

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Metuchen Borough Hall

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 500 Main Street not for publication

city or town Metuchen vicinity

state New Jersey code 034 county Middlesex code 023 zip code 08840

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____
Assistant Commissioner, Natural & Historic Resources/DSHPO
State of Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Patrick Andrews

5/14/2001

Metuchen Borough Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex, New Jersey
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
		sites
		structures
	<u>2</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Government: city hall

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Government: city hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th century
revivals: Classical Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation _____
walls Brick

roof _____

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1924-1950

Significant Dates

1924

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Clement W. Fairweather

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Metuchen Borough Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex, New Jersey
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.2

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

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Zone Easting Northing

3

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Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Nancy L. Zerbe, Tyreen Reuter

organization _____ date _____

street & number 81 Rector Street telephone (732) 906-8203

city or town Metuchen state NJ zip code 08840-1540

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Borough of Metuchen

street & number 500 Main Street telephone (732) 632-8540

city or town Metuchen state NJ zip code 08840

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Metuchen Borough Hall
Borough of Metuchen,
Middlesex County, NJ

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DESCRIPTION

Metuchen Borough Hall (Photograph #1) is an early twentieth century Neo-Classical brick structure located at the north corner of the intersection of Main Street and Middlesex Avenue (Route 27). The Borough Hall, and the adjacent municipal park and public library to the northeast along Middlesex Avenue, form a transition between the commercial structures to the southwest along Middlesex Avenue and south along Main Street, and St. Francis Cathedral and the residential neighborhoods to the north.

The structure is set back from both Main Street and Middlesex Avenue, with a wide lawn in front of its two main facades. Landscaping on the site consists of two evergreen trees flanking the walkway to the main entrance, several deciduous trees along the Main Street and Middlesex Avenue lawn areas, and low shrubs along the entire front façade of the building. Immediately to the rear (north) of the structure is a paved driveway which is accessed from Main Street. Adjacent to the building on its northeast side is a municipal parking lot.

The building sits on a concrete foundation and consists of brick walls laid in Flemish Bond. Representative early twentieth century Classical features include strict adherence to symmetry, the prominent two-story central entrance, the central section's flat roof with a central parapet, Classical columns and pilasters, entablature with a wide frieze and modillion cornice, decorative stone cartouche with a Classical shield and swags, paneling in the doors and the fascia board between the central doorway, the three-part window above the main entrance, the multi-pane six-over-six and eight-over-eight windows, and the keystones above the windows.

The main block of Borough Hall consists of three sections: a five-bay two-story center section flanked by a five-bay one-story northwest wing parallel to Main Street, and a three-bay one-story west wing parallel to Middlesex Avenue. Connected to the Middlesex Avenue wing is a recessed two-bay one-story section connecting the structure's main block with the five-bay one-story Police Station.

The structure's most prominent feature is its central curved two-story section (Photograph #2) with a large Classical entablature, and a flat roof with a masonry block cornice line trim and a central parapet. Located in the center of the parapet wall is a Classical masonry ornamental cartouche with a central shield containing a carved letter "M". On either side of the shield are Classical swags and garlands.

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Metuchen Borough Hall
Borough of Metuchen,
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The center block contains the building's main entrance flanked by two bays of windows on each side. The entrance directly faces the intersection of two prominent streets in Metuchen, and is approached via a walkway set on a diagonal to both streets. The three central bays with full-height columns are slightly recessed from the two end bays, creating the impression of a full-height porch, a character defining feature of the Neo-Classical style.

The central entrance consists of two recessed six-paneled wood doors with a Classical door surround and a modillion cornice. Above the central doorway is a four-part wood panel above which is a three-part window: a central six-over-six double hung wood window flanked by two small two-over-two wood windows. This three-part rectangular window is a common feature on Neo-Classical structures. The two bays on either side of the central entrance bay contain single, wide eight-over-eight double hung wood windows on each floor. These windows have a plain masonry sill and a central masonry keystone flanked by a brick lintel course with alternating rows of stretchers and headers. The two end bays on the center block contain single, narrow eight-over-eight double hung wood windows on each floor.

To the north of the center block is a five bay one-story wing (Photograph #3). The first three bays (original to the structure) are on the same plane as the two-story center block, and the last two bays are slightly recessed from the plane of the original structure. Each of the five bays contains a center eight-over-eight double hung wood window. Similar to the windows in the center block, these windows each have a plain masonry sill and a central masonry keystone flanked by a brick lintel course with alternating rows of stretchers and headers. Each bay is also framed by a row of brick headers on the sides, top, and bottom of the bays. Brick pilasters with masonry plinths and Classical entablatures flank each bay. The Classical entablature on this wing is identical to the entablature on the main block: a small architrave, wide frieze, and a modillion cornice.

To the east of the center block (along Middlesex Avenue) there are three adjoining sections of the building: a one-story, three bay section; a recessed one-story two bay section; and a one-story five bay section (Police Department). The first three bay section (Photograph #4) is original to the structure and is identical to the three bay section along Main Street: on the same plane as the main block; each of the three bays containing a center eight-over-eight double hung wood window. Similar to the windows in the center block, these windows each have a plain masonry sill and a central masonry keystone flanked by a brick lintel course with alternating rows of stretchers and headers. Each bay

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Metuchen Borough Hall
Borough of Metuchen,
Middlesex County, NJ

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is also framed by a row of brick headers on the sides, top, and bottom of the bays. Brick pilasters with masonry plinths and Classical entablatures flank each bay. The Classical entablature on this wing is identical to the entablature on the main block: a small architrave, wide frieze, and a modillion cornice. The east side façade of this section contains two bays similar to the front façade except for the lack of the brick pilasters.

Adjacent to the three bay section is a recessed section (Photograph #5) with two bays, each containing a double window. Similar to the two bays described above, this section continues the building's brickwork and trim, except for the brick pilasters.

The last section of the Middlesex Avenue façade is the five bay Police Department (Photograph #6). This section projects out from the plane of its adjoining two bay section, but not as far out as the building's main block. The Police Department section is set at an angle to the structure's main block and contains many of the design features of the main block: Flemish Bond brickwork, large entablature, brick pilasters with masonry plinths and Classical entablatures flanking each bay, and eight-over-eight double hung wood windows with a plain masonry sill and a central masonry keystone flanked by a brick lintel course with alternating rows of stretchers and headers. The entrance to the Police Department is located in the fourth bay away from the main block. This bay slightly projects out from the main wall and contains a double wood door with half-height panels below eight-light windows. Above the doorway is a Classical door surround and a modillion cornice. To the east of the doorway is a cornerstone with the date "1966".

The east side façade of the Police Department (Photograph #7) contains five bays: a single door, a small six-over-six double hung wood window; two larger six-over-six double hung wood windows; and paired six-over-six double hung wood windows. The trim on this façade is similar to that on the front façade except for the brick pilasters. The back of the Police Department (Photograph #8) consists of four bays: paired windows; two small windows; and a single door with a small entry hood. The Classical entablature only wraps around to the beginning of this façade, and then it ends.

