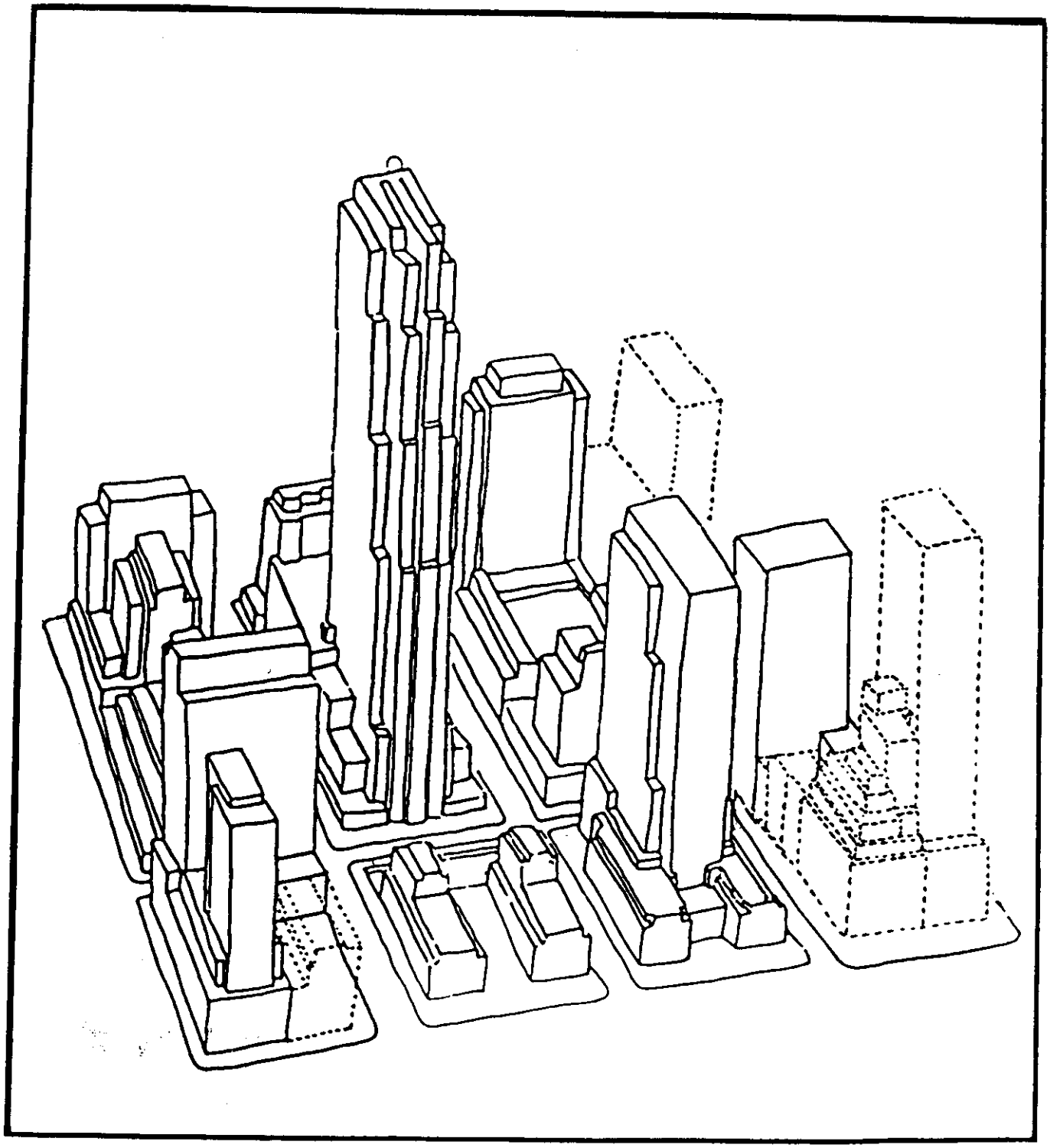
ROCKEFELLER CENTER



LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

The City of New York

1985

ROCKEFELLER CENTER
DESIGNATION REPORT

1985

City of New York
Edward I. Koch, Mayor

Landmarks Preservation Commission

Gene A. Norman, Chairman
Elliot Willensky, Vice Chairman

Commissioners

Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel
Thomas J. Evans
Jose L. Ithier
Frances Halsband
Joseph Mitchell
Adolph Placzek
David Todd
Anthony M. Tung
Elliot Willensky
Barry B. Williams

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS KEY

ALT	Alteration number as designated, Dept. of Buildings, Manhattan
Art Digest	Art Digest. New York: Rockefeller Center, May, 1982.
Balfour	Alan Balfour. Rockefeller Center. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1978.
Fosdick	Raymond B. Fosdick. John D. Rockefeller Jr.: A Portrait. New York: Harper & Row, 1966.
Gill	Walter Karp and Brendan Gill. The Center: A History and Guide to Rockefeller Center. New York: American Heritage Publishing Co., Inc., 1982
Jordy	William H. Jordy. American Buildings and Their Architects. vol. 4. New York: Anchor Books, 1976.
JSAH	Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians
Krinsky	Carol H. Krinsky. Rockefeller Center. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.
Loth	David Loth. The City Within a City. New York: William Morrow & Co., 1966.
NB	New Building number as designated, Dept. of Buildings, Manhattan.
NCAB	National Cyclopedia of American Biography
NYT	New York Times
RCM	Rockefeller Center Magazine
RCW	Rockefeller Center Weekly

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

RESEARCH: Janet Adams, Landmarks Preservationist
Amy Galanos, Research and Production Assistant
John Ruocco and Mark Walker, Student Interns

WRITING: Janet Adams, with assistance on building descriptions from Marjorie Pearson and Anthony W. Robins

EDITING: Marjorie Pearson, Director of Research
Anthony W. Robins, Deputy Director of Research

PHOTOGRAPHY: All photography by Stephen Senigo with the exception of p. 96 bottom and p.138 by Amy Galanos and p. 50 top and p.217 by Janet Adams

GRAPHICS: Janet Adams
Schematic of Rockefeller Center, James Stewart Polshek and Partners, Architects, "Rockefeller Center, Proposed Landmark Designation," (Sept. 20, 1983), modified by Janet Adams

Landmarks Preservation Commission
April 23, 1985, Designation List 179
LP-1446

Rockefeller Center including:

Warner Communications Building (formerly Esso Building), 75 Rockefeller Plaza;

1270 Avenue of the Americas Building (originally RKO Building, later the Americas Building, then the American Metal Climax Building, then the AMAX Building), 1270 Avenue of the Americas;

Radio City Music Hall, 1260 Avenue of the Americas;

Associated Press Building, 50 Rockefeller Plaza;

International Building including the statue of Atlas in the courtyard, 630 Fifth Avenue;

RCA Building, 30 Rockefeller Plaza;

RCA Building West, 1250 Avenue of the Americas;

the sunken plaza with skating rink and the statue of Prometheus;

British Building (formerly the British Empire Building), 620 Fifth Avenue;

promenade and channel gardens;

Maison Francaise, 610 Fifth Avenue;

Simon & Schuster Building (formerly the U.S. Rubber Company Building) and its addition, 1230 Avenue of the Americas;

10 Rockefeller Plaza Building (formerly Eastern Airlines Building), 10 Rockefeller Plaza;

1 Rockefeller Plaza Building (formerly the Time & Life Building), 1 Rockefeller Plaza;

Manhattan.

Landmark Site: Tax Map Block 1267, Lot 22, Block 1266, Lot 1, Block 1265, Lot 1, and Block 1264, Lot 5.

TESTIMONY AT THE PUBLIC HEARING

On September 20, 1983, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of Rockefeller Center as a New York City Landmark and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 1). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Nineteen persons spoke in favor of designation. The representatives of Rockefeller Center, Inc., expressed support for a partial designation. The Commission has received letters and other expressions of support for this designation.

Rockefeller Center is one of the most important architectural projects ever undertaken in America. It was unprecedented in scope, near visionary in its urban planning and unequaled for its harmonious integration of architecture, art and landscaping. The complex grew out of an ill-fated plan to build new midtown quarters for the Metropolitan Opera Company. When the original scheme collapsed, the project was transformed into the private commercial enterprise of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Construction of the original complex began in 1931 and ended with the completion of the fourteenth building in 1939. The site was subsequently enlarged by the construction of the Esso (now Warner Communications) Building in 1946-47 and by the purchase in 1963 of the Sinclair Oil (now Manufacturers Hanover) Building (1950-52). Both of these structures were designed in harmony with the complex by Rockefeller Center's architects. More recently the complex has been extended with new buildings on the west side of Sixth Avenue but these are largely unrelated to the historic core.

Architectural significance of the Complex

With the withdrawal of the Opera in 1929 Rockefeller's complex lost its raison d'etre. The decision to proceed required a vast fortune, rare courage, sound business acumen and considerable architectural and planning abilities. The unique situation produced a unique result, one of tremendous and longterm urban consequence. Rockefeller Center was the only large, non-government architectural project executed between the stock market crash and WWII. Indeed, it was the largest private enterprise ever undertaken in this country. Not only did it employ thousands of workers during the Depression, but restored the commerce and image that New York had of itself before the crash. In the words of a contemporary, it embodied "the New York idea."[1]

Rockefeller Center marked the end of the tiered and elaborately crested skyscrapers of the 1920s and the beginning of the new slab aesthetic. It dealt pragmatically with commerce, real estate and urban density and realized in almost visionary terms the ideal of the modern skyscraper metropolis. The complex was remarkably progressive for its pedestrian and vehicular traffic systems, unprecedented in its amenities for human enjoyment in a commercial development and unparalleled for its integration of all the arts from architecture, sculpture, mosaics and painting to multi-level landscaping. A city within a city, Rockefeller Center achieves a distinct sense of place through uniformity of materials, lingering Beaux Arts symmetry and its own graded skyline which mounts to the irresistible focus of the RCA Building. It has served as the prototype for numerous

commercial developments worldwide and has won the Fifth Avenue Association award (1939) and the first Twenty-Five Year Award of the American Institute of Architects (1969). In a 1976 survey of American building projects, architects selected Rockefeller Center as second only to Thomas Jefferson's University of Virginia.[2]

When the Opera withdrew, Rockefeller's complex was transformed from a cultural to commercial enterprise. In consequence, the form which had evolved over months was now radically altered. Early plans had located the lowrise opera house in the center of the site. This was replaced by a tall office building in a plan dated January 8, 1930. Known as "Scheme G-3," it was signed by Reinhard & Hofmeister, although it should be noted that Hood and Corbett were already engaged as consultants. Developer John R. Todd may have also played a role in it as he did in later designs. Although the proposal would undergo numerous modifications, the basic arrangement established in G-3 set the pattern for the buildings in the final complex. It was, according to Raymond Hood, somewhat like "a five spot card."[3] By restricting the height of the Fifth Avenue units and transferring air rights to the central tower, the arrangement provided maximum light and air within a basically symmetrical plan. It was dependent in large part upon Beaux Arts principles of design, but modified by specific tenant needs and the requirement for maximum profit.

Critical to the success of the plan, and more particularly to the Center as executed, are its three major and multiple minor axes. The first lies along Fifth Avenue at the "front" of Rockefeller Center where its international tenants were housed in four virtually identical units. By maintaining the small scale of nineteenth-century New York these six story facades provide a powerful N-S vista. Their line is continued in the Manufacturer Hanover Trust (originally Sinclair Oil) Building and in 666 Fifth Avenue (both designed by Rockefeller Center architects Carson & Lundin) as well as in several other buildings to the north and south. Together with St. Patrick's Cathedral and the neighboring Saks department store, Rockefeller Center's Fifth Avenue frontage provides an urbane, human scaled space —— an asset which becomes increasingly more precious as financial pressures continue to transform Fifth Avenue into a canyon of highrise developments.

The second, and by far the most famous, axis is the Promenade/Channel Gardens. A steeply banked E-W pedestrian corridor, it extends the ambience of Fifth Avenue into the heart of the complex. Its horizontal vista is strongly defined by the uniform flanks of the British Building and La Maison Francaise (which themselves are intersected by a minor N-S axis that runs through the lobbies of all the international units). The axis terminates in the genuinely centripetal space of the skating rink/sunken plaza, the center of the Center. It climaxes in the powerful vertical focus of the RCA Building which is the lynchpin of the entire complex.

The private N-S street known as Rockefeller Plaza provides

the third major axis. It runs parallel to and between Fifth and Sixth Avenues and intersects the three blocks between 48th-51st Streets. It helps to establish the unique identity of Rockefeller Center by interrupting the city grid while simultaneously aiding it as an additional artery. From the private street extend the sunken plaza and six of the Center's principal structures. Among them are the Warner Communications (formerly Esso) Building which stands as its northern terminus. The structure marked the end of plans to extend the street as the spine of a vast civic and cultural complex. It provides a strong vertical focus at the northern boundary of the Center, much as the RCA Building does at the end of the Channel Gardens.

In general, the complex was oriented toward the east and fashionable Fifth Avenue. Its Sixth Avenue frontage faced toward New York's theater district and was developed as the Center's entertainment complex. The Sixth Avenue front was expected to play a more significant role in the Center when the El was demolished in 1939. This was enhanced by the completion of the Sixth Avenue subway line in 1940. The subway established yet another traffic pattern at Rockefeller Center. It was linked to the shopping concourse and the vast subterranean network which connects all builings in the development. In unprecedented fashion the concourse transformed the lobbies of individual buildings from self-contained cul de sacs into gateways to the Center at large.

The underground truck route provides a further circulation artery (one which likewise frees the surrounding streets from freight deliveries). Yet another circulation system was planned at rooflevel where bridges were to connect the gardens atop various buildings. Although the latter scheme was ultimately abandoned and the grand garden scheme only partially realized, the planted rooftops above the four international buildings and above RCA's eleventh story roof distinguish Rockefeller Center as the first urban commercial development to be landscaped in modern architecture. The roof- and ground level gardens are just one more aspect of the multi-level integrational system which unites the entire Center.

Despite its multiple axes, the Center lacks rigid symmetry and its various components vary in massing according to original tenant requirements. It nonetheless comprises a visually unified composition. The coherence results from the limited palette of material and architectural vocabulary. All the buildings are clad with buff colored, shot-sawed Indiana limestone with vertically ridged spandrels (cast slate gray aluminum in the skyscrapers; limestone spandrels in the lowrise units). All have two-over-one steel sash recessed slightly behind flat piers to produce a significantly cohesive fenestration pattern throughout. The unity of material and handling gives the Center a distinct sense of place and "the coherent impression of [the] precinct as virtually one structure."[4] Six of the buildings have foliate spandrel terminations while others have a simple chevron crest,

but in each case these are minor decorative elements on buildings which depend for effect on their monumental simplicity.

The earliest (pre- air conditioned) units were designed to take full advantage of natural light and ventilation. Their minimal setbacks are functionalist expressions of elevator elimination. The guiding principle throughout was maximum beauty consistent with profitability. Purely aesthetic extravagence was avoided. There was, however, a great concern for a comprehensive and thematically integrated art program.

HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT

The complex history of Rockefeller Center dates back to 1926 when the Metropolitan Opera Company commissioned designs for a new facility from Benjamin Wistar Morris (1870-1944). Morris was a patrician architect who executed classically inspired residences and clubs and who, in partnership with C. Grant La Farge, worked for a period on the completion of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Morris was briefly associated on the Opera with the Austrian architect Joseph Urban (1872-1923) who for many years designed the Opera's stage sets. The Opera's once fashionable quarters at 39th Street and Broadway had become small and antiquated, left behind in an inelegant commercial district by more northerly urban development. Several safer and more centrally located sites were inspected (including, ironically, the present site of Lincoln Center) before settling upon the midtown location between 48th and 51st Streets, Fifth and Sixth Avenues.

Between 1804 and 1811 this property had been developed by Dr. David Hosack as the famed Elgin Gardens. An innovative concept in America, its legacy was to survive in Rockefeller Center's rooftop and Channel Gardens. In 1811 rising cost led Dr. Hosack to sell the property to New York State. Three years later the nearly 12 acre plot was conveyed to Columbia College (later University) under an aid-to-education act. Located about three miles north of the college campus at Church Street, the "Upper Estate" was leased for residential development, all of which was completed by 1879.[5] By the mid-1920s, however, many of the 298 rowhouses in this once stylish neighborhood had deteriorated into an unseemly collection of boarding houses, nightclubs and speakeasies on the northern boundary of New York's theater district. The proposal to build a new opera house on the site thus prompted visions of redevelopment as a midtown cultural center.

In order to make the undertaking financially feasible Benjamin Morris was forced to include revenue-producing units which would cover construction, operation and maintenance costs of the entire opera complex. But the price of midtown development was so high that the Opera would have been dwarfed by

the necessarily large commercial units. At length Morris concluded that the only hope of keeping the Opera dominant "seem[ed] to lay in an endowment of very large dimensions."[6] It was supplied by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., one of the richest men in America.

