

AUG 23 1985

# BUILDING-STRUCTURE INVENTORY FORM

DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
NEW YORK STATE PARKS AND RECREATION  
ALBANY, NEW YORK (518) 474-0479

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
UNIQUE SITE NO.	_____
QUAD	_____
SERIES	_____
NEG. NO.	_____

YOUR NAME: Ted Bartlett DATE: August, 1985

YOUR ADDRESS: 130 Spring Street  
Rochester, NY 14608 TELEPHONE: (716) 546-7029

ORGANIZATION (if any): Landmark Society of Western New York, Inc.

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### IDENTIFICATION

1. BUILDING NAME(S): Chamber of Commerce

2. COUNTY: Monroe TOWN/CITY: Rochester VILLAGE: NA

3. STREET LOCATION: 55 St. Paul Street

4. OWNERSHIP: a. public  b. private

5. PRESENT OWNER: Chamber of Commerce ADDRESS: Same

6. USE: Original: \_\_\_\_\_ Present: \_\_\_\_\_

7. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: Yes  No

Interior accessible: Explain office hours

### DESCRIPTION

8. BUILDING MATERIAL: a. clapboard  b. stone  c. brick  d. board and batten   
e. cobblestone  f. shingles  g. stucco  other: \_\_\_\_\_

9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: (if known) a. wood frame with interlocking joints   
b. wood frame with light members   
c. masonry load bearing walls   
d. metal (explain) \_\_\_\_\_  
e. other \_\_\_\_\_

10. CONDITION: a. excellent  b. good  c. fair  d. deteriorated

11. INTEGRITY: a. original site  b. moved  if so, when? \_\_\_\_\_  
c. list major alterations and dates (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

Five-story addition on west side, 1925-26.

12. PHOTO:

13. MAP:

see continuation sheet

see continuation sheet

14. THREATS TO BUILDING: a. none known  b. zoning  c. roads   
d. developers  e. deterioration   
f. other: \_\_\_\_\_

15. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS AND PROPERTY:  
a. barn  b. carriage house  c. garage   
d. privy  e. shed  f. greenhouse   
g. shop  h. gardens   
i. landscape features: \_\_\_\_\_  
j. other: none

16. SURROUNDINGS OF THE BUILDING (check more than one if necessary):  
a. open land  b. woodland   
c. scattered buildings   
d. densely built-up  e. commercial   
f. industrial  g. residential   
h. other: \_\_\_\_\_

17. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS:  
(Indicate if building or structure is in an historic district)

Building

see continuation sheet

18. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING AND SITE (including interior features if known):  
see continuation sheet

**SIGNIFICANCE**

19. DATE OF INITIAL CONSTRUCTION: 1916-1917

ARCHITECT: Claude Bragdon and Charles Evans (1925-26 addition by Gordon and Kaelber Architects)

BUILDER: Unknown

20. HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:

see continuation sheet

21. SOURCES:

Rochester plat maps and city directories; historic and architectural files and surveys, Landmark Society of Western New York; Local History Division, Rochester Public Library; and City of Rochester public records.

~~21.~~ THEME: Democrat and Chronicle, Sept. 6, 1925, p. 20  
The Architectural Forum, Vol. 27, No. 6, p. 157-64.

Chamber of Commerce  
.55 St. Paul Street  
Monroe County  
Rochester, New York

17. This building is located on the east bank of the Genesee River in Rochester's central business district. It is bounded on the north by a modern apartment complex and on the south by a modern hotel. Nineteenth-century commercial buildings are located on the east side of St. Paul Street. The nominated property is less than one acre in extent.

18. This rectangular Neoclassical building has four stories with a flat roof. The east facade has six bays; the northernmost one is recessed. The structure is divided in half horizontally. A stone water table above the foundation and a stone string course in the middle of the building delineate the lower half (floors one and two), while a protruding, modillion block cornice marks the top of the upper half (floors two and three). In addition, there is an ornate bronze, bracketed balcony in the middle of the structure, at the third floor. The lower half of the recessed north bay contains the entrance which has a console supported architrave. A circular medallion is embossed in the transom panel above the door.

The central three bays of the lower half contain tripartite windows which run almost the entire height. Bronze is used for the mullions and the spandrels which separate the first and second story windows. The end bays have casement windows on both floors.

