Form 10-300 (Rev. 6-72) UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Gracie Mansion, located in Carl Schurz Park on East End Avenue and the north corner of 88th Street, stands on a point of land jutting out into the East River. A simple, frame, Federal style structure of approximately 14 rooms, the house today must appear much as it did more than 160 years ago, just after the completion of its enlargement in 1811.

The white clapboard house is rectangular in shape and two stories in height. It has chinoiserie lattice balustrades and a handsome Federal fanlight doorway. Each side has two tiers of windows with black shutters, set in direct alignment one above the other. Generally speaking, this arrangement of the fenestration gives the house an appearance of symmetry and almost of formality. However, a slight but noticeable variation in the spacing of the two tiers of windows to the right of the doorway, and those similarly located at the west end of the house, is due to the fact that they are part of the 1811 addition to the house on the north side. The same is true for the variation in the two pairs of chimneys. The more massive pair dates from 1799, the more slender from 1811.

The house is set on a high basement, half above, half below ground, concealed by planting. At the first floor level it is encircled on the south, east and part of the north elevation by a porch. Columns of the Tuscan order, with slender square balusters and railings between, support the chinoiserie lattice balustrade. Small square posts topped by graceful finials separate the alternating lattice patterns. The shallow hipped roof is also surrounded by a balustrade, similar in design but differing in pattern.

The main facade on the east looks out over the lawn and river. The eight columns are arranged in two groups of four each, evenly spaced. This arrangement stresses the wide center opening approached by a short flight of steps leading up to the doorway. On either side are two tall windows. The smaller second story windows are aligned with those on the first floor.

The striking Federal doorway is unusual in design and has been attributed by some to Major Charles Pierre L'Enfant.

Deep reveals enframe the six-paneled door, surmounted by a lunette flanked by a pair of oval rosettes set between a pair of elongated wood consoles. Just below these are the leaded glass sidelights framed by graceful, downward-tapering, pilaster-like elements. These in turn rest on true pilasters rising from the porch floor separated by plain panels between them.

### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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7. DESCRIPTION

(Continuation Sheet)

PAGE 2

(Number all entries)

The south elevation is composed of two distinct parts: the original house and a modern addition. They are separated from one another by an area of lawn which extends back to the onestory, balustraded wing that connects the two parts like the cross bar of the letter "H". The south side of the old house has a six-columned porch and two tiers of four windows.

On the west side of the original house, only part of the first story is visable; the rest is blocked from view by the one-story, connecting wing. The narrow end of the porch adjoins the wall of the house in which three windows are set. That there was once a fourth in this group can be deduced by observing the placement of the second story windows. The fourth window of the first story evidently was eliminated in the break-through of the wall connecting the new wing with the old house. This wing is built around a light well, which conceals but nevertheless contains, the two windows at the north end of the house. The second tier windows, here as on the other elevations, are in alignment with those below, except for the fourth window which now is set above the new wing.

The north elevation, as it appears today, was an attempt by the architect, Mott B. Schmidt, to integrate the old house with the new addition in an overall, unified design. His basic solution to the problem appears to have been the use of the principle of symmetry, which is an architectural characteristic of Gracie Mansion.

The center projecting bay has two windows on the first story, one on the second and, above it, a pediment containing a lunette. The second story walls, right and left of the bay, are similar in dimensions and each has one window. On the first floor (left) is a window aligned with the one above. The bay is flanked at the left by the porch, with a narrow flight of steps, and at the right by the low connecting wing previously mentioned—an evidence of Schmidt's desire to achieve symmetry in his design. The balustrade reproduces the lattice design of the porch, and a bandcourse at first floor level and a string course exactly at the height of the balustrade railings tie together the three separate architectural sections.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DESCRIPTION

To carry out his design, Schmidt had to make certain alterations in the original north elevation, which fortunately has been preserved in a photo of c. 1890. Here the narrow, towerlike bay is off-center and appears to break into the continuous flow of the porch. Steps lead up to a small, glassed-in section of the porch on the right. On the left there is a broad area of wall with two tiers of single windows placed at the outer corners of the wall, leaving the remainder blank. Schmidt's solution was to widen the bay at the left, thus centering it between the porch and his wing.

