

**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

APR 16 1980

1. Name

historic University Club

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 1 West 54th 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___ not for publication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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<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: Club

4. Owner of Property

name University Club

street & number 1 West 54th Street

city, town New York

___ vicinity of

state New York

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. New York Register's Office, Surrogate's Court Building

street & number 31 Chambers Street

city, town New York

state New York

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Landmarks Preservation Commission LP-0263 has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes no

date January 11, 1967 ___ federal ___ state ___ county local

depository for survey records Landmarks Preservation Commission, 305 Broadway

city, town New York

state New York

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

The University Club occupies the northwest corner of Fifth Avenue and 54th Street in Manhattan. Attributed to Kendall and Moore (of the architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White), the club was designed in 1897 under the supervision of Charles F. McKim.

The six-story University Club building, constructed of granite, closely resembles a sixteenth-century Italian Renaissance palazzo in plan and proportions but its exterior displays a combination of original architectural features. The handsome facade is divided into three main horizontal divisions separated by two strongly defined band courses. Each of the three divisions contains a row of large, arched windows. The first two divisions above street level have small, rectangular mezzanine windows above the arched windows, alternating with carved, marble shields. Each arched window has a large keystone block embellished with an heroic size head. On the Fifth Avenue side, attic windows are ingeniously worked into the frieze of the superb deep cornice crowning the building.

Among the conspicuous architectural features of the exterior are the elaborately ornate bronze railings of the six projecting balconies which are supported on large stone brackets. The dominant arched entrance doorway, on the Fifty-fourth Street side, is enframed by two handsome rusticated columns supporting a heavily ornamented lintel or entablature. Well-emphasized horizontal stone courses in continuous bands cover the surface of the building; the corners are slightly projected, rising the full height of the building, to create a feeling of enframement and strength in this truly imposing structure.

The decoration of the interior of the University Club is unequalled in the City of New York. The first and second floor halls are characterized by panelled walls with marble columns (Doric on the first floor; Ionic on the second) supporting projecting entablatures. The walls of the main floor hall are decorated with mosaics. A relief of the club's insignia, hanging over the fireplace, was designed by Kenyon Cox and executed by Charles Keck. The main dining room is articulated into rhythmic bays by engaged Ionic columns and pilasters, and each bay is filled with richly carved panelling accentuated by each university's crest. The ornate coffered ceiling is also of wood. The lounging room's ceiling is very similar to that of the dining room, while its walls are simpler: blank walls are separated into bays by ornate Corinthian pilasters. The doorways are enframed by a sumptuously carved, arched surround which rises the full height of the room. The library is by far the most elaborately decorated room. The ribs of the cross-vaulted ceiling are delicately carved in wood. Ceiling paintings by H. Siddons Mowbray (1904), which are based in style and color on those by Pintaricchio in the Borgia Apartments in the Vatican, fill every wall surface. Other public rooms, such as the magazine room and the council room, are also notable for their fine detailing, which is distinct and yet equal to that found in any other chamber of the club.

Very little remodeling has since taken place, save the addition of the 1916-20 wing (52 x 100 feet) on the northwest corner of the building, also designed by McKim, Mead & White, and included in this nomination.

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 1897-1900

Builder/Architect McKim, Mead & White

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The University Club, a superb example of the work of the architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White, was designed as a monumental Italian Renaissance palazzo. Occupying a conspicuous site on Fifth Avenue, the building achieves an excellence in its proportions and details rarely surpassed in this country. A building of this type will probably never again be built in the United States.

Called "one of the great buildings of the city,"¹ the University Club was designed in 1897 according to the principles taught at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris where the partners of the firm had studied. Among its outstanding features on the exterior are the bronze railings decorating the six balconies, and the deep terra-cotta cornice crowning the building. A most impressive feature is the arched entrance framed by rusticated columns which dominates the Fifty-fourth Street side. This grandiose exterior and the more refined elements of the interior illustrate the masterful skill of the architects in creatively synthesizing Italian Renaissance forms to produce an outstanding original design.

