

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED **OCT 16 1979**  
DATE ENTERED **JAN 3 1980**

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

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Hackensack Water Company Complex at Weehawken ~~at Weehawken~~

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER 4100 Park Avenue

\_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN Weehawken

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 14th

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE New Jersey

CODE 34

COUNTY Hudson

CODE 017

**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 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	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Hackensack Water Company

STREET & NUMBER 4100 Park Avenue

CITY, TOWN Weehawken

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE New Jersey

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Hall of Records

STREET & NUMBER Hudson County Court House

CITY, TOWN Jersey City

STATE New Jersey

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory (#3254.3)

DATE 1977

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Office of Historic Preservation, Department of Environmental Protection

CITY, TOWN Trenton

STATE New Jersey

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" 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		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Construction of the Hackensack Water Company Complex at Weehawken began in 1883. The complex which includes a large 15 million gallon reservoir, gatehouse, office building, metering shop, and a 175 foot water Tower encompasses a 7.7 acre lot.

The majestic water tower (#1), which resembles the Palazzo Vecchio of Florence, Italy, is approximately 175 feet high, 30 feet square at the base and some 15 stories (stair landings). The base of the tower is bluestone while the walls are brick with a decorative diamond pattern at the uppermost levels. The structure is divided into eight major units rising vertically and divided by belt coursing. At the upper levels the tower projects slightly beyond the base and is supported by horizontal brackets set closely together, forming a series of small brick arches. This section originally held a 150,000 gallon water tank which weighed some 600 tons at capacity.

The lower levels have terra cotta round window heads. The base is connected to the metering building. Historical records indicate that the ground floor housed two pumps needed to pump water from the reservoir to the tank. The second floor was a supply room. The third floor contained business offices and the grounds superintendent lived above.

The brick-lined reservoir (#2) covers several acres and has a basically rectangular configuration. It is directly south of the tower and has an iron fence surrounding it at the base and a modern chain-link fence at the brim.

At the west corner of the reservoir on Park Avenue is a gatehouse (#3). Built into the bank of the reservoir, the structure is brick with three large round arches per facade. The roof is hip with a clipped gable. The brick at the exposed foundation has a diamond pattern. This building was probably designed by architect Frederick C. Withers as was the tower. The company engineer was Charles E. Brush.

The Hackensack Water Company Office building (#4) is a 3 story flat-roofed brick structure with an eleven bay front on Park Avenue. This front block is 3 bays deep, but projects partially out the rear another four bays, producing an L-form. Built around the turn of the century, this large office facility is attached to a small two story brick structure in the rear. This six bay flat-roofed building was erected circa 1895 and functioned as the Water Company offices after the tower became inadequate for such a purpose. The architecture of the entire office complex is quite similar with random stone foundations, trapazoidal window arches on the first floor, and round arches on the second and subsequent floors.

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input 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		

Charles E. Brush, Engineer

SPECIFIC DATES

1883

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Frederick C. Withers, Architect

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Hackensack Water Company Plant at Weehawken is an important industrial complex which firmly establishes an interrelationship between engineering technology, functional industrial construction, and aesthetic architectural design in the late 19th century. While the magnificent water tower forms a focus around which the plan was created, the other structures nonetheless contribute significantly in projecting an excellent New Jersey industrial ambiance.

The Weehawken Water Tower itself may be of national importance both architecturally and engineering-wise, but the gatehouse, office metering shop, and reservoir provide a context within which the tower is to be interpreted. The purpose and function of the water tower, reservoir, and ancillary buildings are more clearly understandable as a waterworks complex rather than focusing on one individual structure.

The water tower's significance is reflected in a newspaper account in 1936 which suggests a threat to the building at the time:

"The tower will probably remain for many years to come, as officials of the company think too much of it as a landmark in the rise of the utility company to consider tearing it down."

(Hudson Dispatch, 12/17/1936)

Frederick C. Withers (1828-1901) designer of the water tower, was a noted architect of the second half of the 19th century. A native of England and trained there in architecture, Withers came to the United State around mid-century and began work in Newark, New Jersey. Around 1857 he combined with New York architect Calvert Vaux to form the firm of Withers and Vaux. They worked in a loose partnership for some 15 years uniting in 1864 with Frederick Law Olmstead as consultants for the architectural treatment of New York's Central Park.

Primarily known for his ecclesiastical architecture, Frederick Withers also designed numerous institutional buildings. The famous Jefferson Market Court House (1877) and Strecker Memorial Laboratory (1892) of New York City; McClintock Hall Alterations (1863), Wilkes Barre, Pa.; Hudson River Hospital (c. 1870), Poughkeepsie, N.Y.; and the Van Schaick Free Reading Room (1883), Westchester, N.Y. are among his public commissions. Along with the first three aforementioned edifices, two religious structures designed by Withers are on the National Register of Historic Places. They are Chapel Hall of Gallaudet College (1867-70),

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Leiby, Andrian C. The Hackensack Water Company; 1869-1969. River Edge, New Jersey 1969.  
 Withey, Henry and Elsie. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects, Deceased,  
 L.A., 1970, (p.668)  
National Register of Historic Places. 1976. U.S. Government Printing Office. Washington  
 D.C. 1976, (pp. 124,131,509,510,513,642).  
American Architect & Building News. "Hackensack Water Co. Water Tower at Weehawken"  
 v. 14 p. 114 pl. 402. September 8, 1883.

