

**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

JAN 13 1983

date entered

1. Name

historic Empire Building

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 71 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not for publication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

Category

X district
X building(s)
structure
site
object

Ownership

X public
X private
both
Public Acquisition
NA in process
NA being considered

Status

X occupied
unoccupied
work in progress
Accessible
X yes: restricted
yes: unrestricted
no

Present Use

X agriculture
X commercial
educational
entertainment
government
industrial
military
museum
park
private residence
religious
scientific
transportation
other:

4. Owner of Property

name 71 Broadway Co.

street & number 100 William Street

city, town New York

vicinity of

state

New York

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Surrogate's Court/Hall of Records

street & number 31 Chambers Street

city, town New York

state New York

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title none

has this property been determined eligible? yes X no

date

federal

state

county

local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

7. Description

Condition

☒ excellent ☐ deteriorated
☒ good ☐ ruins
☐ fair ☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date NA

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Strategically located just to the south of Trinity Church and Cemetery, the Empire Building is among the most impressive late nineteenth century skyscrapers in lower Manhattan. Constructed of limestone and terra cotta, this Classical Revival style office tower takes the form of a rectangular box enlivened by a rounded and chamfered corner at Broadway and Rector Street. The building has a tripartite horizontal massing that is typical of New York's skyscrapers of the period. With its four-story base, twelve-story shaft, and four-story capital (with a later one-story attic), the building forms a unified backdrop to historic Trinity Church.

The Empire Building has a particularly impressive main entrance on Broadway. This entrance is in the form of a Roman triumphal arch with a round-arched portal flanked by smaller arches and by paired granite columns, each of which is surmounted by an eagle perched on a globe. At the frieze are cartouches emblazoned with the letter "E." A subsidiary entrance with limestone columns is located at the chamfered corner and leads to a commercial space. On the long Rector Street facade, the base of the building is articulated with a series of classical forms, the most notable being the long arcade with Ionic pilasters at the third and fourth floors. Architecture critic Montgomery Schuyler found this arcade to be "one of the stateliest features of our street architecture."¹ It is flanked by two "massive pavilions"² articulated by Renaissance-inspired tripartite windows.

The fifth floor, with its single and paired round-arched openings and Ionic pilasters, forms a transition between the ornate base and the simpler shaft. The horizontal nature of the Empire Building's design is accentuated on the shaft by the use of a series of raised belt courses which are interrupted only by the crisply cut rectangular windows. In order to prevent this large building from becoming monotonous, architects Kimball & Thompson altered the ornamental pattern at the ninth and thirteenth floors by replacing the belt courses with groups of vertical pilasters that flank rectangular panels and rectangular and round-arched windows--a motif that echoes that of the triumphal-arched entrance. Also serving to add excitement to the shaft are projecting balconies located at the seventh, eleventh, and fifteenth floors and cartouches at the fifth, eighth, and twelfth floors. A modest bracketed cornice above the sixteenth floor separates the shaft from the capital.

The most prominent feature of the four-story capital is the long loggia formed by paired Corinthian columns at the center of the Rector Street facade. A smaller loggia created by two single Corinthian columns enlivens the front facade. The top floor, set above the loggia, is adorned with cartouches inscribed with either carved 'E's or with classical motifs. The building is surmounted by a deep cornice. In 1899 Francis Kimball added a penthouse to the roof for use as a residence. This attic story was designed in a style compatible with the original building which had only recently been completed.

The exterior of the Empire Building retains its original architectural integrity and remains one of the finest early skyscrapers in New York. The interior, however, has been extensively modernized. Of the original building fabric, only the west stairway is extant. This stairway has marble treads and dados and an extremely ornate iron railing.

**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

Empire Building

Item number 7

Page 2

71 Broadway, N.Y.C.

ornamented with dolphins flanking Neptune's scepter.

¹Montgomery Schuyler, "The Works of Francis H. Kimball and Kimball & Thompson,"
Architectural Record, 7 (April-April, 1898), p. 518.

²Ibid.

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 1895 Builder/Architect Kimball & Thompson

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Empire Building, designed in 1895 by the architectural firm of Kimball & Thompson, is architecturally significant as one of the finest of the Classical Revival style skyscrapers erected in New York City in the late nineteenth century. Commissioned by the O.B. Potter Trust, the Empire Building was one of the earliest skyscrapers erected during a period when much of lower Broadway was being rebuilt. Its virtually unaltered exterior remains a symbol of turn-of-the-century corporate grandeur. America's most important contribution to architecture has been the development of the commercial skyscraper. Developed in conjunction with structural and technological innovations, the skyscraper became the symbol of the wealthiest cities in the country. In New York City, skyscrapers began to be constructed in the 1870's, but it was not until the 1890's that the skyline of lower Manhattan started to change radically as skyscrapers of fifteen or more stories replaced older commercial buildings. These new office towers were generally designed in the Romanesque Revival and Classical Revival styles, with facades massed so as to resemble a classical column with a base, a shaft, and a capital.

The Empire Building is located just south of the wall that marked the boundary of Dutch New Amsterdam. In the early eighteenth century this area developed as a residential neighborhood centering on the first Trinity Church, built in 1698 and enlarged in 1737. By the mid-nineteenth century, the residential character of the area had changed as commercial structures replaced the residences. Five-story Italianate style commercial buildings were erected along lower Broadway. These structures remained viable until the advent of the elevator and skyscraper construction. Between c. 1895 and c. 1910 almost all of lower Broadway was rebuilt with high-rise buildings. The New York Times commented in a 1907 article entitled "The Increasing Marvels of Lower Broadway" that:

The great financial centre of New York, probably the richest, most crowded spot on the American continent, is in the throes of a transformation. New structures are soaring up and up, as though to the highest heavens, changing the skyline, making the streets unfamiliar, lending new splendors of marble, bronze, and colored terra cotta to the narrow cañons through which tides of men rush ceaselessly for the seven hours of the business day.