The prestigious architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White was chosen to design the clubhouse. Appropriately, the architects looked to the Italian Renaissance for inspiration, which to them meant the High Renaissance, not the Baroque exuberance of classical motifs then current. Earlier examples of the firm's interest in this style were the impressive group of the Villard Houses on Madison Avenue (1882), and the Boston Public Library (1887). The University Club remains to this day one of the most well-known McKim, Mead & White buildings.

Early in 1864, a group of men who had been intimate friends in college discussed the idea of founding a University Club. They had previously met on Saturday evenings for three years as an organization known as the Red Room Club. The following year, a Charter, "for the purpose of the promotion of literature and art, by establishing and maintaining a library, reading-room and gallery of art, and by such other means as shall be expedient and proper for such purpose,"² was granted by the legislature on April 28, 1865. They originated something that was new in the club life of New York, a club that required an intellectual and cultural background for membership, a college degree. For fifteen years, prior to occupying their present home in 1899, the club had its headquarters in the Jerome Mansion, at the southeast corner of Twenty-sixth Street and Madison Avenue on Madison Square.

¹Harmon H. Goldstone, History Preserved: A Guide to New York City Landmarks and Historic Districts (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), p. 214.

²University Club. University Club Charter of 1865. New York, April 28, 1865.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property Less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Central Park

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	8
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5	8	6	4	3	0
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4	5	1	2	5	2	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property occupies Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1270, Lot 34 and is roughly 175' x 100.5' in size (with a 52' x 100.5' addition).

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

Holly Huckins, Research Consultant Contact: E. Spencer-Ralph
name/title For Joan Olshansky, National Register Coordinator, (318) 474-0479
Landmarks Preservation Commission

organization date September, 1979

street & number 305 Broadway telephone (212) 566-7577

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 *[Signature]*
title Director, Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau date 4/28/80

For HCERS use only

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

[Signature] date April 16, 1980
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: *[Signature]* date April 14, 1980
Chief of Registration

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

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RECEIVED	FEB 29 1980
DATE ENTERED	APR 16 1980

University
CONTINUATION SHEET Club N.Y. County ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

Alexander, J. W. History of the University Club of New York.
New York: Scribners, 1915.

Goldstone, Harmon H. History Preserved: A Guide to New York City
Landmarks and Historic Districts. New York: Simon and Schuster,
1974.

Landmarks Preservation Commission. The University Club Designation
Report (LP-1263). New York: City of New York, 1967.

Roth, Leland. Monograph of the Works of McKim, Mead & White,
1879-1915. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1973.

University Club. University Club Charter of 1865. New York:
April 28, 1865.

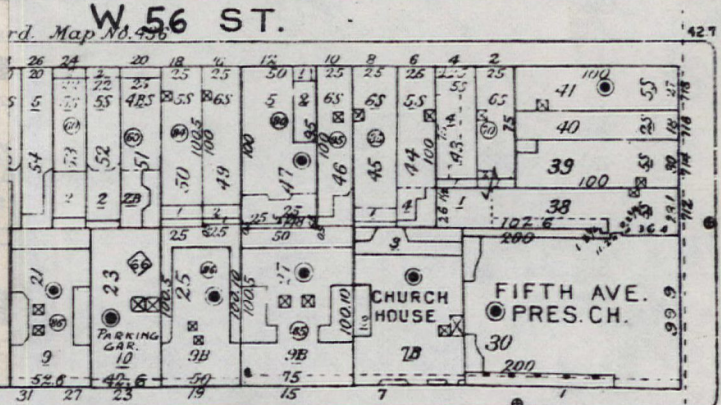
AVE. OF THE AMERICAS

UNIVERSITY CLUB
New York County, New York
Manhattan Land Book, Plate 83
New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1977.

