

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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 RECEIVED **NOV 14 1980**
 DATE ENTERED **JAN 12 1981**

**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
Perth Amboy City Hall ^{and} ~~Complex~~ *Surveyor General's Office*
 AND/OR COMMON
City Hall and Surveyor General's Office

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
260 High Street
 CITY, TOWN
Perth Amboy
 STATE
New Jersey
 CODE
034
 VICINITY OF
15th
 COUNTY
Middlesex
 CODE
023

CLASSIFICATION

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

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
City of Perth Amboy
 STREET & NUMBER
260 High Street
 CITY, TOWN
Perth Amboy
 STATE
New Jersey

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Middlesex County Administration Building
 STREET & NUMBER
John F. Kennedy Square
 CITY, TOWN
New Brunswick
 STATE
New Jersey

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Middlesex County Inventory of Historic, Cultural and Architectural Resources
 DATE
1977-1979
 DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
Office of Historic Preservation
 CITY, TOWN
Trenton
 STATE
New Jersey

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Perth Amboy City Hall

The present appearance of the existing Perth Amboy City Hall, located at the corner of High and Market Street, gives the impression of a Victorian Mansard style building, and reflects little of its original appearance. It basically consists of three parts; the earliest and original section is 6 bays wide and 2 bays deep. It is 2 1/2 stories with a campanile type tower in the center of the front facade. This appears to have been one of the late additions, as the front face of the building is flush, and the tower effect carried out through applied pilasters around the main entrance and projecting brickwork embellishing the flat arched 2, centered, second floor windows beneath the truncated pyramid of the tower roof above. The roof of this part of the building is slate, typically Mansard design with a slight curve at the base of the roof where it meets the heavy overhanging cornice. There are dormers with flat arched roofs repeating the pattern of the windows below. A double window dormer is centered on the tower with a broken pediment treatment at its roof line. Two small bullseye windows are in the tower with the trim on sides running down straight for 8 or 10 inches, giving a somewhat Empire appearance. Brick chimneys are on either end of this main segment of the building which are about 3'0" square without decorative or projecting courses.

The heavy cornice overhangs about 2'0" and is supported by pairs of scroll carved brackets located between the windows below. The windows of the second floor are taller than those of the first floor, with flat segmental, slightly projecting, brick heads and heavy sandstone sills. The same treatment is given the first floor windows, with 2 projecting feature belt courses of brick, one just below the second floor window sills and the second about a foot above the first floor window heads. The brick work, which is now painted on this part of the building is slightly different in size of brick and coursing than the additions, which have repeated the design features of projecting belt courses, segmental window heads, etc.

The main front door features double pilasters with Corinthian type capitals supporting a wide flat entablature with a cartouche bracket centered also supporting it just above the door opening. A pair of heavy paneled doors with transom are behind recently constructed storm vestibules at all three entrance doors.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input 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

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

George W. Mercer (1871-1872)-
City Hall

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Setting atop an 18th century foundation, this structure is a good example of a public building in the Second Empire style. The site has been the location of city government from its beginning in the 18th century.

The Perth Amboy City Hall, believed to be the oldest municipal office still in use in the United States and constructed during the years 1713-1714, began its existence as a combination jail and court house. It was built in response to Perth Amboy's designation in 1713 by the Provincial Assembly (Legislature) of New Jersey as the location for the Middlesex County Court House and Jail. City Hall also became the meeting place of the Provincial Assembly when it sat in East Jersey (since Perth Amboy was its capital) and the site wherein New Jersey's Royal Governors were inaugurated. As such, City Hall was a seat of "state" government at this time.

City Hall burned in 1731 and was not rebuilt until approximately 1745. It was again destroyed by fire when, in 1765(6?) a man named Martin, angered by his earlier imprisonment on debt charges allegedly set fire the building. Its reconstruction was authorized by the Provincial Assembly on June 28, 1766 and was finished the next year. Upon completion, City Hall rose two and one-half stories high with a belfry (cupola) on top. It is uncertain as to how much of the original walls were incorporated in the rebuilding, but it is known that this 1767 structure later formed the nucleus for the building which stands today.

No longer a jail, City Hall still housed the Middlesex County Court and remained the meeting place of the Provincial Assembly. In addition, it became the location for meetings for the Governor's Council, town meetings of the Corporation of Perth Amboy (chartered in 1718), and the Supreme Court of New Jersey. City Hall had now become the center of state and local government.

After the Revolutionary War, the capital was moved to Trenton and the seat of County Government transferred to New Brunswick. As a result, City Hall's only uses were those of a schoolhouse and a place for town meetings. Even though no longer a center of state government, City Hall was the site where the New Jersey Assembly ratified, in 1790, the Bill of Rights, making New Jersey the first state to do so.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Krogh, Albert C., Historic Perth Amboy and A Story of Odd Fellowship, (New York, Vantage Press), 1974.

