

**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 HCRS use only

received FEB 29 1980

date entered

MAY 7 1980

1. Name

historic American Radiator Building

and/or common American Standard Building

2. Location

street & number 40-52 West 40th Street _____ not for publication

city, town New York _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district 18

state New York code 036 county New York code 061

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" 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. Owner of Property

name American Radiator and Standard Sanitary Corp.

street & number 40 West 40th Street

city, town New York _____ vicinity of New York state 10018

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 LP-0878 has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date November 12, 1974 _____ federal _____ state _____ county local

depository for survey records Landmarks Preservation Commission 305 Broadway

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 American Radiator Building is a twenty-three story, black and gold skyscraper, designed with a series of setbacks employing cubistic masses and faced with black brick.¹ The silhouette and the color scheme catch the viewer's eye from a distance, but the fine details of the lower three stories give an especially interesting character to the portion of the building that is immediately visible from the sidewalk. These details were carefully designed to enhance the windows of the ground floor showrooms. Large plate glass windows are enframed by slender, bronze, ribbed shafts reminiscent of the Gothic style but terminating in the cubistic pinnacles. The windows are surmounted by a slender, continuous, modillioned bronze molding.

The main entrance, placed between the showroom windows, is set within an arched opening and accented by striking bronze details of modified Gothic design. The date of the building and the name of the architect are incorporated into the base of the enframing. The pinnacles of the framing above the arch are grouped into the same type of cubistic masses that are so prominent a part of the tower setbacks. The deep reveals of the entrance and the panels above and flanking the arch are of gold-colored stone which provide a striking contrast to the polished, black, granite stone facing of the lower two stories. The second floor is surmounted by a modillioned cornice set on large intricate corbel blocks, which display a variety of figures reminiscent of medieval prototypes--recalling Hood's work of two years earlier on the Chicago Tribune tower. These were executed by the noted architectural sculptor Rene Chambellan.

The third story has a distinctive window bay treatment which sets off the tower rising above it. The bays are flanked by indented brick pilasters which are surmounted by gold pinnacles. The design of these pinnacles anticipates the peaks of the setbacks at the upper portions of the tower. Gold spandrel panels above the windows provide further contrast to the black brick. Intricately designed railings, incorporating S-curved snake designs, shield the bases of the third floor windows.

Although Hood sought to give the main shaft of the tower a massive appearance, it does not have a monolithic quality. Slightly projecting brickwork adds subtle variety to the wall surfaces. The various setbacks of the tower terminate in gold-colored cubistic masses--forms that are often associated with the Art Deco style of architecture. Corbels, cornices and spandrel panels, also of gold, accent various window portions of the setbacks. Crowning the tower is a striking arched and pinnacled form that adds the final golden touch to the silhouette of the building.

Although the exterior of the building is virtually unchanged, changes have occurred on the interior which reflect the changing needs of the occupants. The vestibule within the outer entrance doors remains intact. The walls are of polished gold marble and incorporate large bronze radiator grilles with medieval motifs. The bronze framing of the inner and outer entrance doors remains intact. Beyond the vestibule the original lobby and showrooms have been completely modernized. The showroom at the east side has been converted to a reception area. The office floors were designed to be flexible enough to adapt to the needs of the tenants with the elevators, rest rooms, and stair towers placed in a core adjacent to the eastern edge of the building. Ninety percent of the floor space is within twenty-five feet of the windows.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service****National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

American Radiator Building

Continuation sheet New York County, New York Item number 7

Page 2

For HCRS use only

received FEB 29 1980

date entered MAY 7 1980

A five-story showroom and office extension of 1936-37 placed to the west of the tower harmonizes with it. The two lower stories are faced with polished black granite. The large plate glass show windows are enframed with bronze in the same manner as those in the tower. A centrally placed revolving door provides an entrance to the showroom. A cornice with figural corbel blocks surmounting the second story joins that on the tower. The window bay treatment at the third story repeats that of the third story on the main building. The upper two stories of the extension are set back and faced with black brick. Brick piers separate groups of double windows and terminate in gilded buttresses. A gilded parapet surmounts the building. On the interior, the ground floor comprises a showroom which is a single open space. The upper stories have offices which are contiguous with those in the tower.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1923-24 ; 1936-37 **Builder/Architect** Raymond M. Hood

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

J. Andre Fouilhoux

The American Radiator Building is one of the finest and most significant skyscrapers in Manhattan. Designed by Raymond M. Hood and built in 1923-24, the American Radiator Building initiated a new trend in skyscraper design in New York City with its bold cubic massing of forms--often associated with the Art Deco style-- and its freedom from the Beaux-Arts classical details that had previously encumbered New York City skyscrapers. A five-story showroom and office addition, designed by J. Andre Fouilhoux to harmonize with the existing tower, was built in 1936-37.

