

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 MUTUAL BENEFIT LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY ✓
and/or common ESSEX CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

2. Location

street & number 300 BROADWAY AND ^{2nd} SECOND STREET N/A not for publication
city, town NEWARK _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district _____
state NEW JERSEY code 034 county ESSEX code 013

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name 300 BROADWAY COMPANY c/o Mr. Lewis Henkind
street & number 286-304 Broadway 565 Fifth Avenue
city, town Newark _____ vicinity of New York, NY 10001 state New Jersey 07102

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. ESSEX COUNTY REGISTRAR OFFICE
street & number 465 HIGH STREET, HALL OF RECORDS, ROOM 130
city, town NEWARK state NEW JERSEY 07102

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Newark Historic/Architectural Preservation Survey (2186.0) has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date 1968 federal state county local
depository for survey records Office of New Jersey Heritage, Dept. 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 type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

DESCRIPTION

The Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company's Broadway Building is a six (6) story building with a basement which features Civic Renaissance elements and ornamentation on the two major facades and in the major interior spaces. The architects were John H. and Wilson C. Ely, of Newark. A master plan was developed for the property to allow a maximum amount of building on the site to be completed in separate phases. The original building represented the first unit, providing accommodations for the Home Office at the time of construction with allowance for substantial growth.¹ The building is located at the intersection of two major streets, Broadway and Second Avenues, with its two classical facades facing these streets. (Photo #1)

The building is flat-roofed, E-shaped in plan. The main portion of the building has two principal facades, the back of the "E", facing north on Second Avenue (Photos #3 & 4) and one leg of the "E" facing east on Broadway Avenue. (Photo #2) The remaining exterior leg of the "E", a minor facade, faces west on Summer Avenue (Photos #7 & 8) and houses the auditorium and gymnasium beneath. The interior leg of the "E" is a service wing housing elevators, rest-rooms and locker rooms. The building is built with steel columns and beams, concrete floor slabs, and masonry exterior walls. The exterior is faced with ashlar patterned limestone on the principal facades and on the south face of the leg facing Broadway (Photo #5) (visible by approaching the building from center city), and is faced with a buff colored common bond brick on the remaining facades. Windows are double-hung bronze with red painted bronze spandrel panels between the third and fifth floors. Exterior entrance doors on the principal facades and the door facing Summer Avenue are bronze and glass with glass transoms. There are solid bronze pocket doors² outside of the entrance doors, used to secure the building.

The building was constructed between 1925 and 1927, as the first unit of construction according³ to the master plan shown in a rendering by Chester B. Price.³ (Photo #31) The master plan showed an addition along Second Avenue which would establish the center window of the group of seven west of the portico as the center facade and would then mirror the portico and east portion of the facade. It is not clear from available information, if the Broadway facade would be duplicated on Summer Avenue. However, because the existing Summer Avenue facade is brick and the remaining facades visible from the streets are not, it is believed that the Broadway facade would also be mirrored, possibly as a third stage of construction.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

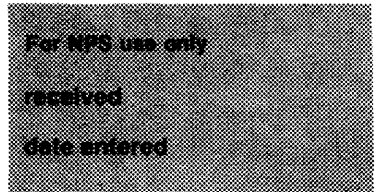
**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company
Newark, Essex County, NJ

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 1



DESCRIPTION

On the first floor, two large corridors (Photo #12 & 13) leading from each portico cross at right angles under a rotunda (Photo #15) marked by double non-fluted ionic columns at each corner and give access to the large open office insurance departments most often dealing with the public (Photos #18 & 19). The elevator lobby (Photos #16 & 17) is adjacent to the rotunda in the service wing. There are shaftways with bronze doors for twelve elevators, but only six bronze elevator cars were ever installed. The elevator lobby is flanked on both sides by staircases to the basement and upper floors. Access to the auditorium is from the east-west corridor or directly from the Summer Avenue entrance. The auditorium (Photos #27 & 28) with seating for 1000, features a fully working stage with a fly gallery, an orchestra pit, sloping floors in the main auditorium and balcony, and a motion picture projection room at the rear of the balcony.