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, JR. and JOHN R. TODD

John D. Rockefeller, Jr. (1874-1960) was born in Cleveland, Ohio. After graduating from Brown University in 1897 he joined his father's office and for some years held directorships of such businesses as the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, United States Steel Corporation and Missouri Pacific Railroad among others. By about 1911, however, Rockefeller had become almost totally involved with philanthropic, civic, educational and religious enterprises such as the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, the Rockefeller Foundation, Rockefeller Sanitary Commission and International Education Board to name a few only. A devout Baptist, he also founded the Institute for Social and Religious Research and funded construction of Riverside Church (1927-30). The latter was just one of the many architectural undertakings which Rockefeller sponsored. He also funded the restoration of the palaces at Fontainebleau and Versailles and Reims Cathedral in France, the Agora and Stoa of Attolos in Athens, and in America, Washington Irving's "Sunnyside" home, Colonial Williamsburg and the birthplace of George Washington. He also supplied the land for the Museum of Modern Art, for the Rockefeller Institute and Fort Tryon where he built the Cloisters. Later, in 1946, Rockefeller donated land for the construction of the United Nations along the East River and gave generously to Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts.[7] Although never an opera devotee, he supported the Metropolitan Opera project as just one more worthy civic and cultural cause.

Rockefeller's involvement in the Opera project began on May 21, 1928 when Benjamin Morris presented the scheme to potential investors during a dinner at the Metropolitan Club. Among the guests was Ivy Lee, Rockefeller's public relations manager. He recommended the proposal to his employer, noting that it would "make the [Opera] Square and the immediate surroundings the most valuable shopping district in the world."[8] Rockefeller was interested. He, his sister and father lived in three large houses on W. 53rd and 54th Streets (just three blocks north of the proposed Opera site) and owned a good deal of real estate in the area. Development of a cultural center would insure the quality of his neighborhood while increasing the value of his speculative properties. But before making any committment, Rockefeller sought development advice from prominent real estate advisors, the Todd, Robertson & Todd Engineering Corp. among them.

John Reynard Todd (1867-1945) was a lawyer who, in partnership with Henry Clay Irons, became accidentally involved

in construction and rentals. Todd & Irons developed their building activities into a lucrative business through which they erected and sold at large profits numerous hotels, apartments and commercial structures. Among them was the Cunard Building whose lobby was designed by Benjamin Morris and which stood directly across the street from Rockefeller's Standard Oil Building at 26 Broadway. When Irons retired in 1919 Todd went into partnership with his physician brother, Dr. James M. Todd (c.1870-1939), and Hugh S. Robertson (1880-1951), a specialist in real estate and financial management. Together they were responsible for the internal planning, construction and rental of the Ritz and Barclay Hotels, Postum Building and the fabulously successful Graybar Building which they linked to Grand Central Terminal with corridors.

John R. Todd was the personal friend of Thomas M. Debevoise and Charles O. Heydt, Rockefeller's legal and real estate advisors and it was due to them that he became involved in the Opera project. It was through Debevoise that Todd's son Webster (in the engineering firm of Todd & [Joseph O.] Brown) was engaged in Rockefeller's restoration of Colonial Williamsburg in 1928. And through Heydt that Todd, his brother and Robertson were hired to develop Rockefeller's midtown complex. Heydt informed Rockefeller that Todd had been involved "in very large enterprises, [had] architects in his own office, and --- [had] never made a failure. He [understood] thoroughly the matter of financing the construction of large buildings...and would be in a position to help prospective tenants...construct their own buildings." Todd, he said, was "a hard-headed business man."[9]

Todd, Robertson & Todd was one of five real estate firms to advise Rockefeller on the development potential of the Opera project in autumn, 1928. In addition to the Opera and its plaza (to be designed by Benjamin Morris), the firm recommended a remarkably progressive mixed use complex including hotels, apartment and office buildings, a shopping arcade and department store (the latter in continuation of the development of Fifth Avenue with such fashionable counterparts as Saks and Altmans). The plan also included two new private streets and a lower level for vehicular traffic, parking and freight deliveries. The scheme was prepared over Labor Day weekend, 1928 by two little known, 38 year old architects on Todd's staff: I. Andrew Reinhard and Henry Hofmeister.

Under Todd's directive, Reinhard & Hofmeister prepared an improved plan in mid-September, 1928. Two weeks later (October 1, 1928) Rockefeller made a committment to lease from Columbia College the three blocks between 48-51st Streets. The land stretched west from Fifth Avenue but stopped short of Sixth Avenue where street frontage was privately owned. (In subsequent years Rockefeller acquired the western lots as well). The Columbia contract was not actually signed until December 31, 1928 at which point Rockefeller agreed to pay approximately $3.5

million annual rent during 1928-1952 with options for three 21-year renewals.

Earlier in the same month (December 6, 1928) Rockefeller appointed his trusted associate and president of Colonial Williamsburg Inc., Col. Arthur Woods, to be president of the newly formed holding company "Metropolitan Square Corporation" (which took its name form the Metropolitan Opera that was to occupy the site). Woods arranged for an architectural "Symposium" in order to recieve "independent and varied advice on the problems involved in a development of [such] magnitude." Seven architects were invited to prepare designs for the complex which would "...assure an appropriate and artistic environment, ample and convenient approaches, circulation, and a delight and harmony of architectural composition in the development of land surrounding the Opera."[10] The contest was juried by John Russell Pope and Cass Gilbert (two the most prominent architects of the day) and Milton B. Medary (a specialist in institutional architecture).

Although nothing came of the contest per se, several of the ideas advanced did come to fruition at the Center. Among them were Benjamin Morris' recommendation that the site be extended all the way to Sixth Avenue and that its buildings include planted terraces. Also prophetic were Harvey Corbett's proposals for separated pedestrian and vehicular traffic, a graded open corridor leading into the complex from Fifth Avenue, lower buildings in the east stepping up to focal tall buildings in the west (each to be occupied by related tenants) and the visionary connection of these buildings with the Sixth Avenue subway (not completed until 1940, eleven years later). The architectural advisors were most favorably disposed toward the latter scheme by Corbett.

Ultimately all the "Symposium" schemes of 1929 were rejected. On October 1, 1929 (precisely a year after Rockefeller agreed to lease the Columbia property) Todd, Robertson & Todd were appointed managers of the project. Their mandate was to "build the thing, put it on a profitable basis, and sell it to the world."[11] By the end of October their staff architects (Reinhard & Hofmeister) were named architects of the development. They were experienced in the internal layouts preferred by Todd and familiar with his theory that "business property income production supercedes pure aesthetics."[12] Todd recommended at the same time that Harvey Corbett and Benjamin Morris be engaged as consulting architects (although the latter declined after December, 1929). He also suggested employment of Raymond Hood, the man of ideas whose reputation as a leading skyscraper designer had skyrocketed in recent years.

Todd selected architects "who would be primarily interested in good planning, utility, cost, income, low operating expenses and progress...[men who were not too] committed to the architectural

past [nor] too much interested in wild modernism."[13] The pooling of eight different talents from three different firms allowed for a division of labor and for an undertaking too large for most private offices of the day. Architecture by committee modified the singular dominance of any one personality, but also seems to have generated competition and controversy. The situation was resolved in February, 1930 when the architects united in a collective known as the Associated Architects. Thereafter all drawings bear the three firm names in strict alphabetical order: Corbett, Harrison & MacMurray; Hood, Godley (until 1931) & Fouilhoux; Reinhard & Hofmeister.

Since August, 1929 Rockefeller agents had been buying property along the western boundary of Columbia's property with the aim of extending the site to land covered by the Sixth Avenue El. The holding company was appropriately (and poetically) named "Underel." Both real estate and architectural plans developed rapidly throughout autumn, only to be stalled on December 5, 1929 by the Opera's decision not to relocate. With the stock market crash on October 29th the Opera, never overly well endowed, felt financially bound to stay put. On the very next day (December 6) Todd announced that all future planning for the site "would be based upon a commercial center as beautiful as possible consistent with the maximum income that could be developed."[14] All previous plans were reviewed, those with the Opera as a main feature set aside and new schemes undertaken for a commercial project.

Throughout the proceedings Rockefeller had intended to share costs with the Opera and to develop the site with buildings constructed by individual tenants. He never planned to carry the entire lease by himself, nor did he ever consider taking on full responsibility for its architectural development. But finding himself at an annual loss of more than $3,000,000 for the lease of the 12 acres, he boldly proceeded --- in the teeth of the Depression --- to develop the largest private enterprise ever undertaken in America.

Contracts were made with RCA by the end of December and in June a contract signed for the construction of Radio City. The deal transformed what had been an aristocratic cultural center --- a vision of the past --- into one of the future where the focus was democratic entertainment, commerce and modern technology. The name of the enterprise was changed from the Metropolitan Sqare to Rockefeller Center in late December, 1931.[15]

THE ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS

Corbett, Harrison & MacMurray

Harvey Wiley Corbett (1873-1954) was born to physician parents in San Francisco, California. He was educated at the University of California (1895), the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris (1906) and the atelier of the historistic Jean Louis Pascal. Between 1903 and 1912 he was in partnership with F. Livingston Pell and between 1912 and 1928 with Frank J. Helmle. While a lecturer at the School of Architecture of Columbia University (1907-11, 1920-35), Corbett trained many students in the "Atelier Columbia,"which was modeled after the system of the Ecole des Beaux Arts. One of Corbett's major works was the Bush Terminal Building on W. 41st Street (1923) which established his reputation as a practicioner of "modern" architecture. Its success led Irwin Bush to commission from Corbett designs for the $10,000,000 Bush House in London. Dedicated to "the friendship to English speaking peoples," this American-English center was to find its counterpart in the British Empire Building at Rockefeller Center.

Corbett was an early and strong advocate of the skyscraper as an urban building form and wrote and lectured extensively in support of this concept. He was a practical architect who envisioned the future city with super-block skyscrapers, tiered streets and multi-level transportation systems. Corbett had a reputation as a skilled planner who worked within budget while remaining aware of the cityscape and urban design. He acted as a consultant to the Regional Plan Association and served on the architectural planning committees for the 1933 Chicago Century of Progress Exposition (beginning in 1929) and the 1939 New York World's Fair.

Corbett was a fellow of both the American Institute of Architects and the Royal Institute of British Architects and received honorary degrees from the University of California, the University of Liverpool and Columbia University. He was a member of the Fine Arts Commission of the State of New York and served as president of the Architectural League of New York and the National Arts Society.[16]

Corbett submitted his "Symposium" design after the retirement of Frank Helmle in 1928 and his establishment of a new partnership with William MacMurray and Wallace Harrison. Together they designed the Roerich Museum and Master Apartments on Riverside Drive in New York and the Horace Bushnell Memorial Hall in Hartford, Connecticut. Because of the latter experience in theater design and because of Corbett's formidible reputation, the Rockefeller developers were anxious to secure the firm's expertise.

William H. MacMurray (1868-1941) became associated with Corbett some time before 1927. His prime concern was the partnership's business affairs. He had little to do with the design of the Rockefeller Center project.[17]

Wallace K. Harrison (1895-1982), by contrast, was very much involved in matters of design and after the death of Raymond Hood in 1934 he exerted an increasingly strong influence on Rockefeller Center's architectural form. He was also responsible for one of the Center's new buildings on the west side of Sixth Avenue.

Harrison was born to a foundry superintendent in Worcester, MA. He quit school at 14 to take a $5.00/wk job as an office boy with the contracting firm of O.W. Norcross, simultaneously attending Worcester Polytechnic Institute. In 1915 he became a draftsman in the New York office of McKim, Mead & White and attended evening classes at the atelier of Harvey Corbett. In 1917 Harrison enrolled in the Ecole des Beaux Arts. He then returned briefly to McKim, Mead & White before winning a Rotch Traveling Scholarship and a year at the American Academy in Rome. Upon his return to New York in 1922 Harrison became a draftsman for Bertram Goodhue who was then engaged on the Nebraska State Capitol. In 1926 Harrison married Ellen Milton whose brother was the son-in-law of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and in the following year, joined in partnership with Corbett, Helmle (soon to retire) and MacMurray.

In 1935 Harrison left Corbett's office and formed a partnership with J. Andre Fouilhoux who had worked with Raymond Hood until the latter's death in 1934. Six years later Max Abramowitz (1908-1959) was taken on as a partner. When Fouilhoux died in 1945 the firm survived as Harrison & Abramowitz and went on to become one of the most successful postwar architectural concerns in America. Included among its works are parts of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Nelson Rockefeller's Empire State Plaza in Albany and the United Nations (for which Rockefeller donated the land in 1946). In 1967 Harrison was awarded the gold medal of the American Institute of Architects for his "demonstrated ability to lead a team in producing significant architectural works of high quality over a period of more than 30 years."[18]

Hood, Godley & Fouilhoux

Raymond Mathewson Hood (1881-1934) was born in Pawtucket, RI. He studied at Brown University before transferring to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1900 and later, the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris (1905, 1908-10). As a draftsman he was employed in the offices of Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson, Boston; Palmer, Hornbostel & Jones, New York; and Henry Hornbostel, Pittsburgh. He set up his own office in New York in 1914, but did not achieve any great architectural success until 1922. In that year John Mead Howells asked Hood to join him in submitting a design for the Chicago Tribune competition. Their winning scheme was a soaring tower terminating in setback peaks and flying buttresses of neo-Gothic design, distinguished by its logical plan and clarity of design. The competition established Hood's reputation as a skyscraper designer and brought his firm several notable commissions: the American Radiator Building, Daily News Building and the McGraw Hill Building, all in New York

City, and all in the years immediately preceding Rockefeller's development. Hood was also associated with Harvey Corbett on plans for the Chicago Century of Progress Exposition of 1933.[19] His good working relationship with Corbett, together with Hood's originality and the publicity generated by his previous skyscraper designs, were positive factors in his selection for the new complex. Before his premature death in 1934, Hood played a dominant role in the design of Rockefeller Center. He was responsible for the introduction of building setbacks and rooftop gardens, the establishment of uniformly lowrise elevations along Fifth Avenue and significantly, the suggestion to bring the radio industry to the Center.

Hood was a fellow of the American Intitute of Architects, a president of the Architectural League of New York, and a trustee of the Beaux Arts Institue of Design. He received the Medal of Honor of the Architectural League in 1926, and in 1940 was posthumously awarded a gold medal from the New York Chapter of the AIA.

Hood brought to the Center Godley and Fouilhoux, his partners since the mid 1920s. Frederick A. Godley (1887-1961) received his B.A. from Yale University (1908), an M.A. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1910) and a diploma of architecture from the Ecole des Beaux Arts (1913). After working in the Boston architectural office of Guy Lowell, he established his own firm in 1915 (Godley & Haskell, 1913-18; Godley & Sedgwick, 1918-24). In 1924 he joined Raymond Hood in the firm of Hood, Godley & Fouilhoux, specializing in the business affairs of the office. He left the firm in 1931, while the Rockefeller Center project was underway, to join the faculty of the Yale University School of Architecture, where he taught until 1947. Godley was also a fellow of the American Institute of Architects and chairman of the educational committee of the Beaux Arts Institute of Design.[20]

Jacques Andre Fouilhoux (1879-1945), a Paris-born engineer, received his training at the Ecole Centrale des Arts et Manufactures. Emigrating to the United States in 1904, he established the firm of Fouilhoux & Whiteside in Portland, Oregon in 1908. He later worked for Albert Kahn, noted industrial architect, in Detroit, among others. After WWI Fouilhoux moved to New York where he formed a partnership with Raymond Hood in 1927. Following Hood's death, Fouilhoux became partners with Wallace K. Harrison (formerly of Corbett, Harrison & MacMurray) and together they continued to be involved with Rockefeller Center. With their new partner Max Abramowitz they designed the Rockefeller Apartments, general plans, major buildings, Trylon and Perisphere for the New York World's Fair of 1939. In collaboration with others Fouilhoux designed the Fort Greene and Clinton Hill housing projects in Brooklyn. He fell to his death from one of their roofs in 1945. Fouilhoux was a fellow of the

American Institute of Architects and served as treasurer of the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design.[21]

I. Andrew Reinhard (1891-1964) was the son of a carpenter-cabinet maker who, at age 14, became an office boy for Benjamin Morris's (the architect initially commissioned to design the new Opera). Reinhard then studied at the Mechanics Institute in New York and finished his formal education at the Beaux-Arts Society of Design. He then returned to Morris' firm as a junior designer and worked in other prominent offices, notably that of Raymond Hood (who would later make some of the greatest contributions to Rockefeller Center). Reinhard then spent eight years with Todd, Robertson & Todd during which time he and Hoffmeister worked on rentals and interior layouts for the Graybar Building. In 1928 Reinhard & Hofmeister formed a partnership.[22]

Henry Hofmeister (1891-1962) was a self-trained architect who, after only two years of high school, joined the firm of Warren & Wetmore. He worked there for 17 years before joining Todd, Robertson & Todd. Hofmeister acquired a reputation for being methodical and having a good knowledge of such practical matters as plumbing, ventilation and efficient interior layouts. He organized the Rockefeller Center architectural office and supervised the preparation of the necessary architectural drawings. He was, according to Reinhard, "the man who got the work out."[8] Following the completion of Rockefeller Center, the partners received gold medals for their work from the Architectural League of New York and the Fifth Avenue Association.[23]

Other works later executed by Reinhard & Hofmeister include the World's Fair Hall of Music of 1939 (which has many spatial similarities to Radio City Music Hall); the Federal Building at John F. Kennedy International Airport; the Chrsyler Building East; buildings for the New York Medical College; Chase Manhattan Bank; the Italian, Swedish and Waterman steamship lines; the Dun and Bradstreet home office building in New York; the surgical building and research center of the New England Medical Center in Boston; the Deeds Carillon Tower in Dayton, Ohio; and the WWII American cemetery chapel at Neuville en Condroz in Belgium. In 1947 the firm expanded as Reinhard, Hoffmeister & Walquist, but dissolved upon Reinhard's retirement in 1956.

