

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Hook & Ladder No. 3

other names/site number Engine 18

## 2. Location

street & number 218 Central Ave

N/A

not for publication

city or town Jersey City

N/A

vicinity

state New Jersey Code NJ county Hudson code 017 zip code 07307

## 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

Rh Boony Ass't Commissioner 12/29/14  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

NJ DEP  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain:)

Joe Edson H. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

8.24.15  
Date of Action

Hook & Ladder No. 3  
Name of Property

Hudson County, New Jersey  
County and State

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)		
		Contributing	Noncontributing	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	1	0	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	0	0	sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	0	0	structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	0	0	objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	1	0	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 / Fire Station

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
COMMERCE / TRADE / professional

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
LATE VICTORIAN / Renaissance  
LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> & 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS / Beaux Arts

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
foundation STONE, BRICK  
walls BRICK, TERRA-COTTA  
STONE: Indiana limestone, blue stone  
roof SYNTHETICS: Rubber  
other CORNICE: METAL

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

See Continuation Sheets, Section 7, pages 1-2.

**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.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See Continuation Sheets, Section 8, pages 1-4.

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- ARCHITECTURE
- POLITICS / GOVERNMENT
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1896-1964

**Significant Dates**

1896

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Charles H. Detwiller, Architect

**Primary location of additional data**

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

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

Hook & Ladder No. 3  
Name of Property

Hudson County, New Jersey  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property .045 acres

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	18 T	580053	4510544	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			

See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is the city lot referenced as 218 Central Avenue, Jersey City, block 04401 lot 00007.

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary delineates the complete property (block and lot).

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carla Cielo  
organization Carla Cielo, Historic Preservation Consultant / Designer date Aug. 2012; REVISED June 2015  
street & number 548 County Road 579 telephone 908-284-9638  
city or town Ringoes state New Jersey zip code 08551

### 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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Medici Associates, LLC  
street & number 218 Central Avenue telephone  
city or town Jersey City state New Jersey zip code 07307

**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.

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National Park Service

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Name of Property

218 Central Ave, Jersey City, Hudson Co., NJ  
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## 7. Narrative Description

Hook & Ladder No. 3 at 218 Central Avenue is a brick firehouse built in 1896 in the Beaux Arts/Renaissance Revival style (photo 02). It is located on the corner of Central Avenue and Ferry Street in the Jersey City Heights section of Jersey City. Central Avenue was commercially developed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Ferry Street is residential and is dominated by the presence of St. Nicholas Roman Catholic Church and school. The firehouse and church are the anchors of the block (photo 01).

The firehouse has a rectangular footprint that occupies its entire 94' x 25' lot. This two-section building has a two-story front section (64' x 25') that originally accommodated a truck room (60' x 21½') on the ground floor, a sitting room and dormitory on the second, and a connecting one-story section at the rear (30' x 25') that was originally designed as horse stables. The penciled message "this house was erected 1896 - Fireman Bill O'Connor" is located on the front interior wall of the second floor (photo 17).

The principal facade fronts Central Avenue and faces west. It is symmetrically organized with three bays with a central truck portal flanked by narrow windows on the first floor and a large central window with a round arched header flanked by narrow, arch-topped windows on the second floor. The "Hook & Ladder No 3" name panel is at the second floor level (photo 04). The front section of the north Ferry Street facade is organized in five bays (photo 05). Both end bays have first floor entry doors and are symmetrically projected beyond the center three bays for definition and balance. First floor windows and doors have flat jack arch headers; second floor windows have rounded arch headers. The one-story rear section has a grouping of three small windows and originally had a stable entrance (now infilled and fitted with windows). The south facade is about a foot away from the adjacent building and has no windows. The east end of the rear section is attached to the adjacent Ferry Street building.

The two-story front section is defined and distinguished from the smaller one-story rear stables by the use of materials and details. A heavy bracketed metal cornice tops the front section; the rear section has slightly corbelled decorative brickwork lining a limestone-capped parapet (photo 06). Both sections have a smooth brick base (about 3-feet high) topped by rusticated brickwork that provides a strong horizontal effect common to the Beaux Arts style, but only the front section has quoined corners. The upper level of the front section has smooth yellow brickwork adorned with paneled brick pilasters with small ionic capitals and medallions (photo 03).

The Central Avenue and Ferry Street facades display a masterful arrangement of decorative brickwork. "More than twenty different styles, shapes, sizes and colors of brick compose the [exterior] walls."<sup>1</sup> Various color bricks were burned to order in the kilns. The brick base, first floor quoins, shadow lines of the first story rusticated brickwork, the second story arched window headers, pilasters and medallions are variegated terra cotta color brickwork intended to contrast with yellow field brick. First floor windows have exaggerated jack arch headers in rusticated brickwork. Mortar is tinted to match the color of the adjacent bricks. Molded bricks line the medallions, paneled pilasters and window surrounds. Decorative bricks molded with either an egg-and-dart motif or dentils are below an Indiana limestone band between the first and second floors that continues to form the cornice of the one-story rear stables. The pilaster capitals, bases and keystones of the arched window headers are brownstone colored terra cotta, as is the "Hook & Ladder No 3" name panel. There is also an Indiana limestone band topping the terra cotta colored base and a bluestone band at grade.<sup>2</sup>

The interior was also finished with an attention to detailing "corresponding in beauty" to that of the exterior.<sup>3</sup> The 24-foot wide truck room has 14-foot high ceilings (Photos 07, 08, 09). It occupied the entire ground floor except for a small section

<sup>1</sup> "New Firehouse Truck No. 3 Will Soon Be in Handsome Quarters - A Symphony in Brick." The Evening Journal (Jersey City: December 5, 1896), p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid; field conditions

<sup>3</sup> "New Firehouse Truck No. 3 Will Soon Be in Handsome Quarters - A Symphony in Brick." The Evening Journal (Jersey City: December 5, 1896), p. 12.

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at the rear of the building which had a locker room, feed room and manure pit. Three stables were in the rear of the truck room (Photo 12). The 9-foot wide truck portal on the Central Avenue side (Photo 10) was originally fitted with “sliding” paneled doors. Two smaller entry doors are on the Ferry Street side. Walls were originally finished with white subway tile to the four foot height and North Carolina beaded pine lined the upper part of the walls and ceiling (Photo 11). The floor was hardwood. The stable area was designed with a lower ceiling, brick walls and a concrete floor. The second floor sitting room had an “ornate open fireplace between two windows” (Photo 13). The dormitory was designed to accommodate 7 beds and was joined to the sitting room by a sliding door (Photos 15, 16). There was also a “toilet room” and a “bathroom” on the second floor. The second floor was finished with hardwood flooring, plaster walls and beaded pine ceilings.<sup>4</sup>

The structure of the firehouse is based on “mill rule” principles. Brick bearing walls support wood joists and rafters that span the full width of the building and are pocketed into the brick bearing walls. The ends of the joists are fire cut - cut on the diagonal to help preserve the exterior bearing walls in the event of a fire. The roof is flat, concealed by the heavy cornice and parapet.

