

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED SEP 7 1977
DATE ENTERED JAN 8 0 1978

**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 ******
Trenton City Hall
AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
309 East State Street
CITY, TOWN
Trenton
STATE
New Jersey
VICINITY OF
COUNTY
Mercer
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
04
CODE
021

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
City of Trenton
STREET & NUMBER
309 East State Street
CITY, TOWN
Trenton
STATE
New Jersey
VICINITY OF

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Mercer County Court House
STREET & NUMBER
CITY, TOWN
Trenton
STATE
New Jersey

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory
DATE
1976
DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS 109 West State Street
CITY, TOWN
Trenton
STATE
New Jersey
FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The building is situated on the south side of East State Street between Canal and Stockton Streets. It is a long rectangular structure whose longer dimension runs parallel to East State Street. The building is set back quite far from the street and has a raised esplanade with a balustrade which extends the entire length of the building. The site itself slopes from east to west. However, the esplanade provides a flat surface upon which to walk.

The building measures approximately 100' by 230' and is three stories high. The exterior of the building with the exception of the rear or southern facade is faced with pure white "Grade A" Vermont marble. The building's overall design appears to be derived primarily from French baroque and Italian mannerist sources.

The exterior is divided into three horizontal sections throughout: there is a heavily rusticated base; a two-story central section; and a cornice with a superimposed, closed attic balustrade. The northern, or East State Street, facade is divided into three vertical divisions: the central section consisting of the main entrance portico with a twelve-bay-long loggia above, and two, three bay-wide end wings. The main entrance consists of a projecting portico, proceeded to by steps, which is pierced by three arches of equal size. Directly behind the three arched openings are three small, mosaic-lined quoin vaults followed by revolving bronze doors. Handsome bronze gates flank these arched doors and are closed at night. Directly above the portico is a loggia which is ornamented with twelve Roman Doric columns which are connected by a balustrade. The window treatment changes from floor to floor as one progresses up the facade of the three-bay-wide end wings. The windows on the first are embellished with Gibbs Surrounds. Those on the second have projecting lintels and sills supported by modified scrolls, and those on the third have eared architraves with patera flanked by swags in their centers.

The east and west facades are three-bays wide and have projecting central sections which correspond to the treatment of the central section of the East State Street facade. On the first story they have single arched doorways flanked by bronze gates leading to revolving doors. On the second and third they have a projecting central portion that consists of paired three-quarter Roman Doric columns flanking an ornamental panel.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1907

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Spencer Roberts

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Trenton City Hall was designed by Spencer Roberts, an architect from Philadelphia in 1907. Two other examples of his work are the Trenton Free Library, done in 1900, and the English Village in Philadelphia and then for three years at art schools abroad. As a result he seems to have acquired the academic reverence for the order, calm and monumentality of classic and Renaissance architecture prevalent at the time.

The general style of the Trenton City Hall reflects this reverence. As a result it is similar to that of most governmental buildings built in the United States from the late nineteenth century until the 1930's. Its simple rectalinearity and strong horizontal emphasis produced by the substantial length of the north and south facades has a peaceful effect sought by the architect. In a newspaper article dating from the time of construction he is quoted as saying,

"Above all things the building must have repose. A nervous building, one that breaks out in all sorts of meaningless projections and nasty knots of supposed ornaments, inconsistent handling of detail, bad scale, all such produce (a) lack of repose and is much like a good story that is spoiled in the telling".

Aspects of the building's general composition and its delicate detail appear in part to have taken their inspiration from French Renaissance prototypes. The window treatment and the handling of the end facades is reminiscent of the Petit Trianon. Similarly the use of the loggia, despite the heaviness of its Roman Doric Columns undoubtedly was derived from such sources as the east facade of the Louvre. The sturdiness of the Roman Doric order, coupled with the building's low horizontality elicit a sense of solidity and permanence.

Many of the governmental buildings in this tradition exude a clumsy sterility that makes them seem lifeless. Such is not the case here, creating what is essentially a municipal office building that acts simultaneously as a handsome and vital monument to the city.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See attached list)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

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

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Property bounded by East State Street, Stockton Street, and Armory Drive and the rear parking lot.

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

Eric Drake

ORGANIZATION

Trenton Dept. of Planning and Development

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

10 Capitol Street

TELEPHONE

609-989-3504

CITY OR TOWN

Trenton

STATE

New Jersey

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL XX

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

TITLE

Commissioner, Dept. of Environmental Protection

DATE

4-13-77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

1-30-78

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

DATE

1-30-78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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The end wings of the rear or southern facade of the building are faced in marble and are identical to those on the front facade. In contrast the central portions are covered with tan face-brick. In its entirety the facade is divided into five three-bay-wide sections, the first, third and fifth of which project out. Moulded, white marble bands separate the floors in the central brick section. All the openings have flat lintels with the exception of those in the central section which have round-arched lintels.

On the first floor of the interior there is a large central hallway and long corridors to the east and west with doorways at their ends. Generally, the same plan exists on the second and third stories as well; however, the square central hallway is positioned slightly to the south of the one on the first story to provide room for the Mayor's Suite on the second story and offices on the third story along the northern side of the building. The main hall on the first story

"is finished in limestone and the corridors are wainscoted to a height of 6' with white marble. The Council Chamber and the Mayor's Suite are finished in walnut, while other rooms with their furniture are finished in oak, stained a dark color and rubbed to a wax finish. Wherever the finish is white marble, close-grained walnut is used in connection with it; and wherever the wall finish is plaster, oak is used...the flooring of all the main hallways is white marble".

At the eastern end of the second story is a two-story Council Chamber. It has gilt ornamentation on the ceiling, and to a lesser extent on the walls, and marble pilasters with gilded Corinthian capitals flanking the openings. On the wall behind the podium there is a large mural by Everett Shinn, a member of the Ashcan School, which depicts the two major industries in Trenton, the steel and pottery industries. The municipal court once existed at the western end of the building's third floor and consequently there is a large stained glass skylight in the center of the ceiling. The room has since been divided up for Public Administration offices.

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Everett Shinn, one of the five original "Ashcan School" painters, painted a mural on the building's second floor. The scene on the left illustrates wire drawing, whereas the one on the right illustrates pottery making. Before painting this mural, Everett Shinn, true to his belief in realism, spent six months alternating between the Roebling Steel Mills and the Harry Maddock Pottery in Trenton. Consequently he managed to capture the spirit of the two working environments and the dignity of the workers performing their jobs. To quote a contemporary article:

This mural "shows an inferno of heat, of vibrant lights, and darks, of dancing shadows. The whole is a riotous harmony played by quick active muscles and fast-moving wheels, still one moment, tense or relaxed the next".

The building's elegant richness and the industrial vitality depicted in these murals are a tribute to the prosperity that belonged to Trenton in the early part of the twentieth century. National Register listing would help to insure their preservation as symbols of that past and as beacons of hope for renewed prosperity in the future.

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