Reinhard was a member of the National Commission of Fine Arts in Washington in 1945-50, a fellow of the American Institute of Architects, and served as an officer of the New York Chapter of the AIA, the Architectural League and Municipal Art Society. Hofmeister served as a consultant during WWII to Nelson Rockefeller, then coordinator of Inter-American Affairs with the State Department. He was a member of the American Institute of Architects, the New York Building congress and the Architectural League of New York, directing the League's program for aiding

unemployed or needy architects for a number of years. Shortly before his death, Hofmeister served as a planning consultant on the Lincoln Center project.

ART IN THE COMPLEX

While planning the various buildings at Rockefeller Center it became clear that the decorative arts, like the architecture itself, would require a unified program in order to prevent confused effect. In November, 1931 John R. Todd recommended that approximately $150,000 be alotted for the purpose.[24]

The job was given to Professor Hartley Burr Alexander (1873-1939), the son of a Methodist minister who received his Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1901.[25] Professor and head of the philosophy department at Scripps College in Claremont, California, Alexander was a prolific author in a variety of fields, notably mythology and symbology. He designed the sculptural program for Lee Lawrie at Bertram Goodhue's Los Angeles Public Library (1921-26) and also at the Nebraska State Capitol (1920-32) where Lawrie was joined by Hildreth Meiere. The influence of Nebraska's proto-WPA style is evident at Rockefeller Center and appears in such specific motifs as the bison head with corn cob horns in the sixth story spandrels of the International Building North and more generally in Meiere's plaques for the exterior of Radio City Music Hall.[26] Professor Alexander also designed thematic programs for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company in New York and worked with Raymond Hood on the Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago (beginning in 1929).

By December, 1931 Professor Alexander was engaged to design a "scenario" for Rockefeller Center.[27] He early suggested "Homo Fabor, Man the Builder" as representative of the new social ideal where satisfaction would derive from work and not from "some incidental wage."[28] The theme, however, failed to enlist much support. As an alternative the Professor suggested the "New Frontiers" which faced man after the conquest of the physical world. This included the cultivation of his mind and soul, the broadening of human relations and the harnessing of new scientific discoveries. The latter aspect was particularly appropriate for radio and emerging television technology and inspired such works as Leo Friedlander's sculpture for the RCA Building's side street entrances, Robert Garrison's panels for 1270 Avenue of the Americas (originally the RKO Building), Barry Faulkner's mosaic and Gaston Lachaise's sculptural panels for the RCA Building West, and Lee Lawrie's "Wisdom."[29]

The Professor's themes imbued the complex with elevated social and spiritual themes, but had the practical effect of restricting creative license, particularly as he specified in

minute detail exactly how the finished product should appear. His ideas criticized as "beatific humbug,"[30] Alexander was ultimately relieved of his position. But his influence seems to have survived in the programs finally chosen. Among them were "Intellectual and Spiritual Progress" (including Chambellan's fountainheads in the Channel Gardens and the sculptural works on the former Time-Life Building), "Historical and Mythological Background" (as represented by "Atlas" and his brother "Prometheus" as well as the murals in the RCA Building's lobby) and "The Rise of the Nations." The latter was particularly appropriate to Rockefeller's announced quest for world peace through global commerce and appears in all the international units on Fifth Avenue.

The professor was replaced in March, 1932 by a panel of five experts in the art world. Included were Edward Waldo Forbes who was a Renaissance authority and Director of Harvard's Fogg Museum; Everett V. Meeks, Dean of the Yale University School of Art; Fiske Kimball, Director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art (whose specialty was Colonial art); Paul J. Sachs, Trustee of Boston's Museum of Fine Arts and Herbert E. Linlock, the Egyptian authority who directed the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Significantly, there was no representative from the Museum of Modern Art.[31] The panel was comprised of conservatives who for the most part selected like-minded artists. At least a half dozen had attended the American Academy in Rome, others the Ecole des Beaux Arts while still others followed the academic traditions of such masters as Guzton Borglum. The great exceptions were Gaston Lachaise (who, however, revealed none of his characteristic sexual dynamism) and Isamu Noguchi. The latter produced one of the finest, if not the best, works in all of Rockefeller Center with his innovative stainless steel panel for the main entrance of the Associated Press Building.

Although there was a general feeling that the Center's art left something to be desired, much of it is notable for technical achievements. In addition to Noguchi, significant advances were made by Hildreth Meier in her extremely handsome metal and enamel plaques for the exterior of Radio City Music Hall. This was also true of Lee Lawrie and Attilio Piccirilli who pioneered new applications of architectural glass in their respective panels for the RCA Building and International Building North. There are, moreover, many works of fine decorative quality, like Paul Manship's "Prometheus" which serves as the Center's gilded focus and Lawrie's "Atlas" who does the same for the International Building's Fifth Avenue courtyard. Some of Lawrie's reliefs on the side entrances of the four international units are especially notable for their refined graphic style.

The artworks throughout the complex allow the architecture to dominate, but simultaneously relieve its uniform buff limestone with color and varied texture. Their above lintel placement emphasizes mural mass and in many cases dramatizes the

severe simplicity of the entrances which they crown. Interesting as period pieces, the major significance of the art lay in the fact that it was designed as a component of a vast commercial complex in which all of the arts were integrally combined. As such, the art and the Center as a whole, are unprecedented. (See Appendix for biographies of the artists who worked at Rockefeller Center).

INTRODUCTION FOOTNOTES

1. Thomas J. Bradley, "Plans Progressed for the Radio City Development," Real Estate Record and Guide, 30 (March 14, 1931), 11.

2. "New Edifices Win Fifth Avenue Awards," NYT, 2/5/39, Sec. 9, p. 1:4. Also see "Rockefeller Center: 50 Years of Leadership," Real Estate Forum (Nov. 1982), 52-61.

3. "The Design of Rockefeller City by Raymond Hood," Architectural Forum, 56 (Jan. 1932), 2.

4. Douglas Haskell, "Unity and Harmony at Rockefeller Center," Architectural Forum, 124 (Jan.-Feb. 1966), 42-47.

5. Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, "Land with a Unique History," The Last Rivet, p. 11-17.

6. Winston Weisman, "Who Designed Rockefeller Center?," JSAH, 10 (March 1951), 11-17 and "Towards A New Environment: The Way of Price Mechanism," Architectural Review, 108 (Dec. 1950), p. 399-405.

7. Fosdick, John D. Rockefeller: A Portrait, (New York: Harper & H.Row), 1956 and NCAB, 44, p. 1-7.

8. Ivy Lee to JDR, Jr., May 25, 1928, quoted in Krinsky, p. 31 n3.

9. Charles Heydt to JRD, Jr., August 19, 1929, quoted in Balfour, p. 13 n16.

10. Woods to Metropolitan Square Corporation architects advisory board, Weiseman, "The Way of Price Mechanism," quoted in Balfour, p. 15 n21.

11. John R. Todd and William C. Vogel, Living A Life, New York, 1947, p. 83-84. See also, Krinsky, p. 42.

12. Ibid., p. 88-89; Krinsky, p. 45.

13. Ibid.

14. Weisman, "Who Designed Rockefeller Center?," JSAH, 10 (March 1951), 11-17 [16].

15. "Radio City to Bear Name of Rockefeller," NYT, 12/21/31, p.1.

16. Carol Willis, "Harvey Wiley Corbett," MEA, I, p. 451; Krinsky, p. 37-39; The Builder, obit. (April 30, 1954) 186, p. 756; Architectural Forum, 100 (May 1954), 45-46; RIBA Journal, (July 1954) 391.

17. NYT obit., 2/21/41, p.19:4.

18. Victoria Newhouse, "Harrison & Abramowitz," MEA, II, p. 324-26; Krinsky, p. 38-39; Architectural Record obit. (Jan. 1982), p. 34; AIA Journal (Jan. 1982) p. 99 and Samuel E. Bleeker, The Politics of Architecture: A Perspective on Nelson A. Rockefeller, (New York: Rutledge Press), 1981.

19. Walter H. Kilham, Jr., "Raymond M. Hood," MEA, II, p. 414-16 and Kilham, Raymond Hood, Architect: Form Through Function in the American Skyscraper, (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co.) 1973; Krinsky, p. 45- 47; NCAB, 28, p. 389-90.

20. "Frederick A. Godley Dies...," NYT obit., 2/22/61,p.25:2.

21. Carol Krinsky, "Jacques Andre Fouilhoux," MEA, II, p. 106; Architectural Forum obit., 83 (Aug. 1945), 86; John La Farge, S.J., "J. Andre Fouilhoux: 1879-1945," Liturgical Arts, 13 (Aug. 1945), 73.

22. Krinsky, p. 35; Krinsky, MEA, III, p. 359; "I. Andrew Reinhard, 72, Dies," NYT obit., 8/3/64, p. 25:5; Architectural Record, (Sept. 1964) p. 26.

23. "Henry Hofmeister, 71, is Dead," NYT obit., 1/9/62, p. 47:2 Krinsky, "Reinhard & Hofmeister," MEA, III, p. 539; "Henry Hofmeister," Architectural Forum, 116 (Feb. 1962) p. 14; NCAB, 48, p. 524.

24. Minutes of the Board of Directors, 11/20/31, cited by Krinsky, p. 78 n110.

25. "Hartley Burr Alexander," NCAB, 46, p. 538-9.

26. H.B. Alexander, "The Sculpture of Lee Lawrie," Architectural Forum, 54 (May, 1931) p. 587ff and "Hildreth Meiere's Work for Nebraska," Architecture, 62 (June 1931) p. 34-8.

27. "Outline is Drawn of Radio City Art," NYT, 12/6/31, p. 31:5.

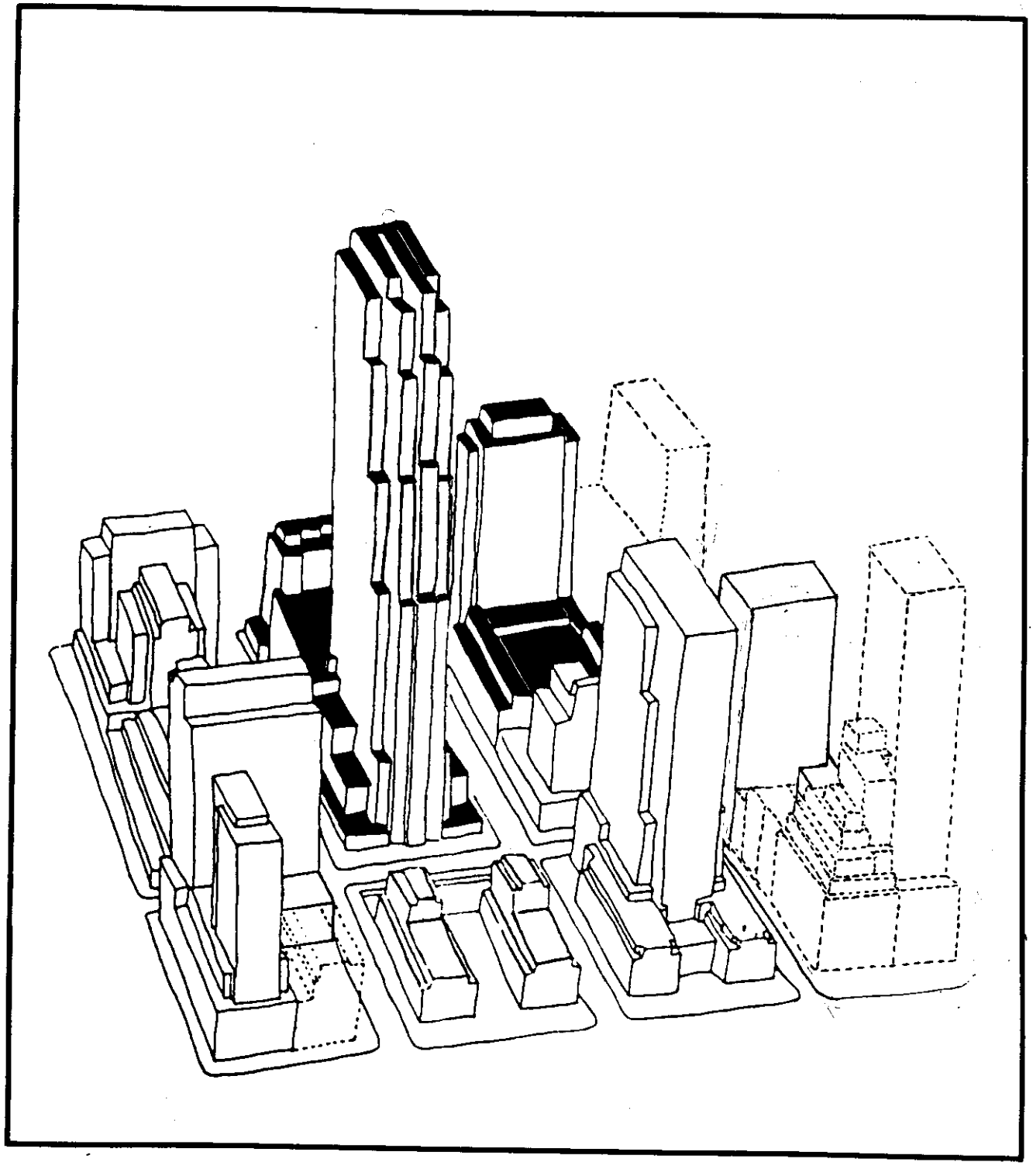
28. Balfour, p. 137.

29. Thomas Craven, "Politics and the Painting Business," American Mercury, 27 (Dec. 1932), p. 463-71.

30. See Balfour, p. 137ff.

31. The Story of Rockefeller Center, New York, 1939.

32. "Rockefeller Center Names Art Commission," NYT, 3/7/32, p.19:4. See also Edith Hallow, "Letter to the Editor," NYT, 3/10/32, p. 20:7.



THE RADIO GROUP

Within one month of the Opera's withdrawal from Rockefeller Center negotiations were underway with the Radio Corporation of America (RCA).[1] A suggestion from Raymond Hood brought the two concerns together. Having recently designed studios at 711 Fifth Avenue for the National Broadcasting Company (NBC), a subsidiary of RCA, Hood was intimately aware of the prodigious expansion of radio and emerging television technology. He correctly foresaw RCA's need for an enlarged center of operations. Architect Wallace Harrison followed up Hood's suggestion with a relative of the chairman of RCA's real estate committee. By February 1930, serious negotiations were underway with the Rockefeller developers. A contract was signed and announced to the press on June 4, 1930.[2]

In its early history the wireless was used almost exclusively for marine telegraphy, and was adopted in 1901 by the U.S. Navy as a substitute for homing pigeons. Its greater potential was not realized until April 12,1912, when a young David Sarnoff, working in the British Marconi Company's New York branch above Wanamaker's Department Store, intercepted a Morse Code message: the Titanic was "sinking fast." Monitored for days as news-seeking crowds swelled the streets, the calamity served as a tremendous boost to both Marconi and Sarnoff. It also proved the reliability of the wireless and led to speculation about its potential to broadcast sound. Four years later and still employed by Marconi, Sarnoff suggested that radio be used to entertain the nation. Visionary at the time, his idea was not realized until the mid 1920s when post-war prosperity found a radio in nearly every American home.

The enormous growth of the radio industry and its increasing importance in American culture had led the far sighted Owen D. Young, chairman of General Electric (one of RCA's corporate parents), to inquire about the possibilities of consolidating RCA's operations in a complex at Rockefeller's development.[3] Corporate reorganization four months later gave RCA independence under its new president David Sarnoff.[4] In partial settlement RCA transferred to G.E. its new office building on 51st Street and Lexington Avenue (Cross & Cross, 1929-30).

The radio group then moved to Rockefeller's development, profoundly altering its character in the process. In replacing the Opera, RCA transformed the complex from an semi-cultural enterprise into a democratic focus for mass entertainment and the corporate headquarters for burgeoning technology. In the words of a contemporary, it substituted "a vision of the future [for] a vision of the past."[5] The impact was such that for years the entire development was popularly, but inaccurately, called "Radio City."[6] The name properly applies only to that part of Rockefeller Center which borders on Sixth Avenue, and which was dominated by RCA and its subsidiaries, the most notable being NBC, Radio-Keith-Orpheum ("RKO," a leading producer, distributor and exhibitor of motion pictures) and RCA Victor (one of the foremost manufacturers of phonographs and records in America).

The Sixth Avenue position of the Radio Group was particularly appropriate as it complemented New York's theater district to its immediate southwest.

Although still somewhat speculative in its recent independence --- and weathering the Depression with reduced profits --- RCA's new president David Sarnoff made an enormous $4.25 million annual rent commitment to Rockefeller Center. In return RCA was allowed to name the entertainment section of the development as well as its two theaters ("Radio City Music Hall" and the "RKO Roxy (later Center) Theater." It also won exclusive broadcasting rights among the many tenants in the complex and most importantly, the right to display the RCA logo atop its own skyscraper in the heart of the Center (on the site originally intended for the Opera).[7]

RADIO GROUP FOOTNOTES

1. "Rockefeller Site for Opera Dropped," NYT, 12/6/1929, p. 1:3. See also Krinsky, p. 50 and n61.