Several fire prevention measures were completed during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century after motorized engines replaced horses to pull fire equipment. These non-intrusive alterations included replacement of the first level joists and wood flooring with a concrete slab and beam floor system; this was later strengthened with additional steel beams. The beaded pine wainscoting was covered with pressed tin. The stables were removed. The height of the truck portal was increased to accommodate larger vehicles (prior to 1938). These changes are important to the history of the building as they represent the transition from horse drawn fire equipment to motorized fire engines - a significant phase in the history of firefighting. In the fourth quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, wood windows were replaced with sympathetic aluminum clad windows. The building was used as a firehouse from 1896 until 2005. It remains in excellent condition, maintaining its integrity of location, design, workmanship and association. The exterior masonry and cornice are nearly 100 percent original. The interior has been renovated for use as the headquarters of a construction company. The interior truck room has been retained in its entirety for vehicular and other storage and the second floor fitted with office partitions that do not touch the perimeter walls or the ceiling. All wall treatments (window and door surrounds, subway tile and pressed tin paneling) have been retained, as has the spiral staircase and the fire pole.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid; field conditions

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**8. Statement of Significance**

The firehouse at 218 Central Avenue, Hook & Ladder No. 3, is locally significant under Criterion A for its association with the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century growth and development of the City of Jersey City. Hook & Ladder No. 3, constructed in 1896, is a tangible expression of the municipal government's commitment to the public service of firefighting and the modernization and expansion of the Jersey City Fire Department, necessitated by the 1869 annexation of Hudson City and Bergen City (formerly Bergen Town) and the 1870 incorporation of a consolidated City of Jersey City. Hook & Ladder No. 3 is located in the section of Jersey City that was formerly the independent municipality of Hudson City and, after annexation, developed as a predominantly residential area known as Jersey City Heights. The firehouse is also significant under Criterion C for its architectural significance as a notable example of a common building type executed in the fashionable late 19<sup>th</sup> century Beaux-Arts/Renaissance Revival style. Hook & Ladder No. 3 was an early work of the subsequently prominent local architect Charles H. Detwiller and the building has retained an extremely high level of integrity. Hook & Ladder No. 3 remained an operating firehouse until Jersey City closed it in 2005. The period of significance begins in 1896 and, consistent with the 50 year requirement for National Register of Historic Places consideration, ends in 1964.

The history of the Jersey City fire department began in 1829 with the formation of an independent volunteer fire company with twenty-nine members, known as the Liberty Engine Company No. 1. At that time, the population of the city was 1,025. Although dedicated to the call of fire fighting, the volunteer group was also a social organization with weekly clam chowders and a steward whose duty was to provide refreshments during and after a fire. Money for hand-pulled, hand-pumped equipment and eventually a building to house the equipment was raised through public auctions. Cisterns located throughout the city provided sources of water, as did the Hudson River.<sup>5</sup> A second volunteer company was formed in Jersey City in 1838 and a third in 1844. Rivalry and disorders from feuds between companies resulted in the custom of providing a separate building for each company - a tendency that lasted into the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>6</sup> Firemen enjoyed their standing in the community and the firehouse was a center of social activity.

The population of Jersey City increased dramatically after 1851 with the construction of the first public water supply system. By 1855, the population exceeded 21,000. Fires were becoming more serious and the volunteer system less effective in their duties. With the development of improved steam powered equipment in the 1850s, larger cities were beginning to switch to the use of a paid fire department instead of volunteers (Cincinnati 1853, St. Louis 1857, Baltimore 1858, Buffalo 1859, Boston 1860, New York City 1865 and Philadelphia 1871).<sup>7</sup> By 1870, Jersey City had become a manufacturing and distribution center and a railroad hub with eight major railroads terminating within its borders. Its population had grown to 82,546,<sup>8</sup> which included the population of Hudson City (currently known as the Jersey City Heights section) that was annexed into Jersey City in 1869. It was home to a large population of Irish and German immigrants. Jersey City was overdue for a modernized paid fire department.

In 1871, an act of the New Jersey Legislature created the first paid fire department in Jersey City and the volunteer system was disbanded over a three-month period. This act represents the acknowledgment of the government's responsibility for public safety and fire fighting. At that time, the department consisted of "ten steamer companies, two hand engine companies, and five hook and ladder companies."<sup>9</sup>

Over the next 30 years, a succession of changes was initiated to improve the force. At the time of reorganization to a paid system the companies were reduced in size, fire fighters were given uniforms and were required to remain at the engine house

<sup>5</sup> "A Century of Progress, an Outline of the History of the Jersey City Fire Department 1829-1936." The Jersey Journal (Jersey City: April 1, 1936).

<sup>6</sup> Alexander McLean, 1895 pp. 107-110; Daniel Van Winkle, 1924 pp. 197-8.

<sup>7</sup> Rebecca Zurier, 1982 pp. 77-80.

<sup>8</sup> John Raum, 1877 p. 278.

<sup>9</sup> Ron Jeffers, 1989 p. 5.

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overnight. Each company had a chief, a foreman, three paid men and additional men on-call known as “buffalos” who had a different payment system.<sup>10</sup> These changes would affect the design of future firehouses as dormitories only became necessary after the overnight requirement was initiated. The steam engines of the 1850s were too heavy to pull by hand and required horses, which were rented or borrowed from nearby stables. After the initiation of a paid system, connecting stables became standard.<sup>11</sup> By 1875, the use of hand-pulled engines was entirely discontinued in Jersey City in favor of horse-drawn apparatus.<sup>12</sup> In 1882, the first fire pole was added to the Engine Company No. 4 Firehouse on First Street in Jersey City by cutting a hole in the dormitory floor. Fire poles were found to be quicker than stairs and soon became a national standard.<sup>13</sup> By the 1890s the proud Jersey City fire department believed it stood “second to none with cities of the same size and population.”<sup>14</sup>

The construction of firehouses in Jersey City in the 1890s reflects both the need to modernize and replace the older firehouses and to add additional up-to-date structures to support population growth. The 1895 Annual Report of the Board of Fire Commissioners in Jersey City states that the “city [was] rapidly extending both north and west and [that it was] absolutely necessary that our department be increased.” At that time, Jersey City had 20 firehouses: 14 brick and 6 frame. Fourteen had been used by the volunteer department. The firehouses, which remained from the volunteer days, were renovated with new floor beams, new stalls, and furnishings or were replaced with a new building.<sup>15</sup> In 1896, Jersey City had 387 fire alarms with nearly a half million dollars worth of loss; the largest losses being Reynolds-Boyce Paper Company, the Lehigh Valley Railroad hay house and a ferry.<sup>16</sup> There were one hundred full time permanent fire fighters and one hundred thirty on-call “buffalos” in Jersey City at that time.<sup>17</sup> The department was in a state of growth. The 1897 Annual Report of the Board of Fire Commissioners in Jersey City boasts 23 firehouses “in full charge of the department” and called for the construction of two additional.<sup>18</sup> This is three additional firehouses from what was listed two years prior and included the construction of Hook & Ladder No. 3.

Hook & Ladder Co. No. 3 shared facilities with Engine Company No. 14 which, by 1895, was described as “cramped” and the territory which it covered too large.<sup>19</sup> Separate facilities were deemed necessary. A site for the new Hook & ladder No. 3 building was chosen on Central Avenue near the Jersey City reservoirs and across from Pershing Field in a then still developing section of Hudson City. Hudson City, which as mentioned, merged with Jersey City in 1869, was largely settled by Germans who arrived after 1850 due to its easy access to downtown Jersey City as well as Manhattan. Central Avenue was developed as a commercial trolley-served thoroughfare, which extended though a residential area. Development of five blocks of Central Avenue between Ferry and Prospect Streets (including the site of the firehouse) was delayed until after 1896 because it was held by the estate of Naomi C. E. Wright, who had died in March of 1888.<sup>20</sup> A comparison between the 1896 and the 1908 Sanborn maps shows that the immediate area south and east of the firehouse was developed between those years.

<sup>10</sup> Alexander McLean, 1895 p. 122.

<sup>11</sup> Rebecca Zurier, 1982 p. 78.

<sup>12</sup> Ron Jeffers, 1989 p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> “A Century of Progress, an Outline of the History of the Jersey City Fire Department 1829-1936.” The Jersey Journal (Jersey City: April 2, 1936).

<sup>14</sup> “Our Fire Fighters - A Department that the People are Proud of.” The Evening Journal (Jersey City: May 16, 1896), p. 12.

<sup>15</sup> “Annual Report Board of Fire Commissioners JC 1895.” Jersey City: A. J. Doan Printers, 1896. pp. 30-31; “Annual Report Board of Fire Commissioners JC 1896.” Jersey City: A. J. Doan Printers, 1897. pp. 30-31; “History of a Year - Splendid Progress Made in the Fire Department.” The Evening Journal (Jersey City: January 16, 1896), p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> “Our Fire Fighters - What they have Done and How they are Equipped for Work.” The Evening Journal (Jersey City: January 16, 1897), p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> “Our Fire Fighters - A Department that the People are Proud of.” The Evening Journal (Jersey City: May 16, 1896), p. 12.