The Empire Building was one of the earliest skyscrapers erected during this period of transformation.

The architectural firm of Kimball & Thompson was founded in 1893 by Francis Hatch Kimball (1859–1919) and George Kramer Thompson (1859–1935). Francis Kimball was one of the leading architects of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Early in his career Kimball managed the Hartford office of the Boston firm of

9. Major Bibliographical References

King, Moses. King's Views of New York. New York: Moses King, 1908, p. 20.
New York City, Department of Buildings, Manhattan. Plans, Alterations, and Cockets.
Schuyler, Montgomery. "The Work of Francis Kimball and Kimball & Thompson," Architectural Record 7 (April-June, 1898), pp. 479-518.
Wiesman, Winston. "A New View of Skyscraper History," in The Rise of an American Architecture,

10. Geographical Data edited by Edgar Kaufman, Jr.. New York: Praeger, 1970, pp. 115-162.

Acreage of nominated property less than 1

Quadrangle name Jersey City

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 18 58338000 506820
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary lines of the Empire Building, 71 Broadway, is shown as the bold line on the accompanying plat 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 Anne B. Covell

organization Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau date May 1980

street & number Agency Building I, Empire State Plaza telephone (518) 474-0479

city or town Albany state New York

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

 national state x 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

Ann Webster Smith

title Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation

date 12/22/82

For HCERS use only

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

entered in the
National Register

Keeper of the National Register

date 2/21/83

Attest

Edson H. Beall

date 8.28.98

Chief of Registration

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

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

For HCERS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Empire Building

Item number 8

Page 2

71 Broadway, N.Y.C.

of Rogers & Bryant. During his tenure in Hartford he supervised the construction of English architect William Burgess' High Victorian Gothic style design for Trinity College. In about 1880 Kimball moved to New York where he designed a number of major buildings including the Catholic Apostolic Church (1885) on West 57th Street, the Emmanuel Baptist Church (1889) and the Montauk Club (1889), both in Brooklyn, and the Riverdale Presbyterian Chapel (now the Edgehill Church of Spuyten Duyvil) (1889) in the Bronx. In 1893 Kimball collaborated with Thompson on the design for the Manhattan Life Insurance Building ---a skyscraper that was located directly across the street from the Empire Building at 66 Broadway. Architecture critic Montgomery Schuyler regarded this design as a pioneering effort and credited Kimball with being one of the first to design a building with a steel frame that was over ten stories in height.² Kimball's partner on this design, George Thompson, was trained in the architectural office of Frederick Clarke Withers and in the 1880's went to work for Kimball. The partnership of Kimball & Thompson lasted until 1898. After 1898, Kimball continued to design notable skyscrapers including the City Investing Building on Broadway and Cortland Street (demolished), which was the largest building in the world at the time of its construction, and the Trinity and U.S. Realty Co. Buildings at 111 and 115 Broadway.

Commissioned by the O.B. Potter Trust, the Empire Building was among Kimball's major architectural commissions and established him as a leading designer of skyscrapers. Montgomery Schuyler found the Empire Building to be "one of the best commercial buildings,"³ and felt that it was worthy of its conspicuous location beside Trinity Church Cemetery. He noted that "the design makes the most of the condition of the problem at hand."⁴ The design is indeed a masterful handling of the monumental frontage that extends 223'10" along Rector Street. The building is viewed as a whole from Broadway and not as a progression of parts, as would be the case were the north side of Rector Street built up. That the Empire Building was originally seen as a major work and continues to be one of the most notable features of lower Broadway is attributable to the sophistication of Francis Kimball's design capabilities. Even more important, the building serves as a sympathetic neighbor to Trinity Church, lending one of New York's major landmarks an appropriate architectural setting.

¹New York Times, October 6, 1907, pt. 5, p. 3.

²Montgomery Schuyler, "The Works of Francis Kimball and Kimball & Thompson," Architectural Record, 7 (April-June, 1898), p. 506.

³Ibid., p.518.

⁴Ibid., p.511.

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

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Empire Building
71 Broadway, N.Y.C.