2. Gill, p.25 .

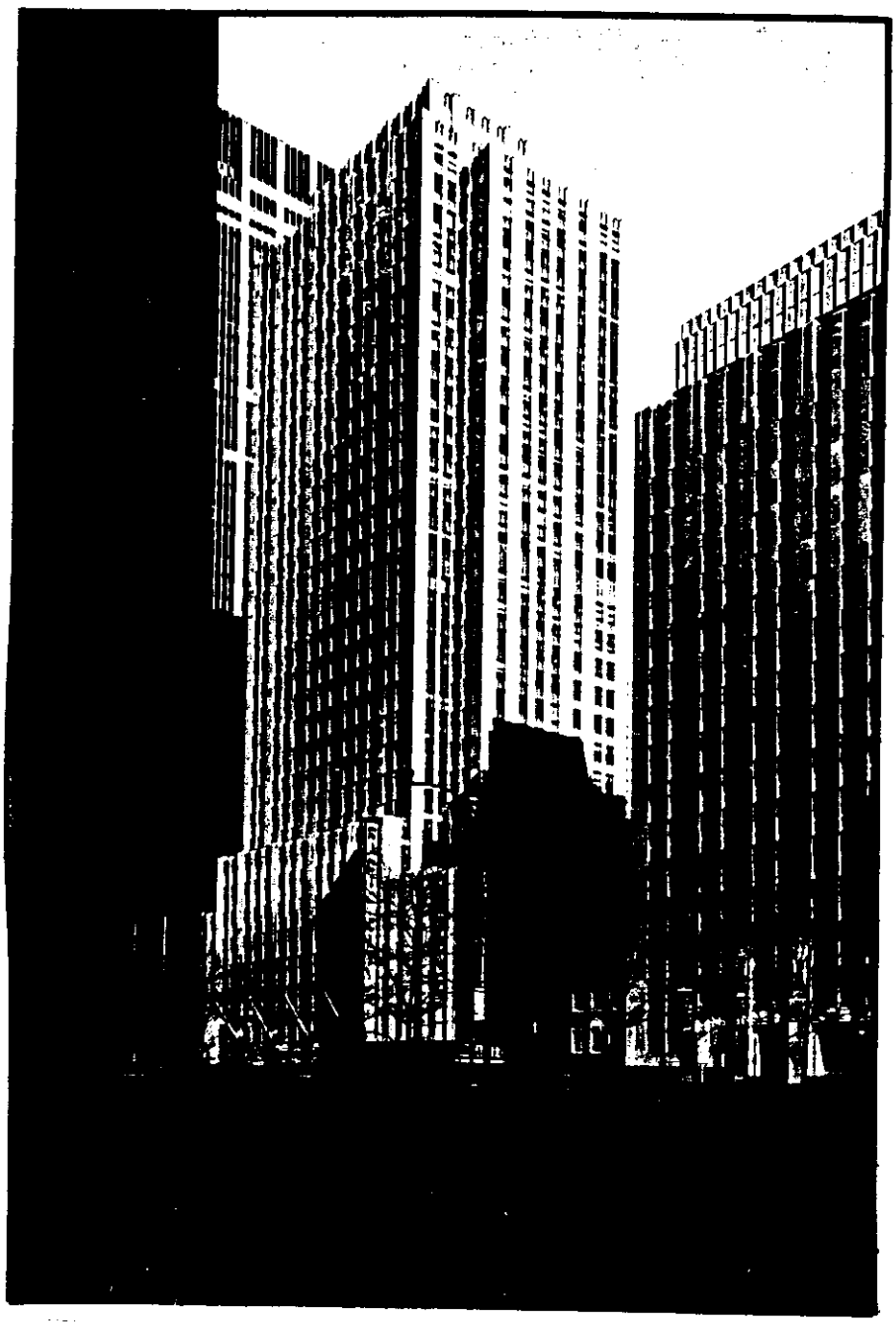
3. Letters from JDR, Jr. to John R. Todd (12/27/1929) and Edward Harden to John R. Todd (1/17/1930) cited in Balfour, p.20-1, nos. 25 and 26.

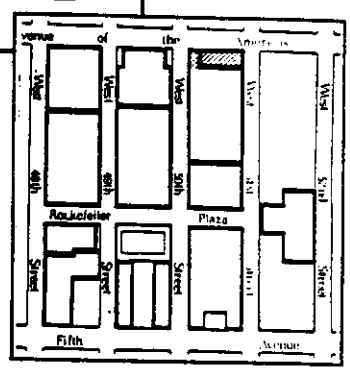
4. Eugene Lyons, David Sarnoff, A Biography, (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), esp. 345ff.

5. "Problems Confronting the Designers of Radio City," NYT, 4/5/1931, Sect. 9, p. 4.

6. "Radio City to Bear the Name of Rockefeller," NYT, 12/21/1931, p. 1. New York City Guide, WPA American Guide Series, New York, 1939 (reprint, 1970), p. 333.

7. Gill, p. 25 and Balfour, p. 21-2.





1270 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS

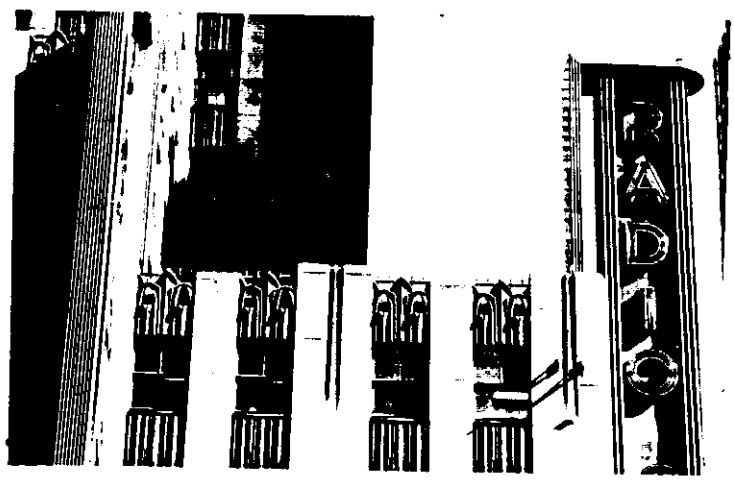
(Originally RKO, later Americas Building, then Amax Building)
Sept. 1931- Oct. 1932

The RKO Building (now the 1270 Avenue of the Americas Building) was the first structure undertaken at Rockefeller Center, followed one month later by RKO's Radio City Music Hall with which it is connected.[1] Excavation was begun in late July 1931.[2] Its steelwork was topped out in February 1932 and the building completed eight months later.[3]

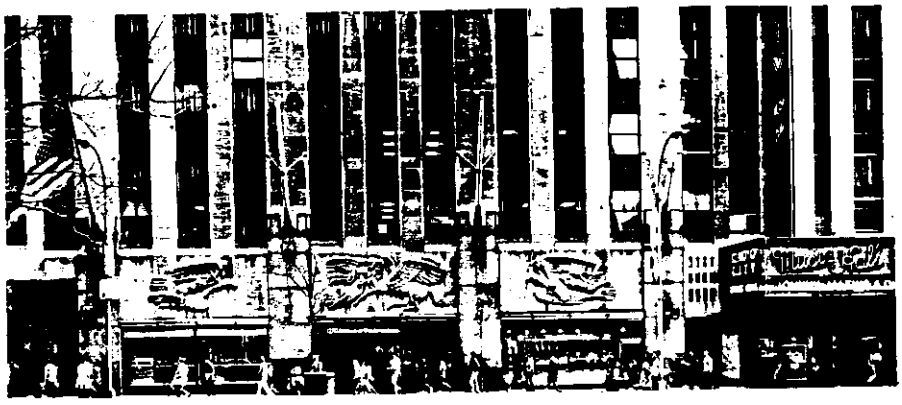
The combination theater-office building was a familiar type in New York with such notable predecessors as the Palace Theater (1912-13) and Hammerstein's (later Ed Sullivan) Theater (1927). The RKO Building, however, differed in its much taller 31 story mass and in the fact that it was designed as part of a larger entertainment complex. It also presented difficult siting problems as it was built adjacent to and partially on top of the theater to its south. It was the kind of problem relished by Henry Hofmeister, and one in which he excelled.[4]

The location of the building on narrow Sixth Avenue site, in front of the Music Hall and above its entrance, predetermined the structure's slab-like form since the building code then in effect prohibited construction over the theater's auditorium. The slab was set on a north-south axis and for a brief period rose in splendid isolation over shabby Sixth Avenue, filled with speakeasies and cluttered by the El. Its singular impact was eclipsed, however, when the more imposing RCA Building was begun five months later to its immediate south.

RKO set the standard for the other Sixth Avenue buildings in the complex. It was echoed in shorter form by the RCA Building West (1932-33) and followed by the U.S. Rubber Company Building (1939) which, like the RKO, was constructed in front and partially over a theater (Center Theater). Together these structures formed a unified and imposing rear facade to the Fifth Avenue-oriented Rockefeller Center. More important, they presented a cohesive front to Radio City, the Center's entertainment complex, and established a formal relationship with New York's theater district to the immediate southwest. They also complemented --- and challenged ---William Fox's "Roxy Theater" which was located just one block west at 50th Street and Seventh Avenue.



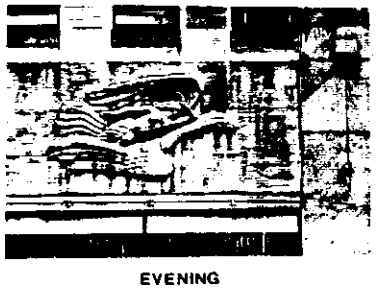
Foliate spandrels and Gothic arcade, extension over Radio City Music Hall.



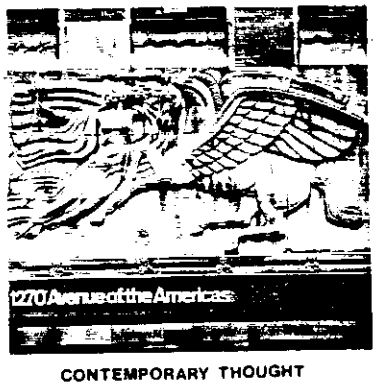
THREE LIMESTONE PANELS
Main Entrance, Sixth Avenue
Robert Garrison
Installed 1932

The Sixth Avenue buildings are integrated by siting and materials and by sympathetic portals in the RKO Building and RCA Building West. The former's central entrance and flanking shops present a horizontal counterpart to the latter's grand triple entrance. Each of RKO's three central bays is crowned by a broad multi-panel limestone lintel (21 feet x 9 feet) for which Robert Garrison designed a bas-relief.

The sculptural series is skillfully, if somewhat academically carved, on a closely joined lithic ground. It is quietly enlivened by an "archway" whose curve extends from the raised central motif along the neckline of birds in the flanking panels.[5] The series was well received as "good decoration" and appreciated for introducing a "fine and lovely grace above the clangor and ugliness of the street."[6] It was, however, weighted by its heavy theme: an allegory of the importance of radio communication in promoting culture. The central panel shows the female muse of Contemporary Thought holding the torch of past knowledge in one hand and in the other, an electric bolt signifying the speed of radio transmission and the force that accomplishes it. To her right is a rearing Pegasus, the immortal winged steed of inspiration. Rushing toward the central panel are symbols of radio's endless activity. On the right, virile Morning flies entwined in the wings of an eagle. Evening at left is borne atop a flying heron.



EVENING



CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT

MORNING

As elsewhere in the Center the sculpture serves to emphasize architectural mass. It underscores the tremendous horizontal of the building's ground floor facade and continues the line of the Music Hall's marquee at right. A lower bronze decorative lintel underlines the effect. The building is otherwise relieved by beveled and scalloped sills below its first story windows, by a pierced limestone screen above its subway entrance, and by its leafy spandrels at setback and roof lines.

The RKO Building was constructed just three years after the formation of Radio-Keith-Orpheum. The company was formed as a result of David Sarnoff's bold attempt to break into the motion picture industry. In 1927 he had contracted with Paramount Pictures to supply sound equipment for their first major "talkie." Shortly thereafter he created the RCA Photophone Company for the production of film recording and sound equipment. Through Joseph P. Kennedy, a major stock holder of the Film Booking Office (and father of the future U.S. President and Attorney General), Sarnoff capitalized on the decline of vaudeville. He bought stock in FBO and through Kennedy's influence brought about a merger with Keith-Albee-Orpheum, a nationally syndicated vaudeville chain with hundreds of theaters across the country. By the additional merger with Pathe Pictures (of which Kennedy was also a major stock holder), Sarnoff created a new company, Radio-Keith-Orpheum (RKO), in 1928. Its initial success was impressive.

Since October 6, 1927 when Al Jolson had appeared in The Jazz Singer, motion picture competitors worked feverishly to produce their own films with sound. RKO was born in the heat of this rivalry and released for its initial effort the lavish sound and partially technicolor Rio Rita.[7] This was followed in 1930 by Amos & Andy starring in Check and Double Check, one of the 15 most profitable pictures of the season. RKO's next release was the artistically acclaimed and commercially successful western Cimarron. In 1932 RKO made a grand display of its new prowess in the entertainment world with the opening of its two Rockefeller Center theaters: the RKO Roxy (later Center Theater) and Radio City Music Hall. And while the latter was a financial failure, the company's future looked brighter with the release of Katherine Hepburn in Little Women and especially with the technically innovative King Kong. The Depression, however, was taking its box office toll. Unable to arrange banking support, RKO drew heavily upon the resources of RCA, but finally went into receivership in 1933.[8]

In later years the RKO Building was known as the Americas Building, reflecting the formal christening of Sixth Avenue as the Avenue of the Americas in 1945. It was renamed for the American Metal Climax Company in 1960-61, and subsequently the AMAX Building. More recently it has been known by its street address, 1270 Avenue of the Americas.

In the course of its 54 year existence, the exterior of the building has remained substantially unchanged. Its only major alterations have taken place at ground level. In 1933-34 Reinhard & Hofmeister cut back the facade's northwestern pier to install a store front.[9] Twenty years later Carson & Lundin further modified the shop fronts, altered the building entrance and intalled new bronze revolving doors.[10]

1270 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS BUILDING FOOTNOTES

1. NB148-31.

2. "Radio City Digging to Begin Tomorrow," NYT, 7/26/31, p. 2:6.

3. "Radio City Progress," NYT, 2/6/32, p. 32:4.

4. Krinsky, p. 35.

5. Eugene Clute, "The Story of Rockefeller Center. XI. The Allied Arts," Architectural Forum, 58 (Feb. 1933), 128-132. See also "Gets Contract for the RKO Building," NYT, 8/10/32, p.23:1.

6. I. Cross, "The Sculpture of Rockefeller Center," Parnassus, 6 (Oct. 1932), 1-3 and NYT, 12/24/33, Sect. 9, p. 9:1.

7. Martin Quigley, Jr. and Richard Gertner, Films in America, 1929-1969, (New York: Golden Press, 1970), p. 25ff.

8. Iyons, David Sarnoff (New York: Harper & Row), 1966 p. 168-69.

9. ALT 2190-33.

10. ALTs 97-53, 475-53.

1270 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS -- DESCRIPTION

No.1270 Avenue of the Americas is a 31-story slab rising above Sixth Avenue with low corner wings. Set back above the sixth-story level at its north and south, and above the eighth-story level in the center, it rises sheer to the top, modified slightly by a recessed two-bay section on the north and south. Like all the Center towers, it is articulated by vertical window-spandrel bays and limestone piers, with terminal foliage at the setbacks and top. (Its southern wing at the northeast corner of Sixth Avenue is described with Radio City Music Hall.)

Four polished granite piers at the ground level in the center of the Sixth Avenue elevation form three wide bays; the outer two of these bays house storefronts, with modernistic metal bands at their top, while the inner bay houses the altered, recessed entrance, under a similar metal band. Above each bay is a large stone relief (see p. 36). At the top of each of the four wide piers forming these three bays is a flagpole with a modernistic bronze base. To the south of the central bays, on the ground level, is a narrow entrance to the subway, with an ornamental stone grille and metal band above. At the northern corner of this elevation on the ground-floor level is a triple-bay storefront which has been altered.

The 51st Street elevation of the tower is simply the narrow side of the slab, and it is treated identically with window-spandrel bays and limestone piers. It also has two modernistic bronze grilles. The 50th Street elevation, rising above the lower bulk of Radio City Music Hall, is similarly treated.

* * * * *

Significant features include but are not limited to:

SIXTH AVENUE FACADE

- Buff colored shot sawed Indiana limestone cladding
- Vertically ridged slate-gray aluminum spandrels
- Decorative pier terminations
- Polished granite bases on limestone piers
- 2/1 double-hung steel sash
- Bronze bands over storefronts and entrance
- Terminal foliage of the 2-eyelet variety
- Three limestone reliefs (see p.)
- Four flag poles, wooden with modernistic bronze anchors
- Bronze light hoods

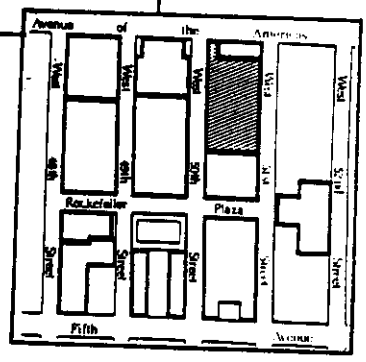
WEST 51ST STREET FACADE

- Buff colored shot sawed Indiana limestone cladding
- Vertically ridged slate-gray aluminum spandrels
- Decorative pier terminations

- Beveled and scalloped window sills
- Polished granite base at first-story level
- Bronze door enframements
- 2/1 double-hung steel sash
- Terminal foliage of the 2-eyelet variety
- Modernistic bronze grilles

WEST 50TH STREET FACADE

- Buff colored shot sawed Indiana limestone cladding
- Vertically ridged slate-gray aluminum spandrels
- Decorative pier terminations
- 2/1 double-hung steel sash
- Terminal foliage of the 2-eyelet variety



RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL

1260 Avenue of the Americas
Nov. 1931 - Dec. 1932

Radio City Music Hall is the popular heir to the aristocratic Opera, planned but never executed at Rockefeller Center. It is one of four theaters originally envisioned for the complex by RKO, and the sole survivor of the two actually constructed. With 6,200 seats, the Music Hall was, upon its completion in 1932, the world' largest indoor theater.[1]

RKO was formed in late 1928 by RCA's David Sarnoff and Joseph P. Kennedy (father of the late John and Robert F. Kennedy) who had controlling interest in the Film Booking Office (FBO) production agency. Through a series of mergers between FBO and, the Keith-Albee-Orpheum vaudeville chain, and later with Pathe Pictures (of which Kennedy was a major stockholder), Radio-Keith-Orpheum (RKO) emerged as one of the six leading producers of motion pictures in America.[2]

Created on the eve of the Depression and encouraged --- at least initially --- by its distraction-seeking audiences, RKO intended to construct at Rockefeller Center two small theaters for drama and comedy and eventually television as well as a large movie house and an even larger showcase for two-a-day vaudeville spectaculars.[3] The grand scheme ripened as a result of Samuel Lionel Rothafel ("Roxy") who left his new namesake theater (located just one block west of Rockefeller Center) to join RKO.