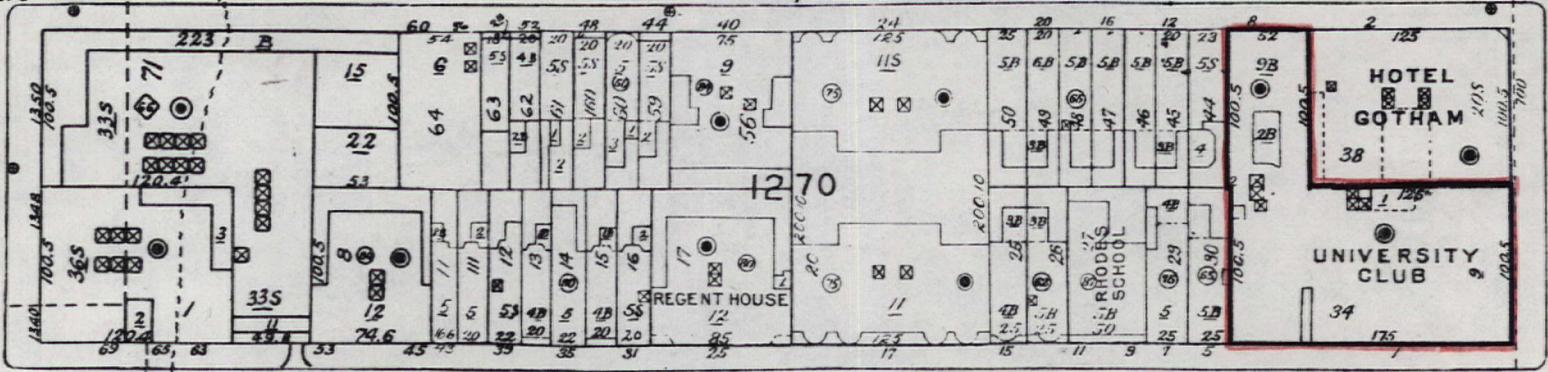
APR 6 1980

FEB 29 1980

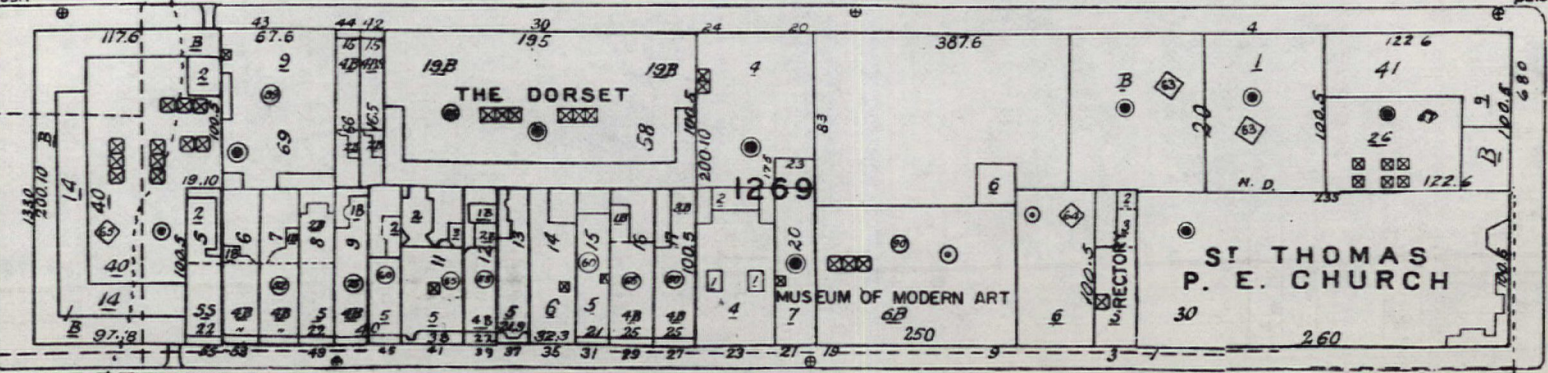
W 56 ST.



W 55 ST.



W 54 ST.



W 53 ST.