Adjacent to the rear façade of the Police Department (Photograph #9) is a two bay recessed section with two single windows. Adjacent to this section is a one bay concrete block section which connects with the northeast segment of the building, a five bay section (Photograph #10) consisting of a central entrance door flanked on each side by a paired window and a single window. Similar to the rear door of the Police Department, this rear door has a small wood entry hood. Entry to this door is via a small staircase or a handicapped access ramp.

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Metuchen Borough Hall
Borough of Metuchen,
Middlesex County, NJ

Overall, the interiors of Borough Hall are not architecturally significant. The building consists of a series of corridors connecting unadorned small offices. Throughout the interior, the finishes are modern with drop ceilings, linoleum floors, and modern doors.

The main entrance of Borough Hall opens up into a small entry foyer (Supplemental Photographs A & B). At the end of the foyer are two corridors (Supplemental Photographs C & D) which extend along each of the building's original wings. The only noteworthy architectural feature along these corridors are rounded arches located at the end of the foyer, at the entrance to the hallway in front of the Tax Office, at three locations along the main front-to-back corridor, and at the entrance to the small corridor to the north of the Council Chambers (Supplemental Photograph E). The cross axis formed by these two corridors reflects the early twentieth century Beaux Arts interest in creating spaces with cross axis. In the middle of the main north-side corridor is a modern corridor (Supplemental Photograph F) leading to the Police Station.

The only other noteworthy space inside Borough Hall is the Council Chamber (Supplemental Photographs G & H) located directly to the north of the entrance foyer. Access to the room is provided via modern sliding doors which open up to the entrance foyer, a single door located along the main front-to-back corridor, and two single doors at the front of the room. The back of the room consists of rows of wooden pews; however, there is no other significant trim within the room.

A simple staircase (Supplemental Photograph I) with a wood newel post and railing leads to the small second floor area. The building's second story (Supplemental Photographs J & K) is limited to a series of small rooms, none of which has any significant architectural features. Access to the Police Department is limited to the small unadorned entrance lobby immediately inside the Department's front door.

The Borough Hall site contains one small structure and two objects, none of which is considered contributing to the resource's architectural or historic significance. At the site's south corner at the intersection of the Main Street and Middlesex Avenue is a modern small (approximately five feet square) vinyl sided hut for the protection of police assisting pedestrians crossing at the intersection. On the lawn area in front of the building's Middlesex Avenue façade is a small milestone marker, dated 1806, and marking the route of the Middlesex and Essex Turnpike to Newark. This marker was removed from its original location, moved to various sites around Metuchen, and placed on the Borough Hall site in 1939 (vertical file information, Metuchen-Edison Historical Society). The second object on the site is a monument to the community's firemen.

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Metuchen Borough Hall
Borough of Metuchen,
Middlesex County, NJ

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Located immediately to the northeast of the driveway leading from Middlesex Avenue into the parking lot, this monument consists of an old metal fire company bell supported by a brick base.

The twentieth century development of the site is indicated in historic maps and photographs. According to the 1903 Sanborn map, there was a wood frame building, probably a private home, on the site prior to the construction of Borough Hall. This structure set very close to both Main Street and Middlesex Avenue. By the time of the 1920 Sanborn map, the lot was vacant.

Borough Hall has undergone several changes since its construction in 1924. The center block of the structure was shown in a 1927 photograph with curved entry steps and awnings. Two early photographs at the local historical society (one dated ca. 1930 and one dated April 16, 1932) show the original structure as consisting of the center five bay two-story block with two three-bay wings. This original structure housed the municipal functions, the library, and the Police Station. In 1940, the Library moved to an adjacent structure. By the time of three 1945 photographs, the northwest façade along Main Street had been extended by two bays. These two bays maintained the overall design and material of the original structure, yet provide a slight setback to distinguish the original structure from the addition. The five bay Police Department section was built in 1966, at which time the two bay connecting portion was probably constructed. Despite the number of additions to the original building, all of the structure's later additions are compatible with the original structure's use of materials, trim, size, scale, and setback.

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Metuchen Borough Hall
Borough of Metuchen,
Middlesex County, NJ

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Metuchen Borough Hall is locally significant under National Register Criterion A for its association with Metuchen's development as an independent municipality, and its representation of the national City Beautiful Movement effort to improve communities. Borough Hall is also eligible under Criterion C both as a representative example of early twentieth century Neo-Classical municipal buildings and as a major work by a local architect. Built in 1924, Borough Hall was the first municipal structure for Metuchen (incorporated in 1900) and reflects Metuchen's early twentieth century efforts to establish its own identity and create an attractive community. The structure was designed by Metuchen architect Clement W. Fairweather, who served as President of the New Jersey Chapter of Architects and a delegate to the International Congress of Architects.

Metuchen's Development as a Municipality

In 1900, Metuchen separated from Raritan Township and was incorporated as an independent municipality (Snyder, p. 170). Although relatively small in size, Metuchen had a successful commercial district centered on its Main Street. Early twentieth century Sanborn Fire insurance maps indicate the area's commercial and residential growth. The number of businesses on Main Street increased and diversified, and residences were developed on newly divided lots.

Metuchen's location on the Lincoln Highway and accessibility by direct train lines to major metropolitan areas led to its rapid population growth: 1800 residents in 1910, 3334 in 1920, and 5748 in 1930. The "country atmosphere" and ability to commute to New Brunswick and New York City attracted bankers, writers, and other "literati" to the area. Metuchen became known as the "Brainy Borough" when literary figures such as novelist Mary Wilkins Freeman and *Harper's Magazine* editor Henry Alden Mills moved to Metuchen (Heritage Studies, p. 3).

By the early 1920s, the new municipality recognized the need for its own municipal building. Since Metuchen's incorporation in 1900, the Borough Council had been meeting in the rear rooms of Robbins Hall, a commercial building on Main Street which also housed at various times a grocer, barber, the post office, and a Masonic Temple (Sanborn maps, 1903-1920). A larger, independent space was now needed to accommodate the growing town. A local paper, the *Metuchen Recorder*, reported in August of 1923 that the Borough Council had considered plans for a small, 20' by 40'

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two-story structure at a cost of \$7,000, but there were concerns about the inadequacy of such a small building.

Minutes from the Borough Council meeting in the fall of 1923 indicate that by September, 1923, plans for a larger and more elaborate structure had been submitted to the Council by Metuchen architect Clement W. Fairweather. Instead of just a simple Council chamber room, the new plans included offices, space for the library, and a police station. The Council approved Mr. Fairweather's designs, and authorized the expenditure of \$25,000 for the construction of Borough Hall as well as a garage and cesspool. The Council also approved hiring a local contractor, David Ross, for the construction of Borough Hall, and a local mason, Thomas Winter, for the building's masonry work. Their work was to be supervised by the Borough Engineer, Otto Voeleker, and the Borough's Chairman of the Building Committee, L.E. Riddle, Jr.