Born in 1892 in a small Minnesota town, Roxy was the son of Gustave Rothafel, a shoemaker. His parents moved to New York when he was twelve, and after working in a department store as a cash boy, he entered the Marines. Seven years later Roxy traveled as a house-to-house peddler and ended up in Pennsylvania where he met his future wife. While working in his father-in-law's bar, Roxy transformed the large dancing hall at the rear into a movie house. He bought a second-hand screen and projector, rented 200 chairs from an undertaker, hired a pianist and charged a nickel admission. He then moved on to Minneapolis and later Milwaukee, introducing such innovative entertainments as music and dance performances to movie theaters.

Roxy returned to New York City in 1913 to manage the Regent Theater at 116th St. and Seventh Avenue (generally recognized as the first "movie palace") where he improved the traditional program with novel lighting effects and a 100-piece orchestra. In the following years Roxy moved on to the newly completed Strand, then to the Rialto and Rivoli theaters, and in 1923 to the Capitol Theater from which he broadcast "Roxy and his Gang," one of the most popular radio shows in America.

Roxy's brilliant theatrical reputation reached a peak in 1927 when he assumed management and gave his name to William Fox's Roxy Theater at West 50th St. and Seventh Avenue. With nearly 6,000 seats this opulent movie house was the largest in the world. Roxy allegedly intended to further enlarge the theater as a center for varied entertainments but when negotiations with William Fox failed, he found a most cordial welcome at Rockefeller Center.[4] By luring the impresario away from Fox, RKO won over its most serious competition. In return Roxy was made vice president, producer and manager of RKO's theaters at Rockefeller Center. Roxy's only rival was his record of past theatrical achievements. He surpassed it brilliantly, especially at Radio City Music Hall, where he realized "the aspirations of a lifetime."[5] Roxy brought in the noted theater architects C.W. and G.L. Rapp to advise on the Music Hall's design.[6] And while it was actually built by the Associated Architects, the Music Hall everywhere bore the influence of Roxy's own imagination and comprehensive knowledge of theater design.

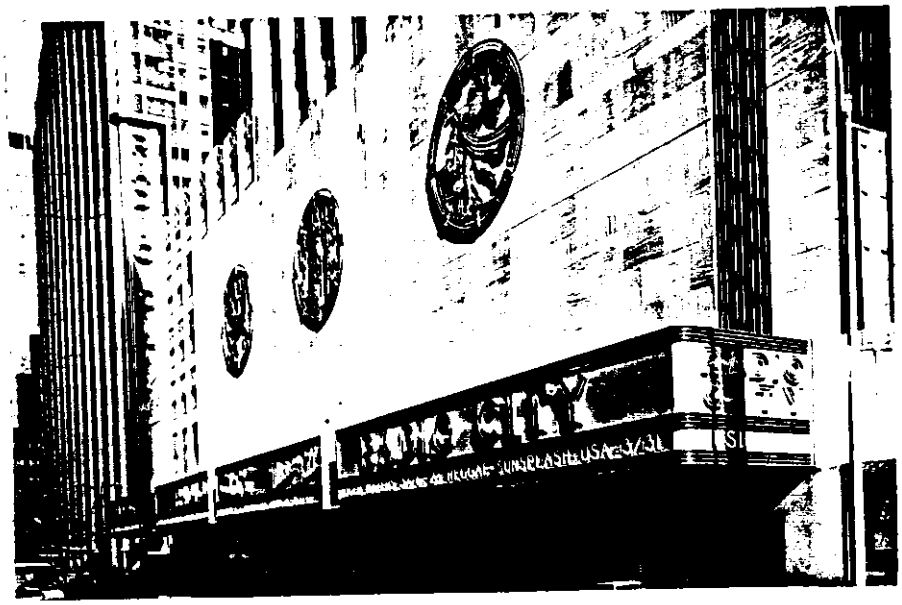
On December 21, 1931, construction began on the "RKO Roxy" (rechristened in 1934 as the "Center Theater"). Located to the south of the RCA Building on the southeast corner of 49th Street and Sixth Avenue (site of the present Simon & Schuster Building addition), this 3,700 seat house was Roxy's "intimate" theater.[7] It was designed for a mixed bill of motion picture and stage entertainment. Work was simultaneously undertaken on the "International (later Radio City) Music Hall," located on the other (north) side of the RCA Building on Sixth Avenue between 50th and 51st Streets. It was built in conjunction with the RKO Building which was partially constructed over the Music Hall's lobby.[8] In 1938 the Music Hall's east wall was abutted by the newly constructed Associated Press Building.

The exteriors of the two theaters were similar in their low-lying limestone massing, a feature dictated by the building code then in effect which forbade construction above theater auditoriums. The (121 foot) high Music Hall, however, was almost twice as large as the RKO Roxy and considerably more decorative. Its exterior sculpture reflected the unique kind of entertainment which Roxy intended to showcase. Unlike his previous theaters which featured a mixed bill of stage and screen entertainment, the Music Hall was designed as a center for diverse and sophisticated entertainments such as legitimate drama, ballet and opera, combined with jazz, a revival of rapidly waning vaudeville and precision dances by the "Roxyette" chorus girls.

SIX BRONZE PLAQUES
Outer Vestibule, Sixth Avenue
Rene Chambellan
Installed 1932

The more popular entertainments of the Music Hall were represented by six bronze plaques over the entrance and side of the theater's vestibule on Sixth Avenue. The series was designed by Rene Chambellan and is closely related to that which he executed for the doors of the Grand Foyer on the theater's interior. The series shows scenes from international vaudeville acts. Reading from left to right are five Russian minstrels who accompany a gypsy dancer, two Black banjo players and a tap dancer, a seated German accordionist and saxophonist who play as a patient cat listens, five American precision dancers (the "Roxyettes"), an old French cellist and female violinist who play as a dog (in clown costume) sits upright, and finally a seated Jewish drummer with a tuxedo clad singer/dancer.

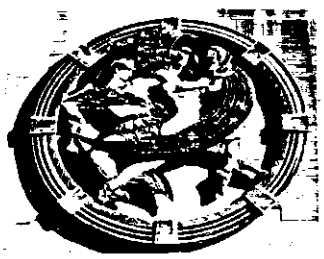
The more legitimate stage arts were depicted in a classically-inspired series of metal and enamel plaques installed 60 feet above West 50th Street on the Music Hall's sprawling south facade. Designed by Hildreth Meiere and executed by Oscar B. Bach, these 18 foot roundels represent a major technical and artistic achievement. They were fashioned from copper, bronze, aluminum, chrome nickel steel and vitreous enamels. Although polychromed metals had been used before, most notably in Sweden, they were largely ignored by American artists. Meiere not only introduced the technique, but did so at unprecedented scale.[9] She drew on her skill as a painter and mosaicist to brilliantly enliven the Music Hall's wall and achieved, in the words of a



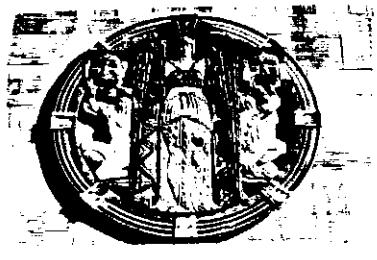
THREE METAL & ENAMEL PLAQUES
W. 50th St. Facade (view west)
Hildreth Meiere
Installed 1932

Rockefeller Center spokesman, "a striking relief from the usual severe [mural] surfaces of theater buildings."[10] Meiere also drew on her previous success in Bertram Goodhue's Nebraska State Capitol and especially his National Academy of Sciences in Washington where Meiere painted similar inhabited roundels on the pendentives of its dome.[11]

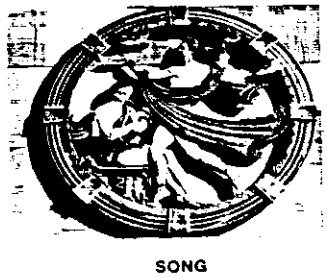
Dance is located at the far left of the wall, closest to Sixth Avenue. The plaque is dominated, as are the two companion plaques, by nude or semi-nude figures whose skin tone changes from matte nickel to a glowing metallic white, varying with the position of the sun. Dance is represented by an animated female, copper cymbols in her raised arms, who leaps across the wall as her brown-red hair flies upward over the geometrically patterned metal and enamel frame. Behind is a copper helmeted matte silver foot soldier (in a black and gold enamel moderne-patterned uniform). He attempts to catch the bacchanalian dancer in a blue and gold drape which billows around her and emphasizes the circular composition of the plaque.



DANCE



DRAMA



SONG

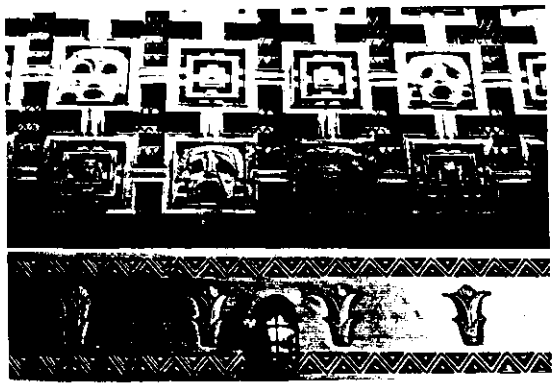
Drama, the middle plaque, is represented by a monumental Athena-like figure, draped in a shiny patterned silver chiton with copper bodice. She radiates on the wall, particularly in the glare of afternoon sun. The muse wears an enormous fan-shaped copper and enamel crown, and is framed by a brown and red drape (with gold details and dark blue enamel trim). Her drape falls in angular cascades in a splendid Art Deco design. The muse is flanked by two crouching females who raise large comic and tragic masks (shiny silver with copper mouths and blue enamel hair).

Song returns the viewer back to Sixth Avenue as a dorsal performer prances west, her green and blue shawl flapping behind. A brown-draped, piper is seated to her left on a silver Greek stool. He plays while three shiny silver birds flutter around the animated singer.

The decorative aspect of the Music Hall's exterior is furthered by its two moderne verticals and marquee which wraps around the theater's southwestern corner, only to be continued in three additional segments along West50th Street. The theater's north and south facades are also relieved at ground level by a variety of bronze-framed display windows and screens. Above, and to the right of Hildreth Meiere's medallions, are eight long vertical screens. They mask with a diaper-like pattern the fire escapes that mar the exteriors of so many other theater theaters. Eight similar screens appear on the W. 51st Street facade which, facing away from the entertainment complex, is somewhat less decorative.

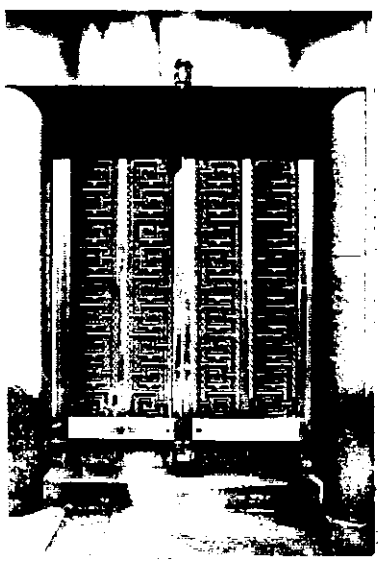
Fire escape screens & display windows, 50th St. facade.

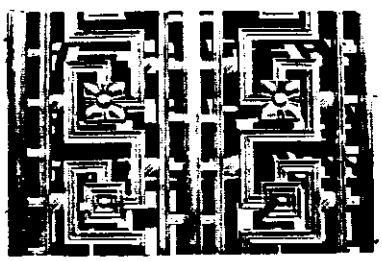
The Music Hall had its gala opening on December 27, 1932 with performances by twenty different entertainers including Martha Graham, Harold Kreutzberg and his ballet, the contralto Vera Schwartz, comedians Weber & Fields, the Tuskegee Institute choir singing Negro spirituals and more. Yet despite the varied program, the entertainment was disappointing. It hardly mat-



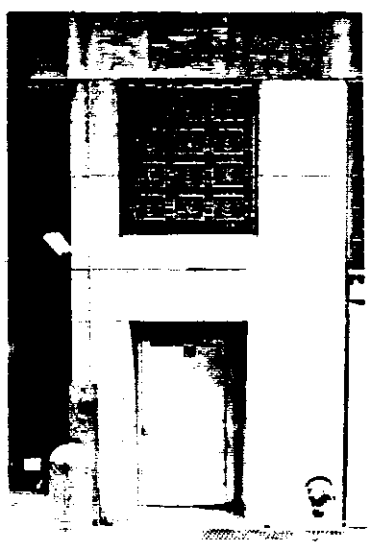
tered, as it was the theater itself that stole the show. As one critic wrote, "...the new Music Hall need[ed] no performers... its beauty and comforts alone [were] sufficient to gratify even the greediest of playgoers."[12] Rockefeller himself found it "beautiful, soul satisfying, inspiring beyond anything [he] dreamed possible."[13]

Technically advanced and lavishly embellished through the unique collaboration of some of the finest decorative artists of the day, the Music Hall was nonetheless a tremendous financial disaster. For the first time in his thirty year career Roxy had misjudged his audience. To his ruinous dismay, there was no interest in his supra-vaudeville revival. Within two weeks of its opening the Music Hall abandoned Roxy's entertainment policy, adopting in its place the film-and-stage show format of the smaller RKO Roxy (which had premiered just two days after the Music Hall). The change effectively eclipsed --- and ultimately killed --- the RKO Roxy. In subsequent years it showcased films, then musicals, later ice skating marvels, and finally television before being demolished in 1954.





BRONZE SCREENS



The switch to a combined film-and-stage show policy in early 1933 barely sustained the sumptuous but unprofitable Music Hall, now suffering in the throes of the Depression. The situation only worsened when RKO went into receivership in late January of the same year. A joint RCA-Rockefeller Center committee of six replaced the disgraced and now physically ailing Roxy in management of the Music Hall, extracting his resignation within the year.[14] The theater limped through 1934; for a time it even accepted "IOUs" in lieu of its $.35 - $.55 admission fees. But by mid-decade audiences were attracted to the Music Hall's varied bill, most movie palaces having abandoned live entertainment. By the early 1940s it had become one of New York's greatest attractions with first run Hollywood films and spectacular precision dancing by the Rockettes (previously named the "Roxyettes" but renamed after Roxy's resignation).

For decades the Music Hall remained "The Showplace of the Nation" before faltering perilously in the late 1960s and 1970s as a result of changes in popular entertainment habits. After closing for a brief period the house was revived in the late 1970s. Recently it has featured stage shows and popular concerts, ironically realizing Roxy's failed attempt to present varied live entertainment.

RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL FOOTNOTES

1. The interior of Radio City Music Hall was designated a New York City Landmark on March 28, 1978. For description and analysis, See "Radio City Music Hall Interior Designation Report" (LP-0995) and Krinsky, 164-187; Balfour, p. 91-97. See also Henry Hofmeister, "The International Music Hall," Architectural Forum, 56 (April, 1932), 355-60.

2. Balfour, p. 21-22.

3. "Rockefeller Plans Huge Culture Center," NYT, 6/14/30, p. 1:5.

4. Balfour, p. 93.

5. Roxy quoted in The Radio City Theatres, n.d. (Billy Rose Theater Collection, Research Libraries of the New York Public Library).

6. Balfour, p. 94.

7. "Roxy Presents New Mood," New York Evening Post, Nov. 29, 1932. See p.232 below for Center Theater.

8. NB148-31.

9. Eugene Clute, "The Story of Rockefeller Center. IX. The Allied Arts," Architectural Forum, 58 (Feb. 1933), 128-132, and Louis Cross, "The Sculpture for Rockefeller Center," Parnassus, 4 (Oct. 1932), 2. See also "Hildreth Meiere Plaques," Architectural Forum, 56 (Oct. 1932), 353-58 (esp. 355-58). Meiere also executed a 42 foot x 24 foot panel for the Center Theater.

10. "Huge Plaques of Metal and Enamel to Adorn the Exterior Walls of Rockefeller Center," NYT, 4/4/32, p. 19:4.

11. Illus. in Charles Downing Lay, "Hildreth Meiere," Arts, 14 (1928), 106-109.

12. "World's Largest Playhouse Opens," Literary Digest, Jan. 14, 1933, p. 16.