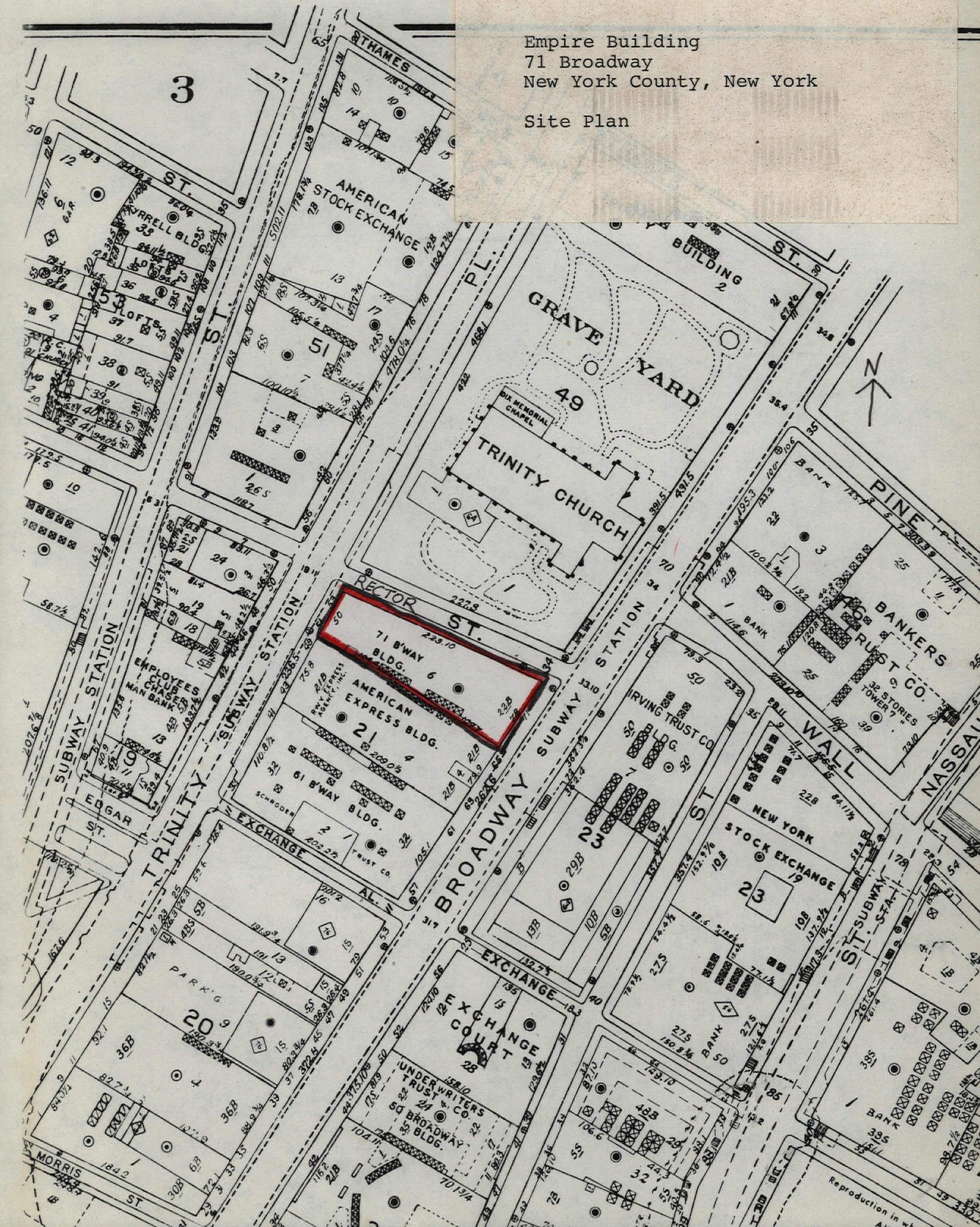
Item number 11

Page 2

Form researched and prepared by:

Andrew S. Dolkart
New York Landmarks Conservancy
11 Broadway
New York, NY
(212) 425-4085

Empire Building
71 Broadway
New York County, New York
Site Plan



Empire Building
71 Broadway
New York County, New York

Site Plan

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

8300 4643

Substantive Review

DOE - owner objection

Empire Building
NY, New York

DOE/OWNER OBJECTION

Entered in the
National Register

8.28.98

E. Beall

Working No. 1.13.83

Fed. Reg. Date:

Date Due: 2/27/83

Action: ACCEPT 2/27/83

Determined Eligible RETURN

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 *Accept*Reviewer *Ann Boyd*Discipline *A.H.*Date *2.27.83*☐ 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
☐ excellent	☐ deteriorated	☐ unaltered
☐ good	☐ ruins	☐ altered
☐ fair	☐ unexposed	☐ original site
		☐ moved 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

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

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Empire Building

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, New York

DATE RECEIVED: 7/31/98 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/11/98
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/27/98 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/14/98
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 83004643

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 8-28-98 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the
National Register

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept

REVIEWER E. Beall

DISCIPLINE Historian

TELEPHONE _____

DATE 8-28-98

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



Empire Building #1
71 Broadway
New York County, New York

View from southwest

Photo: Andrew S. Dolkart April, 1980
Neg. at : N.Y. Landmarks Conservancy

11 Broadway

New York, N.Y.

New York County

9/25
JW

1



Empire Building #2
71 Broadway
New York County, New York

Entrance

Photo: Andrew S. Dolkart April, 1980
Neg. at: New York Landmarks Conservancy

11 Broadway

New York, N.Y.

