

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

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

HISTORIC

Andrew Carnegie Mansion

AND/OR COMMON

Cooper-Hewitt Museum

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

2 East 91st Street

CITY, TOWN

New York

VICINITY OF

\_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

17th

STATE

New York

CODE

36

COUNTY

New York

CODE

61

**3 CLASSIFICATION****CATEGORY** DISTRICT BUILDING(S) STRUCTURE SITE OBJECT**OWNERSHIP** PUBLIC PRIVATE BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION** IN PROCESS BEING CONSIDERED**STATUS** OCCUPIED UNOCCUPIED WORK IN PROGRESS**ACCESSIBLE** YES: RESTRICTED YES: UNRESTRICTED NO**PRESENT USE** AGRICULTURE COMMERCIAL EDUCATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT GOVERNMENT INDUSTRIAL MILITARY MUSEUM PARK PRIVATE RESIDENCE RELIGIOUS SCIENTIFIC TRANSPORTATION OTHER**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Smithsonian Institution

STREET &amp; NUMBER

1000 Jefferson Drive

CITY, TOWN

Washington

VICINITY OF

STATE

D.C.

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

New York County Hall of Records

STREET &amp; NUMBER

31 Chambers Street

CITY, TOWN

New York

STATE

New York

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

<b>CONDITION</b>		<b>CHECK ONE</b>	<b>CHECK ONE</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Andrew Carnegie Mansion is a three-and-a-half story stone and brick structure designed by the firm of Babb, Cook and Willard in a modified Georgian eclectic style. It was constructed for Andrew Carnegie at a cost of one and a half million dollars from 1899-1903, on Fifth Avenue between East 91st and 90th Streets. The house, which has its main entrance on 91st Street, is faced with rusticated stone ashlar on the first floor level and in the quoins. The windows are also framed in heavy stone trim with individual cornices, some with triangular pediments. The dentillated cornice, and the balustrade and corner urns on the roofline are all carved stone. The front and rear facades of the rectangular mansion reflect the treatment of the house as a central pavilion, with 9 windows on a floor, flanked by symmetrical wings, one window wide. Both the corners of the central pavilion and the wings are quoined. There are numerous balconies at the second floor level; one over the front and rear entrances, one at each of the wing windows, and one running the width of three windows on the west side, overlooking Central Park. A copper and glass canopy is suspended over the main entrance.

The mansion has a hip roof, which is pierced by seven dormers along its length and three along its side, all with segmentally arched roofs.

Attached to the east side of the building is a two story garage and service wing, built of brick with stone ornamentation. Flanking it to the south is the glass roofed conservatory. This end of the property is used as the driveway and delivery port of the mansion. The entire property is enclosed with a stone post and iron rail fence. There is a small lawn area to the west of the house and a much larger garden area on the south of the house. At the southeast corner of the Carnegie property on 90th Street, is a five story townhouse, the Miller House, attached to a row, which was built in 1905 and purchased shortly thereafter by Carnegie for his daughter. In 1919, a brick wing was added to the northwest corner of the rowhouse, and via a long pergola which runs along the rear facade of the mansion, the smaller house could be entered, without leaving the Carnegie property. Although the exterior of the townhouse is unchanged, the interior has been considerably altered by its adaptation to office use.

While the exterior of the Carnegie Mansion has remained largely unaltered, the interior was considerably altered during the building's use as the School of Social Work of Columbia University. It is presently being restored, with some alterations, to its original sumptuous appearance. Outstanding features of the 64 room mansion, beginning on the first floor include a long central hallway which runs the length of the house from east to west. This hallway is repeated on the upper floors as well. The handsome wood panelling and stairway on the first floor are Scottish oak, which was selected and prepared in Scotland and then brought over ready to be installed. The large, open stair formerly extended to the third floor, but has been removed between the second and third floor. The rooms on the first floor included a

(Continued)

# 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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1901-1919

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Babb, Cook and Willard

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The "King of the Vulcans," Andrew Carnegie, concluded a satisfactory sale early in 1901 when he disposed of his iron and steel properties to a syndicate headed by J. P. Morgan for \$492,000,000. In the same year, the once-penniless immigrant erected his mansion at 2 East 91st Street in New York City. It sheltered Carnegie in comfort for the next 18 years, while he disposed of much of his fortune in numerous philanthropic undertakings.

Carnegie was born in Dunfermline, Scotland, on November 25, 1835. About 14 years later the Carnegies sailed to the United States and settled in Allegheny, Pennsylvania. Andrew's hard work led to his becoming the superintendent of the Pittsburgh division of the Pennsylvania Railroad by the time he was 23. He left the railroad in 1865 and organized the Keystone Bridge Company.

