

Form 10-306  
(Oct. 1972)UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM  
FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES  
(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:  
New York

COUNTY:  
New York County

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Federal Office Building

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
U. S. Appraisers' Warehouse

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
641 Washington Street (@ corner of Christopher Street)

CITY OR TOWN:  
New York City (Manhattan)

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
17 Congressional District

STATE:  
New York

CODE  
36

COUNTY:  
New York County

CODE  
061

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Post Office</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
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4. AGENCY

General Services Administration

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)  
Region 2

STREET AND NUMBER:  
26 Federal Plaza

CITY OR TOWN:  
New York

STATE:  
New York

CODE  
36

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
New York County Hall of Records

STREET AND NUMBER:  
31 Chambers Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
New York

STATE:  
New York

CODE  
36

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

DATE OF SURVEY: March 15, 1966 ☐ Federal ☐ State ☐ County ☒ Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:  
305 Broadway

CITY OR TOWN:  
New York

STATE:  
New York

CODE  
36

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #6

Form 10-300a

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Form 10-300a  
(July 1969)UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

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

(Number all entries)

## 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (Cont'd.)

Title of Survey: NYSHT - Statewide Survey of Historic Sites  
and Building

Date of Survey: 1967 - State Survey

Depository for Survey Records: Division for Historic Preservation  
Parks and Recreation

Street and Number: South Swan Street Building.

City: Albany, New York 12223

Code: 36

7. The eighth and ninth floors are uniformly treated as a series of paired, two-story, arched recesses - a reduction in scale from the treatment below. Each paired recess includes a brick capital with stone cap. Within the recesses are double hung windows with granite sills and heads. The eighth floor window is round arched, the surrounding masonry arches are constructed of five concentric courses of header bricks. The seventh floor window sills form a continuous granite belt course supported by a band of corbelled brick.

The tenth floor is a further reduction in scale and consists of a series of smaller scale, round arched openings extending completely around the structure. They are surrounded by corbelled piers which support the round arches constructed of four brick header courses. The round arched, double-hung windows are organized in groups of three; between each grouping is a single round arch filled with brick. Again the granite sills form a continuous belt course supported by a band of brick corbelling.

Above the tenth floor windows the building is capped and unified by a brick, corbelled, dentil cornice.

A large freight elevator shaft occupies the center of the plan at each floor from the full basement to the roof, and is capped by a large, metal and glass, gable-roofed skylight.

The remodeling work completed in 1938 was limited to the installation of partitions and the like, but did not involve structural changes or changes to the exterior.

8. "The United States Federal Building is one of the finest examples of the Romanesque Revival Style of Architecture in New York."

7. DESCRIPTION			
CONDITION	(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair
	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins		<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site
DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE			
<p>The United States Federal Building is a massive, ten-story, Romanesque Revival, brick warehouse building which occupies an entire city block. The building is four-sided with smooth, rounded corners and is irregular in plan - none of the sides are parallel to one another. It dimensions 238 feet along Christopher Street (north elevation), 208 feet along Barrow Street (south elevation), 290 feet along Greenwich Street (east elevation), and 214 feet along Washington Street (west elevation).</p> <p>The structure consists of exterior brick bearing walls set on massive brick and granite foundations. A column and beam system (steel or cast iron) supports the shallow arched, fire-proof floors. The roof is composition covered and flat with the sides slopping to meet the parapet at each of the four sides. It is heated by its original coal boilers which have been modified for use with oil and gas.</p> <p>The exterior brick bearing walls are dark red in color with mortar joints tinted pink and struck flush.</p> <p>The Romanesque Revival facades are strong, simple compositions utilizing brick masonry arch construction throughout and are constructed and detailed similarly for each side of the building. The large first floor round arches spring from moulded granite imposts which also serve as capitals for the granite piers separating each arched opening. The arch surrounds are constructed of 9 concentric courses of header bricks with a stone moulding at the circumference.</p> <p>The piers have a watertable and are finished smooth; however, they set on heavily rusticated granite foundations. The watertable and foundations continue around the curved building corners.</p> <p>Each arched opening encompasses the three cellar windows with their rusticated lintels and the round arched first floor window divided by two vertical mullions. The window sills are smooth faced granite and are separated from the cellar windows by a brick panel.</p> <p>The second floor double-hung windows (as well as the windows of all the floors) are centered above each first floor arched opening. They are grouped in pairs, separated by brick piers and have square heads. The sills are granite and form a continuous rectangular belt course. A heavy, moulded granite belt course is immediately above the second floor windows and extends all around the building.</p> <p>The third through the seventh floors are uniformly treated as a series of tall, vertical, arched recesses separated by brick pilasters with rectangular brick bases and corbelled brick capitals capped with granite. The recesses contain paired double-hung windows with stone sills and heads, separated by brick piers. The seventh floor windows are round arched with two vertical mullions and the surrounding masonry arches are constructed of 8 concentric courses of header bricks.</p>			
Continued on Sheet #7.			