New York County

12

52

1



Empire Building #3
71 Broadway
New York County, New York

Stairway

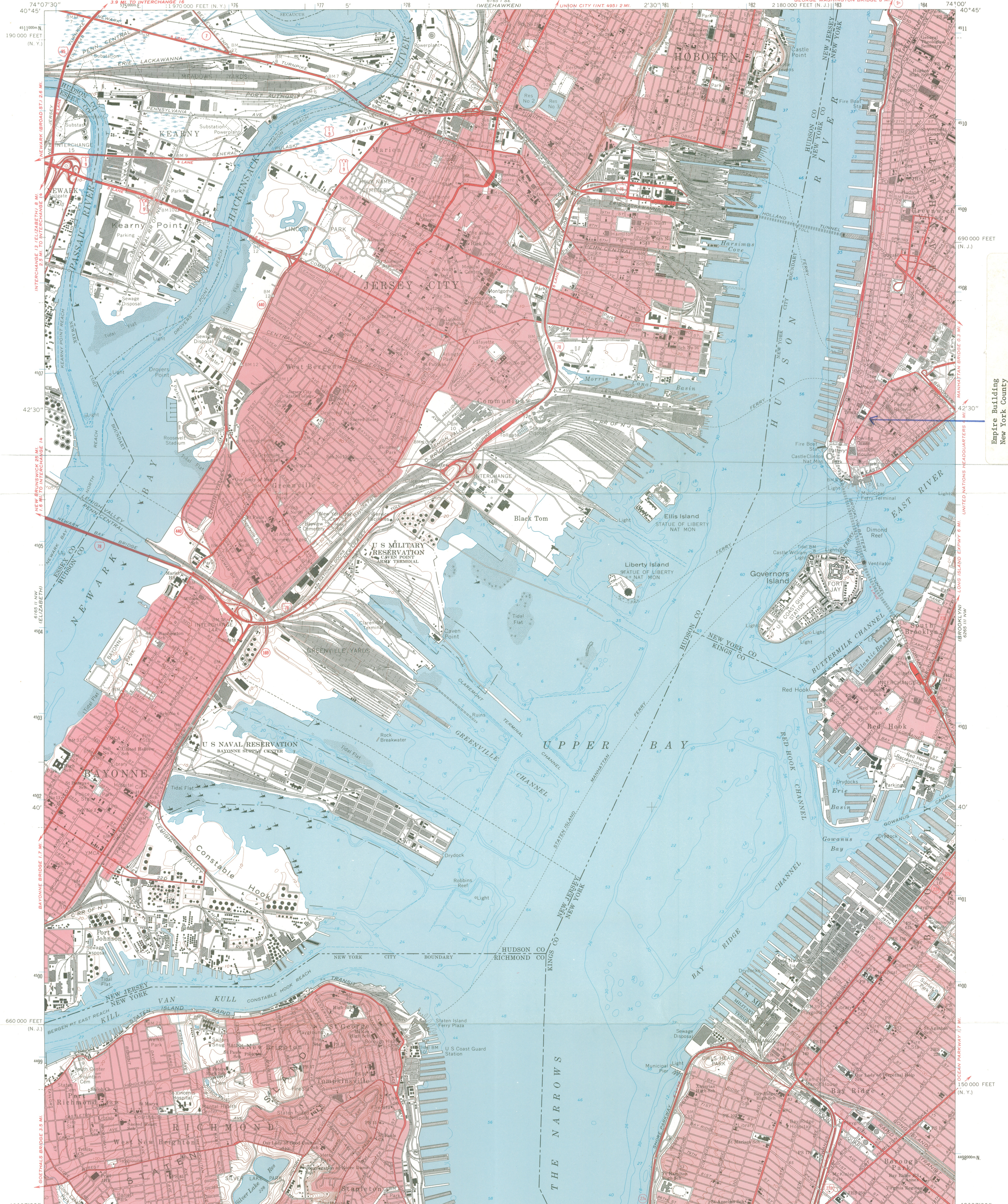
Photo: Andrew S. Dolkart April, 1980
Neg. at: New York Landmarks Conservancy
11 Broadway
New York, N.Y.

New York County

22

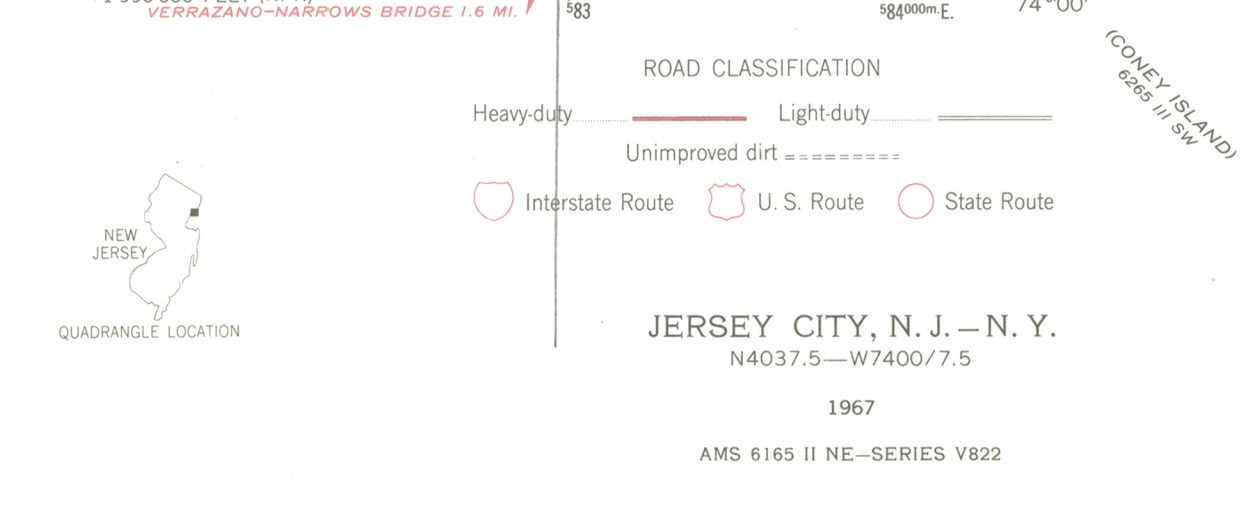
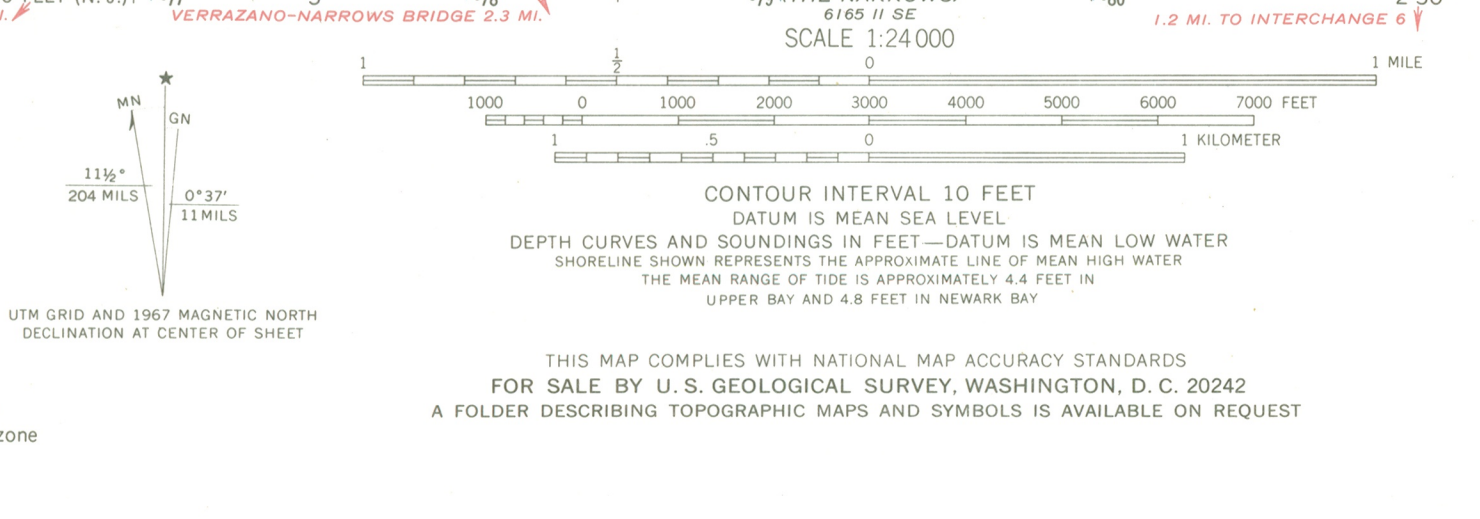
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