<sup>18</sup> “Annual Report Board of Fire Commissioners JC 1896.” Jersey City: A. J. Doan Printers, 1897. pp. 30-31.

<sup>19</sup> “Annual Report Board of Fire Commissioners JC 1895.” Jersey City: A. J. Doan Printers, 1896. p. 31.

<sup>20</sup> Naomi C. E. Wright was the wife of Edwin R. V. Wright, a prominent lawyer, newspaper editor, Mayor of Hudson City (1855) and one term United States Representative (1855-1857), who died on January 21, 1871.



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A circa 1906 postcard shows its block nearly fully developed with commercial buildings.<sup>21</sup> The firehouse was evidently one of the first buildings built on the former Wright estate.

Hook & Ladder No. 3 exemplifies significant patterns of American firehouse design and culture. The late 19<sup>th</sup> century firehouses aimed “to create a comfortable and attractive home” for the firemen, to include proper sanitation and equestrian facilities and space for the proper care and storage of equipment.<sup>22</sup> When built, Hook & Ladder No. 3 was “deemed a model firehouse” and was declared “the finest in the city.”<sup>23</sup> The first floor was designed with an open plan with a 3-stall stable at the rear of a large steam-heated truck room. Stable doors were automatically activated by the fire alarm opening directly into the truck room allowing the trained horses to assume position in front of the wagon upon opening. The stables were designed with “hygienic principles” to contain foul smells. It had a ventilator roof, feed room and manure pit. Beyond the stables were lockers for the men’s clothing. The upper level contained “comfortable” quarters with a bathroom with bathtub and washstand, sitting room with fireplace and a well-ventilated and heated dormitory planned for 7 beds, a brass fire pole for fast access and a staircase.<sup>24</sup>

The architect of Hook & Ladder No. 3 was Charles H. Detwiller (1863-1940). Detwiller was a prominent local architect noted for his residential work in Jersey City and Northern New Jersey.<sup>25</sup> He was born in 1863 in what is now the Greenville section of Jersey City and enrolled in the first architectural class at Columbia University, graduating in 1885 with a bachelor’s degree. After a three-year apprenticeship in both New York City and Europe he started his own practice in Jersey City. In 1892, he formed the partnership of Detwiller and Melendy in New York City and in 1899 a private practice in New York City.<sup>26</sup> Detwiller married Ethel R. Hassell of Plainfield, New Jersey in 1905 and after which resided there. His social memberships included the Lincoln Association, a group that honored the memory of President Lincoln,<sup>27</sup> the Architectural League of New York, the Sketch Club of New York, the Sons of the American Revolution, the Jersey City Golf Club and the Plainfield Country Club.<sup>28</sup> He was also a founding member and trustee of the Hudson County Society of Architects.<sup>29</sup> He retired in 1938 at the age of 74. Both his son and grandson followed in his footsteps and became preservation architects.

Detwiller was schooled in the classical order of architecture. His schoolwork, which is housed at Avery Library at Columbia University, shows his eye for classical proportions and composition. Neoclassical, Renaissance Revival, and later, Colonial Revival were within his repertoire. Although noted as a residential architect, Detwiller also produced a number of civic buildings in Jersey City. In addition to Hook & Ladder No. 3, three years later, in 1899, he was commissioned to design Engine House No. 15, which is located in the Marion section of Jersey City.<sup>30</sup> This brick firehouse, although larger than Hook & Ladder No. 3, maintained a similar plan, but its neoclassical facade is much simpler and shows the architect’s transition away from the Beaux Arts. Other civic buildings designed by Detwiller in Jersey City include the Women’s Club (Colonial Revival), the Jersey City Golf Clubhouse (demolished) and the parish house for Grace P. E. Church in the Greenville Section (1913).<sup>31</sup> He also entered competitions for the City Hall building in Jersey City (1892)<sup>32</sup> and the Jersey City Library (1898), both of which he came in second.<sup>33</sup> Hook & Ladder No. 3 may be his finest remaining civic building.

<sup>21</sup> Randall Gabrielan, 1999 p. 61.

<sup>22</sup> Van Winkle, 1924 p. 198.

<sup>23</sup> “New Firehouse Truck No. 3 Will Soon Be in Handsome Quarters - A Symphony in Brick.” The Evening Journal (Jersey City: December 5, 1896), p. 12.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> “C. H. Detwiller Prominent Architect, Dead.” Plainfield - Courier News (Plainfield, N.J.: March 23, 1940).

<sup>26</sup> “Class of ’85 School of Mines, Columbia College Twenty Fifth Anniversary Reunion 1885-1910.” New York, N.Y. 1911. p. 38. Note: McConly was incorrectly substituted for Melendy.

<sup>27</sup> “They Honor Lincoln Annual Dinner.” The Evening Journal (Jersey City: February 14, 1898), p. 8.

<sup>28</sup> “C. H. Detwiller Prominent Architect, Dead.” Plainfield - Courier News (Plainfield, N.J.: March 23, 1940); “Golf Club Euchre.” The Evening Journal (Jersey City: November 29, 1899), p. 7.

<sup>29</sup> “Hudson County Architects Organize.” The Evening Journal (Jersey City: February 25, 1904), p. 12.

<sup>30</sup> “Miscellaneous Business.” The Evening Journal (Jersey City: June 21, 1898), p. 6.

<sup>31</sup> “Grace P. E. Church Breaks Ground For Parish Building.” The Jersey Journal (Jersey City: September 8, 1913), p. 3; Personal Communications with Mr. John Gomez (Jersey City Landmarks Conservancy) dated October 5, 2011.

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Italian and French inspired designs were popular for American commercial buildings throughout the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Detwiller’s use of a Renaissance vocabulary for the design of Hook & Ladder No. 3 combines classical composition and detailing with locally available materials - brick and terra cotta - and an innovative approach to the use of color and texture. Although only two stories in height, the building is ordered with a base, body and robust capital. The use of rusticated brickwork to define the first floor base, although a common Beaux Arts theme, uniquely combines depth and tonal variations in brickwork. The exterior has retained a remarkably high degree of integrity and, aside from the replacement of windows and doors, is nearly 100% original.

The cost of the building was \$12,000.00, which included the cost of the site, construction and architect’s fees. This was \$4,000.00 more than what was appropriated two years prior. Arthur S. Perrine was the mason; his bid was \$5,100.00. Joseph Jewkes & Son was the carpenter (\$2,658.00), James F. Blackshaw was the plumber and steamfitter (\$557.00 and \$685.00) and John Pforr the inspector.<sup>34</sup> Detwiller was paid 3.5% of the cost of construction for plans and construction supervision.<sup>35</sup>

Between 1916 and 1924, Jersey City replaced all horse drawn equipment with motorized equipment.<sup>36</sup> This change resulted in the eventual renovation of most firehouses. Firehouse stables were no longer needed and were converted for other purposes. The wooden truck room floors were replaced with concrete to prevent fires and to add rigidity for the heavier vehicles. Wooden staircases were often replaced with metal winder stairs. Pressed tin was used to line walls and ceilings often in place of wood wainscoting or plaster. Today, the architecture of Hook & Ladder No. 3 reflects these common early 20<sup>th</sup> century interior changes, thus representing the evolution of firehouse design.

Today, Jersey City is the second largest city in New Jersey and has a population of 247,597.<sup>37</sup> Over the past 30 years, the downtown manufacturing has been replaced with a vibrant corporate center. However, the Hudson City section and the area served by Hook & Ladder No. 3 have changed little since the days it was built. The move to consolidate firehouses within larger modern facilities was first initiated in Jersey City in the 1970s and the replacement of Hook & Ladder No. 3 was scheduled for the early 1980s.<sup>38</sup> These plans, however, did not materialize and Hook & Ladder No. 3 remained in active service as a firehouse until 2005, when it was closed.<sup>39</sup>

Hook & Ladder No. 3 remains as testimony to the public service of firefighting. It is an excellent example of the firehouse building type representing both the horse drawn era of fire fighting and the transition to the use of automotive equipment. The locally important architect Charles H. Detwiller designed this building in a significant architectural style that was characteristic of the 1890s. Detwiller’s exceptional use of the Beaux Arts style combines an innovative use of materials in color, texture and definition, with the scale and proportions of a classical composition. The interior plan was considered to be a model for others to emulate. Hook & Ladder No. 3 is among this architect’s rare & best surviving public/civic buildings.

