(Rev. 8-86)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: United Charities Building

other name/site number: _____

2. Location

street & number: 105 East 22nd Street

not for publication: N/A

city/town: New York vicinity: N/A

state: NY County: New York code: 061 zip code: 10010

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. ___ See continuation sheet.

_____ _____
Signature of certifying official Date

_____
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria. ___ See continuation sheet.

_____ _____
Signature of commenting or other official Date

_____
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

____ entered in the National Register _____ _____
___ See continuation sheet.
____ determined eligible for the _____ _____
National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
____ determined not eligible for the _____ _____
National Register
____ removed from the National Register _____ _____

____ other (explain): _____

_____ _____ _____
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: Social, civic — Sub: _____
public service organization

Current : Social, civic — Sub: _____
public service organization

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Late 19th and 20th
Century Revival
Renaissance design

Other Description: _____

Materials: foundation unknown roof asphalt
walls limestone, other _____
roman brick,
terra cotta, granite

Describe present and historic physical appearance. _X_ See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: national

Applicable National Register Criteria: B, A

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : _____

Areas of Significance: Social History
Community Planning and
Development
Education

Period(s) of Significance: 1899 to 1912

Significant Dates : 1899, 1902, 1912

Significant Person(s): Josephine Shaw Lowell
Florence Kelley

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Robert Henderson Robertson
James Baker

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.
_X_ See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

_X_ See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary Location of Additional Data:

X State historic preservation office
_ Other state agency
_ Federal agency
X Local government
_ University
_ Other -- Specify Repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Less than one acre

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A	18	585520	4510110	B	__	_____	_____
C	__	_____	_____	D	__	_____	_____

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: The boundaries of this nomination are coterminous with New York City Block 878 Lot 1, as shown on the attached Manhattan Land Book map. The L-shaped lot, located at the northeast corner of Park Avenue South and East 22nd Street, measures 150' along East 22nd Street and 58.9' along Park Avenue. The north lot line extends eastward for 80.10', turns north for 40' and continues eastward for another 68.2'. At its eastern end, the lot is 98.9' deep.

Boundary Justification: The historic association is coterminous with the limit of the urban lot (Block 878 Lot 1) upon which the building stands.

==========

11. Form Prepared By

==========

Name/Title: Dr. Page Putnam Miller, Director, NCC

Organization - National Coordinating Committee For the Promotion of History — Date - September 29, 1989

Street & Number - 400 A Street, SE — Telephone - (202) 544-2422

City or Town - Washington — State - DC ZIP - 20003

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The United Charities Building is located on the northeast corner of Park Avenue and Twenty-Second Street and is flanked by the Kennedy Building on Park Avenue and the Dockbuilders Building of Twenty-Second Street. Situated a block northeast of Gramercy Park, the building is in a mixed-use district, encompassing institutional, commercial, and residential structures.

The Building was designed by R.H. Robertson, one of New York's leading architects at the turn-of-the-century. Known for his series of ecclesiastical and institutional buildings, Robertson's earlier projects reflected Romanesque Revival styles, but by the 1890's, he had begun to incorporate a more classical influence. The UCB contains the ornamental forms derived from this classical design, but elements of the structure recall some of Robertson's earlier Romanesque work.

The street elevation of the nine-story United Charities Building is horizontally divided into four distinct bands, demarcated by cornices. The lowest bank, two-stories of light gray limestone articulated by rectangular window openings with cast-iron enframements, has as its focus a two-story semi-circular arched opening housing the main entrance on East Twenty-Second Street. The entry doors are flanked by granite Ionic columns. The arch is enhanced by guilloche, egg and dart, and bead and reel patterns. On either side of the arch are decorative cartouches which together exhibit the date 1892. Surmounting the entrance is the legend "United Charities Building" in bronze letters, and a tripartite semi-circular window with floral pilasters.