SEC 5
SCALE: 120'

COPYRIGHT SA

SEC. 5

77

84

SEC 5

SCALE: 120'

COPYRIGHT SA

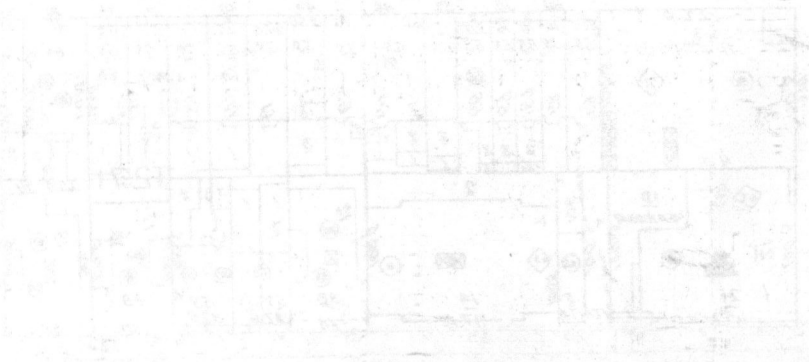
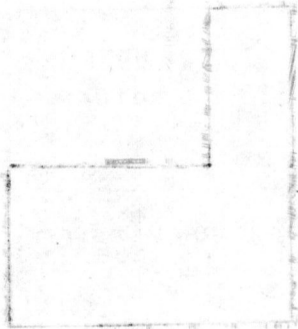
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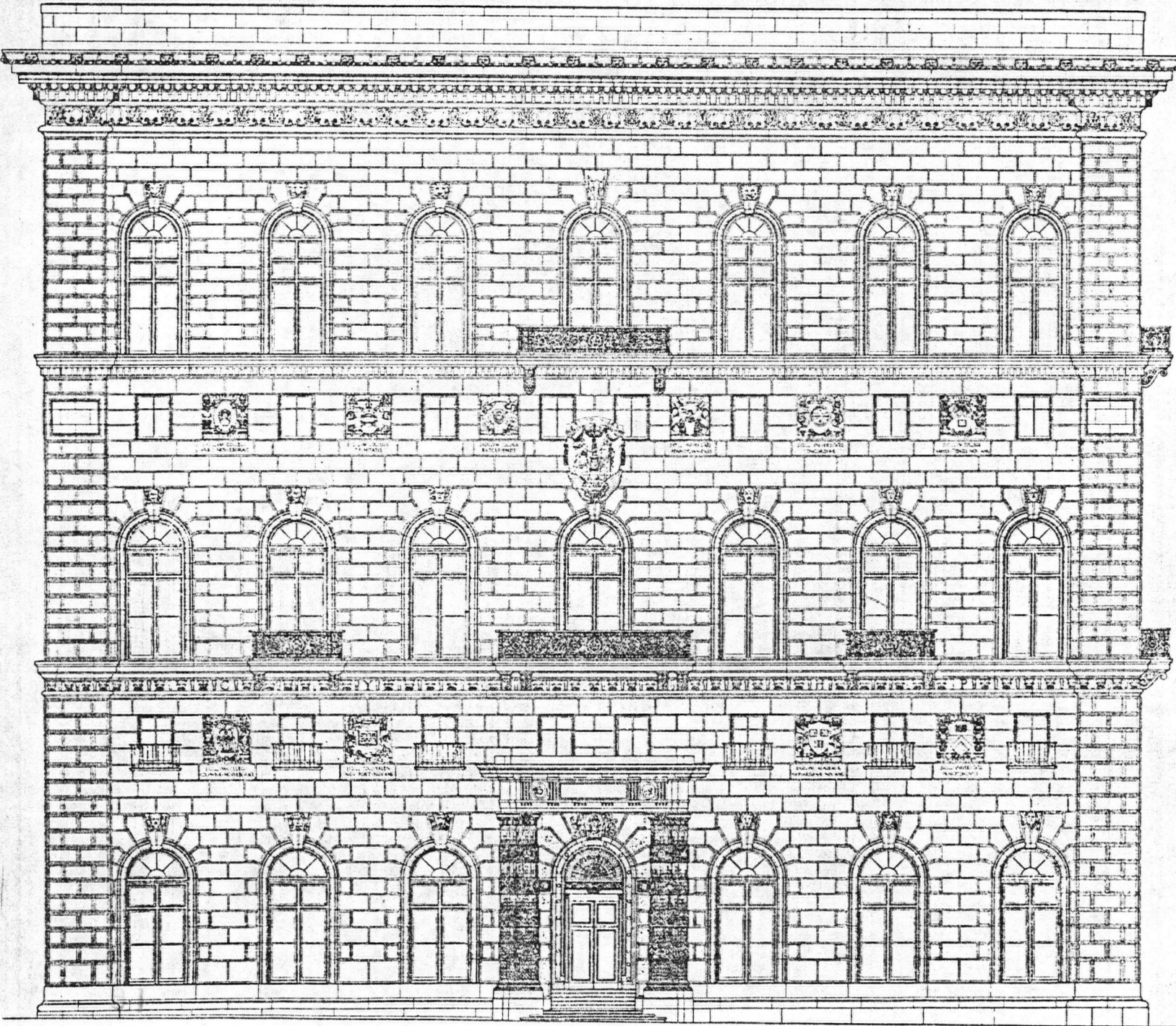
100