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<sup>32</sup> “New City Hall.” The Evening Journal (Jersey City: August 4, 1892), p. 4.  
<sup>33</sup> Front elevation competition entry drawing Detwiller and Melendy Architects Series 2, professional papers, C. H. Detwiller Columbia collection, 1874-1940 (bulk 1881-1885) Columbia University Libraries Avery Drawings & Archives.  
<sup>34</sup> Ibid; “New Public Works - Bids in for Building a New Truck House.” The Evening Journal (Jersey City: April 14, 1896), p. 4.  
<sup>35</sup> “Motions and Resolutions.” The Evening Journal (Jersey City: May 10, 1895), p. 7.  
<sup>36</sup> Ron Jeffers, 1989 p. 7.  
<sup>37</sup> Wikipedia - Jersey City, New Jersey  
<sup>38</sup> “Firehouse Replacement Outline.” The Jersey Journal (Jersey City: March 19, 1979).  
<sup>39</sup> “Closed Firehouse on Central Ave. Won’t Reopen.” The Jersey Journal (Jersey City: August 1, 2006), p. 11.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Hook & Ladder No. 3

Name of Property

218 Central Ave, Jersey City, Hudson Co., NJ  
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   9   Page     1    

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Hook & Ladder No. 3

Name of Property

218 Central Ave, Jersey City, Hudson Co., NJ  
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   9   Page       2      

- 
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- “New Firehouse Truck No. 3 Will Soon Be in Handsome Quarters - A Symphony in Brick.” The Evening Journal (Jersey City), December 5, 1896, page 12. Courtesy of John Gomez, founder of the Jersey City Landmarks Conservancy.
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**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number   9   Page       3      

Hook & Ladder No. 3

-----  
Name of Property

218 Central Ave, Jersey City, Hudson Co., NJ  
-----  
County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Hook & Ladder No. 3

-----  
Name of Property

218 Central Ave, Jersey City, Hudson Co., NJ  
-----  
County and State

-----  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number     Photographs     Page     1    

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**List of Photographs**

Exterior (Refer to photo key)

Photo 01: Front, looking northeast on Central Avenue.

Photo 02: Front and side, looking south from Central Avenue.

Photo 03: Front, looking up at cornice from Central Avenue.

Photo 04: Front and side, second floor, looking south from Central Avenue.

Photo 05: Side, looking southwest from Ferry Street.

Photo 06: Rear and side, second floor looking west from Ferry Street.

Interior (Refer to photo key)

Photo 07: First floor, garage/truck room (before the removal of a non-original partition wall), view facing east (Stables were located in the rear of this space, behind non-original partition wall.)

Photo 08: First floor, garage/truck room (before the removal of a non-original partition wall), view facing northeast, showing windows along the Ferry Street side

Photo 09: First floor, garage/truck room (before the removal of a non-original partition wall), view facing southeast, showing metal winder stairs

Photo 10: First floor, garage/truck room, view facing northwest, showing truck portal on the Central Avenue side

Photo 11: First floor, garage/truck room, showing wall finishes - original glazed subway tile, molded wood chair rail and pressed tin

Photo 12: First floor, garage/truck room, view facing east, showing exposed brick wall in former stable area

Photo 13: Second floor, sitting room, view facing east

Photo 14: Second floor, metal winder stairs from first floor, view looking down

Photo 15: Second floor, former dormitory, view facing east

Photo 16: Second floor, sitting room, view facing west

Photo 17: Second floor, former dormitory, view facing northwest, showing 1896 quotation "this house was erected 1896 - Fireman Bill O'Connor"

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Hook & Ladder No. 3
----- Name of Property
218 Central Ave, Jersey City, Hudson Co., NJ
----- County and State
----- Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photographs Page 2

Historic

Architect's rendering of Hook & Ladder No. 3. "New Firehouse Truck No. 3 Will Soon Be in Handsome Quarters - A Symphony in Brick." The Evening Journal (Jersey City), December 5, 1896, page 12

1938 view of firehouse

Architect's rendering of Engine House No. 15 by Detwiller and Melendy, Architects, Courtesy of Frederic C. Detwiller

HOOK AND LADDER NO 3  
218 CENTRAL AVE  
JERSEY CITY NJ  
HUDSON COUNTY

1BT 580049E

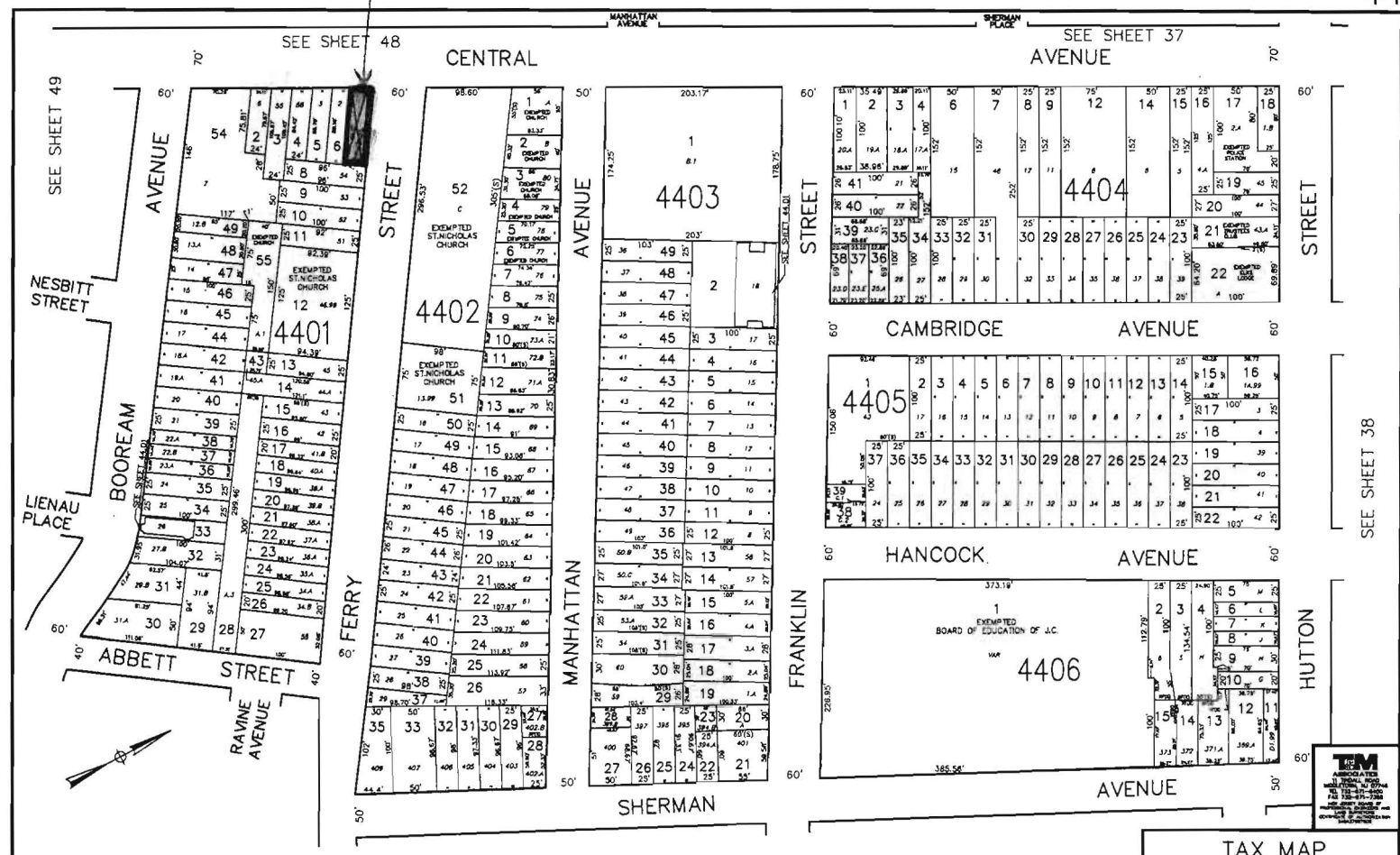
4510547N

JERSEY CITY QUADRANGLE  
NEW JERSEY - NEW YORK  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)  
GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE 8 MI  
2 180 000 FEET (N. J.) '83