The two smaller entrances on the Twenty-Second Street facade display Classical Revival terra-cotta decoration. The one to the east is more highly decorated, as it is the entrance to the Assembly Hall. Marked by a shallow portico, it is decorated with floral pilasters, cherubs, and bead and reel detailing. The semi-circular window above the doorway displays grillwork indicating "100 ASSEMBLY HALL."

A denticulated cornice divides the facades' lowest band from the upper stories of Philadelphia pressed brick. The second major band, comprising four stories, emphasizes the contrast between flat and curved surfaces. It is articulated by a rhythmic system of trabeated and arched openings. Two-story pilastered triple arches alternate with square-headed paired windows on the third and fourth stories. Square-headed triple windows articulated with two-story Ionic columns alternate with two-story single arches on the fifth and sixth stories, terminating with two two-story arches at the east. A relatively simple cornice divides the sixth floor from the upper stories.

The remaining three stories are slightly recessed from the cornice and constitute the upper two sections. They are an 1897 addition by J. B. Baker. The third horizontal section consists of two stories of paired rectangular windows, divided by terra-cotta panels of foliate garlands. This section is capped by the buildings' most ornate cornice, bracketed and denticulated, above which is the ninth story. On this uppermost story, paired rectangular windows capped by an ornamented gable alternate with a series of three rectangular windows surmounted by an ornate pediment. The sloped roof, which continues behind the gables and pediments, maintains its original Spanish tiles on the Twenty-Second Street facade, and has received matching tiles on the Park Avenue facade.

Originally the United Charities Building had only seven stories, with the exception of the easternmost section which had only six. The elevation was capped with a flat roof with balustrade at the six-story section, and with a sloped roof with gabled and pedimented dormers at the seven-story section.

While the building's main lobby was remodeled (circa 1930s) the foyer retains original oak and glass doors with decorative metal grillwork. The lobby features a marble plaque framed in a Scottish thistle motif, dedicated to the United Charities founder J.S. Kennedy, on an entrance wall. Throughout the United Charities Building, a substantial amount of original woodwork is in place in public corridors and offices. The original marble stairways with iron railings in the form of Ionic colonnettes and ornate newel posts grace most of the building.

One of the most striking features of the building's interior is the assembly hall on the ground floor. It is composed of a rectangular space, defined by four complex piers with Ionic pilasters, surrounded by four quarter-arched coffered vaults. An elaborately detailed metal ceiling incorporates its own lighting system. Clerestory windows with the original leaded panes of stained glass grace the room's north elevation. In addition, the assembly hall retains its richly carved wood wainscotting and trim, fine marble mosaic entrance floor and terra-cotta cheek walls.

In part because the United Charities Building has from its beginning through the present served as a headquarters office building for social service organizations, it has retained an extremely high degree of integrity.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Charity Organization Society and the National Consumers League, located in the United Charities Building, were at the forefront of significant progressive reforms and played a pivotal role in the development of graduate studies in social work. Within the context of the National Historic Landmark Program thematic framework, the United Charities Building has national significance under the theme: XXXI. Social and Humanitarian Movements (J) Poverty Relief and Urban Social Reform, and XXVII. Education (C) Higher Education - 4. Research, Graduate, Post-Graduate Studies, and Professional Studies. During the Progressive era (ca. 1890-1917), government assumed a greater role in social welfare through the enactment and enforcement of laws regulating wages, hours, factory conditions, housing, and the like. No more were poverty, dirt, and labor relations the sole provinces of private endeavors. The stage was set for the New Deal and the modern American state. The women who used the United Charities Building complex (UCB) as their base led the way in accomplishing this major change in our national mindset.