Local newspapers and town Council minutes indicate that the opening of the building was an occasion of great civic pride. For the laying of the cornerstone at the new Borough Hall site in May, 1924, a ceremony and parade was organized to coincide with Memorial Day. The *Metuchen Recorder* wrote "It is to be hoped that the dedication of the new Borough Hall will mark an epoch of increased prosperity and growth for Metuchen." Several months later, upon its completion, a formal opening was planned for January 1, 1925. All residents, societies and friends of the Borough were encouraged to join the celebration in which Metuchen resident Governor George S. Silzer and other well-known citizens would present the key to Borough Hall to Mayor Clarkson. According to the minutes from the Borough Council's first meeting in the new building on December 29, 1924, Mayor Clarkson declared that they now have "quarters that a municipality many times our size might be proud to possess" and felt assured that it would be so for many years to come.

City Beautiful Movement

American architecture was greatly influenced by the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. As discussed below, following the Exposition, American architects were increasingly interested in Classical styles. However, according to architectural historian William Lebovic, "the most important outgrowth of the Columbian Exposition" was "the incorporation of city halls into civic center plans or even larger city plans. Under the rubric of the City Beautiful Movement, the architect Daniel H. Burnham and his associates began applying the Beaux-Arts planning concepts they had learned at the exposition in redesigning American cities." (Lebovic, p. 28). For municipal buildings,

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Metuchen Borough Hall
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the application of the Beaux-Arts planning concepts meant an increased interest in new civic buildings as well as an increased attention to issues such as landscaping, siting, and a building's relationship to its surrounding community.

The period when Metuchen Borough Hall was built has been described as a time of "an explosion of Beaux-Arts-inspired civic projects...Aspiring cities throughout the country were attempting to enoble their centers with libraries, museums, city halls, and courthouses." (Guter, Section 8, p. 4). Between 1900 and 1936, two dozen states built new statehouses and in New Jersey numerous cities including Plainfield, Paterson, Trenton, New Brunswick, Newark, Montclair, and Woodbridge built new civic structures. (Ibid).

The Beaux-Arts emphasis on siting and landscaping is evident in the design of the Metuchen Borough Hall. The structure was prominently located at the intersection of two major streets in Metuchen, with the main entrance set at a diagonal to both streets. In contrast to the surrounding commercial structures along Main Street, the structure was set back on its site to allow for a landscaped lawn along both of its main facades.

Contemporary records from the 1920s indicate that the construction of Borough Hall was just one of many steps taken in Metuchen to improve the quality of the new municipality. With the growing population and economic expansion following World War I, Metuchen began efforts to enhance the services and appearance of the town as it transitioned from a farming region to a cosmopolitan suburb that attracted new residents and businesses.

The Borough Council minutes from the early twentieth century indicate the Council's ongoing concern with Metuchen's quality of life. There are numerous authorizations for expenditures to improve sidewalks and roads and to install a sanitary sewage system. In addition, the Council strongly opposed the Consumers Gas Company constructing a filling station across from the new town hall as it would be unsightly and increase congestion. Perhaps one of the most symbolic examples of how the Borough Hall's construction must be seen as part of an overall effort to improve the quality of life in Metuchen is indicated in the minutes from the Council's first meeting in the new Borough Hall. Mayor Clarkson used the opportunity to reinforce the importance of the town's physical image:

"Fine streets, sewers, public buildings and all improvements however, cannot alone make a town attractive. Civic pride on the part of each and every citizen is a necessary contribution to the prosperity and good

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Metuchen Borough Hall
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looks of any municipality. Throughout Metuchen I frequently find much evidence of the lack of civic pride. We thoughtlessly throw papers and rubbish about the streets or deposit it in such places that the first high wind distributes it all over the borough. No ordinance or penalty can as effectively combat this as can an educational campaign to inspire our people to want their town clean and attractive.”

Similar to other communities where private groups formed to focus on the community, Metuchen’s public efforts were supported by citizen effort. In 1901, the Borough Improvement League (B.I.L.) was formed as a civic society whose aim was to “promote the general welfare of the newly independent Borough of Metuchen.” The B.I.L. was active in preserving older structures and improving the look and community well-being of the town. In 1906 the B.I.L. purchased and restored the Franklin Schoolhouse (located across Middlesex Avenue from the Borough Hall) for the purpose of making the building its permanent headquarters.

Architectural Significance

The Metuchen Borough Hall is architecturally significant both as a representative example of early twentieth century Neo-Classical architecture, and also as a major work of a local architect, Metuchen resident Clement W. Fairweather.

Following the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago, architects throughout the United States turned to Classical forms of architecture. Representative early twentieth century Classical features evidenced on the Borough Hall include strict adherence to symmetry, the prominent two-story central entrance, the central section’s flat roof with a central parapet, Classical columns and pilasters, entablature with a wide frieze and modillion cornice, decorative stone cartouche with a Classical shield and swags, paneling in the doors and the fascia board between the central doorway, the three-part window above the main entrance, the multi-pane six-over-six and eight-over-eight windows, and the keystones above the windows.

Several documents from the 1920s and 1930s indicate that the structure was viewed as an important building within the region. It was pictured in a 1926 document produced for the dedication of the Victory Bridge between Perth Amboy and Sayreville with the caption “Symbolic of Progress, Metuchen Borough Hall, on Lincoln Highway” (“Dedication of the Victory Bridge Across the Raritan River, New Jersey, June 24th, 1926”). In 1927, the structure was featured in a statewide publication entitled *Architectural Exhibition Held Under the Auspices of New Jersey Society of Architects*,

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Newark. In 1936, Vernon Howe Bailey, an artist described as “an artist who has gained a national reputation for his pen and ink sketches of places of civic and historical interest drawn for a metropolitan newspaper”, selected Borough Hall to sketch as he considered it “the building of greatest architectural beauty in the borough” (vertical file information, Metuchen-Edison Historical Society).

The two end bays on the northwest wing of the building, added in 1937, maintain the original structure’s Neo-Classical detailing. This addition was designed by Clement W. Fairweather, the architect for the original structure. According to a May 13, 1937 newspaper article in the *Metuchen Recorder*, the addition measured 18 feet by 58 feet, and was erected as a WPA project at the cost of \$11,722, of which \$9,302 was federally funded (vertical files, Metuchen-Edison Historical Society).

Clement Fairweather

Borough Hall’s designer, Clement W. Fairweather, was born in 1882 in Newcastle-on-Tyne, England. He studied architecture under John W. Dyson while in England, and emigrated to United States in 1910 and worked for various architectural firms in New York City. He became a United States citizen in 1917, and moved to Metuchen in 1921, where he built his home and began his own practice (*Who’s Who in America*, 1956, p.808). While much of his work centered around churches and private homes in New Jersey, New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts, he also worked for the Public Service Electric and Gas Company, where he was involved with industrial improvements (Obituary of C.W. Fairweather, *Plainfield Courier-News*, April 17, 1957). In 1924 he designed the Borough Hall, which remains the most prominent example of his work in his hometown.

There are numerous indications that Clement Fairweather’s significance extended beyond his hometown of Metuchen. From 1926 to 1928, he served as Chairman of the State Board of Architects. In 1927 he served as a delegate to the International Congress of Architects (CIAM) in the Netherlands. In 1933 he was named a member of the Construction League of the United States, and from 1950 to 1952 was a member of the Governor’s Advisory Council for New Jersey’s State Institutional Building Program (*Who’s Who in America*, 1956, p.808). He was honored by being placed in the 1957 and 1960 editions of *Who’s Who in America* and when he passed away on April 16, 1957, his obituary appeared in *The New York Times* as well as in several New Jersey newspapers.