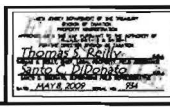


# Hook & Ladder No. 3 Nomination



**SITE PLAN**  
**HOOK & LADDER # 3**  
 218 Central Avenue  
 City of Jersey City  
 Hudson County, New Jersey  
 Scale: 1 Inch = 200 Feet

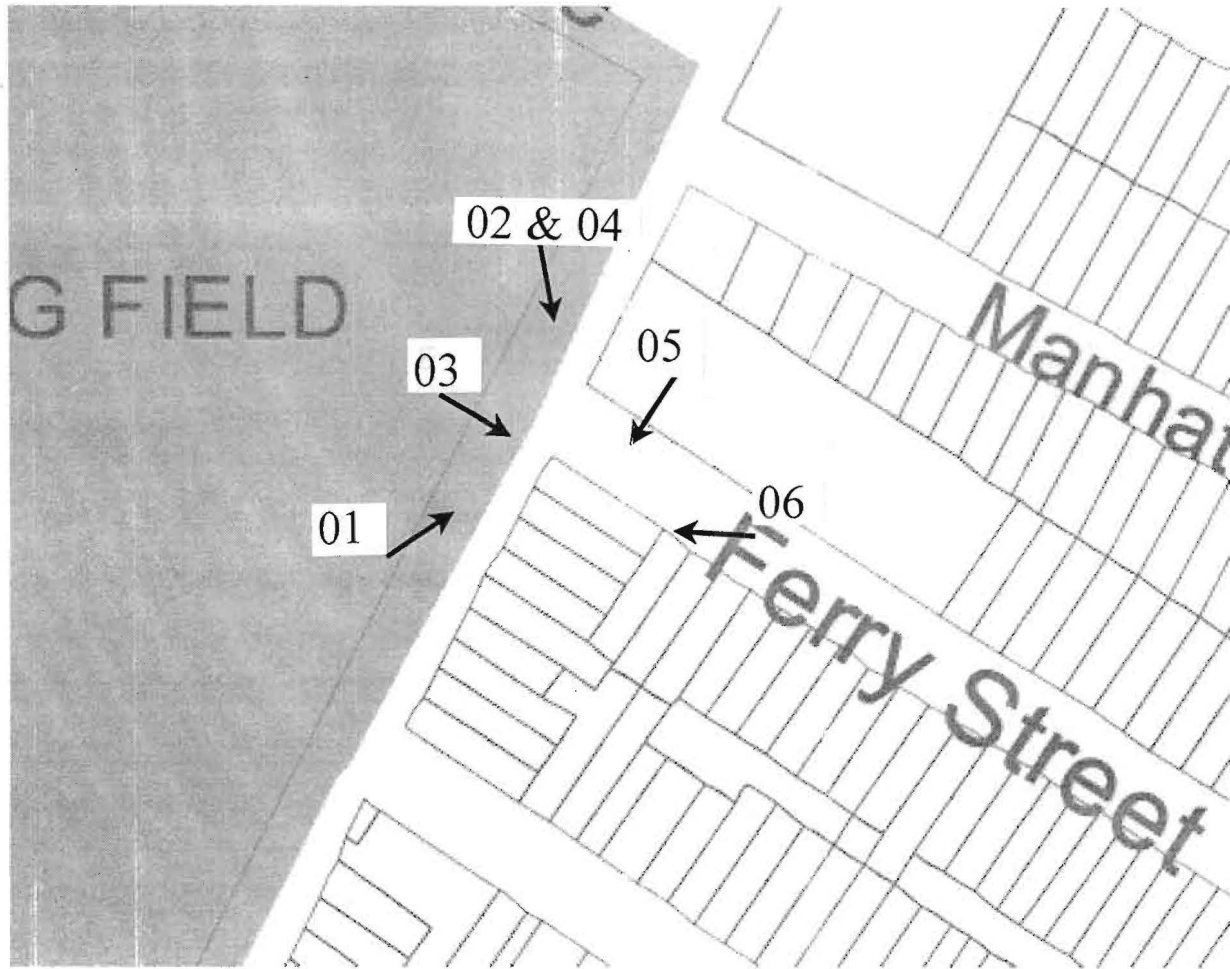
SEE SHEET 45



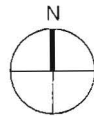
**TAX MAP**  
 CITY OF JERSEY CITY  
 HUDSON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY  
 SCALE: 1" = 50'  
 RICHARD A. MORALLE, P.E., P.L.S.  
 T & M ASSOCIATES  
 11 TINDALL ROAD, MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP  
 NEW JERSEY, 07748

APR - CGA#240427873300

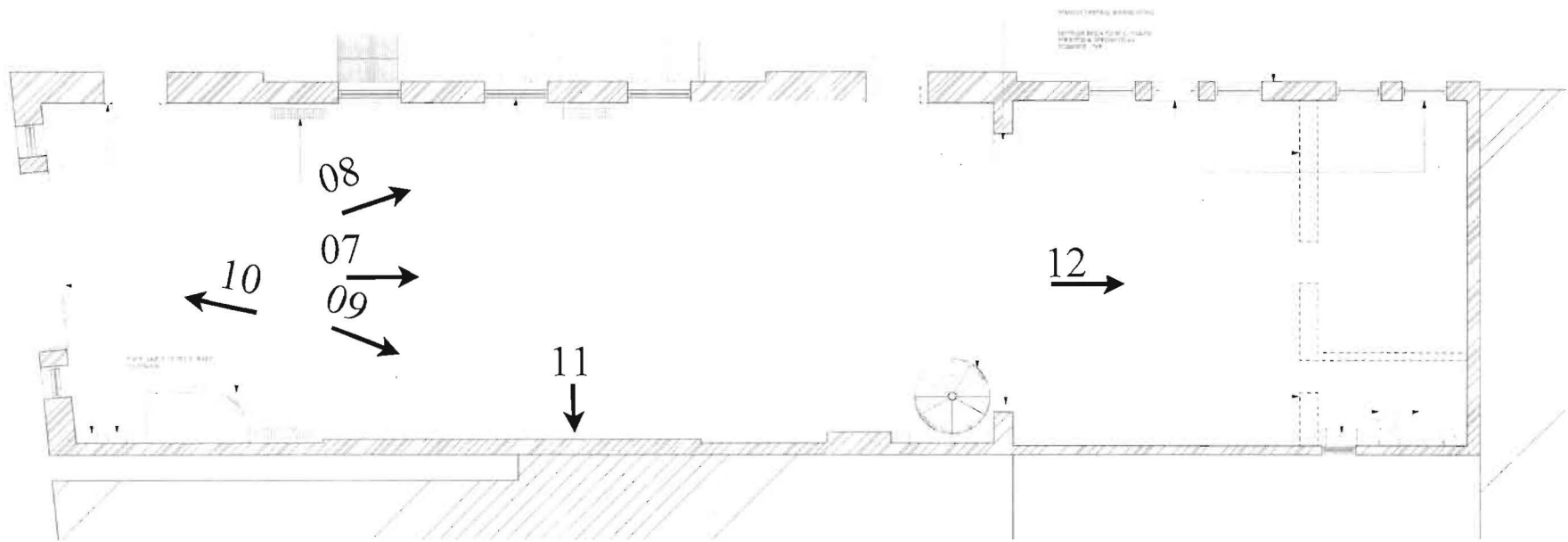
THIS MAP HAS BEEN DRAWN USING COMPUTER AIDED  
 DRAWING SOFTWARE (CAD) AND COORDINATE GEOMETRY.



