

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED **AUG 20 1987**
DATE ENTERED **SEP - 2 1987**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

United States Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

Foley Square

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

40 Foley Square

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

New York

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

New York

— VICINITY OF
CODE

036

COUNTY

New York

CODE

061

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: *(If applicable)*

General Services Administration

STREET & NUMBER

Gerald O'Donnell 26 Federal Plaza Room 2351 N.Y., N.Y. 10278

CITY, TOWN

New York

— VICINITY OF

New York

STATE

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

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Landmarks Preservation Commission

DATE

March 25, 1987

— FEDERAL — STATE — COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS 20 Vesey Street

CITY, TOWN

New York

STATE

New York

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The United State Courthouse, Foley Square, is located at 40 Foley Square in the Civic Center of Manhattan. The legally recorded boundary lines are Block number 158 and Lot number 61. The site is a small irregular parcel of less than one acre facing Foley Square to the north. To the east, across Pearl Street is the New York County Courthouse (1926). On the southeast corner a driveway at the rear portion of the site leads to the judge's parking area in the basement. Directly next to the driveway around the curved portion of the building is a garden dominated by mature low-spreading beech-trees; a wrought-iron fence (1935) separates this area from the sidewalk. On the southwest is a service yard and two non-historic metal bridges which connect the third level of the courthouse to the Silvio Mollo U.S. Attorney's Building (1976) and the Metropolitan Correction Center (1976) across Cardinal Hayes Place. These two non-historic buildings do not contribute to the significance of the nomination and have been excluded from the boundary. On the southwest is a property occupied by St. Andrew's Church. On the northwest side a pedestrian plaza connects Foley Square with the Municipal Building (1914) (NRL). The boundary has been drawn to include only the courthouse building and its immediate lot as drawn on the attached tax map. (1 contributing building).

The Foley Square courthouse is located in the heart of a well-established and distinguished complex of civic buildings in New York City. These range from Federal period City Hall (1811)(NHL) to a series of government buildings erected in the area during the 1920s, that led to the revitalization of the area as a civic center. These building include the Surrogate's Court (1911) (NHL), a Beaux-Arts style granite structure built to the plans of John R. Thomas in the French "hotel de ville" style, the Municipal Building (1914) by McKim Mead and White, an innovative adaptation of the Classical Revival, the Neoclassical style New York County Courthouse (1926) by Guy Lowell, the New York State Office Building (1930) by Sullivan W. James and William E. Haugaard. Some of civic buildings in this neighborhood have already been listed on the National Register individually; others appear to be eligible either individually or in a district context; however, comprehensive survey and evaluation of the entire neighborhood has not yet been undertaken.

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FOLEY SQUARE U.S. COURTHOUSE (1932-36)

CONTINUATION SHEET DESCRIPTION ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

The 31 story U.S. Courthouse is divided into three main parts: a six story base occupying the entire site, out of which rises a rectangular tower shaft surmounted by a classical temple crowned by a gold-tiled pyramid, culminating in a lantern. All the exterior elevations are finished in Minnesota granite, of off-white color, and mottled with peach and grey. The base of the courthouse is irregularly shaped expressing the shape of the lot. The site slopes from south to north, allowing ground floor space below grade at the south to open directly on grade at Pearl Street along the northeast side of the site. Visually, the slope appears diminished by the monumental stairway at the main portico along Foley Square. Windows for the first four floors are expressed in a rusticated granite facade set back from the portico. The fifth floor behind the portico lintel cornice is virtually windowless. The sixth floor forms a frieze with frame window opening and decorated panels. Iron is used along the east facades for window grilles and for the fence. The portico is supported by a colonnade consisting of ten four-story-high Corinthian columns and is flanked by piers framed by pilasters. A frieze bears the inscription "United States Court House." This entablature, adorned with guilloche motifs above the piers at each end, is surmounted by a denticulated cornice and a low attic story pierced by square windows separated by carved pilasters. The ends of the attic story are decorated by roundels, reminiscent of antique coins, depicting the heads of great lawgivers of the past: Plato, Aristotle, Demosthenes and Moses. Rising from the basement to the sixth floor, the broad base covers almost the entire site.