Known works by Clement Fairweather in New Jersey include: the Congregational Church in Irvington, the Corpus Christi Church & Rectory in South River, the Dutch

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Middlesex County, NJ

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Reformed Church in Metuchen, residence of Arthur R. Clapham at 83 Linden Avenue in Metuchen, 39 Rector Street in Metuchen, the First Presbyterian Church in Plainfield, Theological Seminary buildings in New Brunswick, the Townley Presbyterian Church in Union, the Employee's Building in Camden, St. John's Roman Catholic Church & Rectory in Allentown, remodeling of the Hertzog Hall in New Brunswick, Terminal Building addition in Newark, and the Boiler Unit addition in Kearney. Other works outside of New Jersey include: the Reformed Church in Levittown, New York; the Southern Normal School Chapel in Brewton, Alabama; Fisher's Island in New York; Hay Harbor Golf & Yacht Club (unknown location); Coke Plant (unknown location); and various residences in New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut (*Who's Who in America*, 1956, p. 808 and several obituaries).

Although several of the houses which he designed in Metuchen are extant, many of his major works and public buildings have been demolished, including the St. James Episcopal Parish House in Montclair, the War Memorial in Metuchen, and the Theological Seminary Chapel in New Brunswick.

In conclusion, the Borough Hall of Metuchen is historically significant for both its association with Metuchen's development as an independent municipality, and its representation of the early twentieth century City Beautiful Movement effort to improve communities. In addition, the structure is architecturally significant as a representative example of early twentieth century Neo-Classical municipal buildings and as a major work by a prominent local architect. Despite several additions to the original design, the structure has retained its overall integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

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Metuchen Borough Hall
Borough of Metuchen,
Middlesex County, NJ

Section number 9 Page 1

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Interviews

Interview with Metuchen resident Clement Fairweather (son of Architect Clement Fairweather).

Interview with Metuchen resident, Kevin Hale.

Maps

1903 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Borough of Metuchen, Middlesex County.

1910 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Borough of Metuchen, Middlesex County.

1920 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Borough of Metuchen, Middlesex County.

1929 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Borough of Metuchen, Middlesex County.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Metuchen Borough Hall
Borough of Metuchen,
Middlesex County, NJ

Section number 9 Page 2

Maps – con't.

1929 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Borough of Metuchen, Middlesex County.

Photographs

1932 Photographs of Borough Hall (on file at the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society).

1945 Photographs of Borough Hall (on file at the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society).

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Continuation Sheet**

Metuchen Borough Hall
Borough of Metuchen,
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Section number 10 Page 1

Metuchen Borough Hall
Borough of Metuchen,
Middlesex County, NJ

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property being nominated is the western portion of Block 102, Lot 25. Beginning at the intersection of Main Street and Middlesex Avenue, the nominated property proceeds north 217.05 feet along Main Street to the end of the property line at the north edge of Borough Hall's driveway. The nominated property line then proceeds east for 198.30' along the rear line of the driveway; north for 49.51', and east for 117.67'. At the northwest corner of the Borough Hall parking lot, the nominated property line proceeds southwest along the eastern edge of the parking lot until it reaches Middlesex Avenue. At the intersection with Middlesex Avenue, the nominated property line proceeds southwest along Middlesex Avenue until it reaches the starting point at the corner of Main Street and Middlesex Avenue.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property includes all of the property immediately surrounding Borough Hall, but excludes that portion of Lot 25 further removed from the structure. The open space lawn areas in front of Borough Hall along Main Street and Middlesex Avenue are important features. However, the park areas adjacent to the Library which extend back to Library Place are not directly related to the architectural or historic significance of Borough Hall.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Metuchen Borough Hall
Borough of Metuchen,
Middlesex County, NJ

Section number Photos Page 1

PHOTOGRAPHS

For all photographs:

Property Name: Metuchen Borough Hall
Property Location: 500 Main Street
Borough of Metuchen,
Middlesex County, NJ
Location of
Original negatives: 81 Rector Street
Metuchen, NJ 08840-1540
Photographer: Nancy L. Zerbe
Date: February 20, 2000

Photograph #1 of 10:

View: Front (south) façade of building, looking northeast.

Photograph #2 of 10:

View: Detail of front entrance of building, looking northeast.

Photograph #3 of 10:

View: Front (northwest) façade of wing, looking northeast.

Photograph #4 of 10:

View: Front (south) façade of wing, looking northwest.

Photograph #5 of 10:

View: Front (south) façade of building showing eastern addition (joining the main portion of the building to the Police Station), looking northwest.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Metuchen Borough Hall
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Section number Photos Page 2

Photograph #6 of 10:

View: Police Station at northeast end of front (south) façade, looking north.

Photograph #7 of 10:

View: Northeast façade of building, looking west.

Photograph #8 of 10:

View: Northeast end of rear (north) façade of building, looking southwest.

Photograph #9 of 10:

View: Center section of rear (north) façade, looking south.

Photograph #10 of 10:

View: Northwest end of the rear (north) façade, looking southeast.

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Metuchen Borough Hall
Borough of Metuchen,
Middlesex County, NJ

Section number Photos Page 3

SUPPLEMENTAL PHOTOGRAPHS

For all photographs:

Property Name: Metuchen Borough Hall

Property Location: 500 Main Street
Borough of Metuchen,
Middlesex County, NJ

Location of
Original negatives: 81 Rector Street
Metuchen, NJ 08840-1540

Photographer: Nancy L. Zerbe

Date: March 17, 2000

Supplemental Photograph A:

View: Entrance foyer, looking northeast.

Supplemental Photograph B:

View: Entrance foyer, looking west.

Supplemental Photograph C:

View: Small east-west corridor, looking east.

Supplemental Photograph D:

View: Main north-south corridor, looking north.

Supplemental Photograph E:

View: Small corridor to the north of the Council Chambers, looking west.

Supplemental Photograph F:

View: Modern corridor connecting to Police Station, looking east.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Metuchen Borough Hall
Borough of Metuchen,
Middlesex County, NJ

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Supplemental Photograph G:

View: Front of Council Chambers, looking north.

Supplemental Photograph H:

View: Rear of Council Chambers, looking south.

Supplemental Photograph I:

View: Staircase to second floor, looking northeast.

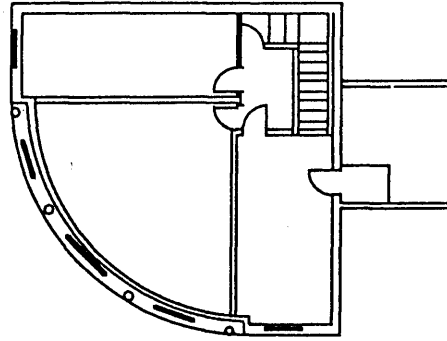
Supplemental Photograph J:

View: Second floor corridor, looking south.