PAGE 3

This one-story rectangular pavilion, built for official entertaining, contains a sitting room, dining room and ballroom on the first floor level, with a council room and offices for the mayor and his secretary below. The original 18th century door frame the prototype for most of the others, as well as the fire-place in the ballroom, come from a house at No. 7 State Street, By a strange coincidence, this house was once the residence of Moses Gracie, whose sister, Ester, married Archibald Gracie.

Except for the entrance portico, most of the architectural motifs Schmidt used reproduced those of the mansion. The slender, fluted columns of the Composite order, however derive from the columns used in the ballroom, which, in turn was inspired by the ballroom in "The Vale," Waltham, Mass., the country house designed for Theodore Lyman, a Boston merchant, in 1793 by the noted Salem architect, Samuel McIntire.

Although some minor architectural revisions have been made in the exterior block of the 1811 Gracie Mansion, the rooms have remained essentially as they were. At sometime during the Wheaton occupancy between 1857 and 1891, fashion dictated a change in the interior decoration. Since the early 1920's, however, when restoration was first proposed, the aim had been to recreate the rooms in their original style. They are handsome, high-ceilinged rooms of pleasing proportion, each with a dado, a simple cornice and fireplace.

The gracefully curving staircase is set at the back of the large entrance hall which gives access to the reception rooms on either side. On the left of the hall, the library and dining room, all of which date from 1799, seem lighter in character than the drawing room of 1811 on the right. Windows and doors are symmetrically arranged, giving the rooms a formal character. Only in the dining room is the balance disturbed by the offcenter placing of the fireplace.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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7. DESCRIPTION

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All the fireplaces now in place, including the one in the hall, are classical in design. Each has a similar characteristic the vertical elements supporting the mantle shelves taper downward. In the hall fireplace, the carved corner decoration reflects strongly the scheme used on either side of the doorway lunette.

In the drawing room (1811) the windows are more deeply recessed and the marble fireplace is heavier and more severe. Simple, rather squat columns support the mantle shelf decorated with a continuously flowing linear pattern carved in relief and somewhat resembling the Greek key motif. The tall east windows and the tall service door in the north wall, and the generous dimensions of the room add to its formal dignity.

The authentic character of all the first floor rooms is greatly enhanced by the loan of period furniture from the Metropolitan Museum, the Brooklyn Museum and the Museum of the City of New York.



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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The year 1646 is the first recorded date of the ownership of the property on which Gracie Mansion stands. It had been granted to Sybout Claessen, a resident of Nieuw Amsterdam, who named the point Hoorn's Hook after his native village in the Netherlands. The name was changed a number of times as the property passed through numerous hands before Jacob Walton purchased acreage between 1760-70.

Here, sometime between 1770 and 1774, Walton--who had married Polly Cruger, daughter of the Hon. Henry Cruger, Mayor of the City of New York--built his country house "Belleview," the first residence to occupy the site. Not long after the Waltons moved to their new home, the American War of Independence broke out and the Waltons, being Loyalist, withdrew to Flatbush where they both died in 1782.

The point of land was so strategically located on the East River that General Washington ordered its fortification early in 1776. In September of that year, presumably during a bombardment, the house was destroyed by shell fire. Evacuated by American forces, the point was captured by the British and from 1776 to 1783 it remained a British encampment.

Because of conditions existing during the war years, the Walton will was not probated until 1791, when his four children inherited the property. It was from them that Archibald Gracie acquired 11 acres of land in two parcels, the first in late December 1798, the second in early January 1799.

Archibald Gracie (1755-1829) was born in Scotland and emigrated to the United States in 1784. He settled in Petersberg, Virginia, where he continued the mercantile and shipping business he had established abroad. He moved to New York in 1793. A few years later, when he married Esther Rogers, he was already a wealthy trader, banker and ship owner. His city residence and business office was located on the lower tip of Manhattan, at the opposite end of the island from the newly acquired land on which he was planning to build his country house.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) PAGE 2

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Some question exists as to whether or not Gracie's house incorporated earlier elements of the Walton house. However, contemporary sketches by Archibald Robertson, dated 1792, seem to indicate that the Walton house was completely leveled by the 1776 bombardment, though it is probable that the Gracie house was built on the older foundation.