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1925-27 **Builder/Architect** John H. and Wilson C. Ely

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) 1927-1957

SIGNIFICANCE

The Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company Building is significant architecturally as an impressive design of noted Newark Architects, John H. and Wilson C. Ely. It is a good example of Civic Renaissance architecture with classical features and ornamentation characteristic of the period which ended with the advent of the modern movement in the 1930's. It is significant commercially because of its association with a major life insurance company which was a prominent force in the City's economy since the mid 1800's, and as the first major step in the expansion of the City's business district to the north. Educationally, the building is significant for housing the Newark Archdiocese regional high school for boys during a time of peak enrollment (1957-1980).

ARCHITECTURAL

John H. Ely (1851-1932) and his son Wilson C. Ely (1873-1959) began practicing architecture in 1895 by winning a competition for the design of the City Hospital. The firm quickly rose to prominence with designs for the City Hall, the New Jersey Historical Society headquarters, the American Insurance Building, the Firemen's Insurance Building, and the National Newark and Essex Building (the tallest in the state at the time). John and Wilson were both charter members of the New Jersey Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and Wilson was later made a fellow of the Institute. The Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Building was one of the last of the classic and traditional designs of the firm as Wilson Ely noted, "The change was gradual, of course, but in the early 30's you could see the turn. Now everything is more or less modern. Greek and Roman were the style when I started." The style of the building contributed to the architectural significance, and at the same time, may have caused only the first unit of the master plan ever to be executed. By the time the company

9. Major Bibliographical References

Footnotes - See attached continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 3.85

Quadrangle name Elizabeth

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	<u>1</u> <u>8</u>	<u>5</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>1</u> <u>2</u> <u>3</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

D			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

E			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

F			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

G			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

H			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification

Blocks 562 + 563, Lots 9 + 1, City of Newark

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

state	N/A	code	county	code
-------	-----	------	--------	------

state		code	county	code
-------	--	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John Philips, President

organization Treby-Howard-Philips

date April 15, 1983

street & number 4347 Hamilton Boulevard

telephone (215) 395-3373

city or town Allentown

state Pennsylvania 18103

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 R.W. Mc Es Oct. 14, 1983

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer - date

For NPS use only

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

entered in the National Register date 11/17/83

John Phillips
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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

Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company
Newark, Essex County, NJ

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1

For NPS use only

received

date entered

SIGNIFICANCE

was ready to expand the building, the classic styles were too costly to produce.

The building posed some particular problems for the architects, not common among buildings of the period, which they noted:

"The property the Company had purchased required moving from the heart of the city to a location in an outlying section... This, however, demanded an absolutely complete building - one which would provide the employes with all requirements, such as dining rooms, rest rooms, gymnasium, etc., - every convenience and comfort."

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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

Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company
Newark, Essex County, NJ

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 1

For NPS use only

received

date entered

FOOTNOTES:

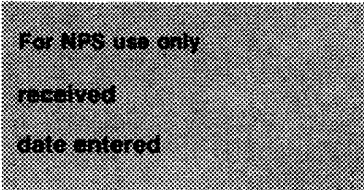
1. Ely, John H. and Wilson C., 'Home Office Building for the Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company, Newark', " Architectural Forum, Part 1", October 1928, p. 497.
2. Ely, John H. and Wilson C., Architects. Architectural drawings for the Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company Home Office Building at Bellview Avenue, Second Avenue and Summer Avenue, Newark, New Jersey, September 30, 1925.
3. Ob. Cit., "Architectural Forum", p. 501.
4. DePace, Anthony J., Architect. Architectural drawings for the Archdiocese of Newark's Essex Catholic High School, Newark, New Jersey. New York City, New York. September 18, 1958.
5. Ibid.
6. Ob. Cit., "Architectural Forum". p. 500.
7. "Newark Evening News", 'Wilson Ely Funeral Set', August 29, 1957.
8. "Newark Evening News", 'Architects to Honor Ely', June 17, 1951.
9. Ob. Cit. "Architectural Forum", p. 497.
10. "Newark Sunday Call", 'What is City's largest product? Insurance, of course!', March 29, 1936.
11. Ibid.
12. Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company, "An Histroic Statement in Behalf of the Board of Directors", Newark, New Jersey, circa October 1954. Reference was made in the "Newark Evening News", 'Building will be Catholic High School', October 25, 1954 to a booklet describing the sale of the Broadway Building which was given to employees at the time the sale was announced.
13. "Newark Evening News", '109 colorful years', October 25, 1954.
14. "American Life Assurance Magazine", April 1862.
15. Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company, "83rd Annual Statement", for 1927, p. 15.
16. Sabine, Julia, "Proceedings", New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey, July 1957, p. 191.
17. Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company, "Pelican", November 1925, pp. 15- 18.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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