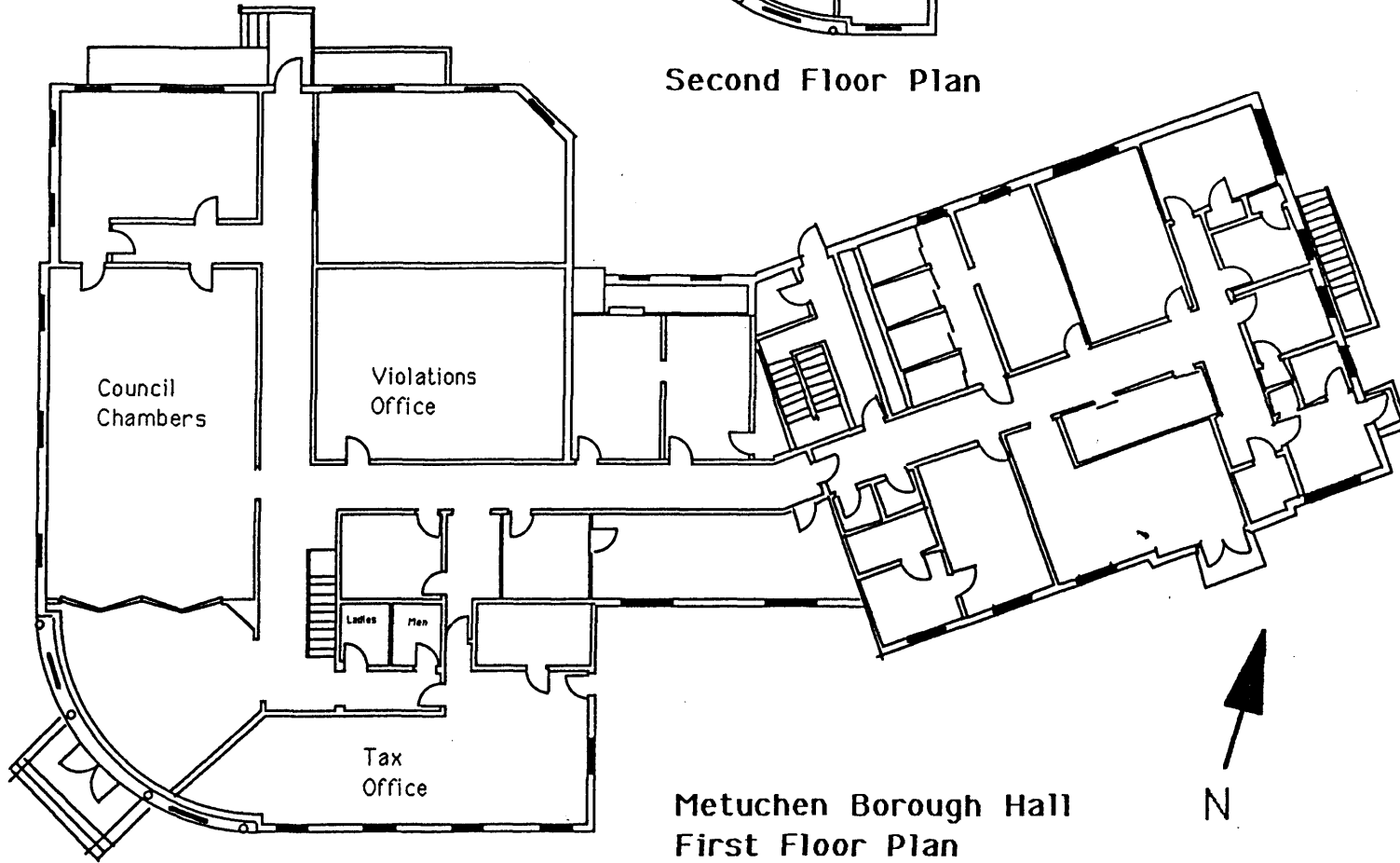
Supplemental Photograph K:

View: Second floor office, looking west.