Part 1 Photo key: Existing Exterior



Hook & Ladder No. 3  
218 Central Avenue Jersey City, New Jersey

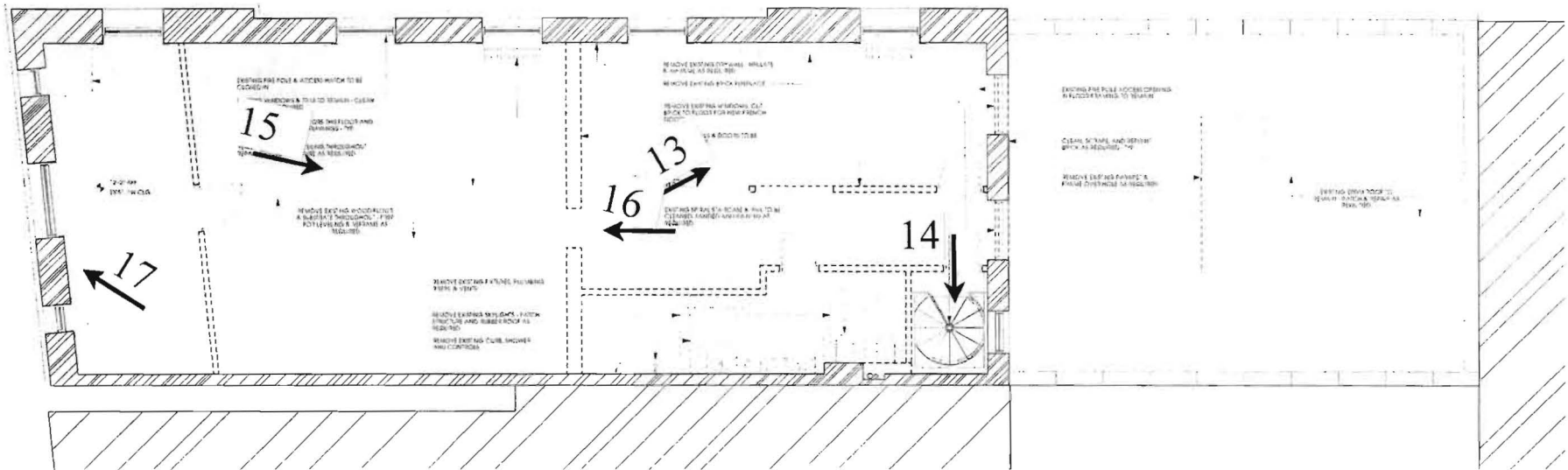


01 FIRST FLOOR DEMOLITION PLAN



Part 1 Photo key: Existing Interior: First Floor showing original open floor plan

Hook & Ladder No. 3  
218 Central Avenue Jersey City, New Jersey.



02 SECOND FLOOR DEMOLITION PLAN

Part 1 Photo key: Existing Interior: Second Floor



Hook & Ladder No. 3  
 218 Central Avenue Jersey City, New Jersey



SHERMAN PLACE

Montgomery

830

Jos. E. Johnson E. Z. Goetz

MANHATTAN

UNION AVENUE

NEW RESERVOIR

No. 3.

UNION AVENUE

N. C. E. Wright

Estate of Wright

WAVERLY

JEFFERSON

Mary Davenport

CAMBRIDGE

HANCOCK

FRANKLIN

AVENUE

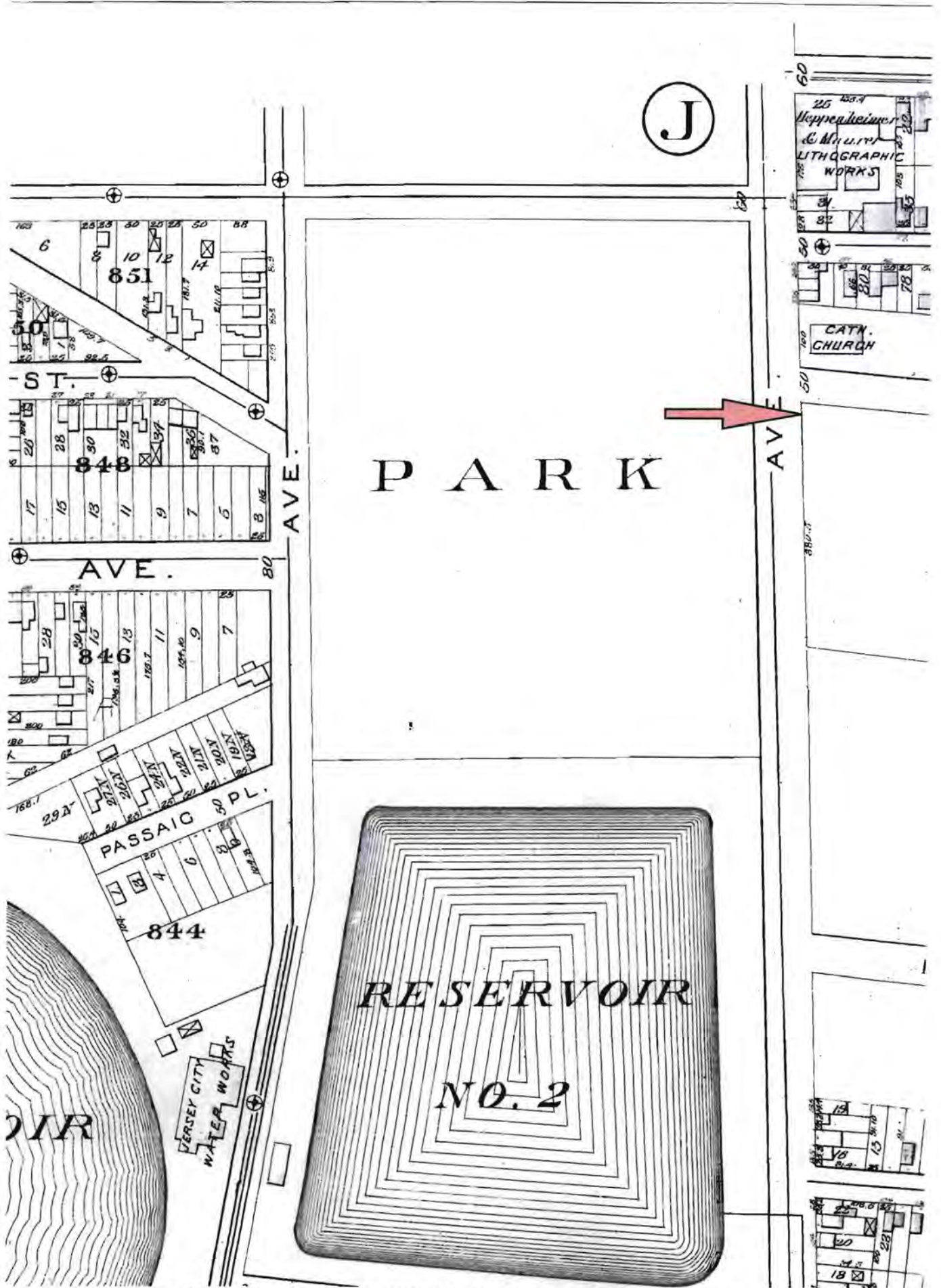
734

WATER ENGINE NO. WORKS.