The base section contains the first six floors, together with a monumental granite stair leading to the main portico and entrance along Foley Square. The ground floor is above grade on the remaining sides of the building except along the south side at St. Andrew's Place. The sides of the base splay outward from Foley Square. The south side of the building is interrupted for the outparcel of St. Andrew's Church; thus the base has an irregular plan which is built around three interior courtyards. The tower extends to the ground outside the enclosing base only at its southwest corner behind the church.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

DESCRIPTION

ITEM NUMBER

7

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3

The shaft consists of a square tower extending from floors seven to twenty-two. The first sixteen stories are given vertical emphasis by the piers separating the window bays. The windows are separated horizontally from each other by rectangular spandrel panels. Surmounting the seventeenth story, a denticulated cornice sets off the three stories above it, which are treated as a unit. A series of horizontal cornices signals the change to five two-story arched windows surmounted by small square ones, separated and enhanced by two-story pilasters. This space marks the library on the 25th floor. The end bays at the corners are of solid masonry pierced by slit windows. This section is crowned by a pierced stone parapet with urns at the corners emphasizing the setbacks of the tower section above. The tower section contains courtrooms, judges offices and judges chambers.

The small setback portion above the shaft supports the pyramidal roof. The setback is divided into five bays on each side separated by three-story high, engaged Ionic columns with paired pilasters. A shallow cornice and low attic story crown the topmost section of the tower with eagles at the corners connected by simple low parapets. These floors contain a variety of services and functions, including elevator equipment and water storage. This small section forms the base for the steep pyramidal roof, which is adorned with gold leaf. At the base of the roof, small pedimental dormers adorn the upper portion of each side. The roof is crowned with a small gold-leafed lantern which has a railing at its base and is crowned by corner finials and a steep roof with an oblong final. Interior space in the courthouse exhibits a clear distinction between public spaces and private, or "back stage," working areas. The public space provide an elegant setting reflecting the ceremonial aspects of the judicial process. Examples of these "ceremonial spaces" are the major courtrooms and the sequence of portico, main hall, and passages used by the public to reach them. The intent, common to nearly all Gilbert's work, was to design these spaces using monumental and permanent materials, embellished with appropriate decorative elements. Interior details of special importance include the variety of coffered plaster ceilings, with their ornament, gilding, and decorative painting. Unfortunately, Gilbert died before all the interior details had been completed.

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Thus, there are few spaces reflecting the sensitive use of color that appears in his watercolors, his sketchbook, and his previous buildings. Particularly noteworthy, however, is the bronzework on the entry doors and the elevators, which is compatible with the plaster and wood details. Original lighting fixtures executed in bronze and glass illustrate traditional craft techniques that skillfully exploit the possibilities of twentieth century electric light.

On the first floor the main lobby spans the entire width of the building along the Foley Square side. The walls of this double-height space are lined with white marble and superimposed colossal Ionic pilasters. The wood and plaster ceiling is divided into seven rectangular sections separated from each other by ornate Greek fret molding. Each section is coffered, edged in gold, and large rosettes of red and blue are centered in each coffer. White marble lintel molding trims the ceiling. Elevator banks are housed in the rear. The elevator doors were originally planned to be brass, but to reduce the costs they were made of steel and were recently painted gold.

There are thirty-five courtrooms in this building; each one has similar ornamental motifs. Many of the smaller courtrooms have undergone extensive alterations and very little of the original fabric remains. The larger courtrooms, however, contain a great many of the original features: wood panelled walls with engaged fluted Ionic pilasters set between colossal round arches and panelled ceilings enframed with Greek fret molding.

The rest of the interior space is composed of offices and the library. Many of the offices have been altered greatly and have little resemblance to the original plans. The double-height library on the twenty-fifth floor, however, remains relatively unchanged. Of special note are the large ceiling beams supported on foliate brackets, which still display their original stencilled foliate designs. The only major additions to this room are the balconies erected to increase shelf space and improve lighting.

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CONTINUATION SHEET DESCRIPTION ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 5

A distinctive feature of the interior is a private elevator for judges which, as originally designed, permitted all judges to go from chamber to courtroom without going into the public corridor. This was required in the design by the government when it became apparent that the building site would not provide sufficient space to allow a judge's chambers to adjoin each courtroom.

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

Foley Square U.S. Courthouse

SPECIFIC DATES	1932-36	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Cass Gilbert and Cass Gilbert, Jr.
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The U.S. Courthouse at Foley Square (1932-1936) is architecturally and historically significant as one of the largest and most distinctive examples of the Federal architecture erected by the U.S. Treasury Department during the expanded public buildings programs of the 1930s. One of the last commissions executed by nationally prominent architect Cass Gilbert, the design of the courthouse embodies the restrained Neoclassicism that had become the preferred idiom for federal buildings during the 1920s and also reflects a similar shift in Gilbert's work at the end of his long career, as more conservative designs replaced the more imaginative and richly decorated compositions (such as the U.S. Customs House at Bowling Green and the Woolworth Building) that had established his reputation several decades earlier. Gilbert's design for the Foley Square courthouse - particularly the monumental six-story base articulated by a Corinthian colonnade on the principal elevation (itself remarkably similar to McKim, Mead and White's General Post Office of 1914) - maintains its link to the public architecture of the earlier twentieth century and harmonizes in style and scale with the buildings in the surrounding neighborhood. These include the New York county Courthouse (1926) and the Municipal Building (1912-14), both classical in inspiration, which flank the courthouse. At the time, the 31-story "modern" office tower component of the courthouse, believed to have been inspired by the form of the campanile in St. Mark's Square in Venice, reflects Gilbert's interest in, and proficiency with, steel frame skyscraper construction, as well as his concern with satisfying the practical needs of his clients within the limits of the site. One of the last Neoclasical style office buildings erected in New York as well as one of the earliest skyscrapers built by the federal government, the U.S. Courthouse at Foley Square illustrates an important turning point in American architectural history.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 8	4 32 0 30	7 31 59 55 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property faces Foley Square on the North; on the east by Pearl St., on the south Cardinal Hayes Places; on the West by Saint Andrew's Plaza. See attached map.

