

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM
INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
FILL IN ALL ENTRIES - COMPLETE ALL APPLICABLE SECTIONS

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE NEW JERSEY

Date Entered

Jan 1 1976

JAN - 1 1976

Name

Location

Hoboken City Hall

Hoboken
Hudson County

Smith, John, House

Morristown
Morris County

OWNER OF PROPERTY
NEW DEPT. OF THE CITY OF HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY
CITY OF MORRISTOWN, MORRIS COUNTY

Also Notified

Hon. Clifford P. Case
Hon. Harrison A. Williams, Jr.
Hon. Dominick V. Daniels
Hon. Millicent Fenwick

(C)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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RECEIVED

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

HOBOKEN CITY HALL

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

86-98 Washington Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Hoboken

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Fourteenth

STATE

New Jersey

CODE

034

COUNTY

Hudson

CODE

017

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

☒ PUBLIC

☒ OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

☒ BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

☒ GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mayor and City Council of the City of Hoboken, New Jersey

STREET & NUMBER

86-98 Washington Street

CITY, TOWN

Hoboken

VICINITY OF

STATE

New Jersey

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Register of Deeds, Hudson County Administration Building

STREET & NUMBER

505 Newark Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Jersey City

STATE

New Jersey

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory #1480.12

DATE

FEDERAL ☒ STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS

P.O. Box 1420 Department of Environmental Protection

CITY, TOWN

Trenton

STATE

New Jersey 08625

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 Hoboken City Hall occupies a square block in the heart of downtown Hoboken, fronting on Washington Street. The present building incorporates two phases of construction, the first completed in 1883, the second in 1911.

City Hall of 1883, was designed by Francis George Himpler in Second Empire Style. Its facade is ultimately based on Haussman's redesign of the Tuileries. Two full stories surmounted a high basement, the whole topped by a mansard roof enclosing usable garret space. The facade was divided into five bays. A central pavilion, marked by an arched doorway and window crowned with broken segmental pediments, and dominating in a low mansarded clock tower, was set slightly forward from the main block of the building. At either end were two pavilions each the width of one window. Shallowly recessed between the central and end pavilions were two bays, each three windows in width. These elements were set off from one another by rusticated quoins.

Materials were somber. The basement was of rock-faced ashlar; the upper stories of brick with brownstone trim. Heavy molded brownstone belt courses defined the stories, which were also differentiated by window trim, triangular pediments on the first floor, segmental on the second. The mansard was pierced by rondels with triangular peaks, in the end pavilions, which bore rectangular, pedimented windows.

Behind this facade, the plan was U-shaped, with wings enclosing courtyard extending to the rear. These wings are still visible, with the lower walls, virtually unaltered, divided into three bays by the device of recessing the central section the thickness of one brick. The decorative detailing of the facade is continued on the first bay; the other two bays and the rear of these wings have simple flat belt courses and plain Italianate window trim. Each of the side facades was pierced by a pedimented door in the rear bay. That on the north side still bears the partially effaced inscription "Police and Records Court."

The building of 1911 left the major portions of the 1883 building intact as the core of the new construction. The central doorway and window above remain intact, as does one window of the original building both stories, on either side of the entrance. This section of the old building was, however, faced with cream-color brick to match the new construction. The major elements of the later are two, two-story, square projecting bays on either side of the entrance: a two-story jail the courtyard between the arms of the "U"; and conversion of the mansard to a full third story. All of these are executed in cream-color brick with brownstone trim.

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The new facade, like the old, stresses the central entrance. The old doorway is screened by a portico linking the two new wings. Paired Ionic columns carry an Italianate balustrade. Window openings are wide rectangles, those on the first floor ornamented with simple entablatures carried on consoles. The wings, flat-roofed, are surmounted by a copper modillion cornice and balustrades alternating brick piers with run of brownstone balusters. The new third floor is also flat-roofed with a strong metal cornice. The central window is framed by a paired brick and brownstone pilasters surmounted by a copper open pediment framing a decorative caroutche. Above, two brownstone pedestals bearing gilded eagles flank a brownstone cresting. The roof corners are marked by brick parapets. The total effect transforms what was a Second Empire building to the forms and spirit of Beaux Arts Classicism.