In the period following World War I, architects continued to use classical details and principles of proportion for their skyscraper designs, although these were often ill-adapted to high buildings. Hood's design broke with tradition and utilized new forms.

Raymond Mathewson Hood (1881-1934), who had received architectural training at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, worked for the firm of Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson--noted for its neo-Gothic architectural designs--in 1906. Hood's first great architectural success came in 1922 when John Mead Howells asked Hood to join him in submitting a design for the Chicago Tribune competition. Hood's winning design was a soaring tower terminating in setback peaks and flying buttresses of neo-Gothic design.

In the early 1920s Hood formed a partnership with J. Andre Fouilhoux, and the firm received the commission for the American Radiator Building. His 1928 building for the National Radiator Company in London, a subsidiary of the American company, is indicative of Hood's continuing success with the company. Among later notable skyscraper designs by Hood, which further established his reputation, were the Daily News Building, the McGraw-Hill Building, and several buildings in Rockefeller Center as a member of the team of the Associated Architects.

Heywood Brown, the well-known journalist, wrote a tribute to Hood after his death: "Even if you look down the list through the ages Raymond Hood will stand out among the architects of all time as one who had the fortune and the genius to conduct radical experimentation with mass and color." ² Hood was posthumously honored with a gold medal from the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1940.

The great skyscraper building boom of the 1920s encouraged architects to seek a new means to best express the height of the building. The New York City Zoning Law of 1916, which dictated a series of setbacks as the buildings rose above a certain height, also had its effect on skyscraper design. Moreover, big business saw the skyscraper as a potent tool, as a symbol to express the pride and power of great corporations.

In the American Radiator Building, Hood had ample opportunity to exploit the new possibilities of skyscraper design. He stated that in its form and mass the building was "an honest development of the zoning law." ³ At the same time Hood was able to create a building that would become a striking corporate symbol.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

UM NOT VERIFIED

Acreege of nominated property Less than one acre

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle name Central Park

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	8	58	5	7	4	0	4	5	1	1	6	0	0
Zone	Easting			Northing									

B

Zone	Easting			Northing									

C

Zone	Easting			Northing									

D

Zone	Easting			Northing									

E

Zone	Easting			Northing									

F

Zone	Easting			Northing									

G

Zone	Easting			Northing									

H

Zone	Easting			Northing									

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property occupies Borough of Manhattan tax map block 841, lot 71, and is approximately 149 feet wide by 99 feet deep with a rear portion 44 feet by 99 feet.

See attached site 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

Contact: Elizabeth Spencer-Ralph 518-474-0479
name/title Marjorie Pearson, Director of Research

organization Landmarks Preservation Commission date October, 1979

street & number 305 Broadway telephone _____

city or town New York, 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 Stephen Bluche

title Director, Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau date 2/26/80

For HCRS use only

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

Bruce Mac Angus date May 7, 1980

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Lynn D. Beebe date April 25, 1980

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 FEB 29 1980

date entered MAY 7 1980

American Radiator Building

Continuation sheet New York County, New York Item number 8

Page 2

Hood used two elements to make the building a unique architectural expression. One was the unusual design of the tower itself which was a conscious attempt to use new forms and break away from the classical mold. The tower rises fifteen stories before it begins a series of setbacks that not only accorded with the Zoning Law, but also contributed to its striking silhouette. Above the fifteenth story, the sides are indented at the corners to create small recessed bays in which windows are located. The corners at the front of the building are beveled to give a shaft-like effect to the main portion of the tower. The upper part of the building can be easily viewed from three sides.

The most striking feature of the building is its unusual black and gold color scheme. In 1926, Talbot Hamlin, the noted architectural historian, described it as "the most daring experiment in color in modern buildings yet made in America." ⁴ To prevent the many windows from looking like black holes and destroying the solid effect of the tower, Hood decided to face the walls with black brick. Gold accents at the tops of the setback pinnacles provide a handsome contrast to the black walls. Hood's interest in color, which is not generally associated with the classical tradition, was also expressed in many of his other buildings. The building was equally dramatic at night when it was floodlighted. It became, in effect, an advertisement for the American Radiator Company. The vivid effects of coloration made it look like a giant glowing coal, even though Hood denied his intention of creating this conscious symbolic effect.

The building was regarded as a startling departure from the past. The New York Times described the building: "A daring departure from the conventional in office building construction marks the new home of the American Radiator Building...Unlike any office building in the country, the new structure is faced entirely with black brick with golden stone trimming, worked together to give a rich black and gold decorative effect. The building has already provoked wide discussion in professional circles because of its unique design....An interesting feature is that over 90 percent of the floor space is within 25 feet of the windows." ⁵

As a measure of its excellence, the Fifth Avenue Association awarded the American Radiator Building a Silver Medal in 1925. The architectural importance of the building is further attested to by a bronze plaque, donated by the Community Trust of New York in 1962, which is placed by the entrance.