See attached map

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

STATE	N/A	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE		CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE: Sonia Rivera, Community Planner

ORGANIZATION: General Services Administration, Planning Staff DATE: 8/10/87

STREET & NUMBER: 26 Federal Plaza Room 235, (212) 264-4163 TELEPHONE:

CITY OR TOWN: New York (See Continuation Sheet) STATE: New York 10278

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES NO NONE

Julia S. Stokes
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is X National State Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE: J. WALTER ROTH DATE: 18 AUGUST 1987

TITLE: PRESERVATION OFFICER

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Alouise Byers Entered in the National Register DATE: 9/2/87

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: _____ DATE _____

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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The area selected for the new federal courthouse had a somewhat checkered, but interesting history. Prior to 1910, most of what is now Foley Square was a freshwater pond called the "Collect," fed by springs that still exist, although their waters are now channeled through underground circuits. In 1792, a large brick brewery had been erected on the edge of the pond (under what is now the New York County Courthouse). By 1837, with the general decline of the neighborhood, the "Old Brewery" had degenerated into a tenement district, the center of the most festering slum in the city. A maze of decaying buildings housing bars and low-life activities became the habitation of vicious gangs of hoodlums. It has been estimated that, over a 15 year period, there was an average of one homicide a night in this neighborhood, which was known as Five Points. Eventually, the worst slums were replaced by missions, the first being established in 1852. By the turn of the twentieth century, the area had lost its nefarious reputation but remained a poor neighborhood filled with nondescript buildings. Its location, however, just a few blocks northeast of City Hall, the intervening blocks also containing a number of important civic and municipal buildings, led to the area's renaissance as a "Civic Center" in the mid-1920s. After proposals to tear down the 1811 City Hall and move the seat of municipal government to an uptown location were rejected, a series of impressive civic buildings were erected in the immediate vicinity of the former Five Points neighborhoods. In April, 1926, Foley Square was named in honor of Thomas F. Foley, a saloon keeper, politician, and one of the last of the old time Tammany district leaders.

By the time of the new courthouse's construction, its site was located in the heart of a well-established and distinguished collection of civic buildings. These include the federal period New York City Hall (Mangin and McComp, 1811, NHL); the Renaissance-inspired Tweed Courthouse (John Kellum and Leopold Eidlitz, 1869, NHL); the Surrogates Court/Hall of Records, a Beaux-Arts interpretation of French Renaissance architecture based on the Hotel de Ville in Paris (John R. Thomas, 1911, NHL); the Municipal Building, a Neoclassical skyscraper that straddles Chambers Street (McKim, Mead and White, 1914 NR); the New York County Courthouse, a Neoclassical courthouse with a hexagonal plan (Guy Lowell, 1926); and the restrained Classical Revival style New York State Office Building (Sullivan W. Jones and William E. Hagaard, 1930).

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The site eventually chosen for the courthouse faced directly onto Foley Square between the county courthouse and the Municipal Building. It was then occupied by a Health Department building and St. Andrew's Roman Catholic church rectory.

The decision by the Treasury Department to build a new facility in Manhattan to house the federal courts exclusively was probably made in 1930. The old federal building at Park Row (1869-75, Alfred H. Mullett), which housed both the federal courts and post office, was not only outdated but was unpopular from the beginning. In fact, the City of New York had, for many years, been lobbying to remove the building and restore City Hall Park. The Post Office Department had moved its principal base of operations to the monumental General Post Office (1910-14, McKim, Mead & White), but by the late 1920's there seemed to be an urgent need for additional federal office space and increasing pressure for the federal government to vacate the old building. In 1928, Congress authorized the acquisition of a site for a new federal building and in the following year it was chosen - the parcel bounded by Barclay, Church and Vesey Streets and West Broadway. It was to be a multi-use building that was to include the federal courts and a post office. (The Church Street Federal Office Building and Postal Station was later constructed on this site.) In 1930, the Treasury Department evidently gave in to pressure by the federal courts to have their own building, as Congress authorized both an increase in the cost limit of the prior site and an additional site for a federal courthouse. By the end of the year, the City of New York and the Treasury Department had worked out a deal that amounted to an exchange; the Treasury Department was to pay the city \$2,450,000 for the federal courthouse site at Foley Square and \$5,000,000 for the Church Street Federal Office Building site, and the city was to pay \$7,450,000 to acquire (and demolish) the old federal building.