While in Europe in 1872, he became familiar with steel making and decided that steel would supplant iron. With his new insight, Carnegie sailed home, soon formed a firm to produce steel, and built in the midst of the depression of 1873 a huge plant. Thereafter, Carnegie's steel company dominated the industry. In 1900 his interests earned a profit of \$40,000,000.

At 65, Carnegie decided to sell his company. He received almost half a billion dollars in bonds and stocks of the United States Steel Company for his properties in 1901. In his remaining years, Carnegie gave away \$350,000,000, a major part of his fortune. He died on August 11, 1919.

The Carnegie Mansion is a three-and-a-half story stone and brick structure situated on Fifth Avenue between East 91st and 92nd Streets. The house is presently undergoing restoration for its use as the Cooper-Hewitt Museum of Decorative Arts, of the Smithsonian Institute.

## Biography

Almost eighty-four years before 1919, Margaret Morrison Carnegie bore Andrew on November 25, 1835, in Dunfermline, Scotland. The future American grew up in and benefited from an intellectual home environment. William Carnegie, a weaver, instilled a love of reading in his son; and William's father a political liberal, gave the boy a liberal bias concerning the British political and social scene.

(Continued)

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

S. Sydney Bradford, "The Andrew Carnegie Mansion," National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings form 10-317, January 20, 1967.  
 John Chamberlain, The Enterprising Americans: A Business History of the United States (New York, 1963).  
 Burton J. Hendrick, The Life of Andrew Carnegie, 2 vols., (New York, 1932).  
 John K. Winkler, Incredible Carnegie (New York, 1931).

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.2 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 8	5 8 7 9 2 0	4 5 1 5 1 5 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(See Continuation Sheet)

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Richard Greenwood, Historian, Landmark Review Task Force

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street NW.

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

DATE

5/30/75

TELEPHONE

202-523-5464

STATE

D.C.

**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.

Boundary Certified  
*Richard Greenwood*  
 DATE 2/3/78  
 date

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

11/24/78

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 2

picture gallery and music room, a handsome dining room and a glass-roofed conservatory. The conservatory has a tiled floor, whereas the rest of the house has wooden parquet floors. Carnegie's massive Aeolean organ was also situated on the first floor although its pipes extended up an additional two stories. It has since been removed to the Henry Clay Frick House in Nassau County and its space is to be occupied by an elevator. Other alterations on the first floor include the conversion of a split-level room on the west of the entrance foyer into a ground level cloak room. In the northwest corner of the house, a fire stair has been installed in a space formerly occupied by bathrooms.

The second floor was used only by the Carnegie family. Included on this floor were a teakwood-panelled library and a billiard parlor, as well as the family bedrooms and dressing rooms. During Columbia's occupancy of the house, a firewall was installed across the length of the house at the stairwell. This wall has been removed during the current restoration and a panelled parapet, surmounted by a pillared arcade has been restored at the stairwell.

The third and fourth floors were used by guests and servants respectively. There was also a gymnasium on the third floor, where Carnegie practiced his golf. These two floors have been considerably altered by partitioning and use as office space.

The current restoration is being undertaken by the new owners, the Smithsonian Institution, in order to convert the building for use as the Cooper-Hewitt Museum of Decorative Arts. The first floor is being generally restored to appearance in Carnegie's days. The upper floors are to be used for office space, reading rooms and stack space for the library, as well as collection display areas. The general restoration is also including the installation of air conditioning and safety systems. The basement, which formerly housed the kitchen, is now to house maintenance facilities.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

By the time Carnegie was thirteen and set out for America with his family, he possessed all of those attributes, physical and personal, that impressed friend and foe in later years. He stood about five-feet-four inches tall, and had a strong constitution, blue eyes, high cheekbones, and a thin-lipped mouth. People enjoyed his pleasant personality and his fund of good stories. They also appreciated his courage, but perhaps feared his intensity. Despite his yearning for success, Carnegie always retained a zest for reading and writing. Ever optimistic, he eschewed formal religious beliefs. He relied on his own abilities, feeling that an individual, through unending effort, could achieve his goals.