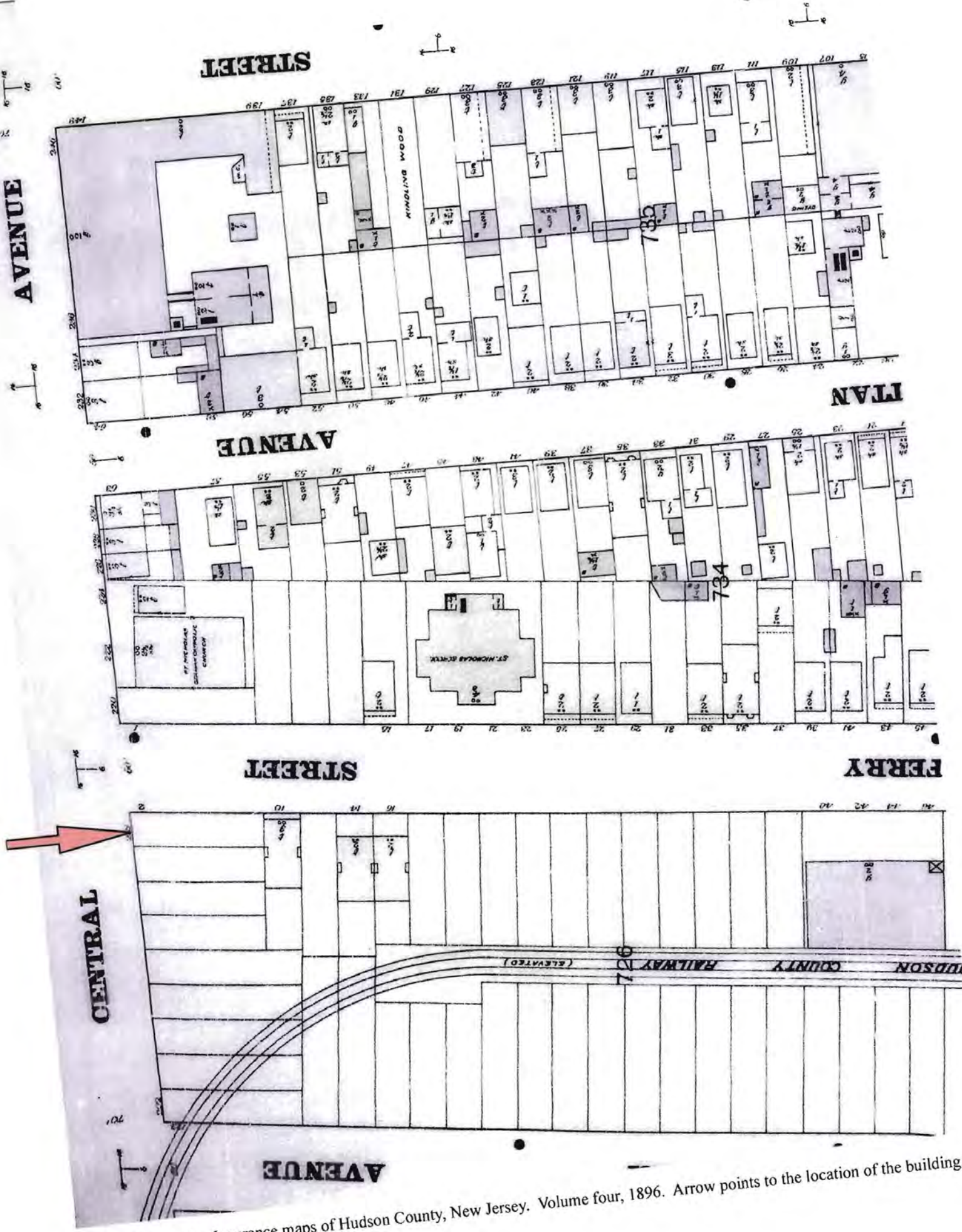
Hopkins, GM. Combined Atlas of the State of New Jersey and the County of Hudson. 1873. Arrow points to the location of the building.





Fowler, L. D. Atlas of Jersey City 1887. Arrow points to the location of the building.

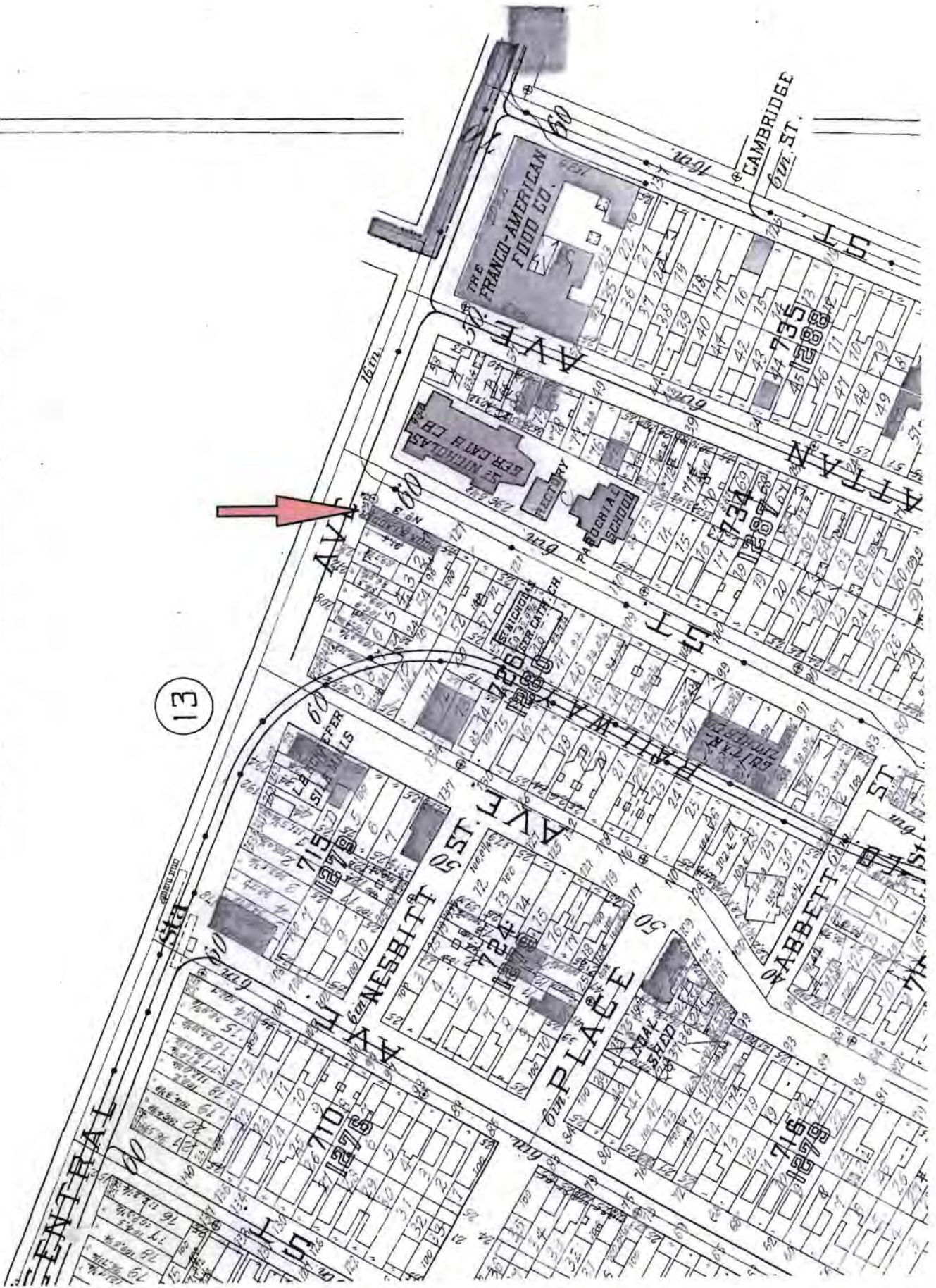




Sanborn Company. Insurance maps of Hudson County, New Jersey. Volume four, 1896. Arrow points to the location of the building.