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In 1931, Congress authorized the Treasury Department to spend up to \$8,250,000 on the new federal courthouse. Funds for public buildings had increased dramatically after the onset of the Depression in an attempt to alleviate unemployment, and the federal courthouse at Foley Square would be one of the largest projects (outside the District of Columbia) initiated under the expanded buildings programs. Construction was begun on numerous post offices across New York State, and one other federal courthouse, in Buffalo, was authorized (completed 1937). Five other large-scale Treasury Department projects were undertaken in New York City at the same time as the federal courthouse: the Parcel Post Building (now Morgan General Mail Facility, 1933-4), the U.S. Assay Office (c.1933), an addition to the Brooklyn Post Office (c.1931-4), the Church Street F.O.B. (1934-8) and the annex of the General Post Office (c.1931-6). Groundbreaking for the federal courthouse occurred in July 1932 and the various federal courts began moving into the building in January 1936.

The Foley Square Courthouse was designed by Cass Gilbert, one of the most prominent architects of his day. Gilbert (1850-1934) was born in Zanesville, Ohio and began his architectural career as an apprentice in the office of Abraham Radcliff of St. Paul. In 1878, he enrolled in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he spent a year studying architecture. In 1880, he spent several months travelling and studying in England, France and Italy before returning to New York and joining the prestigious firm of McKim, Mead and White as Stanford White's personal assistant.

In 1882, Gilbert returned to St. Paul in order to establish an independent practice. From 1884 to 1892, Gilbert was in partnership with James Knox Taylor (1857-1929), who subsequently served as Supervising Architect of the Treasury between 1897 and 1902. It was under Taylor's leadership that Classical and Renaissance design became the primary source for federal architecture. Gilbert continued to maintain a close association with Taylor after the latter became supervising architect. Their friendship, in addition to their shared preference for Beaux-Arts classicism in federal architecture, contributed to Gilbert's receiving many important government commissions in the early stages of his career.

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During the 1890s, Gilbert established a national reputation, designing residences, churches, commercial buildings, government buildings, railway stations and bridges. Around 1900, Gilbert moved his office to New York. His most important early commissions in that city include the Broadway Chambers Building (1899), an early steel-frame skyscraper that exhibited a traditional three-part classical composition, and the U.S. Customs House at Bowling Green (completed 1907), a monumental, richly decorated Beaux-Arts building (NHL) that epitomized the "ideal federal style" as conceived by James Knox Taylor.

Gilbert reached the height of his popularity with the completion of the Woolworth Building in 1913. This slender 742-foot-tall skyscraper, a romantic interpretation of the Gothic Revival clad in light-weight, fire resistant terra cotta, was the tallest building in the world for the next quarter century.

The later part of Gilbert's oeuvre included a massive skyscraper for the New York Life Insurance Company in 1928, also with Gothic-inspired decoration, and a small-scale neo-Georgian style building for the New York County Lawyers Association Building in 1930.

Gilbert's early designs for the federal government, particularly Bowling Green Customs House, are imbued with the Beaux-Arts spirit that he and Taylor had embraced as ideal for federal architecture. His later work, however, is characterized by a more restrained classicism, reflecting a similar shift in federal design ideals during the 1920s under the leadership of Louis A. Simon, who served in the Treasury Department as Superintendent of Architects from 1915 to 1933. During this period, Gilbert is credited with three federal buildings in Washington, D.C.: the U.S. Treasury Annex (1918), the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (1925), and the U.S. Supreme Court Building (1933-35; completed after his death), all in a restrained Neoclassical idiom, as well as the U.S. Courthouse at Foley Square.

Gilbert died in England on May 8, 1934, with the Supreme Court Building and the Foley Square Courthouse under construction. Both projects were brought to completion by his son, Cass Gilbert, Jr.

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Gilbert's approach to architecture in general is reflected in the wide variety of designs that he used for large-scale projects throughout his career. He relied on many visual sources for his work, interpreting them freely as an artist, rather than in a purely "historicist" manner. His paramount concerns were with the more practical issues of suitable massing and proportion, permanence and soundness of construction, orderly management and functional planning for the client's needs. He was noted as an efficient and practical planner, master builder and astute businessman.