Floor Plan
Metuchen Borough Hall
Middlesex County, New Jersey



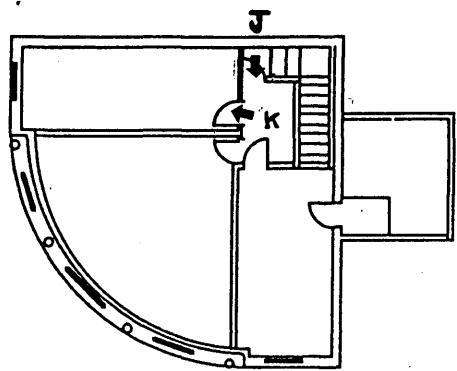
Second Floor Plan



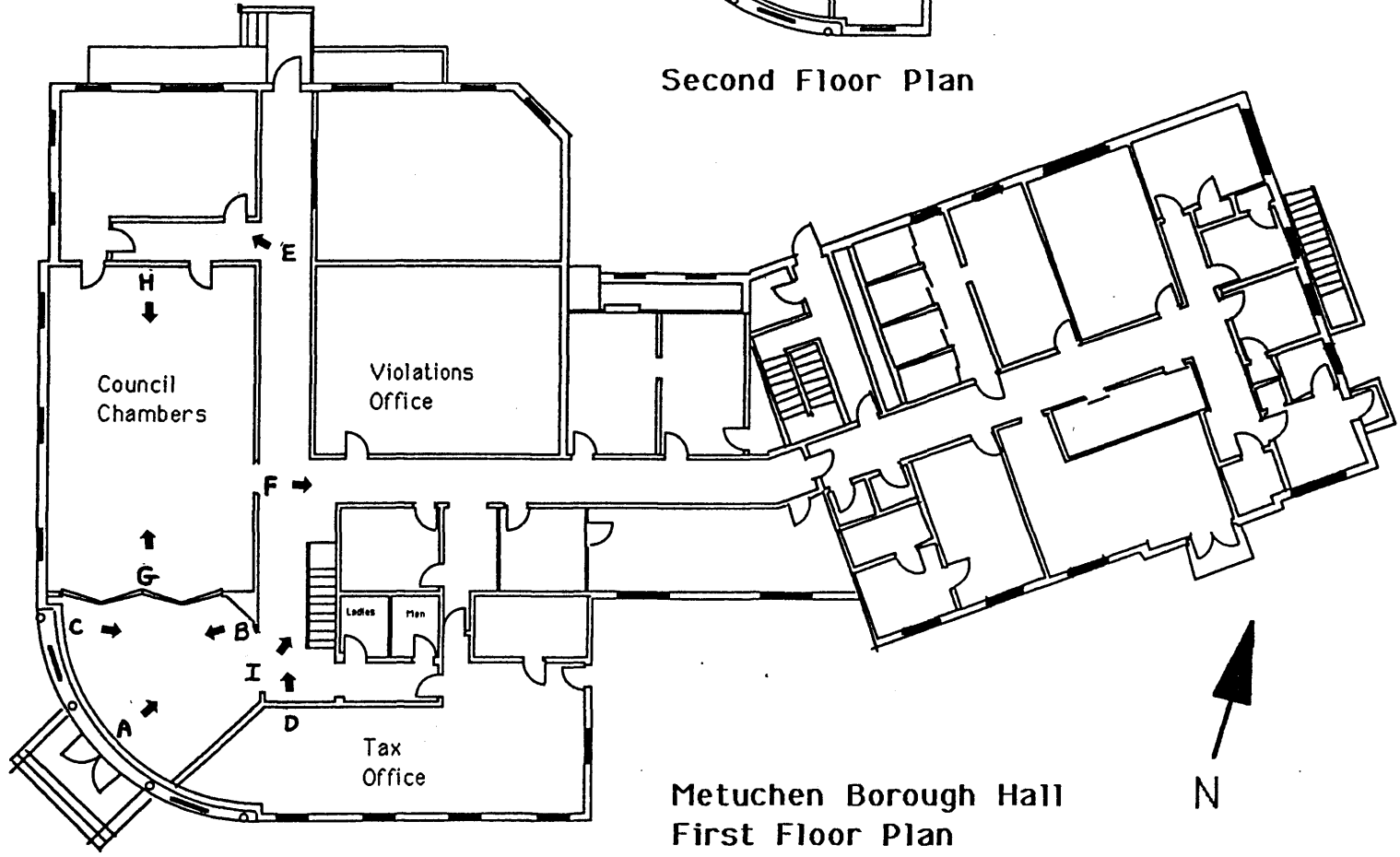
Metuchen Borough Hall
First Floor Plan



Floor Plan
Metuchen Borough Hall
Middlesex County, New Jersey



Second Floor Plan

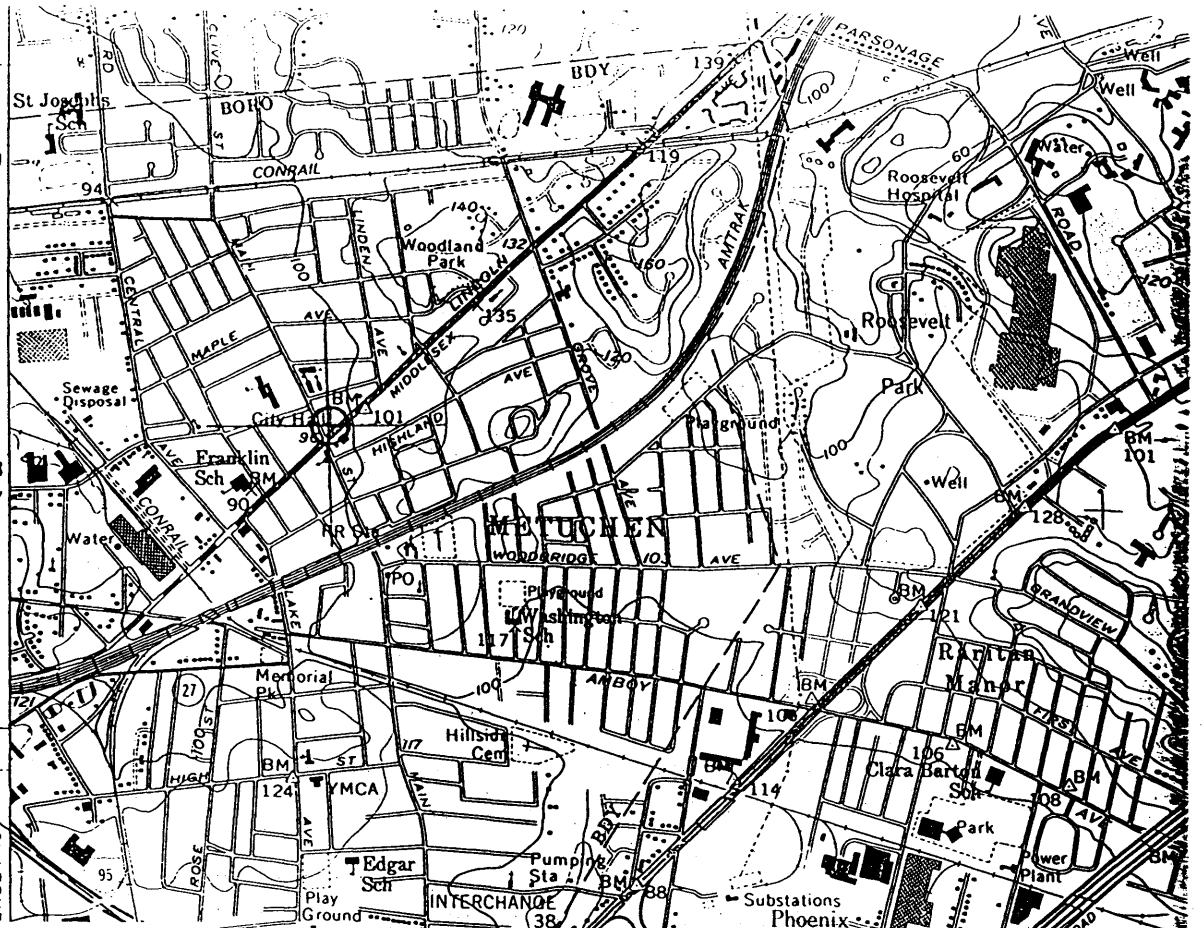


Metuchen Borough Hall