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

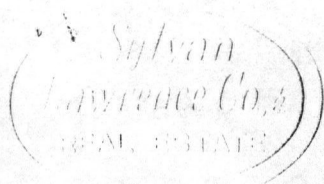


Empire Building
New York County
UTM Reference:
A. 18 583380 4506520

Maped, 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 planetarium 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



JERSEY CITY, N. J. - N. Y.
N4037.5-W7400/7.5
1967
AMS 6165 II NE-SERIES V822



Rec
AWS
OK - app
action



Sylvan Lawrence Company, Inc. 100 WILLIAM STREET • NEW YORK, N. Y. 10038 • (212) 344-0044

September 9, 1982

Historic Preservation Field
Services Bureau
Agency Building #1
Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller
Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12238

Att: Mr. Orin Lehman
State Historic Preservation Officer

Re: Empire Building, 71 Broadway, New York, N. Y.

Gentlemen:

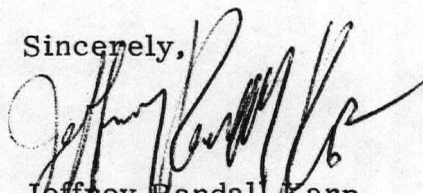
Sylvan Lawrence Company, Inc. is Agent for 71 Broadway Company, owner of the above described premises.

Enclosed is the notarized statement of 71 Broadway Company objecting to the listing of the building known as 71 Broadway, New York, New York, in the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

Please contact me to confirm that 71 Broadway will not be listed in the State and National Registers.

If you have any question, please contact me.

Sincerely,


Jeffrey Randall Karp
General Counsel

JRK:cm
Enc.

Certified Mail
Return Receipt

To: State Historic Preservation Officer

Re: Empire Building
71 Broadway
New York, New York

I, Seymour Cohn, do hereby swear and certify that

(a) I am the Chairman of Sylvan Lawrence Company, Inc.,
Agent for 71 Broadway Company, (b) I am a partner of 71
Broadway Company, (c) 71 Broadway Company owns a 100%
interest in the above described property, and (d) 71 Broadway
Company does hereby object to the same being listed on the
National Register and the State Register of historic places.

71 BROADWAY COMPANY
By: Sylvan Lawrence Company,
Inc., Agent

By: *Seymour Cohn*
Seymour Cohn, Chairman

By: *Seymour Cohn*
Seymour Cohn, Partner

SWORN to before me this

9th day of September, 1982

Camille Maddaloni

CAMILLE MADDALONI
Notary Public, State of New York
No. 24-2462415
Qualified in Kings County
Commission Expires March 30, 1983



New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
The Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza
Agency Building 1 Albany, New York 12238

S. Raiche

518-474-0456

January 4, 1983



Jeffrey Randall Karp, Esq.
General Counsel
Sylvan Lawrence Company, Inc.
100 William Street
New York, N.Y. 10038

Dear Mr. Karp:

Re: Empire Building, 71 Broadway
New York, New York

This letter is in response to your inquiry of September 9, in which you request confirmation that 71 Broadway will not be listed on the State and National Registers. As a follow up to that letter, please be advised that even though 71 Broadway has been recommended for listing on the National Register by the State Historic Preservation Board's Committee on Registers, because of your objection, it will not be listed on the National Register. The nomination, however, as well as your letter of objection will be forwarded to the Department of the Interior. They will review this documentation to determine if the property is eligible for the National Register.

If a subsequent purchaser of the property desires the property to be listed and the property has not undergone substantial change, listing on the Register at that step will be relatively easy. In addition, you should note that if the property is found to be eligible for the National Register, it will be subject to the Federal Agency review procedures of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Finally, there is no provision in the State statute, regarding objections to listing on the State Register. Therefore, this property will be listed on the State Register of Historic Places.