During his long career, Gilbert was a prominent figure in the profession, serving as president of the American Institute of Architects, the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the National Academy of Design and was a founder and president of the Architectural League of New York. At the time of his death, he was the establishment architect of his day, the respected voice of the conservative classical approach, a position that no doubt led to his commission from the Treasury Department to design the new federal courthouse at Foley Square in 1931.

Gilbert's commission for the federal courthouse required that he design a building with 300,000 square feet of usable space (as stated in the original Treasury Program) on a 47,000 square feet site. In addition, the new building was to be designed to complement the Municipal Building to the west and the New York County Courthouse to the east, both in the Neoclassical style. Gilbert's solution was to design a "modern" skyscraper in a restrained Neoclassical style. At the base of the building, a broad six-story base is articulated by a monumental colonnade, creating a sense of continuity with the columned portico of the New York County Courthouse and the classical base of the Municipal Building. Above the base rises a thirty-story tower that provided the necessary floorspace and recognized its "modern" character. The tower is set back on the base in such a way that it is hardly noticeable within the normal view from the sidewalk on the east side on Foley Square. Gilbert apparently wanted the tower to appear as a skyline element among the skyscrapers of the lower Manhattan, while the street level mass of the building blended in with the size and scale of the neighborhood.

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CONTINUATION SHEET SIGNIFICANCE ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 7

The use of a skyscraper form for a federal building was a significant departure from the accepted norm for federal architecture, which favored horizontal forms. Only in Boston had the skyscraper form appeared in federal architecture earlier, with the tower that was added to the U.S Custom House in 1915. By the time the Foley Square federal courthouse was designed and constructed, however, modern forms and decoration had already significantly changed the appearance of much public and private architecture and were beginning to influence federal architecture as well. Construction was begun nearby on the Church Street F.O.B (designed by Cross and Cross and Pennington, Lewis and Mills) only about a year after the Foley Square Courthouse, yet the Church street building features stylized forms and decoration that clearly reflect the influence of modernism.

The Foley Square Courthouse also clearly maintains its connection with earlier twentieth century monumental public architecture. The base of the building is remarkably similar to McKim, Mead and White's General Post Office, which was constructed between 1910 and 1914 as a companion piece to Penn Station. They each feature full width steps leading to a shallow portico supported by Corinthian columns and flanked by end bays with piers. Both buildings clearly illustrate the continued policy of the federal government to use classical forms in public architecture to express the democratic ideals of the nation. Gilbert's other "last work," the Supreme Court Building in Washington, D.C. also embodies these enduring principals.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

FOLEY SQUARE U.S. COURTHOUSE (1932-36)

CONTINUATION SHEET BIBLIOGRAPHY ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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FOLEY SQUARE U.S. COURTHOUSE (1932-36)

FORM PREPARED BY:

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 11 PAGE 1

Draft nomination revised and edited by:

Katheleen LaFrank, Program Analyst

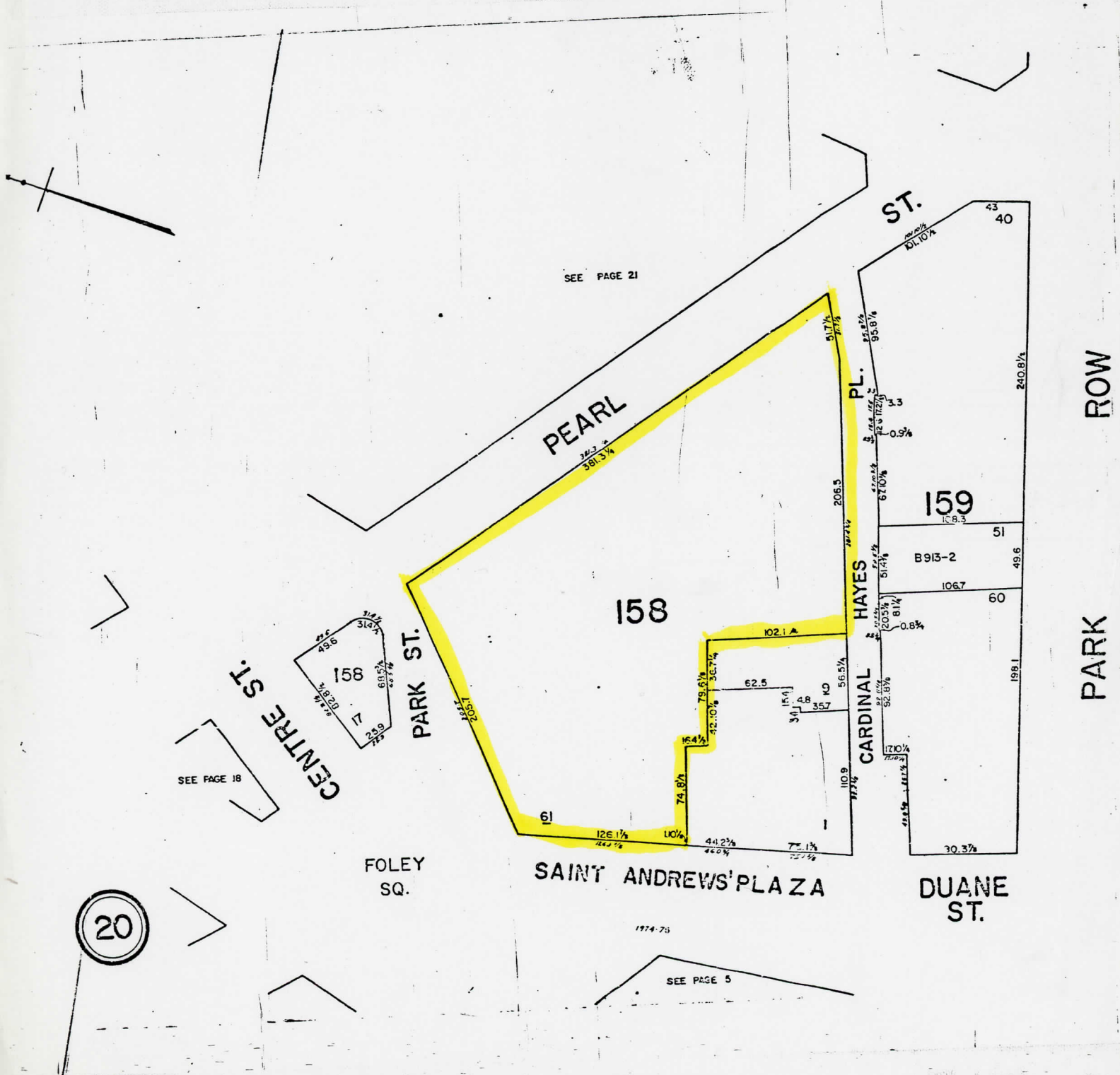
New York State Office of Parks,
Recreation and Historic Preservation
Agency Building #1
Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12238

Peter D. Shaver, Consultant

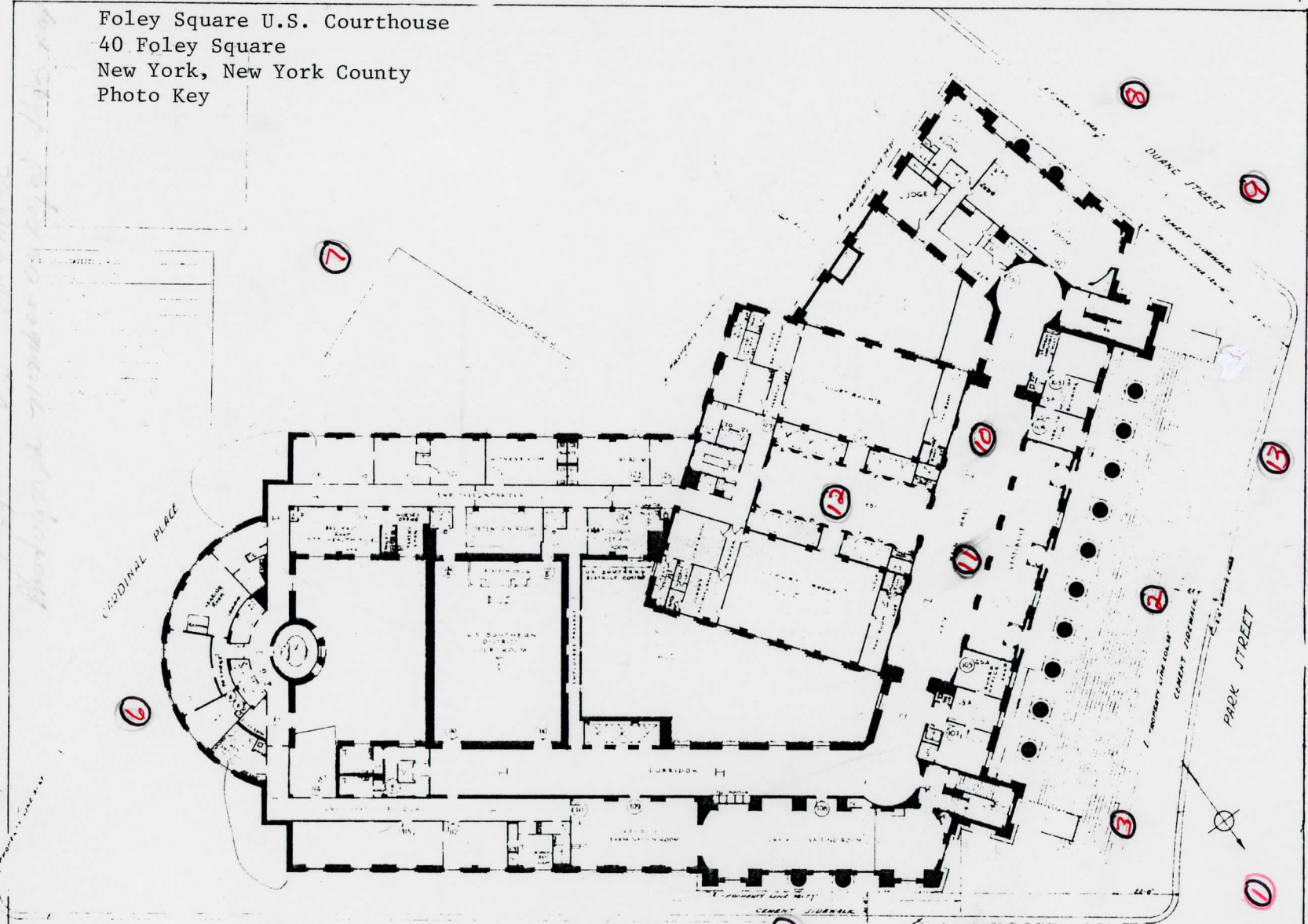
New York State Office of Parks,
Recreation and Historic Preservation
Agency Building #1
Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12238