Slight recesses enclose the upper windows which are identical in all bays except the recessed one. They run the full height of the third and fourth floors divided only by bronze and stone spandrels between the floors. All are casement windows with transoms above the third floor windows. The windows in the recessed northern bay are tripartite. The seven-bay south side of the original building and the 1925 western addition contain the same divisions and design elements as on the front (east). The addition, though, is faced with brick while its foundation, belt courses, parapet, coping, (quoins and vertical division of the bays) are constructed in limestone. A parapet, which encircles the entire building, has carved friezes above each bay and a simple coping. The north wall protrudes slightly past the plan of the eastern facade.

In the original portion of the building, the Assembly and Chamber rooms dominate the arrangement of the interior with all other space ancillary to these rooms. A staircase and several smaller rooms are contained in the northern recessed bay. Many original features are still present on the interior. The most distinctively ornamented areas are the first floor Chamber room and the third floor Assembly room. In addition to oak wainscoting, both rooms have plaster ceiling ornamentation with rich classical details. Plaster designs are also found on the capitals and the second floor balcony piers. Also distinctive are the paired brackets supporting the balcony on the west wall of the Chamber room which are now partially obscured by the 1925 staircase. The enclosed staircase in the north end of the building is of marble, as are the floors and walls of the vestibule opening onto St. Paul Street (east side).

20. The Rochester Chamber of Commerce Building is architecturally significant as a representative example of Beaux-Arts-Classicism and as one of only three examples in the Inner Loop Multiple Resource Area of the work of the prominent Rochester Architect Claude Bragdon. Built to house one of New York State's largest and most active chambers of its era, the building represents a successful attempt to accommodate the Beaux-Arts ideals of symmetry and proportion to a difficult corner site without compromising the

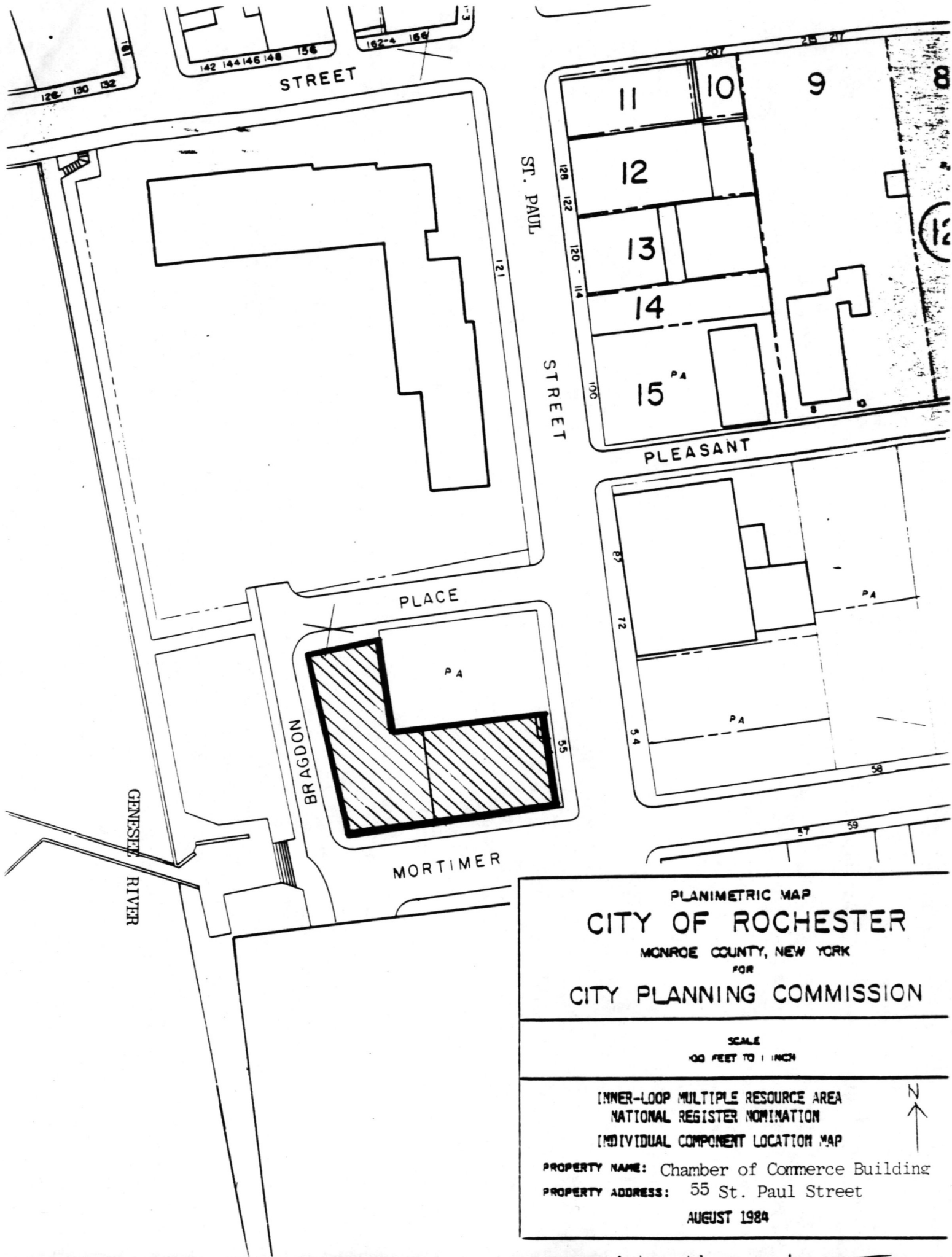
Chamber of Commerce  
55 St. Paul Street  
Monroe County  
Rochester, New York