Whitehead, William A., Contributions to the Early History of Perth Amboy, (New York), 1856.

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 4/10 th

QUADRANGLE NAME Perth Amboy, NJ-NY

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 18 562210 4484005
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Block 55, Lot 1 - Perth Amboy Tax Map

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
 Jack Dudas

Revisions by Office of Cultural & Environ.
 Services - 5/1980

ORGANIZATION
 Assistant City Historian

DATE

June, 1979

STREET & NUMBER
 272 High Street, P.O.B. 868

TELEPHONE

(201) 826-2100

CITY OR TOWN
 Perth Amboy

STATE

New Jersey

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE xx

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Laura K. Smith

TITLE Deputy SHPO

DATE 10/3/80

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Barbara M. Dwyer

DATE 1/2/81

ATTEST:

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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

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CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

To the rear, on Market Street is what appears to be an addition, possibly 1870's, when used as a school. This is a stair tower and has a semi-circular arched head over the entrance doorway, and a pair of semi-circular arched windows on the second floor, the same size as those of main structure. The dormer window in mansard roof of this section repeats the broken pedimented treatment of the main building front center dormer. The roof over this area is slightly higher than that of the main roof, but not as high as the "tower."

To the east of the front facade and almost flush with it is a 5 bay brick addition of slightly smaller scale. All details, window heights and door treatment are the same as the main part. However, above the projecting cornice is a low parapet-like treatment with recessed panels echoing the fenestration below it, instead of mansard roof.

The building has undergone many changes in its long career and little of the original building survives other than the ancient hewn timbers and rubble stone foundations, exposed in the basement. These would indicate the original building about the size of the corner 3 bays of the present main element, with the present chimney in the same location as the original. The present large open area now occupied by the City Tax Assesor and Clerks have exposed cast iron columns similar to those in the Proprietary House, circa 1810, and undoubtedly go back to one of its earlier alterations, as does the brickwork of the main block of the building. Much of the second floor has been altered to the extent that exploratory probing and long and careful study would be required to decern its original plan.

The building is generally in good repair and is certainly most worthy of preservation.

In 1909 a two story brick structure was appended to the end of the main structure. Vaguely Colonial Revival, the details of this unit resembled closely the original. Prior to 1909 the main city hall had two separate front entranceways with double doors. The classical doorway now located in the center of the building would appear to be of the same date as wing.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

Surveyor General's Office

The Surveyor General's Office is an Italianate style building in excellent condition. Interesting features are the brick corbels, arched in the front and regular on the side. The door is a classical pedimented door in sandstone with the words "Surveyor General's Office" in raised letters, in the entablature. The roof is a simple gable fronted structure. The gable contains a diamond shaped window, a popular Greek Revival motif in Perth Amboy. The brick is laid in common bond and iron shutters complement the large sash windows. The building was moved from its location immediately adjacent to City Hall when the wing was added to the latter structure in 1909.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

In 1855, the City of Perth Amboy was sued by a creditor/contractor for \$1,400. In order to pay the judgment, City Hall was auctioned to the Sons of Temperance and the Laurence Lodge, Odd Fellows. The building was bought back in 1858 and (with town meetings having been abolished in 1870) was dedicated on October 15, 1872 by Mayor John G. Garrettson as City Hall. It was at this time that the Mansard roof was added. Also, in 1909 an annex was added to the left side of the building and major interior renovations as well as the erection of a one-story brick addition in the rear were done in the 1930's. This brick addition is presently being expanded. (See Physical Appearance for a further discussion of significance).

The Surveyor General's Office was built in 1860 by the New Jersey Board of Proprietors. The building serves as the group's headquarters and houses all of the Proprietors' records, dating back to 1682, of the East. The Board of Proprietors, which governed New Jersey from 1682 until 1702, still holds its two annual meetings (the Board and Council) in the Surveyor General's Office. The Board is the oldest incorporated body in the United States.

PERTH AMBOY CITY HALL COMPLEX
PERTH AMBOY
MIDDLESEX COUNTY
NEW JERSEY

BLOCK 55, LOT 1

NOV 27 1980

HARBOR

SECTOR ST

99'

SMITH

66'

STREET

LOT 10-24

318.45'

28

174.00'

STREET

224.00'

LOT 23-

19

SHEET No 17

9' HIGH

231.00'

30.00'

45.00'

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CITY OF PERTH AMBOY CITY HALL SITE - EMPTED - 1

MARKET SQUARE



MARKET SQUARE

SECTOR

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37 A

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37 C

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