Impoverished when he landed in America in 1848, Carnegie enjoyed an income of \$47,860 by 1863. He had sailed with his family from Scotland in May, 1848. Following their arrival in the United States, the family settled in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, where Andrew first worked in a cotton mill for \$1.20 a week. He soon exchanged that job for one as a messenger in a telegraph office, where he learned telegraphy. Carnegie's skill as a telegrapher impressed Thomas A. Scott, the superintendent of the Pennsylvania Railroad's new Pittsburgh division, who employed Carnegie as his private operator at \$35 per month. The young immigrant availed himself of his good fortune and steadily rose in position as his patron, Scott, achieved greater responsibility. When only twenty-three, Carnegie became the superintendent of the Pittsburgh division. Furthermore, Scott recommended investment opportunities to Carnegie, the success of which accounted for \$45,460 of the \$47,860 that Carnegie earned in 1863. The difference between the two sums consisted of his \$2,400-salary from the railroad. The perspicacity of Carnegie is further indicated by the fact that by 1863 he also owned interests in an axle company and a railroad-bridge company.

The success of the railroad-bridge company caused Carnegie to turn from railroads to iron. He left the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1865, when thirty, and organized the Keystone Bridge Company. The young promoter's energy and winning personality secured many contracts for his concern, which built numerous iron railroad bridges as replacements for wooden ones. Beams from Carnegie's concern were also used in the Statue of Liberty and the Eads and Brooklyn Bridges. At the same time that Carnegie prospered in the iron business, he realized handsome profits as a seller of bonds in America and Europe. And it was while on a bond-selling trip abroad in 1872 that he became convinced of the future of steel.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

Like a doubtful suitor, Carnegie's conversion to steel manufacturing needed strong stimulation. Before 1872, he had opposed its production in his company, disliking the difficulty of producing the metal. But while in Europe in 1872, he became fully familiar with steel making and decided that steel would supplant iron. His meeting and talking with Henry Bessemer helped to convince him. With his new insight, Carnegie sailed home and invested in a firm that had been founded, in part, by his brother to manufacture steel. The new adherent of steel then formed a separate firm and began to construct, in the midst of the depression of 1873, a huge plant. The works began production in September, 1875. They were tactfully called the J. Edgar Thomson Works, after the president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, a large user of steel products.

Carnegie's rise as the mightiest Vulcan of all after 1875 sprang from several characteristics. His attention to manufacturing details was not one of them. He never knew much about the technique of either iron or steel manufacturing. But he knew men, and his own suggested epitaph was well chosen: "Here lies the man who knew how to get around him men who were cleverer than himself."<sup>1</sup> Carnegie selected astute lieutenants and then stimulated them to perform brilliantly. Thus Captain "Bill Jones," Charles M. Schwab and Henry Clay Frick contributed significantly to the rise of the Carnegie empire. Driving his subordinates as he drove himself, Carnegie used any and every opportunity to expand. Thus he enlarged and modernized his works during depressions. During the depression of 1893, he so improved his plants that when business revived he produced steel more cheaply than any of his competitors. Such boldness was responsible, in part, for the fact that Carnegie's interests returned a profit of \$40,000,000 in 1900.

The turn of the century also witnessed the triumph of the banker-capitalist, as opposed to the industrialist-capitalist of Carnegie's ilk. Now sixty-five, Carnegie disliked the rising influence of the banker, and he decided to sell. Before selling, however, he so upset the bankers interested in forming a steel trust by threatening to expand his interests that he spurred their leader, J.P. Morgan, to agree to a price of \$492,000,000 in bonds and stocks of the proposed United States Steel Company for the Carnegie Company.

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted in John K. Winkler, Incredible Carnegie (New York, 1931), 307.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 4

Following the consummation of the sale in January, 1901, Carnegie kept \$225,000,000 in 5 percent gold bonds, distributed the remainder among his associates, and felt no regret that the formation of the United States Steel Company had ended his days as an active steel manufacturer.

In his remaining years, Carnegie gave away \$350,000,000 a major part of his fortune. His generosity arose from a sense of charity as well as from a desire to stimulate others to develop themselves. Thus he gave library buildings to many communities, but left it up to the recipients to fill them with books and readers. His many other contributions were also intended to stimulate the improvement of man. And his philanthropy continues to benefit individuals many years after his death on August 11, 1919.



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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

Beginning at the intersection of East 90th Street and Fifth Avenue, proceed east along the north curb of 90th Street for approximately 250' to the eastern boundary of the 1905 Miller House, also owned by the Smithsonian Institution thence north along the eastern boundary of the house and the eastern boundary of the Carnegie property to the southern curb of 91st Street, thence west along said curb to its intersection with the east curb of Fifth Avenue, thence south along said curb for 212' to the point of origin. These boundaries enclose the Carnegie Mansion and the townhouse which belonged to his daughter along the property lines established by the Carnegie family.



East 91st Street

Andrew Carnegie Mansion

Service wing

Conservatory

Driveway

The Pergola

1919  
addition  
The  
Miller  
House

The Garden

Fifth Avenue

East 90th Street

The Miller House

Landmark Boundary shown in red