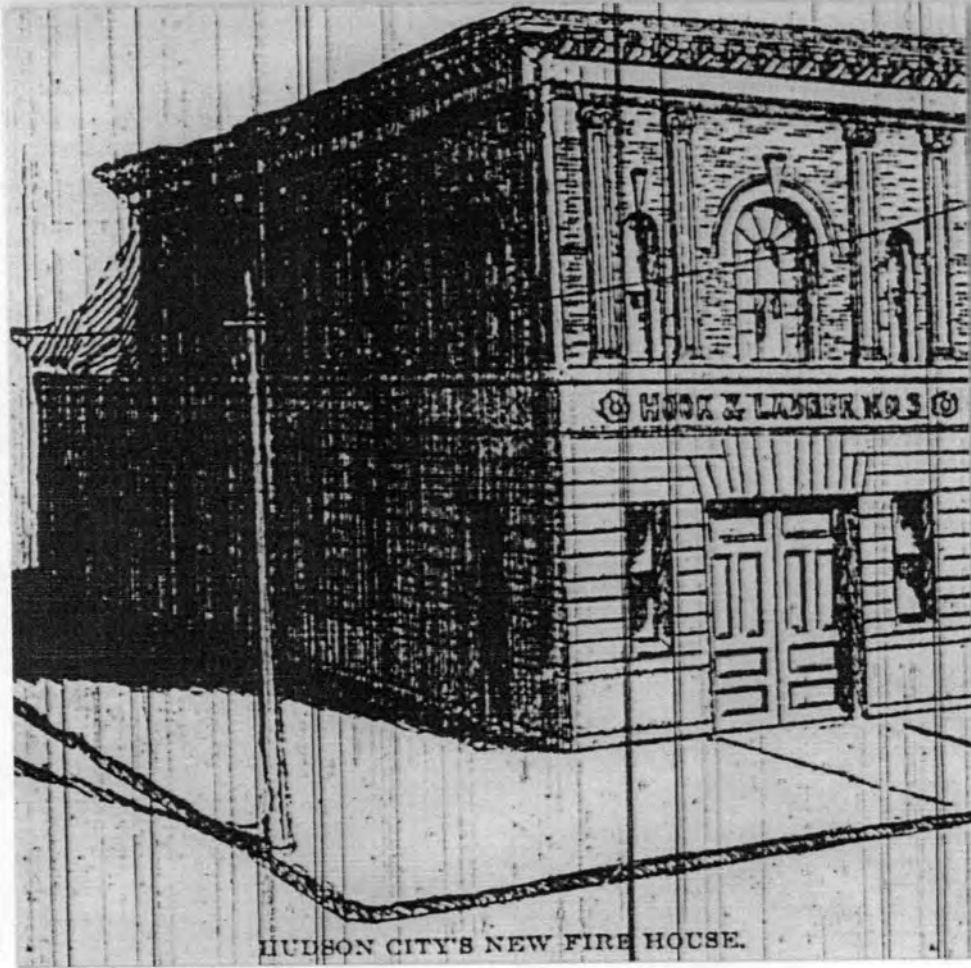


Scale: 150 feet to an Inch



Hopkins, GM. Atlas of the Hudson County 1908. Arrow points to the location of the building.





HUDSON CITY'S NEW FIRE HOUSE.



ENGINE HOUSE NO. 15

517 AND GARRISON AVES.

JERSEY CITY N. J.

DEWELE AND MLENDY ARCHTCTS

NEW YORK AND HUDSON CITY





NJ\_Hudson County\_Hook&Ladder3\_0001



NJ\_Hudson County\_Hook&Ladder3\_0002





NJ\_Hudson County\_Hook&Ladder3\_0003



NJ\_Hudson County\_Hook&Ladder3\_0004



NJ\_Hudson County\_Hook&Ladder3\_0005



NJ\_Hudson County\_Hook&Ladder3\_0006





NJ\_Hudson County\_Hook&Ladder3\_0007



NJ\_Hudson County\_Hook&Ladder3\_0008







NJ\_Hudson County\_Hook&Ladder3\_0011



NJ\_Hudson County\_Hook&Ladder3\_0012





NJ\_Hudson County\_Hook&Ladder3\_0013



NJ\_Hudson County\_Hook&Ladder3\_0014



NJ\_Hudson County\_Hook&Ladder3\_0015



NJ\_Hudson County\_Hook&Ladder3\_0016



NJ\_Hudson County\_Hook&Ladder3\_0017



National Register of Historic Places  
Memo to File

# Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: RESUBMISSION

PROPERTY NAME: Hook and Ladder No. 3

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW JERSEY, Hudson

DATE RECEIVED: 1/04/00      DATE OF PENDING LIST:  
DATE OF 16TH DAY:                      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/18/00  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000049

DETAILED EVALUATION:

ACCEPT       RETURN       REJECT      8.24.15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



## State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Office of the Assistant Commissioner  
MAIL CODE 501-03A  
PO Box 420  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625  
609-292-3541/Fax: 609-984-0836



BOB MARTIN  
COMMISSIONER

CHRIS CHRISTIE  
GOVERNOR

KIM GUADAGNO  
Lt. Governor

December 26, 2014

Mr. Paul Loether, Chief  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Loether:

I am pleased to submit the nomination for the Hook & Ladder # 3, City of Jersey City, Hudson County, New Jersey, for National Register of Historic Places consideration.

This nomination received unanimous approval from the New Jersey State Review Board for Historic Sites. All procedures were followed in accordance with the regulations published in the Federal Register.

Should you want any further information concerning this application, please feel free to contact Daniel D. Saunders, Administrator, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, Mail Code 501-04B, P.O. Box 420, Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0420 or call him at (609) 633-2397.

Sincerely,

Rich Boornazian  
Deputy State Historic  
Preservation Officer



# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Hook & Ladder No. 3

other names/site number Engine 18

## 2. Location

street & number 218 Central Ave

N/A	not for publication
N/A	vicinity

city or town Jersey City

state New Jersey Code NJ county Hudson code 017 zip code 07307

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local  
Rh Boony Ass't Commissioner 1/25/14  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

NJ DEP  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.  
Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:  
\_\_\_ entered in the National Register \_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register  
\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_ removed from the National Register  
\_\_\_ other (explain:)  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Hook and Ladder No. 3

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW JERSEY, Hudson

DATE RECEIVED: 1/16/15      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 2/06/15  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/23/15      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/03/15  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000049

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: Y NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    3/3/15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA Return  
REVIEWER Wm. Ahne      DISCIPLINE H.A.  
TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_      DATE 3/3/15

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



**National Register of Historic Places  
Comments  
Evaluation/Return Sheet**

**Property Name:** Hook and Ladder No. 3

**Property Location:** Hudson County, NJ

**Reference Number:** 15000049

**Date of Return:** 3/19/15

**Nomination Summary**

The Hook and Ladder No. 3 nomination is being returned for technical and substantive issues.

Issues

1. Section 8 of the National Register form is missing information. There is no listing of categories of the areas of significance, period of significance, or significant dates. While a justification is provided for a period of significance from 1896 – 2005, Criterion Consideration G has not been checked and no explanation is provided as to the property’s exceptional importance. Please revise.
2. In Section 8, page 1 of the narrative, Criterion A significance is for “its association with the development of firehouse construction.” For clarity, the area of significance presumably is for politics/government and the summary paragraph should more clearly state that this property illustrates the efforts the local government was undertaking to provide a more efficient firefighting system for Jersey City.
3. If known, please provide the full name of the family associated with the “Wright estate.”

Lisa Deline, Historian  
National Register of Historic Places  
[Lisa\\_Deline@nps.gov](mailto:Lisa_Deline@nps.gov)



HPO Project # 12-1884  
HPO-G2015-052

## State of New Jersey

MAIL CODE 501-04B

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

NATURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES

HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

P.O. Box 420

Trenton, NJ 08625-0420

TEL. (609) 984-0176 FAX (609) 984-0578

CHRIS CHRISTIE  
*Governor*

KIM GUADAGNO  
*Lt. Governor*



July 2, 2015

Patrick Andrus  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Andrus:

The New Jersey Historic Preservation Office is re-submitting the National Register nomination for the Hook & Ladder No. 3, in Hudson County, New Jersey—National Register reference number 15000049, for National Register consideration. The nomination was returned for substantive and technical corrections; specifically for completion of the registration form categories; a justification for the period of significance and its exceptional importance; and to clarify its association with the development of firehouse construction and improved firefighting systems. All changes have been made in compliance with your recommendations.

If you have any further questions or comments, please contact Bob Craig of the Historic Preservation Office staff by email at [bob.craig@dep.nj.gov](mailto:bob.craig@dep.nj.gov) or by phone at (609) 984-0541.

Sincerely,

Daniel D. Saunders  
Deputy State Historic  
Preservation Officer

Resubmission

Edson -

This is the new info  
file for the HOK ladder

I date stamped it

7/8/15. LI = 8.24.15

The sensed remuneration  
looks good. So  
can be listed.

USA