

Form 10-300
(July 1969)UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: New York	
COUNTY: New York	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME			
COMMON: New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theater			
AND/OR HISTORIC: Astor Library			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: 425 Lafayette Street			
CITY OR TOWN: New York			
STATE New York	CODE 31	COUNTY: New York	CODE 061

3. CLASSIFICATION		ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC	
CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY	
OWNER'S NAME: New York Shakespeare Festival	
STREET AND NUMBER: 425 Lafayette Street	
CITY OR TOWN: New York	STATE: New York
	CODE 31

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION	
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: City Clerk's Office	
STREET AND NUMBER: Municipal Building	
CITY OR TOWN: New York	STATE: New York
	CODE 31

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS	
TITLE OF SURVEY: Landmarks Preservation Commission	
DATE OF SURVEY: 1965 <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local	
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Landmarks Preservation Commission	
STREET AND NUMBER: 305 Broadway	
CITY OR TOWN: New York	STATE: New York
	CODE 31

**Admission to building unrestricted and free of admission charge; admission to certain performances by admission charge.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

 STATE: New York
 COUNTY: New York
 ENTRY NUMBER
 DATE

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)
☒ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Deteriorated ☐ Ruins ☐ Unexposed

(Check One)
☒ Altered ☐ Unaltered

(Check One)
☐ Moved ☒ Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

1. Number of stories: central block is four stories plus basement; wings are each three stories plus basement.
2. Number of bays: west facade is fifteen bays wide.
3. Layout and/or shape of plan: irregular in plan.
4. Wall construction: foundations are stone. Walls are brick laid up in running bond, and have stone trim.
5. Structural system: brick bearing walls; masonry columns, cast iron columns.
6. Roof, cornice: flat tar asphalt roof, stone cornice.
7. Chimneys: brick chimneys.
8. Important interior features: elaborate cornice panels and moldings, decorative cast iron columns, arched windows, and original ornamented skylights.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Pre-Columbian ☐ 16th Century ☐ 18th Century ☐ 20th Century
☐ 15th Century ☐ 17th Century ☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1849-53; 1856-59; 1879-81

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theater is situated in the historic Astor Place section of Manhattan, an area characterized by such notable historic buildings as Cooper Union and LaGrange Terrace. The theater has been described by critic Ada Louise Huxtable as

New York's most celebrated cultural and architectural monument when it was constructed in the 1850's.

Three architects built its matching sections as the library expanded. The south wing, by Alexander Saeltzer, went up from 1849 to 1853; the central section was the work of Griffith Thomas, from 1856 to 1859; the north wing was completed by Thomas Stent from 1879 to 1881.

Inside, from south to north, the chronology of construction is a fascinating record of mid-century progress from solid stone to light iron, demonstrating the switch from masonry to metal that eventually made the skyscraper possible.

Restored and remodeled, the theater brings glamour back to what was once the most stylish area of New York. The building was the height of fashion when it opened in 1854; listed as 'Italianate' by the Landmarks Preservation Commission, it was described as 'Byzantine' in accounts of the day....¹

Acquired by the New York Shakespeare Festival in 1966 and saved from threatened demolition by a real estate developer, the old Astor Library has been converted into the New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theater, a cultural facility containing three legitimate theaters (two of 300 seats, one of 100 seats), an avant-garde 104-seat cinema, one chamber concert hall, two art galleries, and technical and administrative facilities for the Shakespeare Festival. Over \$2,500,000 has been spent upon restoration and conversion to its new use, with careful preservation of its historic architectural features under the supervision of architect Giorgio Cavaglieri.

The Astor Library was designated a New York City Landmark by the New York City Landmark Preservation Commission in October 1965.

1. Ada Louise Huxtable, New York Times, Thursday, January 6, 1966.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Huxtable, Ada Louise. New York Times, January 6, 1966.
 Kavalier, Lucy. The Astors: A Family Chronicle of Pomp and Power. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1966.
 Lydenberg, Harry Miller. History of the New York Public Library. New York: Printed and bound by the New York Public Library, 1923.
Magazine of American History. July, 1886.
The Many Faces of the Library: Its History, Its Services, Its Future. New York: Printed and bound by the New York Public Library, 1961.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE				
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	40 °	43'	43"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	73 °	59'	34"
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"			
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Joseph Papp, President *

ORGANIZATION
New York Shakespeare Festival

DATE
June 4, 1970

STREET AND NUMBER:
425 Lafayette Street

CITY OR TOWN:
New York

STATE
New York

CODE
31

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☒ State ☐ Local ☐

Name L. Papp

Title Chairman, Trust

Date 6-4-70

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



NEW YORK STATE HISTORIC TRUST
New York Shakespeare Festival
NAME OF SITE: Public Theater

COORDINATES: NORTH 40°43'43"
WEST 73°59'34"

TITLE OF MAP: Brooklyn, N.Y.

DATE: 1956

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

STATE New York	
COUNTY New York	
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AND/OR HISTORIC: Astor Library			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: 425 Lafayette Street			
CITY OR TOWN: New York			
STATE: New York	CODE 31	COUNTY: New York	CODE 061
3. PHOTO REFERENCE			
PHOTO CREDIT: George Cserna			
DATE OF PHOTO:			
NEGATIVE FILED AT: New York Shakespeare Festival			
4. IDENTIFICATION			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. View of Lafayette St. (front) facade.			