In 1799, Archibald Gracie built a square, two-story, Federal style house of frame construction, with the entrance on what is now East End Avenue. To the left of the entrance hall was the drawing room, opening onto the dining room which looked out onto the river. The service quarters were on the floor below, and access to four bedrooms on the second floor was provided by a staircase.

A careful look at the row of second story windows on the east elevation discloses the outline of 1799 house: four windows evenly spaced from south to north, fitting into the original square mass. Set off from them by a wider area of wall space are two more windows that were part of the addition to the house built in 1811, which added a section half again as large on the north side.

At the same time the entrance was moved from the north to the east side of the house, and the porches and balustrades were added. It is also in 1811 that the only name connected with architecture of the house appears. It has been said that the beautiful, Federal fanlight doorway may be attributed to Major Charles Pierre L'Enfant, who planned the new capital at Washington, D.C., and who practiced architecture in New York City for a time.

In addition to the fine shade trees that stood on the property, Gracie added plantings of flower beds, and here in his delightful summer residence the Gracies entertained John Quincy Adams; Louis Philippe, later King of France; Joseph Bonaparte, Napoleon's brother; Washington Irving; James Fenimore Cooper and other notables.

During the Napoleonic period, fighting on the high seas increased, embargos were imposed, and finally the war with England broke out in 1812. Gracie's ships were in trouble and so was Gracie. He was a man so well-liked in the community that friends and associates tried to assist him financially, but in spite of their efforts his company failed in 1819.

#### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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8. SIGNIFICANCE

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That same year the house was acquired by Rufus King, the distinguished Federalist statesman, a Signer of the Declaration of Independence and whose mansion in Jamaica, Queens, is a designated New York City Landmark. His son James Gore King was married to Gracie's daughter Sarah. It is possible that the house became King's property in return for loans he had advanced to Gracie. At any rate, Gracie continued to live there with the Younger Kings from 1819 until 1823, when the property finally passed out of the possession of the Gracie family.

Joseph Foulke, a wealthy insurance agent, became the new owner, and during his thirty year occupancy he made no important alterations. A few years after his death the house was sold to Noah Wheaton in 1857. Interior photos dated c. 1870 show the first floor rooms redecorated in the then fashionable Victorian style. Exterior photos of a slightly later date show the house still retaining its simple, Federal facade.

Deterioration of Gracie Mansion began in 1891, when the land and house were bought by the City, which was then assembling property for a small park on East End Avenue, later to be named in honor of Carl Schurz. Between 1891 and 1920, the house became almost derelict, serving at various times as an ice cream parlor, a tool shed, a public comfort station, etc. The Chinoiserie balustrades disappeared. The porch railings were battered and broken. The wooden clapboard was badly weathered and unpainted. Yet, it was never totally abandoned.

In 1920, however, there was a renewed interest in the house and discussions were opened concerning possible restoration. In 1923, a bill was introduced to house the newly founded Museum of the City of New York in Gracie Mansion once restoration was completed. The Museum took possession in 1926 and remained until 1932. The Parks Department then took over and more restoration work was done on the house, which in 1943 was designated the official residence of the Mayor of the City of New York. The Hon. Fiorello H. La Guardia was the first mayor to occupy the residence.

NATIONAL REGISTER

#### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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8. SIGNIFICANCE

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PAGE 4

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The approximately 14-room house, originally designed as a private residence, did not lend itself readily to its new official status. Corporations, unions and private citizens raised the sum of \$800,000 for the construction of an adjoining wing to provide a suite of rooms for official entertaining, as well as several offices. The addition (1965-66), designed by the noted architect Mott B. Schmidt in the Federal style of the house, was named in memory of Susan W. Wagner, the first wife of Mayor Robert Wagner.

Situated as it is among the trees and lawns of Carl Schurz Park, Gracie Mansion today still retains the quiet air of an early 19th century country house. It is a fine example of domestic architecture of the Federal period, having dignity, grace and style.