Foley Square U.S. Courthouse
 New York County, New York
 New York State
 Real Estate Assesment Bureau
 1 Center Street New York, New York
 Tax Map Block 158 Lot 61

***Heavy line indicates nomination boundary



Foley Square U.S. Courthouse
 40 Foley Square
 New York, New York County
 Photo Key



PEARL STREET
 • FIRST FLOOR ASSIGNMENT PLAN •
 SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE NEW YORK, N.Y.	
PROJECT NO. 100-100	DATE 10-10-50
FIRST FLOOR & APPROACH PLAN ASSIGNMENT PLAN	
DESIGNED BY	AS 1
NEW YORK, N.Y.	

210170
 10-10-50

87001596

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

United States Courthouse
New York County
NEW YORK

AUG 20 1987

Working No. _____

Fed. Reg. Date: 2/2/87

Date Due: 9/17/87 - 10/4/87

Action: ACCEPT 9-2-87

RETURN

REJECT

Federal Agency: GSA

Approved
Reviewed by
National Register

- 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

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____
Quadrangle name _____
UTM 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: _____

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

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadangle name _____

UTM 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: _____

*NATIONAL REGISTER -
Please note that "whiteout" material was applied by NY SHPO at the time they signed-off on the reverse side. GSA would have preferred to re-type, but it was not possible without losing the required SHPO signature.
W Roth 8/18
GSA PO*



Foley Square U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Sqaure, N.Y., N.Y.
Nathaniel Blue 8/3/87
GSA 26 Federal Plaza Room 2351
View facing south
1



Foley Square U.S. Courthouse

40 Foley Square N.Y., N.Y.

Nathaniel Blue 8/3/87

GSA 26 Federal Plaza Room 2351

Portico- View facing south

2



Foley Square U.S. Courthouse

40 Foley Square N.Y., N.Y.

Nathaniel Blue 8/3/87

GSA 26 Federal Plaza Room 2351

Colonnade-View facing south/west

3



Foley Sqare U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square N.Y., N.Y.
Nathaniel Blue 8/3/87
GSA 26 Federal Plaza Room 2351
West facade-View facing south

4



Foley Square U.S. Courthouse

40 Foley Square N.Y., N.Y.

Nathaniel Blue 8/3/87

GSA 26 Federal Plaza Room 2351

Rear-View facing norht/east

5



Foley Square U.S. Courthouse

40 Foley Square N.Y., N.Y.

Nathaniel Blue 8/3/87

GSA 26 Federal Plaza Room 2351

Iron work-View facing norht

6



Foley Square U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square N.Y., N.Y.
Nathaniel Blue 8/3/87
GSA 26 Federal Plaza Room 2351
Bridges-View facing northeast
7



Foley Square U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square N.Y., N.Y.
Nathaniel Blue 8/3/87
GSA 26 Federal Plaza Room 2351
View facing southwest
8



Foley Square U.S. Courthouse

40 Foley Square N.Y., N.Y.

Nathaniel Blue

GSA 26 Federal Plaza Room 2351

Colonnade-View facing southwest

9



Foley Square U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square N.Y., N.Y.
Nathaniel Blue
GSA 26 Federal Plaza Room 2351
Lobby- View facing east
10



Foley Square U.S. Courthouse
• 40 Foley Square N.Y., N.Y.
Nathaniel Blue
GSA 26 Federal Plaza Room 2351
Lobby- Facing north
11