If you have any additional comments, please feel free to contact me or any other appropriate party at Parks.

Sincerely,

Robert S. Israel
Robert S. Israel
Senior Attorney

RSI/ldr
cc: Ann Webster Smith



New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

The Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza
Agency Building 1 Albany, New York 12238

518-474-0456

January 7, 1983

Carol Shull
National Register Office
DOI
W434
Washington, D.C. 20243

Dear Carol:

Enclosed is the nomination for the Empire Building. Please note that the owner has filed a notarized objection to listing on the National Register. Please feel free to call me if you have any questions about this nomination.

Sincerely,

L. E. Gobrecht / KL

Larry Gobrecht
National Register and
Survey Coordinator
Historic Preservation
Field Services Bureau

KL/sl
Enc.



DETERMINED ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE NEW YORK

DATE DETERMINED **FEB 27 1983**

Name

Location

Empire Building

New York
New York County

Also Notified

NPS REGIONAL OFFICE: Mid-Atlantic

State Historic Preservation Officer

Mr. Orin Lehman

Commissioner, Office of Parks

Recreation & Historic Preservation

Agency Building #1

Empire State Plaza

Albany, New York 12238

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

1522 K Street, NW

Suite 430

Washington, DC 20005

DOE/NR JMS

For further information, please call the National Register at (202)272-3504.



Bernadette Castro
Commissioner

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau
Peebles Island, PO Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189

518-237-8643

July 23, 1998

Ms. Carol D. Shull
Keeper of the National Register
U.S. Department of the Interior
NPS - National Register
Mail Stop 2280, Suite 400
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find a notarized letter from the current owner of the Empire Building at 71 Broadway, New York County, New York, requesting the listing of the building on the National Register of Historic Places. Also enclosed is a copy of the National Register of Historic Places registration form for the building. The owner is taking advantage of the federal historic preservation tax credit program for a major rehabilitation of the building.

If you have any questions, please call me at 518-237-8643, ext. 264.

Sincerely,

Peter D. Shaver
Historic Preservation
Program Analyst

enc

WORLD-WIDE HOLDINGS CORPORATION



May 22, 1998

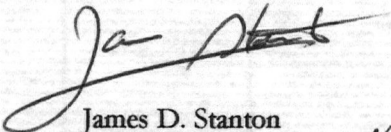
Ms. Ruth Pierpont
Director of Historic Preservation
Field Services Bureau
NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, New York, 12188

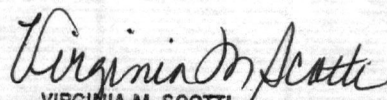
Dear Ms. Pierpont:

We are the current owners of the Empire Building at 71 Broadway. We are in full support of the listing of this building in the National Register of Historic Places. We understand that a previous owner objected to National Register-listing of this property. We hereby remove that previous objection.

Thank you.

Yours truly,


James D. Stanton
President


VIRGINIA M. SCOTTI
NOTARY PUBLIC, State of New York
No. 41-4957791
Qualified in Queens County
Term Expires October 1999

JS/aas

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

date entered

1. Name

historic Empire Building

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 71 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

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

☒ commercial

☐ educational

☐ entertainment

☐ government

☐ industrial

☐ military

☐ museum

☐ park

☐ private residence

☐ religious

☐ scientific

☐ transportation

☐ other:

4. Owner of Property

name 71 Broadway Co.

street & number 100 William Street

city, town New York

vicinity of

state New York

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Surrogate's Court/Hall of Records

street & number 31 Chambers Street

city, town New York

state New York

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title none

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

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

Strategically located just to the south of Trinity Church and Cemetery, the Empire Building is among the most impressive late nineteenth century skyscrapers in lower Manhattan. Constructed of limestone and terra cotta, this Classical Revival style office tower takes the form of a rectangular box enlivened by a rounded and chamfered corner at Broadway and Rector Street. The building has a tripartite horizontal massing that is typical of New York's skyscrapers of the period. With its four-story base, twelve-story shaft, and four-story capital (with a later one-story attic), the building forms a unified backdrop to historic Trinity Church.

The Empire Building has a particularly impressive main entrance on Broadway. This entrance is in the form of a Roman triumphal arch with a round-arched portal flanked by smaller arches and by paired granite columns, each of which is surmounted by an eagle perched on a globe. At the frieze are cartouches emblazoned with the letter "E." A subsidiary entrance with limestone columns is located at the chamfered corner and leads to a commercial space. On the long Rector Street facade, the base of the building is articulated with a series of classical forms, the most notable being the long arcade with Ionic pilasters at the third and fourth floors. Architecture critic Montgomery Schuyler found this arcade to be "one of the stateliest features of our street architecture."¹ It is flanked by two "massive pavilions"² articulated by Renaissance-inspired tripartite windows.

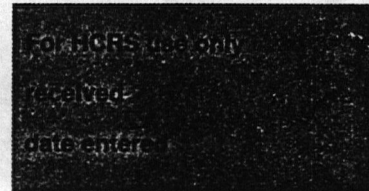
The fifth floor, with its single and paired round-arched openings and Ionic pilasters, forms a transition between the ornate base and the simpler shaft. The horizontal nature of the Empire Building's design is accentuated on the shaft by the use of a series of raised belt courses which are interrupted only by the crisply cut rectangular windows. In order to prevent this large building from becoming monotonous, architects Kimball & Thompson altered the ornamental pattern at the ninth and thirteenth floors by replacing the belt courses with groups of vertical pilasters that flank rectangular panels and rectangular and round-arched windows--a motif that echoes that of the triumphal-arched entrance. Also serving to add excitement to the shaft are projecting balconies located at the seventh, eleventh, and fifteenth floors and cartouches at the fifth, eighth, and twelfth floors. A modest bracketed cornice above the sixteenth floor separates the shaft from the capital.