Just as the site on which the house stands played a part in the Revolutionary War, so the house itself has continued to play a part in the social, political and cultural life of New York City. To wander about the outside of the house or to walk through the interior makes one aware of the historical and architectural heritage of the City and the nation.



Form 10-300a July 1969 CEIVED UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

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(Number all entries) Albion, Robert Greenhalgh. The Rise of New York Port, 1815-1860. New York: Scribner, 1970, reprint 1939, pp. 236, 253 and 255.

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Information generously provided from her unpublished MS on Gracie Mansion and the family and from photographs in her possession.

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Property Gracie (archibald) Mansion	New York Co. 75001205
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### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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View of main facade of	Gracie Mansio	on from the ea	st.

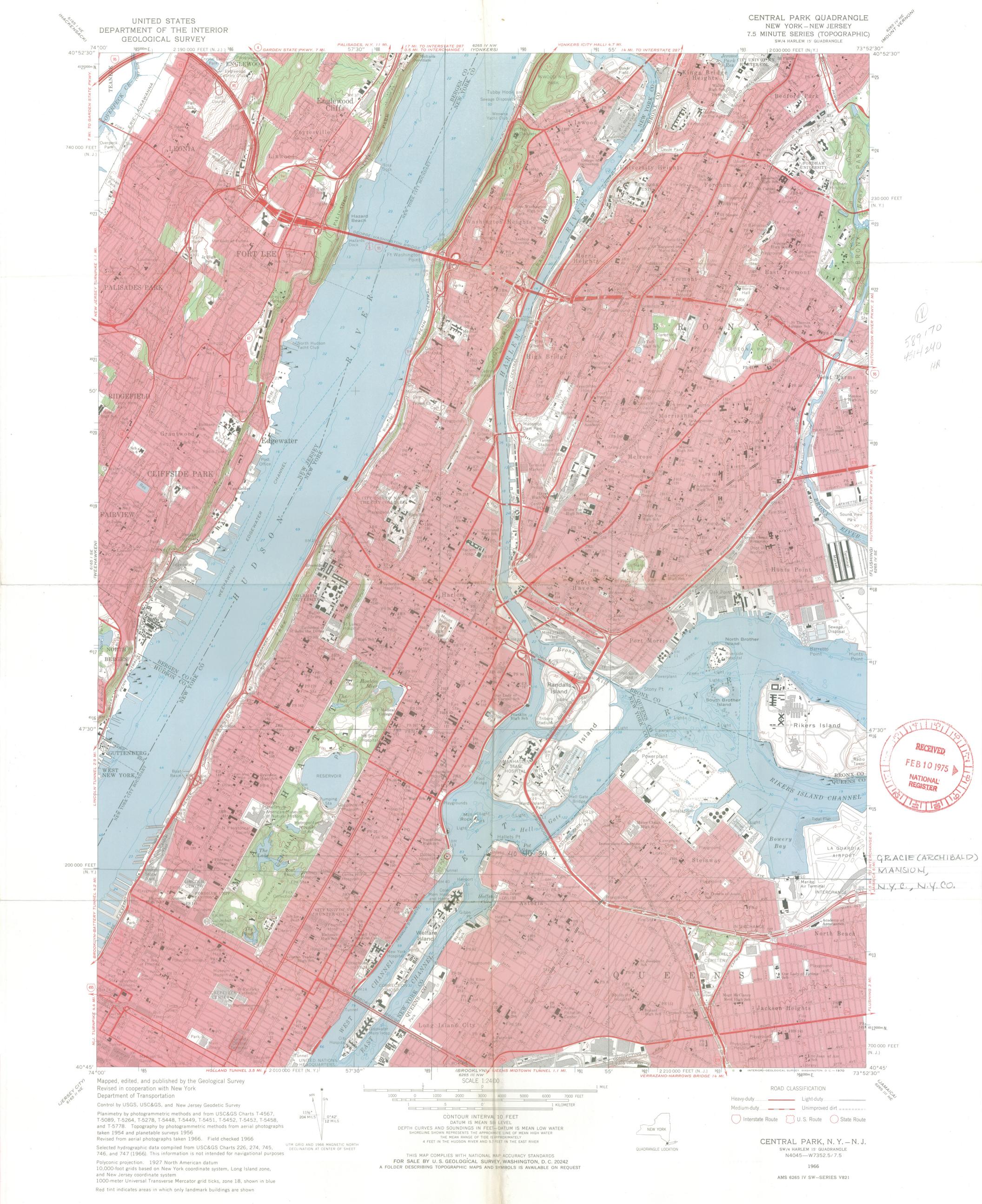
Frame, clapboarding; 2 stories, H-shaped, low hipped roof with chinoiserie motif railing, interior chimneys, slightly off-center front entrance with fanlight and sidelights, 1-story front and sides wraparound chinoiserie-railed entrance porch; side addition, 1811; rear addition, 1965-1966; landscaped yard and gardens; restored. Federal. Built for Archibald Gracie, prominent late 18th C. trader, banker, and shipowner; designated officail residence of mayor of city of New York, 1943.