In front of the building a small lawn, fenced, but linked with benches, serves as a gathering place for Hoboken's citizens. The space is further adorned by three (the fourth is missing) street lamps. These are in the form of Roman Doric columns, from which spring ornamental scrolls to hold the light fixtures. They were cast by the architectural metalworking firm of J.W. Fiske.

The added third story, finished off with a parapet continues at the same height on two bays of the wings. The third story of the rear bay is lower, with a balustrade similar to that on the additions to the facade. At the rear of the building, the addition housing the jail is a simple two-story cube with a hip roof, masked along the street elevation by a steeped parapet bearing a date stone inscribed "1911."

The major interior spaces appear to be those created in the 1883 building. Access is through a two-bay, groin-vaulted entry, leading to a transverse groin-vaulted hall which runs the full width of the building. Floors are of gray Minton tile with a foliated border. All openings into the jails have heavily molded wooden architraves and pediment. Other major interior spaces on the first floor include the courtroom, with trim similar to that in the hall, and, in the new wings, the County Clerk's and Tax Collector's Offices, each with handsome carved wooden counters.

Access to the second floor is through a rear stair hall with a offset open-well stair. The newel post, of cast iron, supports a lighting fixture in the form of an Ionic column. The stairrail is of

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cast and wrought iron. This stairway gives access to a wide hall which repeats the proportions of that on the first floor. Again all openings are framed in heavy wooden trim, but entablatures on consoles replace the pediments of the first floor. Like all major interior spaces in the building, with the exceptions of the main hall on the first floor, the second floor hallway has a coffered pressed metal ceiling, with deep cove cornices.

The village of Hoboken grew slowly until 1884 when Colonel John Stevens, father of Hoboken, donated the property for a city hall. On March 28, 1885, Hoboken was incorporated as a city. At that time the city's political, commercial and residential growth was substantial and needed a city hall capable of housing the governmental activities.

The land on which the building now stands originally was a market where people were often found trading rare foreign commodities. After its completion in 1891, official city business was conducted at the old Horton House, 309 Washington Street.

City Hall's significance appears in three major areas: Architectural, Military and Political.

In the area of architecture, City Hall is important because of its central facade with classical detailing, typical of civic architecture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The architect, John W. Ward, was noted for church architecture but also designed other buildings. He was especially successful in planning the interior spaces of large structures, invented an improved wooden floor to prevent cracks in ceilings and walls. He never worked from blueprints or typed specifications. He also designed Public School No. 1 in Hoboken and Our Lady of Grace Church and Academy of the Sacred Heart Church also in Hoboken.

In the area of military significance, the City Hall had facilities for an armory which was housed on the top floor of the building. During the Civil War, Hoboken was the major port of embarkation for troops sailing to Europe. The City's Police Department, headquartered in City Hall, worked in close cooperation with the military police in controlling the movements of soldiers and sailors who passed through Hoboken. On at least one occasion, some 300 to 400 sailors besieged City Hall in an effort to free two to three of their number who had been arrested for drinking.

SIGNIFICANCE

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW
PREHISTORIC	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC ☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING ☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE ☐ RELIGION
1400-1499	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC ☐ CONSERVATION ☐ LAW ☐ SCIENCE
1500-1599	☐ AGRICULTURE ☐ ECONOMICS ☐ LITERATURE ☐ SCULPTURE
1600-1699	☒ ARCHITECTURE ☐ EDUCATION ☒ MILITARY ☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	☐ ART ☐ ENGINEERING ☐ MUSIC ☐ THEATER
1800-1899	☐ COMMERCE ☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT ☐ PHILOSOPHY ☐ TRANSPORTATION
1900-	☐ COMMUNICATIONS ☐ INDUSTRY ☒ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT ☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)
	☐ INVENTION

SPECIFIC DATES 1883, 1911

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Francis George Himpler

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Every city and town through the United States contains, at least, one important public building which conducts the official business of its city. In Hoboken, that building is City Hall, located at 86-98 Washington Street.