13. JDR, Jr. to John R. Todd (11/10/32) quoted in Krinsky, p. 164.

14. "Roxy Quits as Director of Radio City Music Hall," New York World Telegram, Jan. 18, 1934 and "Roxy Quitting Radio City Post Denies Dispute," Herald Tribune, Jan. 9, 1934.

RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL — DESCRIPTION

Radio City Music Hall is physically linked with No.1270 Avenue of the Americas, whose tower rises partially above the Music Hall's lobby. The Music Hall's main entrance at the northeast corner of Sixth Avenue and 50th Street is recessed under the lower wing of No.1270, and an enormous marquee and twin vertical signs are attached to this frontage, which is therefore being described with the Music Hall. This wing rises five stories above the entrance, to a major setback, behind and above which rises the tower of No.1270, which turns the corner at 51st Street and continues east for seven bays. The south elevation of the complex, rising six and eight stories from the lot line, and the north elevation, proceeding eastward from the eighth bay, form the remainder of the Music Hall's exterior.

The major entrance to Radio City Music Hall is through a recessed rectangular areaway at the northeast corner of Sixth Avenue and 50th Street. It is covered by a giant marquee which is supported on three polygonal piers faced in polished granite. In the long, north-south wall of the areaway are set a wide central pair of double-doors, a single double-door to its north, and two single double-doors to its south. These are separated from each other by thick piers faced in polished bronze, with polished granite bases and bronze-enframed announcement boards, capped by a horizontal, modernistic banding with abstract floral ornament. Above these doorways are polished granite blocks serving as background for the series of bronze reliefs on entertainment themes (see p. 47). The north, short wall of the areaway is faced with polished granite, and holds a wide, ornamental bronze announcement board with one of the bronze entertainment reliefs above.

The enormous marquee over the areaway curves around the corner onto 50th Street, and continues along the street in three additional, separate segments which are cantilevered over the sidewalk. Their long vertical faces are divided into a wide upper zone and a narrow lower zone by three modernistic bands. These bands are formed by four narrow continuous metal strips, within which are set three neon tubes. The wide upper zone holds the words "Music Hall" in cursive neon lettering and the words "RADIO CITY" in bold neon capitals, repeating sequentially along the marquee. The lower band is reserved for changing announcements of current attractions.

Twin seven-story tall vertical signs rise at the north and south ends of the Sixth Avenue portion of the marquee; the northern vertical is placed perpendicular to the avenue, and the southern vertical parallel to it. Tall, narrow and rectangular, their narrow ends are faced with ridged metal plates, while their two wide faces hold the words "RADIO CITY" in vertically placed bold capital neon lettering, and, beneath, the smaller words "MUSIC HALL" in neon lettering on a diagonal. Each vertical is capped with a curving modernistic metal top. The top of the

northern vertical attaches directly to a seventh story setback, while the top of the southern vertical is continued down to the fifth-story setback of the adjoining lower facade.

The remainder of the Sixth Avenue elevation of Radio City Music Hall, in appearance an extension of No.1270's tower design, is treated in the standard Center manner of vertical window-spandrel bays alternating with limestone piers; spandrels are vertically ridged, and bays terminate in 2-eyelet foliage.

On 50th Street, the first three bays from the corner of Sixth Avenue are window-spandrel bays above the curve of the marquee. The marquee continues in three separate sections. Beneath it is a continuous polished granite wall, into which are inset, from west to east, a bronze-enframed double entrance, four bronze-enframed announcement boards continuing the decorative features of those in the areaway, and a series of bronze doorways. Above the marquee, the wall is blank from the second through fifth stories, clad in limestone, and serves as a backdrop for three enormous polychromatic metal and enamel reliefs (see p.48). Above the western end of this blank surface is one story of four window bays, while above the more extensive eastern end rise two stories of nine window bays, each bay combining windows, spandrels and grilles in an irregular order; these bays are topped with 2-eyelet foliage.

To the east of the large portion of blank wall is a set of eight four-story high vertical grilles at the second- to fifth-story level; these are continued in the stories above by triple spandrels, a single casement window, and terminal 2-eyelet foliage. The final ten easternmost bays revert to the typical window-spandrel bays set between limestone piers; these bays are grouped in a 2-3-2-3 pattern. The ground level of this section contains, from west to east, three enormous bronze-enframed announcement boards with modernistic grilles and abstract floral ornament, and a series of intermingling smaller announcement boards and entrances. The entire treatment of the 50th Street elevation reflects the windowless auditorium of the Music Hall behind it.

The 51st Street elevation of the Music Hall is simply a smaller version of the 50th Street elevation. It includes a blank wall with no reliefs, and a six-story high vertical over a two-section marquee with curved corners and neon lettering. The ground-floor level is faced with polished granite, and contains bronze-enframed announcement boards and entrances. The portion of the elevation east of the blank wall and marquee is articulated with multi-story grilles similar to those on 50th Street; beneath them are large bronze-enframed announcement boards. The final ten bays are treated with typcial window-spandrel bays set between limestone piers. Towards the eastern end of the elevation at the ground floor level, two sets of

bronze-enframed doors are capped by an inventive grille based on comic-tragic masks symbolizing theater. There are also grilles on windows and on a pair of doors.

* * * * *

Significant features include but are not limited to:

SIXTH AVENUE FACADE

- Buff colored shot sawed Indiana limestone cladding
- Vertically ridged slate-gray aluminum spandrels
- Decorative pier terminations
- Polished granite base and polished granite entrance wall
- Polished granite polygonal piers
- Bronze-enframed entrances
- Bronze-enframed announcement boards
- Bronze banding
- Bronze abstract floral ornament
- 2/1 double-hung steel sash
- Terminal foliage of the 2-eyelet variety
- Six bronze entertainment reliefs (see p. 47)
- Marquee with neon lettering
- Two vertical signs with neon lettering

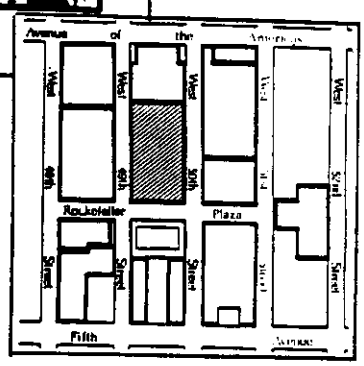
50TH STREET FACADE

- Buff colored shot sawed Indiana limestone cladding
- Beveled and scalloped window sills (at the east end of the first story)
- Vertically ridged slate-gray aluminum spandrels
- Decorative pier terminations
- Polished granite base along the entire ground-floor level
- Bronze-enframed entrances
- Bronze-enframed entrances with grille doors
- 2/1 double-hung steel sash
- Bronze-enframed announcement boards with modernistic grilles
- Bronze abstract floral ornament
- Three polychromatic metal and enamel reliefs (see p. 48)
- Marquees with neon lettering

51ST STREET FACADE

- Buff colored shot sawed Indiana limestone cladding
- Vertically ridged slate-gray aluminum spandrels
- Decorative pier terminations
- Polished granite base along the entire ground-floor level
- Bronze-enframed entrances
- Bronze grilles with comic-tragic masks
- Bronze-enframed entrances with grille doors
- 2/1 double-hung steel sash
- Bronze grilles over windows at ground-floor level
- Bronze-enframed announcement boards with modernistic grilles
- Bronze abstract floral ornament

- Terminal foliage of the 2-eyelet variety
- Marquee with neon lettering
- Vertical sign with neon lettering



RCA BUILDING

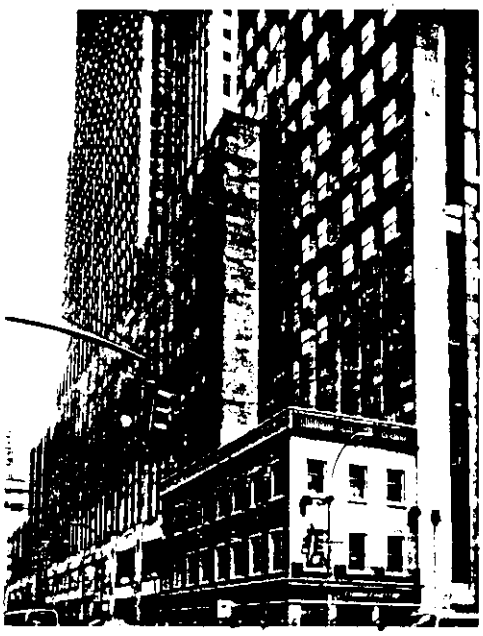
30 Rockefeller Plaza

Jan. 1932 • May 1933

View east along 50th St. Corner property originally uncontrolled. RCA Building West at right; 11-story NBC studios at left, RCA Building slab above.

Nearly 300 men began excavation of the RCA Building in July 1931.[1] Steelwork commenced early the next year and the building was completed thirteen months later.[2] Its architectural design was the result of several conditioning factors. On the most rudimentary level was the accommodation of varied tenant requirements and the maximum utilization of available land. The solution was the combination of three different buildings into a single structure (more than 1,000 feet long) which spans the full block between Rockefeller Plaza and Sixth Avenue. On the east, taking full advantage of light and air, are the 70-story corporate offices of RCA. Additional office space was provided along Sixth Avenue in the sixteen story slab of the RCA Building West. The midblock section, much less desirable for office space, was allotted to NBC's broadcasting studios which needed no windows but only large amounts of layered horizontal space. The technical specifications of this unit were particularly exacting. In order to insure soundproofing all the studios were designed with "floating" walls, floors and ceilings, suspended and insulated from the building's structural frame.[3]

Among the other factors that conditioned RCA's design were the New York Building Code and the introduction of new elevators whose high speed reduced the number required for building service. Equally important were the developer's demand for profitable return and the unwavering functionalism of the Associated Architects, tempered by a touch of romance from Raymond Hood. Because of the size of the site and the Associated Architects' plan to build low-rise Fifth Avenue units backed by an open plaza, they had considerable freedom in determining the mass of their tower. They were encouraged by John R. Todd who was concerned that the air rights (which were not transferable to the north or south blocks) be utilized to their full potential.[4] At length the architects designed a 70-story tower whose facade rises sheer for 33 stories before expressing the elimination of three elevator banks with gentle setbacks. The tower stood in marked contrast to most contemporaneous



View east along 50th St. Corner property originally uncontrolled. RCA Building West at right; 11-story NBC studios at left, RCA Building slab above.

Nearly 300 men began excavation of the RCA Building in July 1931.[1] Steelwork commenced early the next year and the building was completed thirteen months later.[2] Its architectural design was the result of several conditioning factors. On the most rudimentary level was the accommodation of varied tenant requirements and the maximum utilization of available land. The solution was the combination of three different buildings into a single structure (more than 1,000 feet long) which spans the full block between Rockefeller Plaza and Sixth Avenue. On the east, taking full advantage of light and air, are the 70-story corporate offices of RCA. Additional office space was provided along Sixth Avenue in the sixteen story slab of the RCA Building West. The midblock section, much less desirable for office space, was allotted to NBC's broadcasting studios which needed no windows but only large amounts of layered horizontal space. The technical specifications of this unit were particularly exacting. In order to insure soundproofing all the studios were designed with "floating" walls, floors and ceilings, suspended and insulated from the building's structural frame.[3]

Among the other factors that conditioned RCA's design were the New York Building Code and the introduction of new elevators whose high speed reduced the number required for building service. Equally important were the developer's demand for profitable return and the unwavering functionalism of the Associated Architects, tempered by a touch of romance from Raymond Hood. Because of the size of the site and the Associated Architects' plan to build low-rise Fifth Avenue units backed by an open plaza, they had considerable freedom in determining the mass of their tower. They were encouraged by John R. Todd who was concerned that the air rights (which were not transferable to the north or south blocks) be utilized to their full potential.[4] At length the architects designed a 70-story tower whose facade rises sheer for 33 stories before expressing the elimination of three elevator banks with gentle setbacks. The tower stood in marked contrast to most contemporaneous

skyscrapers where zoning setbacks created a wedding cake effect. The RCA Building thus stands as an early example of the emerging architectural slab. The form would be more completely --although not toally -- realized at Rockefeller Center with construction of the One Rockefeller Plaza (formerly Time-Life) Building in 1936-37 and the Ten Rockefeller Plaza (formerly Eastern Airlines) Building in 1938-39, both of which sat on plinths related to pedestrian scale.

Slabs had been periodically proposed since 1912, but rarely executed.[5] They were approached recently, and most significantly, by Raymond Hood for the Daily News (1930) and and McGraw-Hill (1931) buildings, both of which are designated New York City Landmarks. Ironically, it was Hood who lobbied most forcefully for stylistically regressive setbacks on the RCA.

In keeping with his intention to build prime quality business space, developer John R. Todd insisted that no office be more than 27 1/2 feet from a window (the maximum at which natural light and air can be adequately provided). By contrast, many contemporaneous office structures were built to maximum girth leaving dark and unventilated spaces at their cores. The Associated Architects responded to Todd's requirement by grouping high speed elevators into central banks and surrounding them on each floor with a corridor and ring of offices of the required 27-1/2 foot depth. It totally outmoded the wedding cake arrangement where elevators were grouped on either side of a long central corridor, forced deep into the building by the zoning regulations which required towers (and therefore the elevators which serviced those towers) to be set back from the street. The arrangement at RCA provided more than two million square feet of prime office space, distinguishing it for years as the world's largest office building in floor area.

The pure geometry of RCA's functional slab was paradoxically disturbed by Hood's desire to give it full rational expression. After heated controversy among the Associated Architects, he finally succeeded in introducing setbacks at each point of elevator elimination, or, as Hood said, "cut[ting] out all the bad space and let[ting] the building stand on its own."[6] The progressive narrowing of building mass maintained the 27-1/2 foot relationship of office to building core and clearly expressed the reduced number of elevator shafts required for the upper floors (42 at ground level narrowing to ten on the 53rd floor). Honest functionalist expressions on both the north and south sides of the RCA Building, the setbacks are pure romance on its east facade where their primary function is to dramatize the soaring 850 foot tapered shaft. This quality is exaggerated when the building is viewed, as it invariably is, through the sunken Plaza and low horizontal of the Promenade and Channel Gardens. An

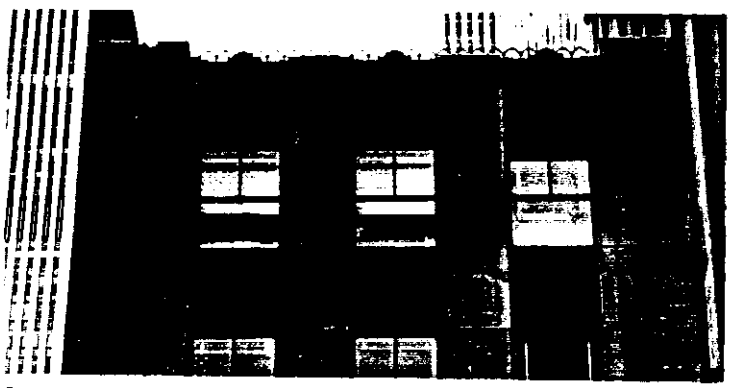
angle view produces a similar effect. It reveals the slab's superblock form, contrasting the slender east facade with its expansive north and south flanks. It was an aesthetic already expressed at smaller scale in Hood's McGraw-Hill and Daily News buildings.

The introduction of rooftop gardens was another of Hood's poetic contributions — one which, like the building setbacks — was a paradoxical outgrowth of his functionalism. Convinced that building form should evolve from interior requirements and not from a primary concern for exterior appearance, Hood designed for the tenant and not the passer-by on the street. The gardens were concessions to the office worker who looked down from his skyscraper windows onto what otherwise would have been an unsightly sprawl of neglected roofs. They were, in addition, a financial asset: higher rents could be charged for the scenic amenity. The eleventh floor of the RCA Building (above the low-lying NBC Studios) was planted with ethnic "Gardens of the Nations" together with a children's garden, modern, rock and vegetable gardens.[7] Inspired by the integrational theories of such architects as Le Corbusier and Gropius, the RCA Building's combination of gardens and architecture was unique in modern times. Its planted rooftops (reminiscent of those at Babylon), seen in conjunction with the Channel Gardens and sunken Plaza, distinguish it as the world's first landscaped skyscraper.[8] It was to have an august lineage especially in the hands of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill notably at the Lever House (1950-52, a designated New York City Landmark) and elsewhere.

RCA was the largest and most important building constructed at Rockefeller Center. As a result, it conditioned the exterior treatment of the other structures in the complex. It set the standard for their shot-sawed Indiana limestone cladding and for their slate gray cast aluminum spandrels. The RCA Building includes three different types of spandrels, all of which have delicate Gothic arcades behind. Stepped vertically ridged spandrels appear on the building's lateral setbacks and at the top of the NBC studios. Leaf clusters rendered in an angular version of the Art Nouveau style appear in a two eyelet variety above the elevator elimination setbacks. The building is terminated with similar leafy spandrels, but with four eyelets. All of these spandrel types appear in other buildings in the complex. A disapproving Lewis Mumford considered these spiky terminations and the arcaded balustrade behind as no more than architectural "jitters."[9] The balustrade is usually attributed to Rockefeller's preference for Gothic.[10] The

Four-eyelet spandrels, upper setbacks and roof level.