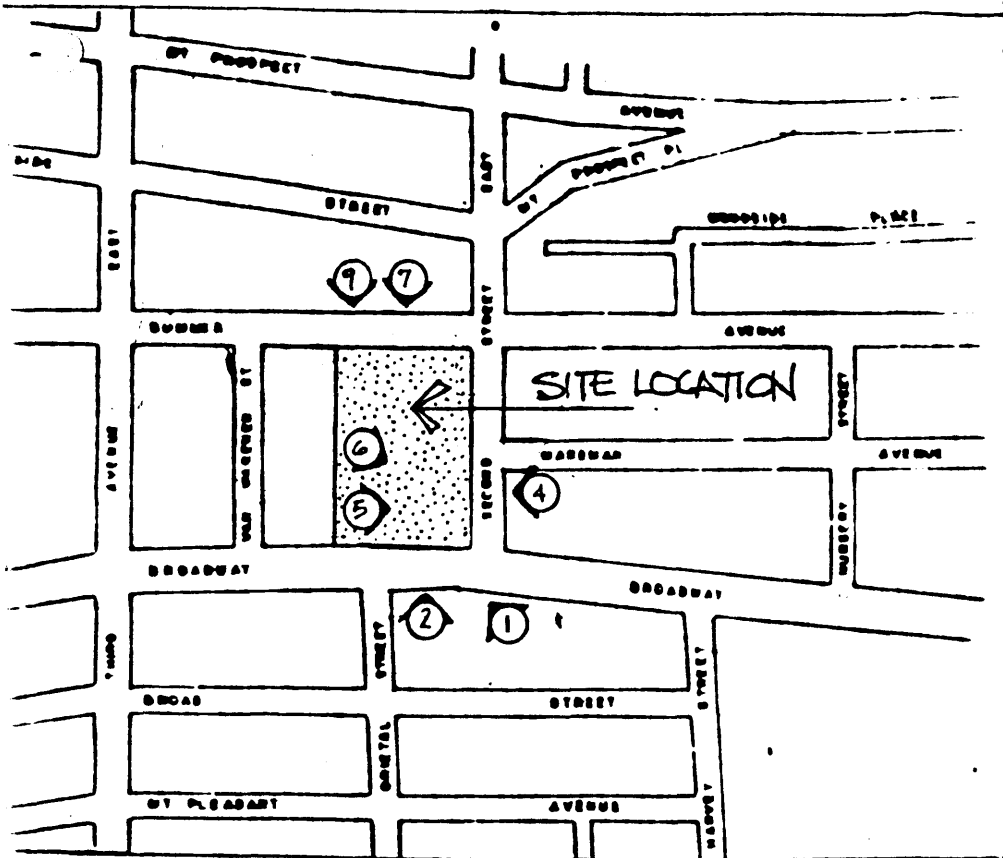
Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company