The village of Hoboken grew slow until, 1784, when Colonel John Stevens, founder of Hoboken, bought the property for \$90,000. On March 28, 1855, Hoboken was incorporated as a City. By that time the City's political, industrial, commercial and residential growth was substantial and required a City Hall capable of housing the governmental activities.

The land on which the building now stands originally was a Market Place, where people were often found trading rare foreign commodities. Prior to its completion in 1881, official city business was conducted at the old Morton House, 209 Washington Street.

City Hall's significance appears in three major areas: Architecture, Military and Political.

In the area of architecture, City Hall is important because of its monumental facade with classical detailing, typical of civic architecture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The architect, Francis G. Himpler, was noted for church architecture but also designed many other buildings. He was especially successful in planning the acoustic properties of large structures, invented an improved wooden partition preventing cracks in ceilings and walls. He never worked from blueprints or typed specifications. He also designed Public School Number 4 in Hoboken and Our Lady of Grace Church and Academy of the Sacred Heart Church also in Hoboken.

In the area of military significance, the City Hall had facilities for an armory which was housed on the top floor of the building. During World War I, Hoboken was the major port of embarkation for troops sailing for Europe. The City's Police Department, headquartered in City Hall, were called upon to join with the military police in controlling the thousands of soldiers and sailors who passed through Hoboken. On at least one occasion, some 300 to 400 sailors besieged City Hall in an attempt to free two to three of their number, who had been arrested for loitering.

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Politically, City Hall is the center of all of Hoboken's political life. Municipal offices have continually been housed there since 1883. The building is in constant use because of the Tax Collector's Office and the Police Department on the ground level. In the early twentieth century, many major political receptions were held right on the steps of the building; one example being, the traditional New Year's reception in 1906 when George Steil became Mayor.

City Hall has been the center of all Hoboken's political life for over 92 years. The architecture is unique due to the creativeness of Himpler and his unusual style of designing. The building has military significance in that it stands ready as an armory to house ammunition for defense purposes. Most of the major decisions concerning the workings of the city are carried on in this building and plans for the continual development are discussed and executed within these walls.

FORM PREPARED BY

Minor Revisions

Nancy Acosta - Historic Sites

Patricia Miller, Assistant Coordinator, Office of Env. Protection

DATE

PROJECT/STUDY AND PROGRAM Community Development

DATE

WASHINGTON STREET

201-702-6700

STATE

New Jersey

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

I HAVE EVALUATED THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE

STATE LOCALITY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE PROPERTY IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES AND THAT THE PROPERTY IS SIGNIFICANT TO THE STATE AND THE NATION

I HAVE ADVISED THE PROPERTY OWNER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES AND THAT THE PROPERTY IS SIGNIFICANT TO THE STATE AND THE NATION

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Cunningham, Lucille, History of Hoboken, the Miracle Mile, Hoboken Public Library (1974)

Evening News of Hoboken (1893)

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1	5	8	1	7	5	0	1	5	0	8	1	2	0
	ZONE	EASTING				NORTHING								
B														
	ZONE	EASTING				NORTHING								
C														
D														
	ZONE	EASTING				NORTHING								

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE: Patricia Billis, Assistant Coordinator

ORGANIZATION: Municipal Operations Program, Community Development Agency

STREET & NUMBER: 4 Washington Street

CITY OR TOWN: Hoboken

(Minor Revisions)
Nanci Kostrub - Historic Sites Office
Dept. of Env. Protection

DATE: 201-792-6700

TELEPHONE: New Jersey

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL XX

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE: *Paul J. Bruch*

TITLE: Commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection

DATE: August 13, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY: I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

EST: *Paul J. Bruch* DATE: 11/1/76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER DATE: 12/31/75

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Hoboken, New Jersey 1855-1955: Hoboken's One Hundredth Anniversary

Hoboken Observer, December 18, 1918

History of Municipalities of Hudson County, Daniel Van Winkel, ed.,
Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1924.

National Cyclopedia of American Biographies, Volume 18, Ann Arbor,
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Company, 1922), page 43

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Hennessey and Ingalls Inc., 1970, page 115