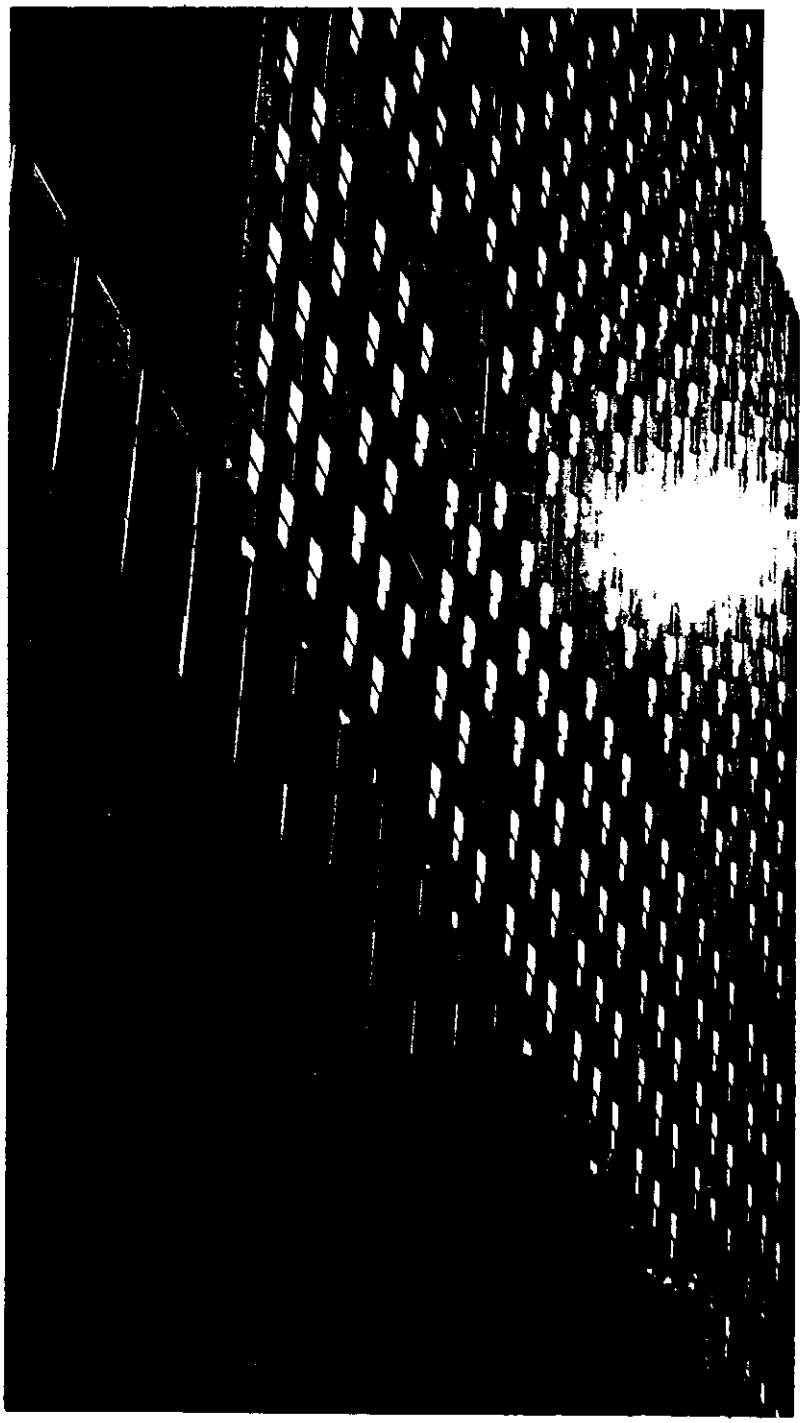
Two-eyelet spandrels, east facade slab setbacks.



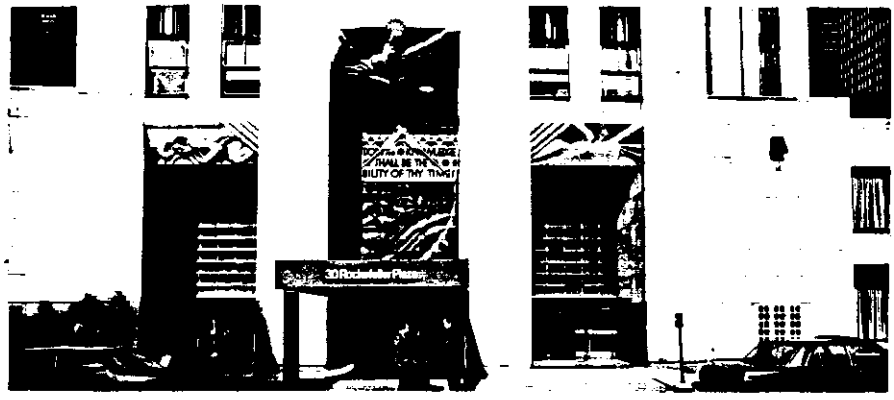
Stepped vertically ridged spandrels, lower setbacks and above NBC studios.

leaves, however, might well derive from the admiration he expressed for Egyptian architecture after a return from the Nile in 1929.[12] Some weight is given to this by the frequent appearance of lotus in the Center's bronze screens, in the general aesthetic of polychromed bas-reliefs on a buff colored lithic ground, and especially in the timeless monumentality of the Rockefeller Center buildings (most notably at the entrance to the International Building which recalls such severely geometric structures as at Dier-el-Bahri). The Egyptian analogy was frequently, if romantically, evoked in the press where the vast development was dubbed "America's pyramid" and the RCA Building compared to a soaring obelisk.[13]

The aluminum spandrels were practical as well as decorative features as they weighed and cost less than stone. They surmount the building's 5,817 windows, creating a significant decorative pattern within the whole. The fenestration itself was long considered a "classic" as it allowed for the design of flexible office space behind.[9]



Ground-level view east, W. 49th Street.



LIMESTONE PANELS & GLASS SCREENS
Main Entrance, 30 Rockefeller Plaza
Lee Lawrie
Installed 1933

Although the buildings at Rockefeller Center depend for effect primarily upon their bold massing, they were relieved and thematically connected (particularly above their portals) by a comprehensive art program. The most important and innovative sculpture on the RCA Building, and arguably in all of Rockefeller Center, is located above its main entrance on Rockefeller Plaza. It is one of fourteen works executed by Lee Lawrie at the complex. As outlined by Professor Alexander the theme was to depict "A Voice Speaking through Time and Space." It was modified, however, by Lawrie to represent "Wisdom: A Voice from the Clouds." The modification was not without consequence. An embarrassed Rockefeller recognized that Lawrie's forcefully masculine figure did not agree with the traditionally female portrayal of Wisdom.[14] Nor did its unacknowledged debt to William Blake go unnoticed. To Rockefeller's discomfort, "Wisdom" was found heavily influenced by the frontispiece to Europe: A Prophecy (1794).[15]

The program shows Wisdom thrusting aside the clouds of ignorance and interpreting for man the laws and cycles of the cosmic universe, thereby ruling all of human activity. The theme extends over all three portals. Wisdom was carved in high relief on the 14 foot sloping lintel of the 37 foot high central entrance. Peering down from a rust red ground through brown and gray clouds edged in black and gold. The color scheme of the panels was orchestrated by the polychromist Leon V. Solon who, together with Ely Jacques Kahn, had developed the theory of primary Greek colors. he holds a huge gilded compass over a polychromatic diamond-patterned lintel and inscription panel below. The inscription (carved and painted black on a tan ground) reads: "WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE SHALL BE THE STABILITY OF THY TIMES" (Isaiah 33:6). Wisdom uses the compass to draw the cycles of Light and Sound (two of the cosmic forces) on the cast pyrex screen below. Composed of 240 glass blocks (28 inches x 18 inches) and joined by vinelite clear cement with vertical steel armatures, the screen is transparent except for a single gold arc extending from the right point of the compass. Fifty-five feet x fifteen feet and cast in 84 different molds to achieve its varied

SOUND

WISDOM

LIGHT

surface (average 3 inch thickness), the 13 ton screen was a major technical achievement.[16] It was also a great stride forward in the creative use of architectural glass. Together with Piccirilli's "Poetic Glass" panel on the International Building North and Rene Lalique's three-story set of windows for the Coty Building at 714 Fifth Avenue, it remains among the most important glass murals in a non-religious setting in New York. The full effect of the screen is currently hampered by a modern awning which projects from above the central door, thus concealing the junction of the panel and the ridged bronze door jambs below. As is the case with all glass art, the panel is seen to best advantage when backlit, i.e. when viewed from inside the lobby.

On the lower (27 foot) and more gently sloped lintel of the south portal Lawrie carved the image of "Sound" on a tan ground with pale-toned clouds in the upper right. This black-haired figure cups his hands as he transmits Wisdom through radio and telephone, as symbolized by the expanding tan and brown circles (edged in black and gold) through which sound travels. The circular sound waves are continued on the glass screen below. "Light" occupies the corresponding lintel of the north portal. Her black hair glowing with gilded diamond-shaped highlights, she spreads Wisdom by means of sight, motion pictures and television. "Light" emerges on a brown ground from brown- and tan-edged clouds, and simultaneously symbolizes spiritual light as the swastika of life on the glass screen below is intended to indicate.

While Rockefeller found the RCA Building's main entrance a source of great pleasure, [17] he strenuously disapproved of the sculpture on its north and south facades. To his mind it was "gross and unbeautiful"[18] and objectionable for its explicit nudity. In its defense one might counter that the sculpture provides a strong terminus to the pylons which flank the building's side street entrances and together with their

connecting bronze wall panels, create a rhythmic and balanced moderne design. Exececuted in pairs, the two commissions develop the broadcasting character of RCA with symbolic depictions of "Radio" and "Television."

The latter appears in two deep relief panels (9 feet x 14-1/2 feet) at the top of the pylons flanking the West 49th Street entrance. They were carved to eliminate distortion while viewed from the ground 34 feet below. On the left three overlapping dancers kick with Rockette-like precision. The monumental figure of "Production" conducts them with her raised right hand. This group is complemented on the right pylon where the looming figure of "Reception" holds a single dancer (an abbreviation of the trio) while Mother Earth and Man (represented by the child who leans across her lap) look on attentively. The panel was executed in 1933 when RCA was experimenting with the iconoscope as an electronic means of transmitting images. The sculptural group prophetically portrays the captivated stare of modern television viewers. (Television was commercially introduced only six years later, by RCA at the New York World's Fair of 1939).[19]

"Radio" appears above the West 50th Street entrance in two sculpted panels, each 10 feet x 15 feet. At left a chorus of singers is conducted while sound is transmitted to "Reception" at right. Mother Earth and her child Man listen on the right pylon as small figures in the clouds - one singing and one playing the lyre - are seen before a loudspeaker.[20]

FOUR LIMESTONE PANELS
Leo Friedlander
Installed 1933
Above: TELEVISION, W. 49th St. Entrance
Right: RADIO, W. 50th St. Entrance

On June 28th, 1937, almost exactly four years after the building's completion, the RCA logo was lit for the first time. Visible for miles, its 24' high letters (made of 2,376' of specially constructed Claude Neon tubing) comprised the world's loftiest sign.[21] It underlined, even at night, the pivotal position of the RCA Building in midtown development, an aspect which has become even more significant since the building's recent spotlight illumination. From the beginning thousands had already appreciated the slab's focal position as they viewed the city from its rooftop observatory (opened, 1933).[22] Decorated with evergreens and offering benches and telescopes for the use of visitors, the deck (approximately 200' x 20') was originally (and partially still is) open to the air.

The RCA Building was the last skyscraper designed by Raymond Hood before his premature death at age 53. It was also the last of the entire group of skyscrapers produced by the economic boom of the 1920s, and which so shaped the "modern metropolis." More importantly, it represented the beginning of the new slab aesthetic that would susequently characterize modern commercial architecture.

Aside from its conspicuous architectural achievements, the RCA Building was distinguished (as were all the Rockefeller Center units) by the extremely high quality of its craftsmanship and materials, all impeccably maintained. As the lynchpin of Radio City, it broke countless building supply records for doors, windows, elevators, steel, and the like.[23] It was, morevover, noted for its novel zoned heating system[24] and its Maxim-Campbell air filtering and sound-proofing device (developed by Hiram Percy Maxim, inventor of the firearm silencer).[25] But most spectacular of all was the building's sub-grade lower floor (not a subject of this designation) which acts not like a self-contained lobby, but as the major circulation artery for the entire Rockefeller complex. It continues the strong east-west flow of the Channel Gardens and spreads, via nearly two miles of shop-lined subterranean corridors, to the subway and every other building in the Center.

Over the years the exterior of the RCA Building has remained largely intact. Aside from several shopfront alterations,[26] little of the original fabric has been lost. It has, however, gained at various times. In 1936, for example, a model apartment was erected on its eleventh story roof.[27] Merely a temporary structure, it was installed to advertise the Rockefeller Apartments (1935-37) which Harrison & Fouilhoux had designed on West 54th and 55th Streets.[28] More recently, there was a proposal (unexecuted) to install on its eleventh story a glass "RCA Management Conference Center" which would have been the first commercial application of solar heat in New York.[29]

RCA BUILDING FOOTNOTES

1. NB 77-31.

2. "First Steel Column Erected," NYT, 3/8/1932, p.43:2 and "Ready for Opening," NYT, 4/30/1933, Sects. 9 & 10, p. 1:4.

3. "Guide to Rockefeller Center," RCW, 2 (May 23, 1935), insert p. 8. See also "Plan and Construction of the National Broadcasting Company's Studios," Architectural Forum, 57 (Aug. 1932), 153-160.

4. Todd to JDR, Jr., 2/11/30, quoted in Krinsky, p. 53, n65.

5. Balfour, p. 37-39; Krinsky, p. 136-37; Jordy, p. 45.

6. Hood, interview with Wallace Harrison, quoted in Jordy, p. 46.

7. See p.186 below.

8. Winston Weisman, "The First Landscaped Skyscraper," JSAH, 18 (May, 1959), 54-59.

9. Lewis Mumford, "Skyline: Mr. Rockefeller's Center," The New Yorker, Dec. 23, 1933, p. 28.

10. Jordy, p. 74; Krinsky, p. 138; Gill, p. 62.

11. "Radio City to Create A New Architecture," NYT, 3/6/31, p. 3:1. See also Fosdick, p. 361ff.

12. "Pyramid of Cheops," NYT, 12/24/33, Sects. 9 & 10, p.6:1; "Our City Within A City," 2/13/38, Sect. 8, p. 6.

13. "The Disciplines of Fenestration," Architectural Record, 117 (April, 1955) 200ff. See also Mary Learned, "Windows," RCW, 2 (Feb. 7, 1935), 6, 21.

14. John R. Todd to JDR, Jr. (3/8/33), quoted in Balfour, p. 144.

15. Balfour, p. 145-6; See also NYT, 12/24/33, Sect. 9, p. 9:1 and "Wisdom and God," Art Digest, 6 (Aug. 1932), 6.

16. Eugene Clute, "Glass, a New Sculptural Medium: Great Glass Wall, or Screen, RCA Building, Rockefeller Center," Pencil Points, 14 (July, 1933) p. 306-308; Idem, "Color in Stone: Lee Lawrie's Monumental Entrance to the RCA Building," Architecture, 59 (Mr. 1934), 143-46. See also "Idem., "The Story of Rockefeller Center. XI. The Allied Arts," Architectural Forum, 58 (Feb. 1933), 128ff.

17. JDR, Jr. to John R. Todd, 9/29/33, quoted in Balfour, p. 144.

18. Ibid., excerpted in Krinsky, p. 144.

19. Gleason I. Archer, Big Business and Radio, (New York: The American Historical Company, 1939), p. 339ff.

20. "Guide to Rockefeller Center," RCW, 2 (May 23, 1935), insert p. 8.

21. "Loftiest Sign is Lit," NYT, 6/29/37, p. 23:2.

22. "Observatory on Roof of RCA Building Opened," NYT, 7/19/33, p.19:3.

23. See, for example, "Biggest Steel Order..."NYT 3/19/31, p. 25:1; "74 Lifts for Skyscraper," NYT, 1/30/32, p. 32:5; "1,000,000 Sq. Ft. of Glass,..." NYT, 7/31/31, p. 34:2 to cite a few only.

24. "Novel Heating System Installed in Rockefeller Center," Real Estate Record & Guide, Dec. 31, 1932, p. 11.

25. "Radio City to Filter Air and Shut Out Din," NYT, 1/14/32, p. 39:1.

26. In 1935 the W. 50th Street freight and trucking entrance was altered to shopfronts (ALT1414-35). Alterations were made to a W. 49th Street storefront three years later (ALT4620-37).

27. ALT931-36.

28. A designated New York City Landmark.

29. "RCA's New Aerie," Architectural Forum, 140 (March 1974), 12, and Krinsky, p. 148.

RCA BUILDING — DESCRIPTION

The RCA Building is a 70-story steel-frame limestone-clad skyscraper. Carefully chosen setbacks give it two distinct profiles. From east or west, the effect is of a tall, slender tower, which is visible in its entirety from Fifth Avenue down the Channel Gardens, making the RCA Building one of the most dramatically sited skyscrapers in New York. From north or south, the setbacks are less visible, and create the effect of a tall, broad, flat slab. A similarly careful use of setbacks defines the tower°s relationship to its surroundings. The tower°s six central window bays, on the east, rise directly from the lot line, but its outer bays, and the bays on the northern and southern elevations, are recessed above the second-story level from two to five bays, thereby creating a two-story base of storefronts and windows wrapping around the tower at the lot line. Articulated as bays separated by wide simple piers, this two-story base adroitly mediates between the massive skyscraper and the human-scale precincts of the plaza and streets.