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE			
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	
SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) <u>Began 1892 - Completed 1899 (remodeled 1938)</u>			
AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input 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	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input 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			
<p>The United States Federal Building, originally named the U.S. Appraisers' Warehouse was built by the Federal Government for the use of Custom Agents to examine, test, and appraise imported commodities to determine the duty to be collected. Calling it a "warehouse" was somewhat of a misnomer since the ten stories were subdivided into 153 rooms for use of the custom service, and items were stored only long enough to be appraised. In 1929 it was designated a "U.S. Government Warehouse" and in 1932 named, the "Federal Building, Christopher Street." It received its present identification in 1938 when the interior was remodeled into office space for the National Archives Record Center, a branch Post Office and other assorted Federal agencies who presently occupy the building.</p> <p>It was first designed by Willoughby J. Edbrooke, an English-born architect, who was appointed Supervising Architect (1891-92) of the Treasury Department in 1891 from a successful practise in Chicago where the "Chicago School" style of office building architecture was being developed by William LeBaron Jenney, Daniel Burnham, William Holabird, John Welborn Root and Louis Sullivan. The Chicago influence which was apparent in Edbrooke's design was further developed by his successor, once removed, William Martin Aiken (1895-96) in 1895 with the final fenestration established by James Knox Taylor, Supervising Architect (1897-1912) for the construction of the upper eight stories begun in 1896 which were completed in 1899. Four Supervising Architects, including Jeremiah O'Rourke, (who built the first two stories of the original design) saw the building through to final use. Sadly, Edbrooke did not live to see his finest building completed; he died in 1896.</p> <p>The ultimate treatment of the facades bears a strong relationship to Adler and Sullivan's Chicago Auditorium (1887-89), even to the arched corbelled windows of the top story which recall those in the Auditorium tower over the theatre entrance.</p> <p>A handsome robust structure, it is the finest example of the Chicago School outside the Midwest. Romanesque Revival in spirit, it presents a simple but powerful architectural composition of distinction comparable to the finer works of architecture today which seek similar solutions.</p>			

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

## 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Files of New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission  
 Original Drawings located at the GSA library, 24th floor,  
 26 Federal Plaza, New York, New York 10007

## 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			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	0 0 0	0 0 0	40°	43'	55"
NE	0 0 0	0 0 0	74°	0'	31"
SE	0 0 0	0 0 0			
SW	0 0 0	0 0 0			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

## 11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: John D. Milner, AIA, Executive Director		DATE: 22 June, 1973
BUSINESS ADDRESS: National Heritage Corporation		
STREET AND NUMBER: P. O. Box 167		PHONE: 215-549-8710
CITY OR TOWN: Chadds Ford	STATE: Pennsylvania 19317	CODE: 37

## 12. CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

State Liaison Officer recommendation:

- ☒ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ None

State Liaison Officer Signature

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby  
 nominate this property to the National Register, certify-  
 ing that the State Liaison Officer has been allowed 90  
 days in which to present the nomination to the State Re-  
 view Board and to evaluate its significance. The recom-  
 mended level of significance is ☐ National ☐ State  
☐ Local