Form 10-301 (July 1968)

#### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

#### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROPERTY MAP FORM

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GRACIE (ARCHIBALD) MANSION N.Y. COUNTY MEN YORK



NEW YORK STATE PARKS & RECREATION South Swan Street Bldg. Empire State Plaza, Albany, New York 12238 Information 518 474-0456 Alexander Aldrich, Commissioner

January 24, 1975

FEB 10 1975 NATIONAL

REGISTER

National Park Service Washington, D.C. 20240

Keeper of the National Register

Dr. William J. Murtagh

Dear Dr. Murtagh:

As the State Historic Preservation Officer, I am forwarding the enclosed nomination to the National Register of Historic Places:

> Gracie (Archibald) Mansion, East End Avenue at 88th Street, New York, New York, New York County

The above nomination has been reviewed and approved by the Committee on Registers in accordance with the criteria outlined in Section 2.2 of the Grants Guide.

The staff of the New York State Division for Historic Preservation, would welcome the opportunity to discuss this submission with your office.

Sincerely yours,

ALEXANDER ALDRICH State Historic Preservation Officer

By:

F. L. RATH, JR.

Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation



#### ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE

HEW YORK

Date Entered

MAY 1 2 1975

Name

Grecie (Archibald) Mansion

Whig Hill and Dependencies

Location

New York County

Paldyinaville Chondaga County

Also Notified

Hon. James L. Buckley

Hon. Jacob K. Javits Hon. Edward I Koch

Hon. William P. Walsh

Regional Director, North-Atlantic

PR

Region

MMott/bsh

State Historic Preservation Officer Mr. Alexander Aldrich Commissioner Parks and Recreation Room 303, South Swan Street Building

Albany, New York 12223 5/19/75

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424-101 JL 13 1979 get

SECTION IN-REMARKS (Please reference the proper item number from Sections I, II or III, if applicable)

#### Con't from Section I, Item 7:

period. It is a remarkably distinguished example of Federal architecture and, as the home of the Mayors of the City of New York, it possesses a distinction quite in keeping with its architectural qualities and its historical reknown.

APPROVED
Signature
Date
11-16

MANIONAL KI	EGISTER	DATA S	HEET
TNAME as it appears of federal register:  CITACLE, Archibald, MANSION  SIDOCATION street & number  East end ave. at 60th St. New You	ork	state New York	3 date of entry: A county code: 05.12.75 061  6 NPS REGION: HOPTH Atlantic
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(2) functions	dates of initial construction	: 1799 - addition /1965-66 rear addition	ETHNIC GROUP ASSOCIATION
WHEN HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT: HOUSE CURRENTLY: ditto	major alterations:   &  side historic events:	addition /1965-66 rear addition	This has been been did to
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when historically significant: House currently: ditto	historic events:  architect: entry design attri-	master builder:	A CHARLES AND COMMISSION OF THE RESIDENCE OF THE PARTY OF
when historically significant: House currently: ditto  architectural style(s):  Federa	historic events:  Pierro Chas. L'enfant * Fover rator:  To Pierro Chas. L'enfa	master builder:  artisan:  build  bui	engineer: ler/contractor:

IF ADDITIONAL SPACE NEEDED, NUMBER & PUT ON REVERSE

reviewers initials 980ff date 2.13.78

\* (2) rear addition designed by Mott B. Schmidt