SUBWAY

65 STA



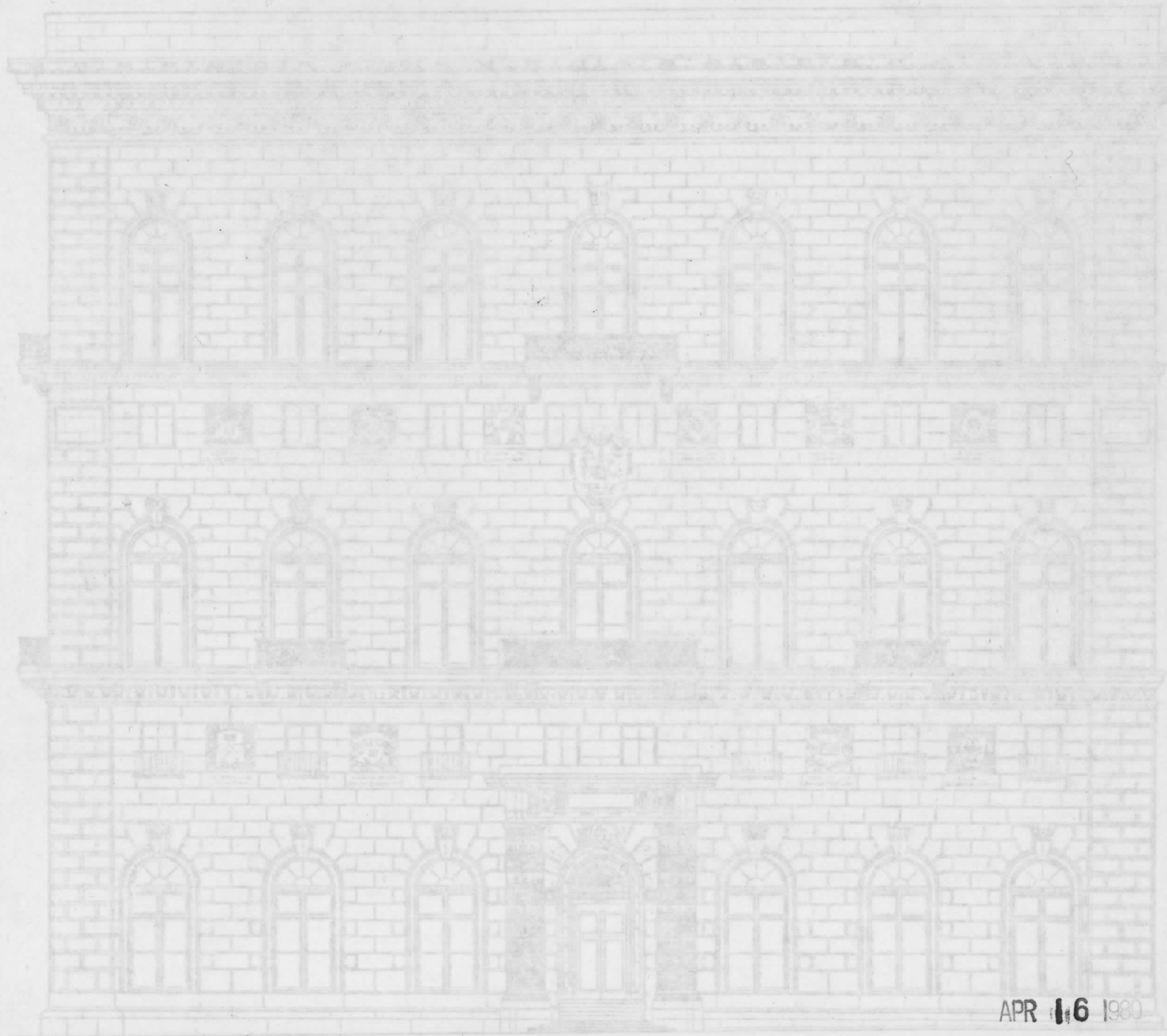
PLAN OF THE VILLAGE



University Club, New York, New York County

The University Club of New York,
 McKim, Mead & White, architects.
 Elevation.
 Roth, Leland, Monograph of the Works
 of McKim, Mead & White, 1879-1915.
 New York: Benjamin Blom, 1973.
 Plate 131

FEB 29 1980



FEB 5 3 1880

APR 16 1980

Place 121

New York: Benjamin Bloom, 1857.

of Horn, Head & White, 1870-1875.

Horn, Head & White, Monograph of the Works
Elevation.

The University Club of New York.

Horn, Head & White, architects.

University Club, New York, New York County

80002726

Property University Club

State Ny - New York

Working Number 2-29-80 582

TECHNICAL

Photos 8

Maps 2

CONTROL

HISTORIAN

Very fine, intact, sophisticated rendition of the Renaissance style — an example of turn of the century Renaissance Revival designed by the prominent firm of McKim, Mead, & White. Associated since construction with the University Club, a mid 19th c. club founded for the promotion of literature & art.