Although places like Hull House in Chicago and the Henry Street Settlement were also centers of reform work, the UCB played a central role in the development of federal reform policies and graduated level social work programs. The initial impetus for a central building to house social welfare organization came from men. In 1885, Charles S. Hewitt, speaking at an annual meeting of the Charity Organization Society, noted the need for a central building to house the city's charitable groups. In 1890, John S. Kennedy, a wealthy businessman, involved with several charitable organizations, offered to undertake the construction of the United Charities Building entirely at his own expense. The purpose of this building was described by Kennedy at the building's dedication in 1893:

> The building was intended to furnish quarters for the four societies named, free or rent, and also to substantially add to their charitable resources. It was also intended to provide offices for other benevolent institutions at a rental lower than that which would be paid by them for similar accomodation elsewhere. All those parts of the building not occupied by the four societies will be rented, with the preference being given to other charitable societies, all of which receive a reduction of 20 percent in their rent." [1]

As a result of this unique opportunity, several nationally important reform groups in which women played a leading role were either born in the UCB or transferred there later. The four original tenant groups were the Charity Organizations Society, which originated the idea of a charities building, the Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, which had joined with the Charity Organization Society in the original subscription drive, the Children's Aid Society, and the New York City Mission and Tract Society. According to the terms of Kennedy's gift, the United Charities were "in effect...their own landlords; for...

they bear all the financial burdens and reap all the financial benefit of the property."[2] It was a successful venture, beneficial to all four organizations.

Of the four owners of the building, only the Charity Organization Society (COS) had significant female leadership. COS was founded in 1882 by Josephine Shaw Lowell, a young widow who had become convinced that charitable work needed to be coordinated in order to have the most impact on the poor. She applied the principles of "scientific Philanthropy" which another building owner, the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor (AICP) had originated. Under Lowell's guidance, the COS became the most effective group of its type, so much so that scientific philanthropy is most commonly associated with COS and the not the AICP. Indeed, once housed in the United Charities Building, the COS and AICP became in fact one organization, and in 1939 joined together as the Community Services Society, which maintains offices in, and manages the UCB.

Lowell's insistence upon rigorous record keeping and client investigation paved the way for the fields of social statistics and professional social work. The UCB provided an inexpensive launching pad for the COS Committee on Statistics and the New York School of Philanthropy (now the Columbia University School of Social Work). The latter was the brainchild of Mary Richmond (1861-1928), who wrote in 1897 of "The Need of a Training School in Applied Philanthropy. "[3] In June of the next year, the COS began a six-week training course taught and attended by both men and women. So successful was this endeavor that in 1902 the COS could report, "The Summer School has become a general meeting place for experienced workers from different cities who share their knowledge with the young men and women...who come from different charitable societies in the several states and cities."[4] By 1907 the New York School of Philanthropy was leading the way in training America's young social welfare professionals.

Social Work was the only profession in which men and women were equals, which helped to alter women's role in the workforce as well as in politics. Many New Dealers attended the School, and they brought to bear in federal programs, the lessons they learned about work relief, the realities of poverty and their remedies, the limits of private charity, and techniques for managing social welfare activities.

The statistical work upon which Josephine Shaw Lowell had relied bore fruit in the hands of perhaps the most important tenant the UCB housed, the National Consumers' League (NCL). The NCL was the most influential of the progressive reform organizations which fought for legislation regulating child labor, women's labor, and wages and hours in general.[5]

The NCL grew out of the concerns of the Working Women's Society, a group which was also a precursor of the Women's Trade Union League, a frequent collaborator with the NCL on labor reform. In 1890, responding to the Working Women's Society

secretary's request, Josephine Shaw Lowell and Mary Putnam Jacobi, a prominent reformer and physician, started a committee to investigate women's working conditions. They named it the Consumer's League, after a similar group in England. They recruited other prominent women, including Maud Nathan, later the New York Consumers' League president, and moved to UCB in 1895. By 1898, the League had succeeded both in drawing attention to harsh conditions in stores and factories and in inspiring a number of similar organizations in other cities and states. Therefore, the National Consumers' League, an umbrella organization, was formed in 1899. It became an immediate occupant of the UCB. Although most of the officers of the NCL were men, its Executive Committee was composed of four women (Maud Nathan and Mary Simkhovitch of New York City, Helen Starr of Philadelphia, and Juliette Wall of Chicago), and its guiding spirit was its corresponding secretary, Florence Kelley. Kelley had been involved in the Working Women's Society in New York before 1891, when she was divorced and moved to Chicago. There she lived in Hull House and became close to Jane Addams, Julia Lathrop, and other important social welfare reformers. Her settlement house experiences and her service as the Illinois Factory Inspector (1893-1897) inspired her devotion to the cause of ending child labor and of improving wages and conditions of all workers. Kelley brought enormous energy and devotion to her Consumers' League Work, and her biographer quoted Felix Frankfurter as saying that she "had probably the largest single share in shaping the social history of the United States during the first thirty years of this century" for her part in securing effective labor legislation.[6]