Continuation sheet Newark, Essex County, NJ Item number 9



Page 2

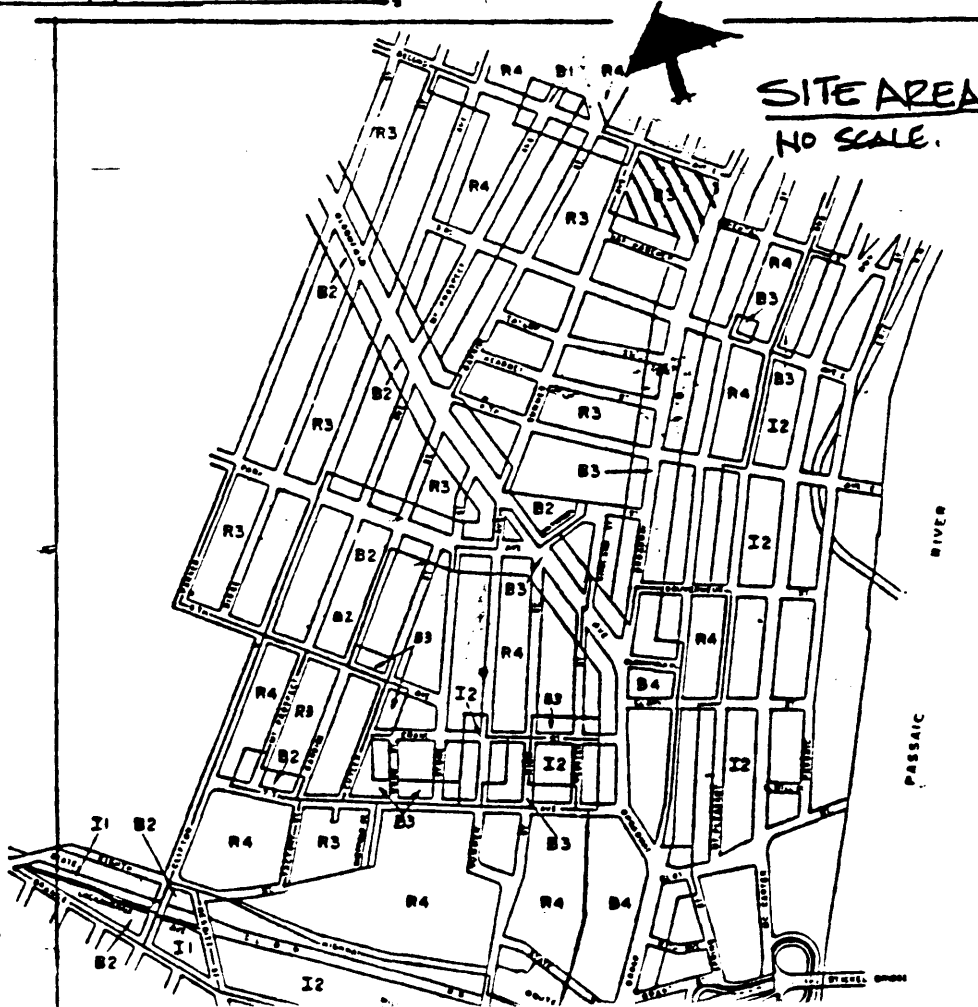
18. Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company, "80th Annual Statement", for 1924, pp. 12 - 13.
19. Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company, "81st Annual Statement", for 1925, p. 10.
20. Ob. Cit. "83rd Annual Statement", pp. 15 - 18.
21. Ob. Cit. "Proceedings", p. 193.
22. Ob. Cit. '109 colorful years'.
23. Ibid.
24. "Newark Evening News", 'New Mutual Benefit Building to bring unique style here', January 31, 1955.
25. "Newark Evening News", 'Building will be Catholic High School', October 25, 1954.
26. Ob. Cit. 'What is City's largest product? Insurance, of course!'
27. "Newark Evening News", 'New Catholic High to open', September 24, 1957.
28. "Star Ledger", 'Archdiocese mulls merger of two schools', December 21, 1979.
29. "Star Ledger", 'Two Catholic High Schools weigh merger', June 14, 1979.
30. "Star Ledger", 'High Schools to merge in Archdiocese', January 10, 1980.



SKETCH MAP
SHOWING PHOTO
LOCATIONS.

MUTUAL BENEFIT LIFE INSURANCE CO.
(ESSEX CATHOLIC
HIGH SCHOOL)
NEWARK, NEW JERSEY

ZONING &
SITE DESIGNATION



MUTUAL BENEFIT LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY
(ESSEX CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL)
NEWARK, ESSEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