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

Accept
L. Beake
4/14/80

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

HAER

Inventory _____

Review _____

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

Accept
L. Beake
4/14/80

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

National Register Write-up _____

Send-back _____

Entered APR 16 1980

Federal Register Entry 2.3.81

Re-submit _____



1. UNIVERSITY CLUB

Fifth Avenue and Fifty-fourth Street
New York, N.Y. *County*

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo, 1979

Neg. at: New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission

View of exterior looking northwest.

APR 16 1980

1078

FEB 29 1980



2. UNIVERSITY CLUB

Fifth Avenue and Fifty-fourth Street

New York, N.Y. *County*

Photo by: Stephen L. Sneigo, 1979

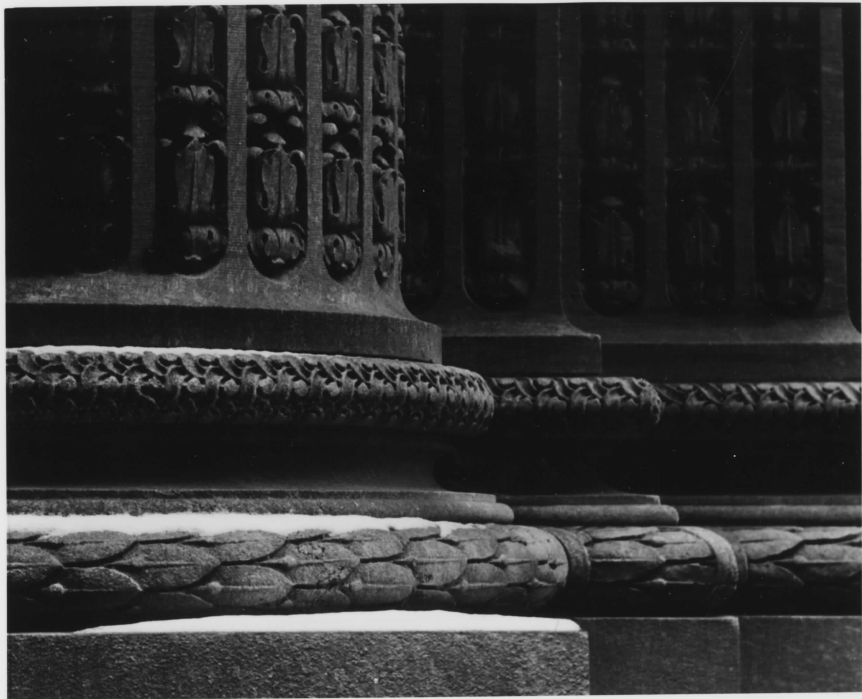
Neg. at: New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission

View of Fifty-fourth Street entrance.