The National Consumers' League's "single most significant contribution to the cause of prewar reform"[7] was its role in persuading the United States Supreme Court that government could legitimately regulate contracts. Kelley had watched in 1895 as the Supreme Court ruled in Ritchie v. People that the protective legislation for women interfered with the constitutional right of freedom of contract. When that decision was reaffirmed in the 1905 Lochner v. New York ruling, Kelley knew what to do. In 1908, she recruited Louis Brandeis to defend an Oregon law restricting women's working hours. Brandeis' sister-in-law, Josephine Goldmark, was NCL publications secretary and chair of the legal defense committee. With Kelley, Goldmark prepared sociological data to include in what became known generically as a "Brandeis brief." Faced with statistical and descriptive evidence that a higher good would be served by restricting contractual freedom, the Supreme Court ruled for protective legislation in Muller v. Oregon.

Muller v. Oregon "represented a tentative step toward judicial acceptance of economic regulation by government (followed by)...gradual acceptance of the doctrine of freedom of contract."[8] It paved the legal path to New Deal legislation, and it also made possible the establishment of minimum wage laws, ten- and eight-hour days, restrictions on women's work, workmen's compensation, and the end of child labor. Florence Kelley, Josephine Goldmark, Frances Perkins, Molly Dewson, Maud Nathan, and the other women of the Consumers' Leagues were at the forefront of every battle for labor laws.

These reformers set up other organizations with which to do battle as well. Two of the most prominent, the National Child Labor Committee and the American Association for Labor Legislation, had their headquarters in the United Charities Building.

The National Child Labor Committee (NCLC) originated in 1902, when Florence Kelley and Lillian Wald of the Henry Street Settlement (where Kelley lived) founded the New York Child Labor Committee. Specifically formed to expose and push through legislation banning the exploitation of children in factories and sweatshops, the NYCLC funded a study by Helen Marot which was used to pass the New York Compulsory Education Act of 1903. In 1904, Kelley helped to organize the National Child Labor committee (NCLC) to lead the fight on a nationwide scale. The NCLC counted among its members such prominent people as Jacob Riis, Felix Adler, J.G. Phelps Stokes, Abram Hewitt, Dr. Abraham Jacobi (Mary Putnam Jacobi's husband), as well as Kelley, Lillian Wald, Mary Simkhovitch, and Josephine Goldmark. Although they met with some success prior to World War I, the Supreme Court repeatedly found child labor laws to be unconstitutional. However, Wald and Kelley succeeded in persuading Theodore Roosevelt to push for the establishment of a United States Children's Bureau (1912). Finally, Franklin Roosevelt and Frances Perkins (who worked with the Consumers' Leagues) ended child labor with the National Recovery Administration and then the 1938 Fair Labor Standard Act.

The American Association for Labor Legislation (AALL) worked for labor law enforcement, workmen's compensation, and health and safety codes. It began its New York existence in the United Charities Building. Charles Spahr, editor of The Outlook, which had offices in the UCB, told of seeing members of the Charity Organization Society, the Child Labor Committees, and the Consumers' Leagues meeting in the UCB Assembly Hall. When he asked, "What's this bunch call itself today?" he found that it was the first meeting of the AALL.[9]

In 1907, Lilian Brandt of the Charity Organization Society wrote of the United Charities Building, "each succeeding year has added to the conviction that it embodies one of the wisest, most far-reaching benefactions of the period. The 'very lively personal intercourse' among the leaders in the different organizations...could hardly have developed to such proportions without it, nor except for it could there be such effective formal co-operation as there is in so many ways."[10] Not just the women and men who worked in the building, but those who visited their colleagues there as well, drew strength from the gathering of like-minded reformers under one roof. Especially for women it provided a place to begin effective political action. As such, the UCB was the source of fundamental changes in American society, for workers in general and for women in particular.