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received FEB 29 1980

date entered MAY 7 1980

American Radiator Building

Continuation sheet New York County, New York Item number 8

Page 3

Footnotes

¹The text of this report was taken almost in its entirety from the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission Designation Report, American Radiator Building (LP-0878), November 12, 1974, by Marjorie Pearson.

²Heywood Broun, It Seems To Me: 1925-1935 (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1935), p.288.

³Raymond M. Hood, "The American Radiator Company Building, New York," American Architect, v.126 (November 19, 1924), p.472.

⁴Talbot F. Hamlin, The American Spirit in Architecture (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926), p.197.

⁵New York Times, January 20, 1924, Real Estate Section, p.1.

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

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

For HCRS use only

received FEB 29 1980

date entered MAY 7 1980

Continuation sheet American Radiator Building
New York County, New York

Item number 9

Page 1

Bibliography

American Architect, 145 (September 1934), 116 (Raymond Hood obituary).

Architectural Forum, 61 (August 1934), 153 (Raymond Hood obituary).

Architectural Record, 76 (September 1934), 203 (Raymond Hood obituary).

Barr, Alfred H., Jr.; Hitchcock, Henry-Russell, Jr.; and Johnson, Philip.
Modern Architect, 133 (January 5, 1928), 1-11.

Burchard, John, and Bush-Brown, Albert. The Architecture of America: A Social and Cultural History. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1961, pp. 341-354.

Hamlin, Talbot F. The American Spirit in Architecture. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926, p. 197.

Hood, Raymond M. "The American Radiator Company Building, New York." American Architect, 126 (November 19, 1-24), 467-474.

"Hood." Architectural Forum, 62 (February 1935), 126-133.

Kilham, Walter H., Jr. "The Way of an Architect with a Client." American Institute of Architects Journal, 58 (September 1972), 23-27.

Kilham, Walter., Jr. Raymond Hood, Architect: Form through Function in the American Skyscraper. New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., Inc., 1973.

New York Times, January 20, 1924, real estate section, p. 1; February 21, 1926, real estate section, p. 2.

Property

American Radiator Building

80002633

State

ny - New York

Working Number

2-29-80 762

TECHNICAL

Photos 4

Maps 2

CONTROL

HISTORIAN

The American Radiator Building, 1923-24, is significant **ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN** as an example of an early 20th century skyscraper which departed from traditional multi-story design with classical detail. Its color scheme of black and gold was also a new treatment as well as its method of dealing with setbacks required by the NY zoning law.

4/24/80 - Accept. P. Keel **ARCHEOLOGIST**

OTHER

HAER

Inventory _____

Review _____

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

Accept
L. Deke
4/25/80

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

National Register Write-up _____

Send-back _____

Entered MAY 7 1980

Federal Register Entry 2.3.81

Re-submit _____



1. American Radiator Building
New York County, New York

MAY 7 1980

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo, 1980
Neg. at: New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission

View from north

FEB 29 1980

1/4



2. American Radiator Building
New York County, New York

MAY 7 1980

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo, 1980
Neg. at: New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission

Detail of tower

FEB 29 1980

2/4



3. American Radiator Building
New York County, New York

MAY 7 1980

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo, 1980
Neg. at: New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission

Main entrance on 40th Street

FEB 29 1980

3/4



.Standard

PLEASE USE RECEIPTS

4. American Radiator Building
New York County, New York

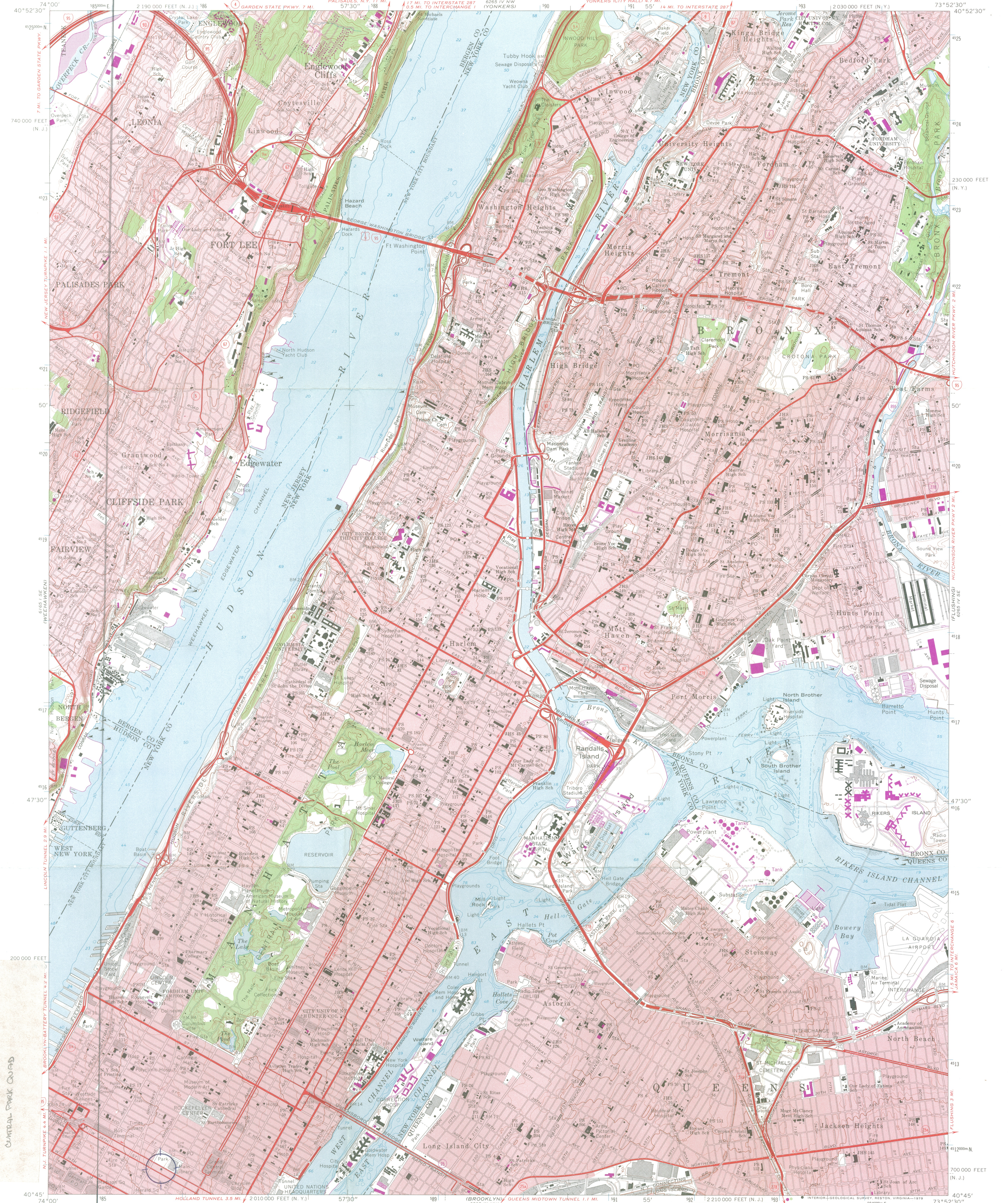
MAY 7 1980

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo, 1980
Neg. at: New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission

Main lobby

4/4

FEB 29 1980



AMERICAN RADIATOR BUILDING
New York, New York County
UTM Reference:
18/585740/4511600

CENTRAL PARK QUADRANGLE

Mapped, edited and published by the Geological Survey
Revised in cooperation with New York
Department of Transportation
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and New Jersey Geodetic Survey
Photometry by photogrammetric methods and from USC&GS Charts T-4567,
T-5089, T-5264, T-5278, T-5448, T-5449, T-5451, T-5452, T-5453, T-5458,
and T-5773. Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1954 and planimetric surveys 1956
Revised from aerial photographs taken 1966. Field checked 1966
Selected hydrographic data compiled from USC&GS Charts 226, 274, 745,
746, and 747 (1966). This information is not intended for navigational purposes
Planar projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grids based on New York coordinate system, Long Island zone,
and New Jersey coordinate system
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 18, shown in blue
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

SCALE 1:24,000
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 AVERAGE RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 2 FEET
4 FEET IN THE HUDSON RIVER AND 5.7 FEET IN THE EAST RIVER
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

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty — Light duty
Medium-duty — Unimproved dirt
Interstate Route — U.S. Route — State Route
Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs
taken 1977 and other source data. This information
not field checked. Map edited 1979
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of
the National or State reservations shown on this map

CENTRAL PARK, N.Y. - N.J.
SW/4 HARLEM 15' QUADRANGLE
N4045-W7352.5-7.5
1966
PHOTOREVISED 1979
AMS 6265 IV SW—SERIES V821



MAY 7 1980

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE NEW YORK

Date Entered MAY 7 1980

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
American Radiator Building	New York New York County

Also Notified

Honorable Daniel P. Moynihan

Honorable Jacob K. Javits
Honorable S. William Green

State Historic Preservation Officer
Mr. Crin Lehman
Commissioner
Parks and Recreation
Agency Building #1
Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12238

NR

Byers/bjr 5/14/80

For further information, please call the National Register at (202)343-6401.