Federal Representative Signature

Date

Title

## NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

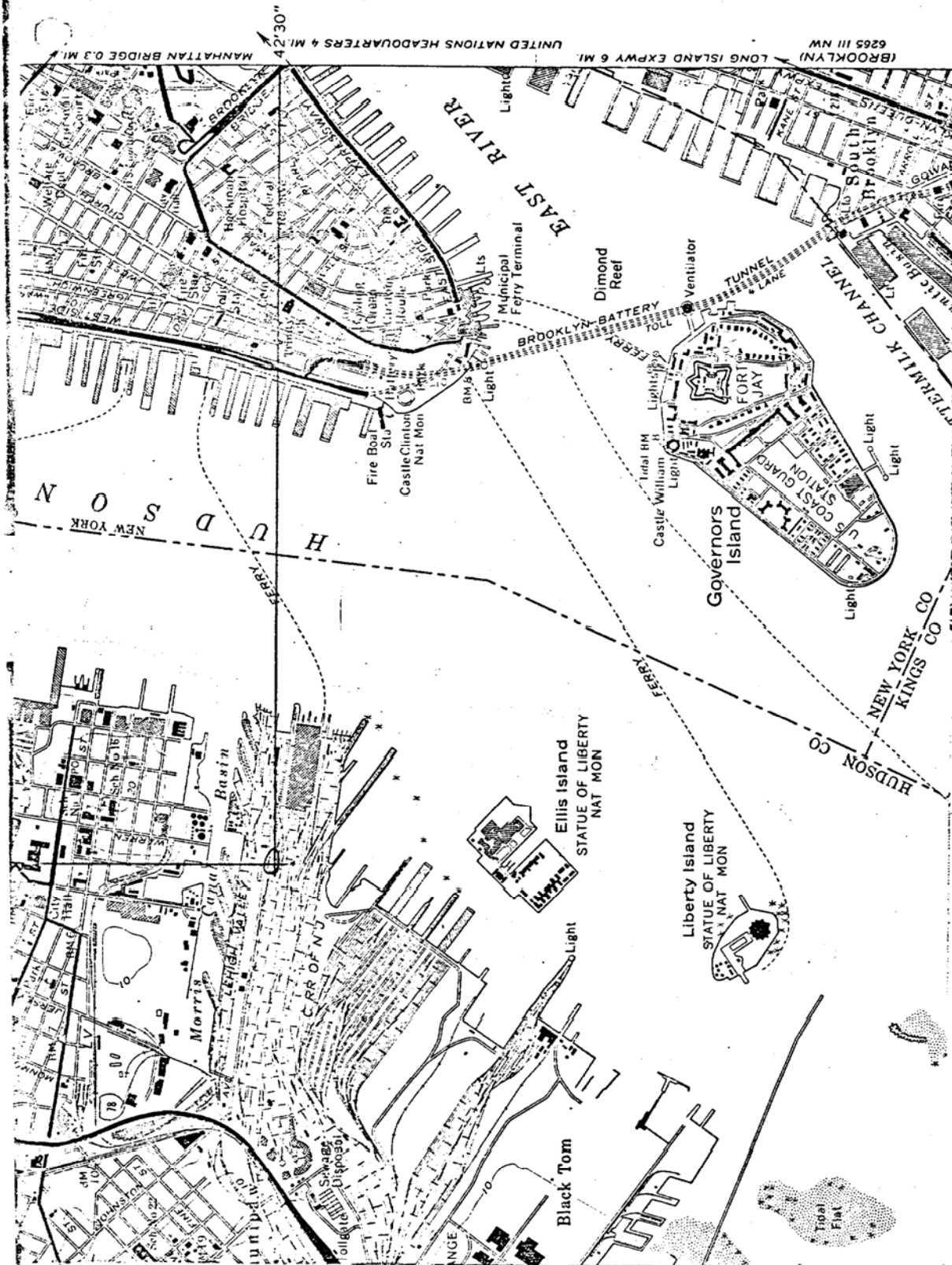
Date

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



Jersey City and  
 lat  $40^{\circ} 43' 55''$   
 long  $74^{\circ} 0' 31''$