Foley Square U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square N.Y., N.Y.
Nathaniel Blue
GSA 26 Federal Plaza Room 2351
Elevator Area-View facing east
12



Foley Square U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square N.Y., N.Y.
Nathaniel Blue
GSA 26 Federal Plaza Room 2351
View facing southeast
13



40°45'05"
40°45'10"
40°43'00" 43"
40°42'52" 42"
40°42'00" 42"
40°41'59"

Foley Square, U.S. Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, New York Co.
UTM Reference (Zone 18)
A. E/432990 N/7395956-
584930 / 450733

Maped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Revised in cooperation with New York Department of Transportation
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, USCE, New Jersey Geologic Survey, and
City of New York Board of Estimate and Apportionment
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods and from NOS charts T-5111,
T-5277, T-5332, T-5450, T-5453, T-5454, T-5460, T-5461, T-5466, T-5468,
T-5469, and T-5470
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken
1954 and planetable surveys 1955. Revised from aerial photographs
taken 1966. Field checked 1967
Selected hydrographic data compiled from NOS charts 285, 287, 541,
and 745 (1964). This information is not intended for navigational purposes
Polyconic projection, 10,000-foot grid ticks 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, 1927
North American Datum. To place on the predicted North American Datum
1983 move the projection lines 6 meters south and 35 meters west as shown
by dashed corner ticks
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of
the National or State reservations shown on this map

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 MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 4.4 FEET IN
UPPER BAY AND 4.8 FEET IN NEWARK BAY

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs
taken 1976 and other sources. This information not
field checked. Map edited 1981
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Primary highway, all weather, hard surface
Secondary highway, all weather, hard surface
Light-duty road, all weather, improved surface
Unimproved road, fair or dry weather
Interstate Route
U.S. Route
State Route

UTM GRID AND 1981 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

JERSEY CITY, N. J. - N. Y.
N4037.5-W7400/7.5
1967
PHOTOREVISED 1981
DMA 6165 II NE-SERIES V822



WR 8/15

AUG 17 1987

Mr. Walter Roth
Historic Preservation Officer
Public Building Service PQC
General Services Administration
Room 3340
18th and F Streets, N.W.
Washington DC, 20405

Dear Mr. Roth:

Enclosed is the supplementary information which supports the proposed nomination of Foley Square U.S. Courthouse, located at 40 Foley Square N.Y., N.Y. as a National Register Historic Building.

Please be advised that, the New York Landmarks Commission designated the Foley Square U.S. Courthouse as a New York Landmark Site. The 1986 Historic Structure Report covering the Foley Square U.S. Courthouse incorrectly named the structure as a National Register Historic Building. This is an error.

The U.S. Courts have chosen to celebrate the nomination during the Bicentennial Celebration of the Constitution. This celebration is planned for September 17 of 1987 and there is a strong possibility that the President will attend this event. I cannot emphasize the significance to the U.S. Courts. Concerning the September 17th celebration and said Courthouse being designated as a National Register Historic Building on that day.

Given these unusual circumstances, I am asking if you can obtain from DOI a waiver in the time period, for review and approval the nomination, and that the review and approval be completed in a period of three weeks. These arrangements were suggested by Ms. Linda McClelland, Architectural Historian, of the ACHPO to alleviate the situation.

Thank you for your assistance and for taking further this matter. If you have any questions please contact me at (212) 264-3581 or Ms. Sonia Rivera at (212) 264-4163.

Once again, thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Gerard O'Donnell



General Services Administration
Public Buildings Service
Washington, DC 20405

August 19, 1987

Dear Ms. Shull:

I am transmitting the enclosed documentation of the United States Courthouse, Foley Square, New York, NY, as a nomination for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. This property is carried on the General Services Administration (GSA) Inventory as Building Number NY0130ZZ.

The nomination documentation was prepared by the staff of GSA Region Two (New York City) with the assistance of New York State Historic Preservation Office staff, and the cooperation of National Register staff. The initiative to seek Register listing at this particular time was prompted by anticipation of attendance by the President at a Bicentennial Celebration of the Constitution ceremony scheduled at the building for September 17, 1987. On that basis, the Historic Preservation Officer for Region Two is requesting a time waiver to meet that schedule (please see the enclosed copy of his August 17 letter to me on that subject).

Your cooperation in this matter will be sincerely appreciated. Additional information, if necessary, may be obtained from Ms. Sonia Rivera (212) FTS 264-4163. I can be reached on 566-0987.

Sincerely,

J. WALTER ROTH
Preservation Officer

Ms. Carol D. Shull
Chief of Registration
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P. O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127

Enclosure

1985

AUG 20 1987