20. (continuation sheet)

convenience of its plan or the visual integrity of an unbroken streetscape. The actual detailing of the building is unusually restrained for its date of construction, the dignified character of the building relying on its classical massing and proportions rather than on gratuitous exterior ornamentation.

Bragdon, a principal contributor to the design, was one of Rochester's most progressive early twentieth century architects. An admirer of Louis Sullivan, his work is characterized by its functionalism and originality, even when working in the popular Neoclassical idiom of the day, as in the Chamber of Commerce Building. In 1909 he was given his most significant commission, the \$2,000,000 New York Central Railroad Station project. (Building demolished 1966). The two remaining examples of his work in the Inner Loop include the First Universalist Church, built in 1908, (National Register Listed, 1971) and the Central YMCA Building, built in 1914 and designed in collaboration with J. Foster Warner, and an individual component of the multiple resource nomination.

In addition to Bragdon, the New York City firm of Foster and Dade was hired to prepare designs for the Chamber of Commerce. Charles Evans arrived in Rochester in 1915 and became involved in this project as the manager of Foster and Dade's Rochester office. The original building was relatively small and designed for use only by the local Chamber of Commerce. In December, 1919, George Eastman offered \$295,000 to build an addition. This addition constructed in 1925-26, doubled the size of the building. It accommodated office space for a variety of public organizations such as the Rochester Community Chest, the Public Health Association, and the Social Welfare League. The architects of the addition were Gordon and Kaelber, the city's most prolific design firm and favorites of George Eastman. Other works by this firm are the Eastman Theater, Rochester Gas and Electric Building, Lincoln Building, Reynolds Arcade, Baptist Temple Building and Rundel Memorial Building, all contributing elements of the Eastman Historic District (National Register eligible 1984) or individual components of the multiple resource nomination.



PLANIMETRIC MAP  
**CITY OF ROCHESTER**  
 MONROE COUNTY, NEW YORK  
 FOR  
**CITY PLANNING COMMISSION**

SCALE  
 100 FEET TO 1 INCH

INNER-LOOP MULTIPLE RESOURCE AREA  
 NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION  
 INDIVIDUAL COMPONENT LOCATION MAP

PROPERTY NAME: Chamber of Commerce Building  
 PROPERTY ADDRESS: 55 St. Paul Street  
 AUGUST 1984



# United States Department of the Interior National Park Service National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received 8/23/85  
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Inner Loop Multiple Resource Area  
State NEW YORK

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

- |     |                                  |                                     |               |                              |
|-----|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|------------------------------|
| 1.  | Reynolds Arcade                  | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Melrose Byers 10/4/85</u> |
|     |                                  |                                     | Attest        | _____                        |
| 2.  | Washington Street Rowhouses      | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Melrose Byers 10/4/85</u> |
|     |                                  |                                     | Attest        | _____                        |
| 3.  | Brown, Adam, Block               | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Melrose Byers 10/4/85</u> |
|     |                                  |                                     | Attest        | _____                        |
| 4.  | Lehigh Valley Railroad Station   | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Melrose Byers 10/4/85</u> |
|     |                                  |                                     | Attest        | _____                        |
| 5.  | Chamber of Commerce              | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Melrose Byers 10/4/85</u> |
|     |                                  |                                     | Attest        | _____                        |
| 6.  | Little Theatre                   | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Melrose Byers 10/4/85</u> |
|     |                                  |                                     | Attest        | _____                        |
| 7.  | Michaels-Stern Building          | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Melrose Byers 10/4/85</u> |
|     |                                  |                                     | Attest        | _____                        |
| 8.  | First National Bank of Rochester | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Melrose Byers 10/4/85</u> |
|     |                                  |                                     | Attest        | _____                        |
| 9.  | Gannett Building                 | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Melrose Byers 10/4/85</u> |
|     |                                  |                                     | Attest        | _____                        |
| 10. | Wilder Building                  | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Melrose Byers 10/4/85</u> |
|     |                                  |                                     | Attest        | _____                        |