[1] Address of John S. Kennedy at the Opening of the United Charities Building, March 6, 1893," p. 3.

[2] Ibid.

[3] The Heritage of American Social Work: Readings in its Philosophical and Institutional Development, Ralph E. and Muriel W. Pumphrey, eds. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961) p. 287.

[4] COS Annual Report (1902) in Pumphrey, p. 293.

[5] Judith A. Baer, The Chains of Protection: The Judicial Response to Women's Labor Legislation (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1978) p. 33.

[6] Josephine Goldmark, Impatient Crusader: Florence Kelley's Life Story (Urbana: U. of Illinois Press, 1953) p. 5.

[7] Clarke A. Chambers, Seedtime of Reform: American Social Service and Social Action, 1918-1933 (Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota Press, 1963) p. 6.

[8] Baer, Op. cit., p. 70.

[9] Irwin Yellowitz, Labor and the Progressive Movement in New York State, 1897-1916 (1965) p. 82.

[10] COS Annual Report (1907) p. 20.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Baer, Judith A., The Chains of Protection: The Judicial Response to Women's Labor Legislation (Greenwood Press, 1978).

Baker, Paula, "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920," American Historical Review 89 (June 1984).

Blumberg, Dorothy R., Florence Kelley: The Making of a Social Pioneer (New York, 1966).

Chambers, Clarke A., Seedtime of Reform: American Social Service and Social Action, 1918-1933 (U. of Minnesota Press, 1963)

Chambers, Clarke A., "Women in the Creation of Social Work," Social Sciences Review 60 (May 1986).

Charity Organization Society Annual Reports, 1893-1915.

Coleman, Peter J., Progressivism and the World of Reform: New Zealand and the Origins of the American Welfare State (University of Kansas Press, 1987).

Davis, Allen F., Spearheads for Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement, 1890-1914 (New York, 1967)

Felt, Jeremy P., Hostages of Fortune: Child Labor Reform in New York State (Syracuse, 1965).

Goldmark, Josephine, Impatient Crusader: Florence Kelley's Life Story (University of Illinois Press, 1953).

The Heritage of American Social Work: Readings in its Philosophical and Institutional Development, Ralph E. and Muriel W. Pumphrey, eds. (New York, 1961).

Kerr, Thomas J., IV, "The New York Factory Investigating Commission and the Minimum Wage Movement," Labor History II (Summer 1971).

Nathan, Maud, Story of an Epoch-Making Movement (New York, 1926).

National Consumers' League Report (1911).

Notable American Women, 1607-1950, 3 vols., Edward James et al, eds. (Harvard University Press, 1971).

Notable American Women: The Modern Era, Barbara Sicherman and Carol Hurd Green, eds. (Harvard University Press, 1980).

Sklar, Kathryn Kish, "Hull House in the 1890's: A Community of Women Reformers," Signs 10 (Summer 1985).

Skolnik, Richard, "Civic Group Progressivism in New York City," New York History LI (July 1970).

Trow's New York City Directory, 1891-1925.

Wesser, Robert F¶, "Conflict and Compromise: The Workmen's Compensation Movement in New York, 1890's-1913," Labor History II (Summer 1971).

Wolfe, Allis Rosenberg, "Women, Consumerism, and the National Consumers' League in the Progressive Era, 1900-1923," Labor History 16 (Summer 1975).

Yellowitz, Irwin, Labor and the Progressive Movement in New York State, 1897-1916 (1965).

United Charities Building
105 E. 22nd St., 289 Park Ave. South
& 111-113 E. 22nd Street
New York, New York County
Site map: Nomination Boundary
indicated by heavy line (New York
County Tax Map)