First Floor Plan



Metuchen
Borough Hall
500 Main Street
Metuchen, NJ

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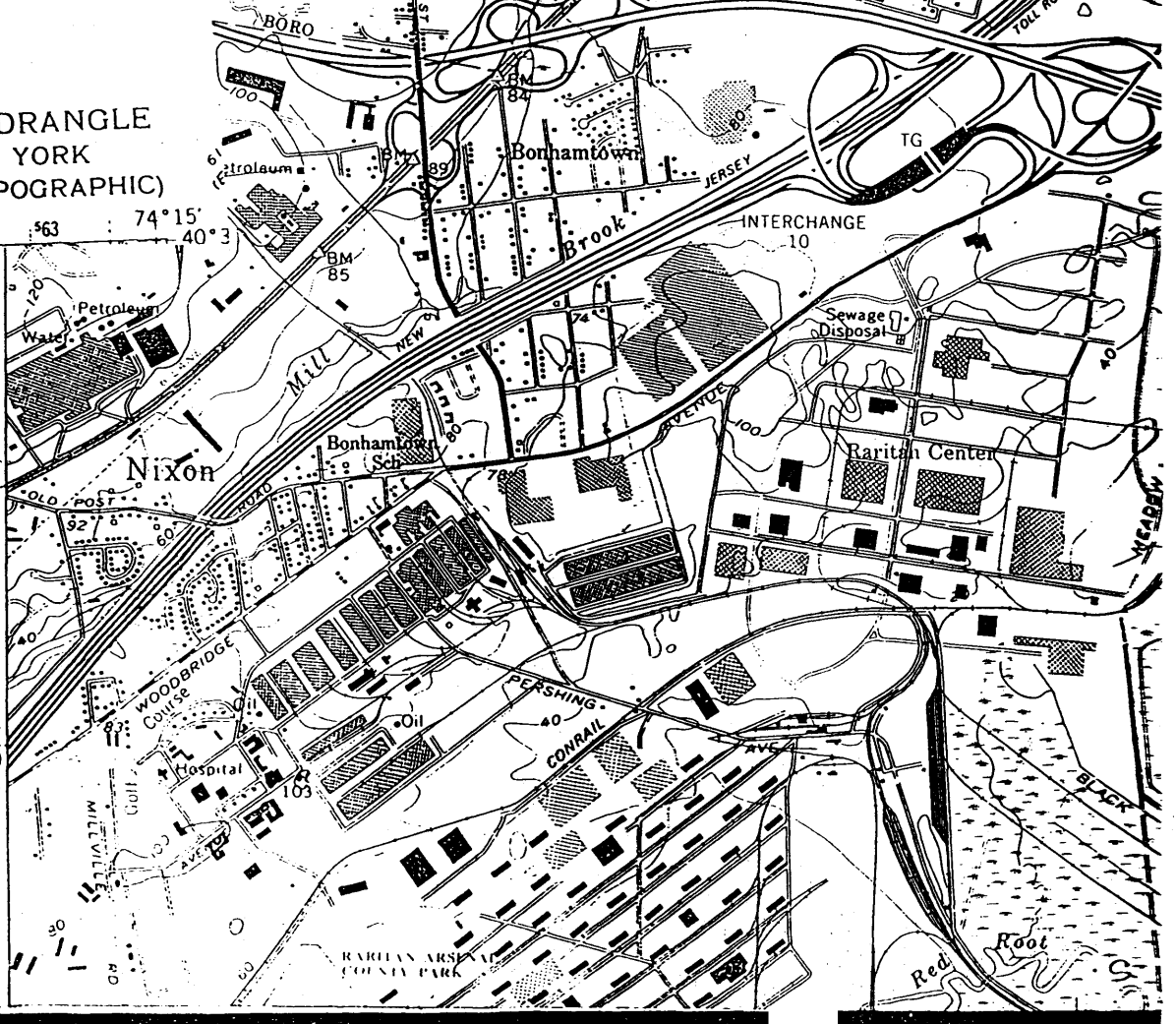
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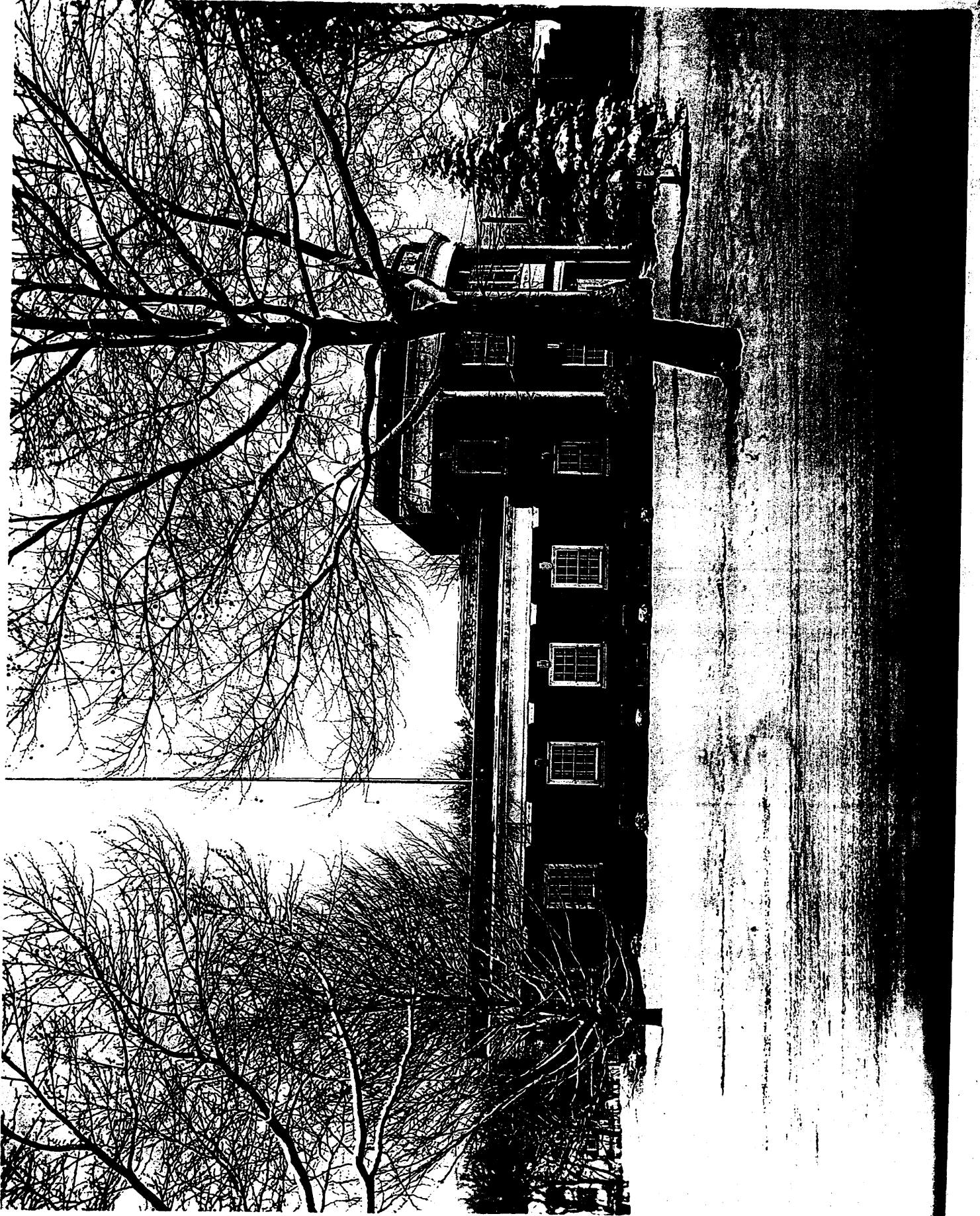
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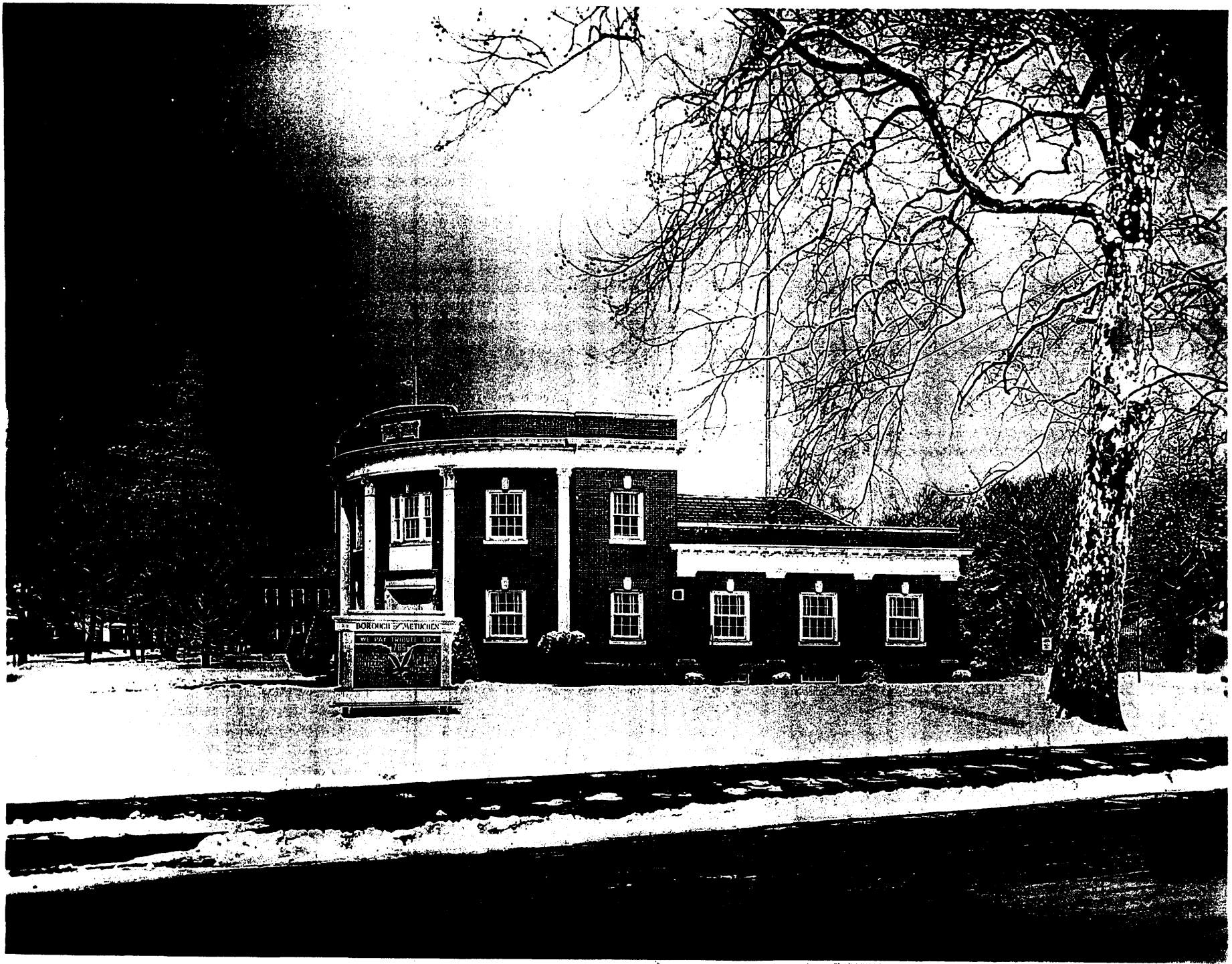




