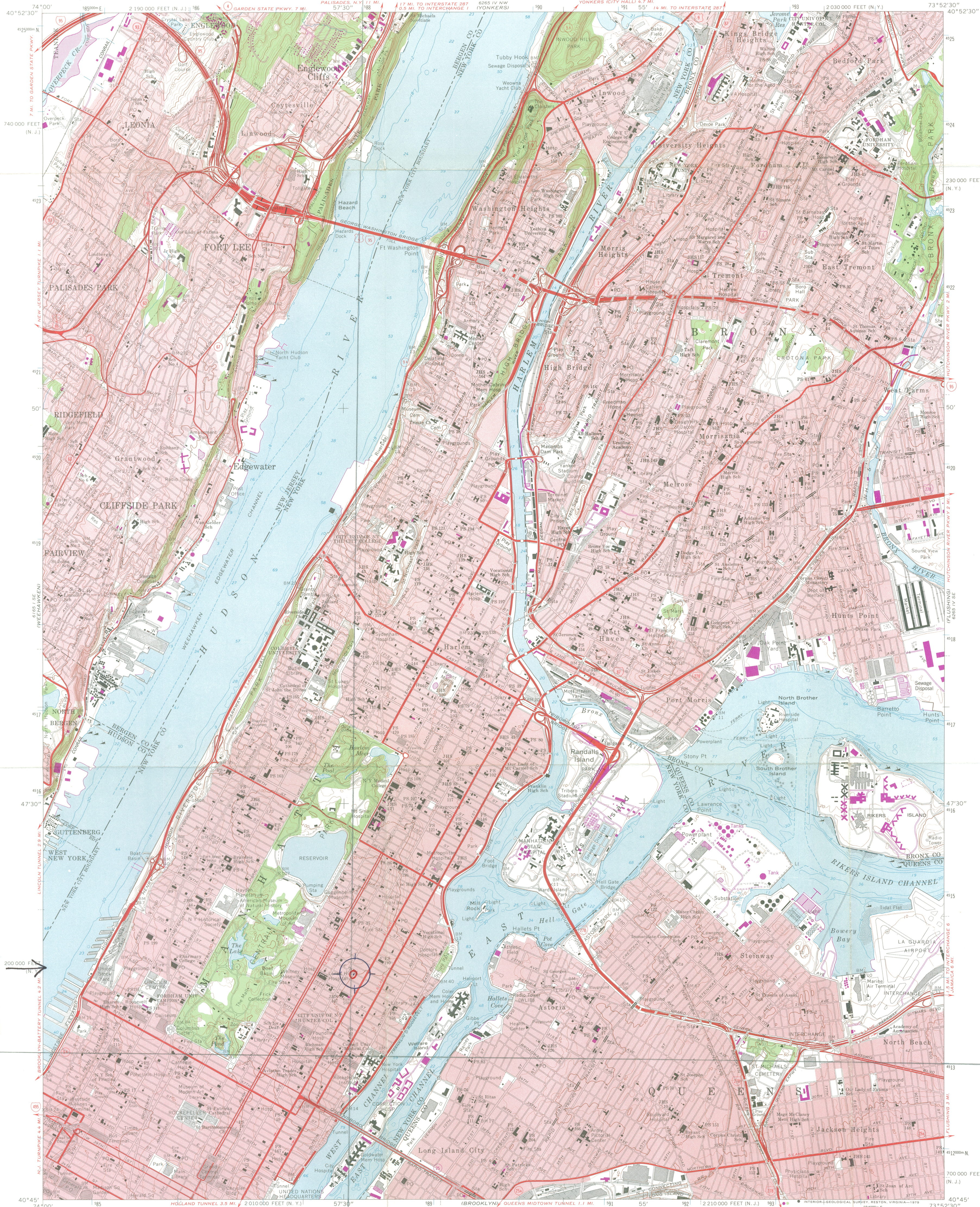
Top floor.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



CENTRAL PARK QUADRANGLE
NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
SW 1/4 HARLEM 15' QUADRANGLE

6265 IV NW
MOUNT VERNON



NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY: YORKVILLE BRANCH
222 E. 79th Street
New York County, New York
UTM Reference: 18/58030/4513950
CENTRAL PARK QUAD

200 000 FEET
(N. J.)

40°45' 74°00'

NEW JERSEY CITY
6165 I SE

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 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

12°

213 MILLS

0°42'

12 MILLS

UTM GRID AND 1979 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

12°

213 MILLS

0°42'

12 MILLS

SCALE 1:24,000
0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 KILOMETER

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 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 ———

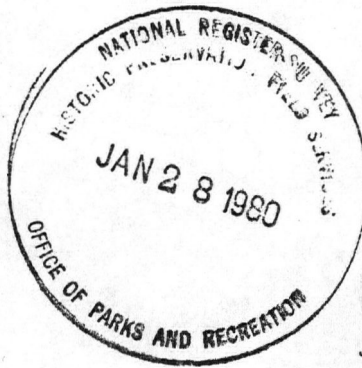
CENTRAL PARK, N. Y.-N. J.
SW 1/4 HARLEM 15' QUADRANGLE
N4045-W7352.5-7.5

1966
PHOTOREVISED 1979
AMS 6265 IV SW-SERIES V821

NEW YORK

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

**The New York
Public Library**
ASTOR, LENOX AND TILDEN FOUNDATIONS



Fifth Avenue at 42nd Street
New York, New York 10018

January 23, 1980

Ms. Elizabeth Spencer-Ralph
Program Assistant
Historic Preservation Field Services
New York State Parks & Recreation
Agency Building 1
Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12238

Dear Ms. Spencer-Ralph:

Mr. Edwin Holmgren has referred your letter of December 28, 1979 to me for reply. Your letter indicates that "New York Public Library, New York County" has been recommended to the State Historic Preservation Officer for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Since the Library has over thirty buildings located in Manhattan, four of which are presently listed in the National Register, it is not clear what specific building or buildings your letter refers to. At present we have listed the Central Research Libraries Building at 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture at 103 West 135th Street, the Jefferson Market Regional Branch Library at 425 Avenue of the Americas, and the Ottendorfer Branch Library at 135 Second Avenue. In addition, I understand that the 115th Street Branch Library at 203 West 115th Street and the Yorkville Branch Library at 222 East 79th Street have been submitted for listing in the National Register.

As I informed you by telephone last month, The New York Public Library would support the listing of both the 115th Street Branch Library and the Yorkville Branch Library buildings. At the moment, as far as I know, there are no other pending listings nor are there any others we plan at this time to submit for listing. If any others have been submitted, please let me know.

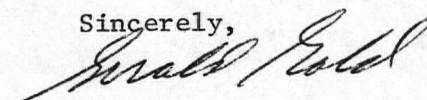
Mr. Holmgren has asked that my name be substituted for his for any future notifications or submissions from your office regarding listings of New York Public Library buildings in the National Register of Historic Places.

Ms. Elizabeth Spencer-Ralph

January 23, 1980

If there are any other questions at this time, please let me know. I can be reached at (212) 790-6211.

Sincerely,



Gerald Gold
Business Manager

GG/gp

cc: D. Bauer
R. Couper
E. Holmgren
W. Roziewski
D. Stam