The most prominent feature of the four-story capital is the long loggia formed by paired Corinthian columns at the center of the Rector Street facade. A smaller loggia created by two single Corinthian columns enlivens the front facade. The top floor, set above the loggia, is adorned with cartouches inscribed with either carved E's or with classical motifs. The building is surmounted by a deep cornice. In 1899 Francis Kimball added a penthouse to the roof for use as a residence. This attic story was designed in a style compatible with the original building which had only recently been completed.

The exterior of the Empire Building retains its original architectural integrity and remains one of the finest early skyscrapers in New York. The interior, however, has been extensively modernized. Of the original building fabric, only the west stairway is extant. This stairway has marble treads and dados and an extremely ornate iron railing.

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Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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ornamented with dolphins flanking Neptune's scepter.

¹Montgomery Schuyler, "The Works of Francis H. Kimball and Kimball & Thompson,"
Architectural Record, 7 (April-April, 1898), p. 518.

²Ibid.

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 1895 Builder/Architect Kimball & Thompson

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Empire Building, designed in 1895 by the architectural firm of Kimball & Thompson, is architecturally significant as one of the finest of the Classical Revival style skyscrapers erected in New York City in the late nineteenth century. Commissioned by the O.B. Potter Trust, the Empire Building was one of the earliest skyscrapers erected during a period when much of lower Broadway was being rebuilt. Its virtually unaltered exterior remains a symbol of turn-of-the-century corporate grandeur. America's most important contribution to architecture has been the development of the commercial skyscraper. Developed in conjunction with structural and technological innovations, the skyscraper became the symbol of the wealthiest cities in the country. In New York City, skyscrapers began to be constructed in the 1870's, but it was not until the 1890's that the skyline of lower Manhattan started to change radically as skyscrapers of fifteen or more stories replaced older commercial buildings. These new office towers were generally designed in the Romanesque Revival and Classical Revival styles, with facades massed so as to resemble a classical column with a base, a shaft, and a capital.

The Empire Building is located just south of the wall that marked the boundary of Dutch New Amsterdam. In the early eighteenth century this area developed as a residential neighborhood centering on the first Trinity Church, built in 1698 and enlarged in 1737. By the mid-nineteenth century, the residential character of the area had changed as commercial structures replaced the residences. Five-story Italianate style commercial buildings were erected along lower Broadway. These structures remained viable until the advent of the elevator and skyscraper construction. Between c. 1895 and c. 1910 almost all of lower Broadway was rebuilt with high-rise buildings. The New York Times commented in a 1907 article entitled "The Increasing Marvels of Lower Broadway" that:

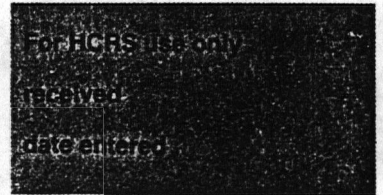
The great financial centre of New York, probably the richest, most crowded spot on the American continent, is in the throes of a transformation. New structures are soaring up and up, as though to the highest heavens, changing the skyline, making the streets unfamiliar, lending new splendors of marble, bronze, and colored terra cotta to the narrow cañons through which tides of men rush ceaselessly for the seven hours of the business day.

The Empire Building was one of the earliest skyscrapers erected during this period of transformation.

The architectural firm of Kimball & Thompson was founded in 1893 by Francis Hatch Kimball (1859-1919) and George Kramer Thompson (1859-1935). Francis Kimball was one of the leading architects of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Early in his career Kimball managed the Hartford office of the Boston firm of

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Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



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71 Broadway, N.Y.C.

of Rogers & Bryant. During his tenure in Hartford he supervised the construction of English architect William Burgess' High Victorian Gothic style design for Trinity College. In about 1880 Kimball moved to New York where he designed a number of major buildings including the Catholic Apostolic Church (1885) on West 57th Street, the Emmanuel Baptist Church (1889) and the Montauk Club (1889), both in Brooklyn, and the Riverdale Presbyterian Chapel (now the Edgehill Church of Spuyten Duyvil) (1889) in the Bronx. In 1893 Kimball collaborated with Thompson on the design for the Manhattan Life Insurance Building ---a skyscraper that was located directly across the street from the Empire Building at 66 Broadway. Architecture critic Montgomery Schuyler regarded this design as a pioneering effort and credited Kimball with being one of the first to design a building with a steel frame that was over ten stories in height.² Kimball's partner on this design, George Thompson, was trained in the architectural office of Frederick Clarke Withers and in the 1880's went to work for Kimball. The partnership of Kimball & Thompson lasted until 1898. After 1898, Kimball continued to design notable skyscrapers including the City Investing Building on Broadway and Cortland Street (demolished), which was the largest building in the world at the time of its construction, and the Trinity and U.S. Realty Co. Buildings at 111 and 115 Broadway.

Commissioned by the O.B. Potter Trust, the Empire Building was among Kimball's major architectural commissions and established him as a leading designer of skyscrapers. Montgomery Schuyler found the Empire Building to be "one of the best commercial buildings,"³ and felt that it was worthy of its conspicuous location beside Trinity Church Cemetery. He noted that "the design makes the most of the condition of the problem at hand."⁴ The design is indeed a masterful handling of the monumental frontage that extends 223'10" along Rector Street. The building is viewed as a whole from Broadway and not as a progression of parts, as would be the case were the north side of Rector Street built up. That the Empire Building was originally seen as a major work and continues to be one of the most notable features of lower Broadway is attributable to the sophistication of Francis Kimball's design capabilities. Even more important, the building serves as a sympathetic neighbor to Trinity Church, lending one of New York's major landmarks an appropriate architectural setting.