Metuchen Borough Hall, February 20, 1945



Metuchen Borough Hall, February 20, 1945



Metuchen Borough Hall, February 20, 1945



Metuchen Borough Hall, April 16, 1932



Metuchen Borough Hall, circa 1930

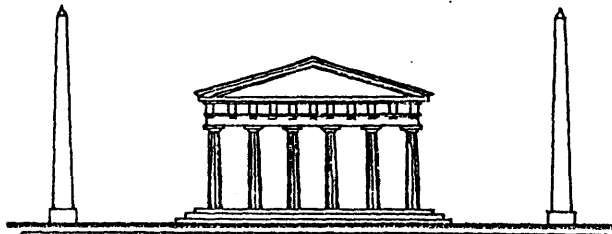
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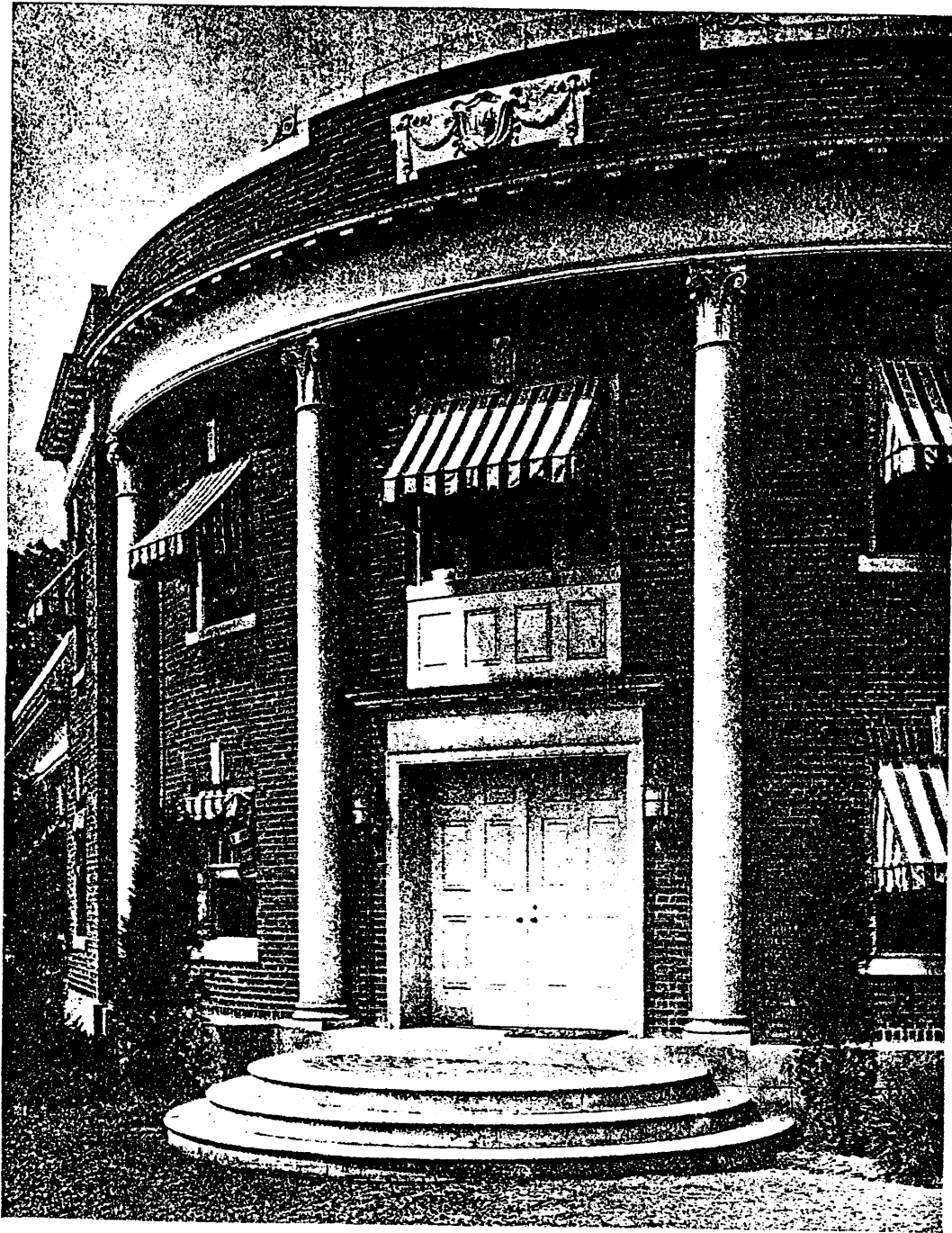
ARCHITECTURAL EXHIBITION

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AND
NEW JERSEY SOCIETY
OF ARCHITECTS
NEWARK

1927





MUNICIPAL BUILDING, METUCHEN, N. J.
CLEMENT W. FAIRWEATHER, Architect.