APR 16 1980

2078

FEB 29 1980



3. UNIVERSITY CLUB

Fifth Avenue and Fifty-fourth Street
New York, N.Y. *County*

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo 1979

Neg. at: New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission

Detail of columns at entrance.

APR 16 1980

30f8

FEB 29 1980



4. UNIVERSITY CLUB
Fifth Avenue and Fifty-fourth Street
New York, New York *County*
Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo *1979*
Neg. at: New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission
Interior. Reading Room.

APR 16 1980

FEB 29 1980

4 of 8



5. UNIVERSITY CLUB

Fifth Avenue and Fifty-fourth Street
New York, New York *County*

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo 1979

Neg. at: New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission

Interior. Ceiling of Council Room.

5088

APR 16 1980

FEB 29 1980



6. UNIVERSITY CLUB

Fifth Avenue and Fifty-fourth Street

New York, New York *County*

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo 1979

Neg. at: New York City Landmarks Pres-
ervation Commission

Interior: Library.

FEB 29 1980

APR 16 1980

6 of 8



FEB 29 1980

7 UNIVERSITY CLUB

Fifth Avenue and Fifty-fourth Street

New York, New York *County*

(copy) Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo 1979 APR 16 1980

Neg. at: New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission

View of interior: library, 1900.

As taken from Leland Roth's Monograph of the
Works of McKim, Mead & White, 1875-1915 (New
York: Benjamin Blom, 1973).

7 of 8



UNIVERSITY CLUB

FEB 29 1980

8 Fifth Avenue and Fifty-fourth Street
New York, New York *County*

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo *1979*

APR 16 1980

Neg. at: New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission

View of interior; Lounging Room, 1900.

As taken from Leland Roth's Monograph of the
Works of McKim, Mead & White, 1875-1915 (New
York; Benjamin Blom, 1973).

8088



Central Park Good
THE UNIVERSITY CLUB
New York, New York County
UTM Reference:
18 / 586430 / 4512520

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
Polyconic 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
1966
PHOTOREVISED 1979
AMS 6265 IV SW-SERIES V821

RECEIVED
FEB 29 1980
NATIONAL REGISTER
APR 16 1980

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE NEW YORK

Date Entered APR 16 1980

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Onderdonk, Horatio Gates, House	Manhasset Nassau County
First Reformed Church	New York Queens County
Kings County Savings Bank	Brooklyn Kings County
Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Transfiguration	Brooklyn Kings County
Mariner's Temple	New York New York County
Church of the Transfiguration	New York New York County
St. Bartholomew's Church and Community House	New York New York County
University Club	New York New York County

Also Notified

Honorable Jacob K. Javits
Honorable Lester L. Wolff
Honorable Joseph P. Addabbo
Honorable Frederick W. Richmond
Honorable John M. Murphy
Honorable S. William Green
Honorable Charles B. Rangel

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

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

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE NEW YORK

Date Entered APR 16 1980

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Claremont Stable (Claremont Riding Academy)	New York New York County
Harlem Courthouse	New York New York County
St. Ann's Church Complex	Bronx Bronx County
Llenroc	Ithaca Tompkins County
Masterton-Dusenberry House	Bronxville Westchester County
White Plains Armory	White Plains Westchester County
Ingleside	Alexandria Bay Jefferson County
Kelsey-Davey Farm	Skaneateles Onondaga County

Also Notified

Honorable Daniel P. Moynihan	
Honorable Robert Garcia	State Historic Preservation Officer
Honorable Matthew F. McHugh	Mr. Orin Lehman
Honorable Peter A. Peyser	Commissioner
Honorable Richard L. Ottinger	Parks and Recreation
Honorable Robert C. McEwen	Agency Building
Honorable Gary A. Lee	Empire State Plaza
	Albany, New York 12238

NR

Byers/bjr 4/22/80

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