¹New York Times, October 6, 1907, pt. 5, p. 3.

²Montgomery Schuyler, "The Works of Francis Kimball and Kimball & Thompson," Architectural Record, 7 (April-June, 1898), p. 506.

³Ibid., p.518.

⁴Ibid., p.511.

9. Major Bibliographical References

King, Moses. King's Views of New York. New York: Moses King, 1908, p. 20.
New York City, Department of Buildings, Manhattan. Plans, Alterations, and Cockets.
Schuyler, Montgomery. "The Work of Francis Kimball and Kimball & Thompson," Architectural Record 7 (April-June, 1898), pp. 479-518.
Wiesman, Winston. "A New View of Skyscraper History," in The Rise of an American Architectur
edited by Edgar Kaufman, Jr.. New York: Praeger, 1970
pp. 115-162.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than 1

Quadrangle name Jersey City

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary lines of the Empire Building, 71 Broadway, is shown as the bold line on the accompanying plat 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 Anne B. Covell

organization Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau date May 1980

street & number Agency Building I, Empire State Plaza telephone (518) 474-0479

city or town Albany state New York

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

Ann Webster Smith

title Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation

date 12/22/82

For HCRS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Empire Building
71 Broadway, N.Y.C.

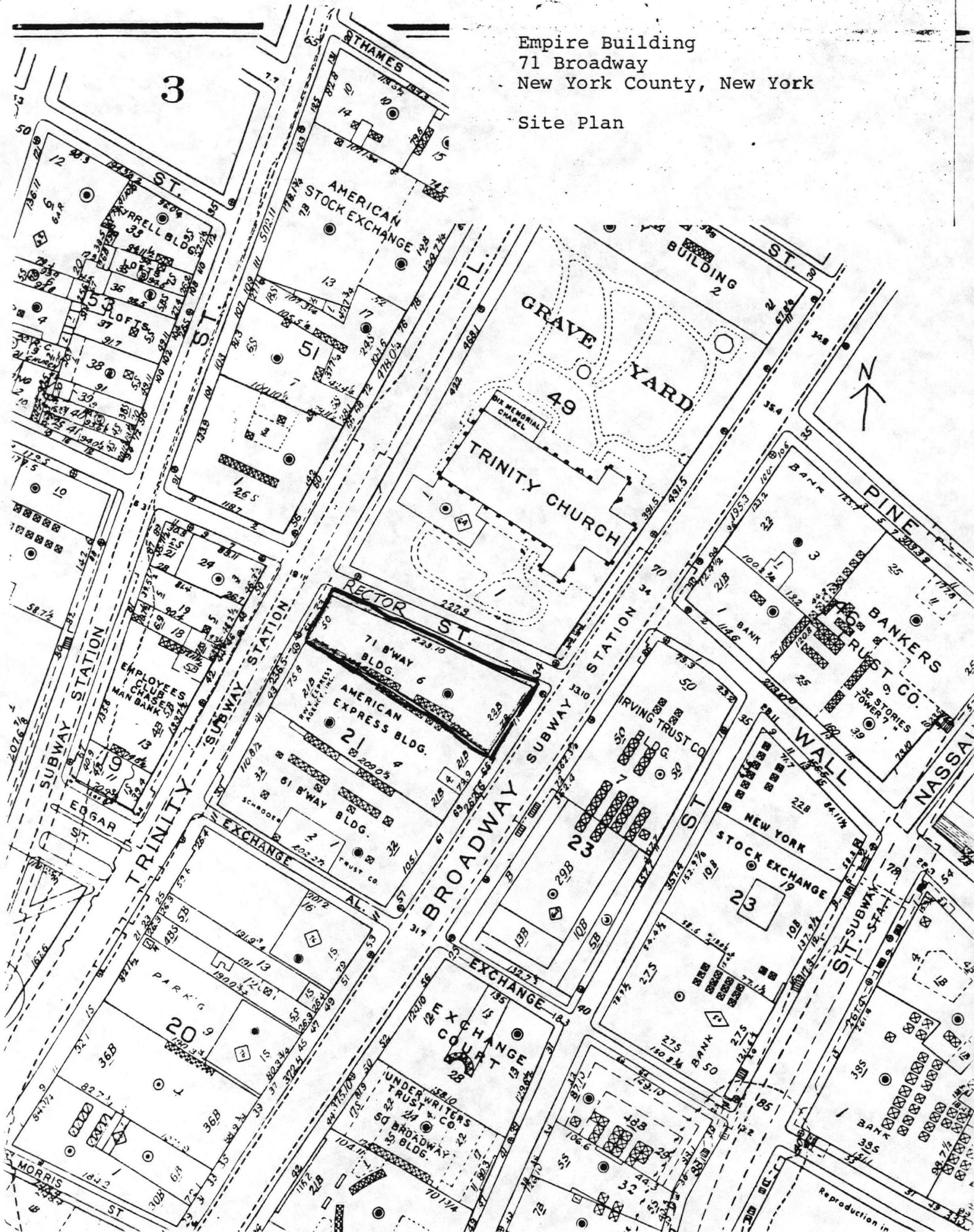
Item number 11

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Form researched and prepared by:

Andrew S. Dolkart
New York Landmarks Conservancy
11 Broadway
New York, NY
(212) 425-4085

Empire Building
71 Broadway
New York County, New York
Site Plan



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

6265 IV SW
(CENTRAL PARK)



Empire Building
New York County
UTM Reference:

A. 18 583380 4506520