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

*Rec#*  
*85002859*

Chamber of Commerce (Inner Loop MRA)  
Monroe County  
NEW YORK

Working No. AUG 23 1985

Fed. Reg. Date: 2/9/87

Date Due: 9/19/85 — 10/7/85

Entered in the  
National Register

Action:  ACCEPT 10-4-85

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 \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Discipline \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: \_\_\_\_\_ technical corrections cited below  
\_\_\_\_\_ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership Public Acquisition	Status Accessible	Present Use

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

- excellent
- good
- fair
- deteriorated
- ruins
- unexposed

Check one

- unaltered
- altered

Check one

- 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

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_  
Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_  
UTM References \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal boundary description and justification

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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**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

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**13. Other**

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



ROCHESTER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ALLRIGHT  
AUTO PARK  
ENTRANCE →

ALL DAY  
WEEKEND  
MONTHLY

Chamber of Commerce  
55 St. Paul Street  
Rochester, New York  
Monroe County  
Inner-Loop Multiple Resource Area

Photograph - Landmark Society, 1984  
View: Looking West

*Negative at Landmark Society of Western N.Y.*



Chamber of Commerce  
55 St. Paul Street  
Rochester, New York  
Monroe County  
Inner-Loop Multiple Resource Area

Photograph - Landmark Society, 1984  
View: Addition - West Elevation

*Negative at Landmark Society of Western N.Y.*

**Inner Loop Multiple Resource Area  
Individual Components  
Rochester, Monroe Co., N.Y.  
UTM References:  
(All Zone 18)**

- A. Kirsstein Building 4783  
242 Andrews Street  
287900-4781670
- B. Salmon-Musbaum Building  
148 Clinton Avenue  
287990-4781690
- C. Young Men and Young Women's  
Jewish Association Building  
400 Andrews Street  
288250-4781710
- D1. Rochester Fire Department  
Headquarters  
288320-4781750
- D2. Rochester Fire Department Shops  
288280-4781780
- E. Baptist Temple Building  
14 Franklin Street  
288240-4781640
- F. Downtown YMCA  
100 Gibbs Street  
288520-4781560
- G. Chester Dewey School  
200 University Avenue  
288810-4781620
- H. Adam Brown Block  
440 East Main Street  
288630-4781510
- I. Sibley Triangle Building  
20-30 East Avenue  
288280-4781370
- J. Little Theatre  
240 East Avenue  
288790-4781190
- K. Mallman Chevrolet 4781  
200 East Avenue  
288740-4781210
- L. University Club 115000  
36 Broadway  
288600-4781170  
FEET
- M. Yewman and Erbe Building  
41 Chestnut Street  
288340-4781230
- N. Naval Armory/Convention Hall  
75 W. Monroe Avenue  
288170-4780800
- O. Lehigh Valley Railroad Station  
99 Court Street  
287930-4780900
- P. Rundel Memorial Library  
115 South Avenue  
287100-4781000
- Q. Court-Exchange Building  
142 Exchange Street  
287700-4780840
- R. Arcade Mill  
26-32 Aqueduct Street  
287680-4781130
- S. Gannett Building  
55 Exchange Street  
287580-4781020
- T. Ebenesser Watts House  
47 S. Fitzhugh Street  
287460-4780970
- U. Wilder Building  
1 Main Street  
287600-4781160
- V. Washington Street Rowhouses  
30-32 N. Washington Street  
287150-4781230
- W. First National Bank 4779  
(Monroe Saving Bank)  
39 State Street  
287500-4781250
- X. Reynolds Arcade  
18 East Main Street  
287600-4781230
- Y. Rochester Chamber of  
Commerce Building  
55 Street Saline Paul Street  
287790-4781420
- Z. H. H. Warner Building  
72-82 St. Paul Street  
287840-4781460
- AA. Michaels-Stern Building  
87 North Clinton Avenue  
287990-4781520
- BB. Andrews (H.C. Cohen Co.)  
Building  
100 Andrews Street  
287840-4781640 4778



43° 07' 30" 77° 37' 30" 287 29 MI. TO NY 252 760 000 FEET 289 35' 190  
0.6 MI. TO NY STATE THRUWAY

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS, USC&GS, and New York Geodetic Survey

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial  
photographs taken 1971. Field checked 1971

Supersedes map dated 1952

WEST HENRIETTA  
5470 II SW

MN  
IGNI

1:2000