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 7.7

QUADRANGLE NAME Weehawken

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 

1	8	5	8	2	6	4	0	4	5	1	3	9	7	0
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## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Block surrounded by Park, Highwood, and Terrace. Block 46, Lots 68 and 69.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Terry Karschner, Historic Preservation Specialist

ORGANIZATION

Office of Historic Preservation

DATE

11/1977 4/1979

STREET & NUMBER

109 West State Street

TELEPHONE

(609) 292-2023

CITY OR TOWN

Trenton

STATE

New Jersey

# 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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*[Signature]*  
11/24/79

TITLE Acting Commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 1-3-80

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *[Signature]*

DATE 1/8/80

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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CONTINUATION SHEET

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Washington, D.C. and Chapel of the Good Shepherd (1888), New York City. Numerous other Withers designs are documented. Included among these are the Church of St. George (1886), Newburgh, N.Y.; Columbia Institute for Deaf and Dumb (1876), Washington, D.C.; New York Produce Exchange (1881); Dr. J. Pierrpont Davis House (1881), Hartford, Conn.; John F. Ward House (1884-extant), Jersey City, N.J.; Frank Hasbrouck House (1887), Poughkeepsie, N.Y.; Presbyterian Church (1859), Newburgh; St. Luke's Church (1884), Altoona, Pa.; St Thomas' Church (1878), Hanover, New Hampshire Villa Residence (1876), Wilkes Barres; and "Whitecaps" (1881), Monmouth Beach, N.J.

The earliest buildings designed by Withers are High Victorian Gothic in style. Later buildings have more of a Queen Anne or Jacobethan motif.

Designed by Withers in 1883, the Weehawken Water Tower is an exceptional architectural landmark in New Jersey significant as a massive yet aesthetic industrial engineering accomplishment. Perhaps the last extant brick water tower in New Jersey, it is further one of the few known industrial structures designed by Withers.

F. C. Withers clearly was the architect of the Hackensack Water Company Water Tower at Weehawken. While the superficial Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased) does not list the Weehawken Water Tower among Withers buildings, Francis Kowsky, who completed his Doctoral dissertation on "The Architecture of Frederick Clark Withers (1828-1901), has stated that there is no doubt that Withers designed the tower. Further, Kowsky has a clear recollection of the Hackensack Water Company communicating with him a few years ago concerning the original plans and specifications of the water tower at Weehawken.

This tower, built in 1883 and one of the few such towers left in the country, is a vitally significant engineering and architectural landmark. The eclecticism of architectural features incorporated in the water tower and the possible borrowing from 13th century European precedents such as the Palazzo del Vecchio in Florence is an academic argument which should be explored further, but is not the scope of this essay.

The reservoir and numerous buildings associated with the water tower are intimately connected with the Water Company's history and development as an industrial entity. The tower establishes itself as a focal point for Weehawken also having a firm impact on the physical landscape of the area. The gatehouse, metering shop, and offices are all buildings historically associated with the Hackensack Water Company at Weehawken.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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Attached to the tower is what apparently functioned as the metering facility (#5). This complex has four major components. This first is a 2 1/2 story brick edifice with hip roof and dormers. It has a six bay facade with round arch window heads facing the reservoir and four bays along the tower. North of this section is a 1 1/2 story hip-roofed brick unit. This unit is physically fused onto the tower and has round window arches similar to that section to the south. Off the east of this 1 1/2 story portion is another 1 1/2 story brick hip-roofed unit which functions as a garage. Enclosing the south and part of the east facade of this structure is a one story L-shape brick unit with a flat roof. Presumably, this entire 4-part unit, save perhaps the one story flat-roofed section, was built from 1895 to 1915.

A small one story flat-roofed brick garage (#6) is directly east of the metering facility. This square structure was probably built around 1930.

The office and metering complex are separated by a paved entrance driveway off Park Avenue which opens into a substantial employees parking lot to the east. There is another entrance driveway off of Highwood Avenue.

Surrounding the plant is basically a residential neighborhood.

The water tower and adjacent reservoir functioned as a unit supplying water to the Hoboken region. Although the reservoir does not, at this time, impound water, it still retains integrity of design and setting. The purpose and function of the reservoir and the water tower are more clearly understandable as an engineering entity and cannot be historically disjointed. Within the waterworks complex, the ancillary buildings surrounding the site have historic significance and assist in the understanding of the functional nature of the entire complex.

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

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Engineering

The Hackensack Water Company, chartered in 1869, was one of New Jersey's first public water supply companies in the state. The Weehawken plant provided water from the Hackensack River to the City of Hoboken and outlying regions. It operated from 1883 until the 1920's when Jersey City firms began supplying the water.

HADERSACK WATER COMPANY PLANT AT WEHAWKEN  
 WEHAWKEN  
 HUDSON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

- A-21
- (1) Water Tower
  - (2) Reservoir
  - (3) Gatehouse
  - (4) Office Building
  - (5) Metering Building
  - (6) Garage
- BLACK LINE DELINEATES  
 BOUNDARIES