The tower's main elevation faces east. Its six central bays rise sheer half-way up to a one-bay deep setback, and continue to rise to a second one-bay deep setback and finally to the skyline. On either side of this central section, a two-bay wide portion, recesseed two bays deep, rises and matches its setback profile. An outer three-bay wide portion, recessed five bays deep, rises only a dozen stories, with still more pronounced setbacks in its upper levels, creating a low, chunky mass between the tower and the two-story high base. The effect is highly sculptural. Aside from the setback-produced massing, the tower depends for its vertical effect on the arrangement of spandrels and windows in long uninterrupted columns, set between continuous limestone piers. The spandrels are vertically ridged, and slightly recessed; the windows comprise double-hung, two-over-one steel sash.

A dramatically recessed entrance portal is set at the base of the central portion of the eastern elevation. Its central bay is three stories high, its flanking bays two stories. These bays are created by heavy piers rising up into the tower. The portal forms a framework for the enormous sculpture of "Wisdom" (see p. 64), flanked on the lower left and right by "Sound" and "Light" (see p. 65). Beneath is the large glass screen (see p. 64-5). The six revolving entrance doors and two sets of plain doors, all bronze-enframed, are framed by projecting zig-zag metal jambs. North and south of the entrance portal are original storefronts and display windows, heavily altered on the south, but retaining much original detail on the north.

The western elevation of the tower rises sheer above the low bulk of the RCA West Building to its west. Not truly part of the scenographic composition of Rockefeller Center, it is not given the dramatic setback articulation of the eastern elevation, but is nevertheless highly visible from the west as a towered representative of the Center. The elevation's seven-bay central

section is flanked by two-bay wide portions set back half-a-dozen bays.

The northern and southern elevations of the RCA tower are identical to each other. Each comprises a two-story base of storefronts and windows, above which rise setbacks and a broad expanse of tower. In the western half of each elevation, the third through twelfth stories are, with the exception of one story of windows, blank, reflecting the housing of NBC's studios behind. The lower portion of this wall is articulated with bays consisting solely of multiple spandrel panels; the upper portion is completely blank, but its top is marked by a line of long, narrow, modernistic grilles related in style to the spandrel design.

The north and south facades have one-bay wide entrances, set within three-story high portals. The portals are formed by two very wide three-story high piers framing a recessed metal bay. Projecting out over the first-story entrance is a large, modernistically curving canopy with metal banding. The window above, at the second story, is a single rectangular pane, while that at the third story comprises three panes separated by narrow vertical elements. The heavy stone piers of the portal serve as background for the large sculpted reliefs of "Radio" on the south and "Television" on the north (see p. 66). The storefronts and display windows along each elevation retain their original form and detailing, with beveled bronze-framed glass shop fronts, and bronze-framed structural black glass lintels, as well as retractable awnings and housings. Many of the shops use period lettering for their logos. The first four storefronts from the east on 50th Street have had their top portions replaced; others on 50th and 51st Street have had minor alterations.

At the top of the tower, on both the southern and northern elevations, are set in 24' high letters of neon tubing the "RCA" logo.

At the eleventh story, the "Ethnic Gardens" survive only as a terrace with various plantings.

The 69th and 70th stories of the RCA tower serve as outdoor observatory terraces. The 70th-story portion, which is the crest of the tower, is a long, narrow rectangular walkway with red-brown tile flooring. It is ringed by a "Gothic" parapet of metal balustrades set between squat stone-faced piers. The western end holds building machinery. At the eastern edge is a large concrete slab which forms the uppermost point of the eastern tower facade. Set in the flooring, towards the eastern end, is a polychromatic tile representation of a compass, pointing the four directions against a modernistic design (reminiscent of a skyscraper silhouette) on a light blue ground. Wooden planters and benches appear to be recent additions.

The 69th story projects outward beyond the 70th story, forming two wide sections of terrace on the north and south and a

narrow section on the west. The two stories are connected by a staircase. The 69th-story terrace has similar tile flooring, inset with four identical tile representations of a compass, and is ringed with similar "Gothic" parapets. The limestone-faced walls of the 70th story rise up from the 69th-story terrace, and are capped by terminal foliage of the 4-eyelet variety. Elevated wooden platforms with benches and planters appear to be a recent addition.

* * * * *

Significant features include but are not limited to:

ROCKEFELLER PLAZA FACADE

- Buff colored shot sawed Indiana limestone cladding
- Vertically ridged slate-gray aluminum spandrels
- Decorative pier terminations
- Polished granite base
- Bronze-enframed doors and revolving doors
- Projecting zig-zag metal jambs
- 2/1 double-hung steel sash
- Bronze-framed large single panes at second story over storefronts, with side panes
- Beveled bronze-framed glass display windows and storefronts
- Terminal foliage, 2- and 4-eyelet variety
- Stepped terminations
- Metal balustrades at sixth- and eighth-story setbacks
- "Wisdom," "Sound," and "Light" sculptures and glass screen (see p. 64)
- Bronze light hoods
- Inscription, "WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE SHALL BE THE INSPIRATIONS OF THY TIME," over central portal
- Inscriptions at entrance base on four piers, from left to right: "30 Rockefeller Plaza," "RCA BUILDING," "RCA BUILDING," and "ROCKEFELLER CENTER MCMXXXII," all incised and gilded
- On piers at either end, at first story top, bronze raised letters spelling "ROCKEFELLER PLAZA"
- At either side of entrance, at base, a grille of deep rectangular openings
- Metal hinge in sidewalk connecting portal piers

50TH STREET FACADE

- Buff colored shot sawed Indiana limestone cladding
- Vertically ridged slate-gray aluminum spandrels
- Decorative pier terminations
- Polished granite base
- Bronze-enframed doors
- 2/1 double-hung steel sash
- Bronze-framed large single panes at second story over storefronts, with side panes
- Beveled bronze-framed glass display windows and storefronts
- Bronze-framed structural black glass lintels
- Retractable awning frames in concealed vertical housing

- Terminal foliage, 4-eyelet variety
- Bronze light hoods
- Rooftop plantings
- Stone reliefs of "Radio" (see p. 66)
- 24' high neon "RCA" logo on upper tower portion
- Gilded incised letters spelling "RCA BUILDING" on either side of entrance
- Modernistic metal canopy over entrance
- Metal grille ringing upper portion of recessed entrance
- Raised letters spelling "FIFTY WEST FIFTIETH STREET" over doors in recessed entrance
- Two bronze-enframed announcement boards with "ROCKEFELLER CENTER" in raised letters
- Recessed metal bay over portal

49TH STREET FACADE

- Buff colored shot sawed Indiana limestone cladding
- Vertically ridged slate-gray aluminum spandrels
- Decorative pier terminations
- Polished granite base
- Bronze-enframed doors
- 2/1 double-hung steel sash
- Bronze-framed large single panes at second story over storefronts, with side panes
- Beveled bronze-framed glass display windows and storefronts
- Bronze-framed structural black glass lintels
- Retractable bronze awning frames in concealed vertical housing
- Terminal foliage, 4-eyelet variety
- Bronze light hoods
- Rooftop plantings
- Stone reliefs of "Television" (see p.66)
- 24' high neon "RCA" logo on upper tower portion
- Gilded incised letters spelling "RCA BUILDING" on either side of entrance
- Modernistic metal canopy over entrance
- Raised letters spelling "FORTY NINE WEST FORTY NINTH STREET" over doors in recessed entrance
- Two bronze-enframed announcement boards with "ROCKEFELLER CENTER" in raised letters on portal piers
- Recessed metal bay over portal

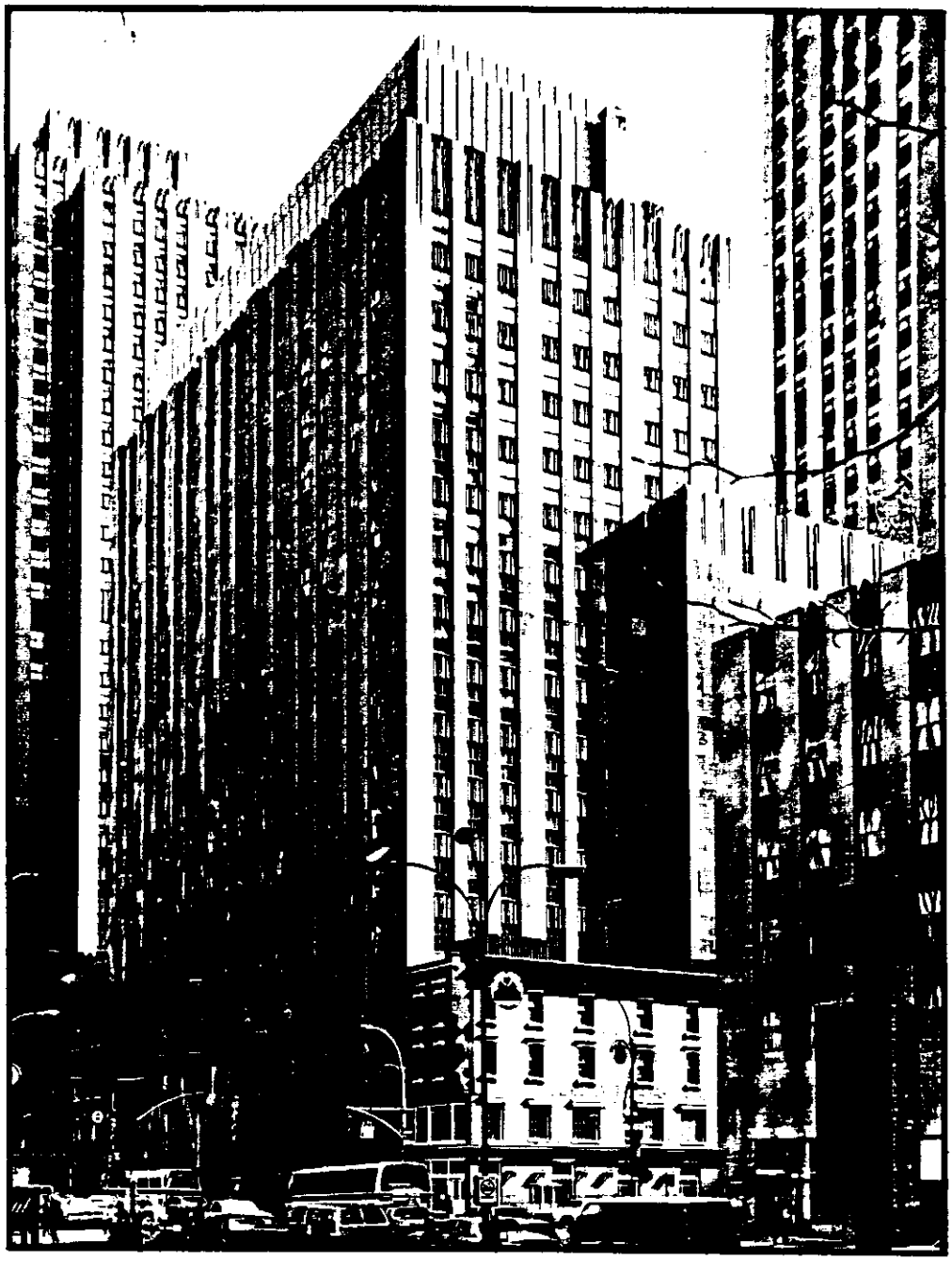
ELEVATION FACING SIXTH AVENUE

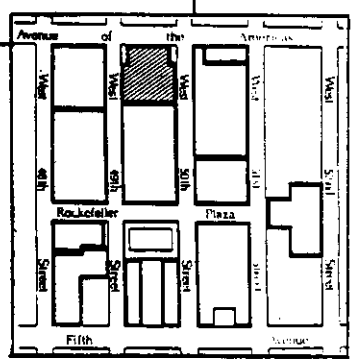
- Buff colored shot sawed Indiana limestone cladding
- Vertically ridged slate-gray aluminum spandrels
- Decorative pier terminations
- 2/1 double-hung steel sash
- Terminal foliage, 4-eyelet variety

ROOFTOP OBSERVATORY TERRACES

- Red-brown tile flooring
- "Gothic" parapet of metal balustrades set between squat stone-

faced piers
- Concrete slab forming uppermost point of eastern tower facade
- Five polychromatic tile representations of a compass
- Limestone-clad walls with terminal foliage of the 4-eyelet variety





RCA BUILDING WEST

1250 Avenue of the Americas
Jan.1932 • May 1933

The RCA Building West is a sixteen-story extension of the RCA Building proper. Both share the same materials and unique four-eyelet leafy spandrels at rooflevel (other units in the complex terminate with a more abbreviated, two-eyelet variety). The two sections of the building are connected by NBC's eleven story studios. All three units were constructed simultaneously.[1]

The building was begun four months after the 31-story RKO Building (now 1270 Avenue of the Americas) to its north. And together with the similar Simon & Schuster (originally U.S. Rubber Co.) Building to the south, it forms one of three north-south axis blocks along Sixth Avenue. The group served as the backdrop to that portion of Rockefeller Center which is oriented to Fifth Avenue, but as the corporate front of the development's entertainment complex. This was exclusively true until 1939 when the U.S. Rubber Company Building was erected in front and to the south of the Center Theater. With Sixth Avenue thus occupied by the RKO Building, Music Hall, RCA Building West and Center Theater, Radio City established a formal relationship with New York's theater district to its immediate southwest and to William Fox's "Roxy Theater" at 50th Street and Seventh Avenue (the world's largest indoor theater until that distinction was claimed by the new Radio City Music Hall).

The greater significance of the Sixth Avenue frontage was expected in 1935 as plans continued to develop for the construction of the Sixth Avenue subway. A scheme for a four track subway line called for a station at Rockefeller Center with a spacious mezzanine stretching from 47th to 50th Street. This was to be connected to the Center's shopping concourse. The RCA Building West was to have "a wide, decorative entrance" leading directly to the concourse and subway mezzanine.[2] In turn, it was to be linked by subterranean corridors to the Music Hall and Center Theater, providing hoards of passengers direct access from subway to entertainment, shopping, and the Center at large.

The plan of 1935 (prepared by Reinhard & Hofmeister) was realized in more modest terms but not until the opening of the subway in 1940. In the interim expectations of the El's demolition generated hopes for the revitalization of Sixth Avenue as a "Dream Street" where towers would replace old brownstones.[3] This too was achieved but in somewhat less poetic terms.

Among the Sixth Avenue structure in the original complex, the RCA Building West is distinguished by the fact that its facade rises sheer from the sidewalk and by the stepping back of its facade around two low-rise corner properties. Rockefeller owned the southern corner, but the northern corner was in private hands.[4] The architectural solution was apparently a concession to symmetrical massing.

Similar concerns for unity are evident in the entrance to the RCA Building West. It echoed in vertical terms the tripartite entrance of the RKO Building, while simultaneously recalling the triple portals of the RCA Building's main entrance on Rockefeller Plaza. But unlike the latter, where the entrance is largely filled with a glass screen, its monumental portals are left open, creating a grand recessed vestibule. This feature was inversely sympathetic to the exterior space produced by the projecting marquees of the Music Hall to its north and the Center Theater to its south.

In the RCA Building West, above its three revolving doors, is a 79 foot x 14 foot mosaic which wraps around the polygonal outer vestibule. Designed by Barry Faulkner and executed by the Ravenna Mosaic Company (signed by the latter, lower right), it is composed of nearly a million glass enamel tesserae in more than 250 shades of color. It is the most brilliantly polychromatic work at Rockefeller Center.

The theme depicted is "Intelligence Awakening Mankind." At center, standing above the world, is "Thought" flanked by her articulate manifestations: the female image of "Spoken Words" on the right and on the left, "Written Words" with a book and quill in his hands. Emanating from the central trio are extensions of intelligence. At left, a large lyre-bearing female is preceded by personifications of "Religion," "Drama" and "Music" (reading top to bottom) and succeeded by "News," "Politics" and "Poetry." These airborne figures fly toward the open arms of man and his

INTELLIGENCE AWAKENING MANKIND
Mosaic, Outer Vestibule
Main Entrance, Sixth Avenue
Barry Faulkner
Installed 1933

blindfolded mate and destroy, in the last panel of the mosaic, man's billious green enemies of "Cruelty" and "Ignorance." The extensions of Intelligence are transmitted to man along billowing pastel and gold sound waves which burst into flames against the dark blue speckled sky as they encounter his universal opponents. A similar format is followed in the right half of the mosaic where a large winged male holds a light in his outstretched hand. He is preceded by the figures of "Philosophy," "Hygiene," and "Publicity." Following him are "Physics," Biology" and "Sports." These aspects of knowledge are greeted by a hand-holding couple, behind whom "Poverty" and "Fear" plummet in chaos out of the heavens. The top of the mosaic is bordered by six gold mosaic bands, the bottom by four, all of which visually integrate the mosaic with vestibule's bronze ridged lintel and horizontal handrails below.

Above the entrance are four limestone panels (each 11-1/2 feet x 4 feet) by the noted sculptor Gaston Lachaise. Installed on the entrance piers at third story level, they were seen to "great disadvantage" until the demolition of the Sixth Avenue El six years later (1939).[5] Each allegorical theme was intended to express the purpose of the building as well as various aspects of modern civilization. At left Genius Seizing the Light of the Sun is represented by a monumental central "Genius" who directs the sun's gilded rays through a glass for use as fire and electricity. At left center is The Conquest of Space where a trio amid Saturn and gilded stars suggests astronomical and physical science. Gifts of Earth to Mankind occupies the right center position. It shows the monumental figure of Mother Earth offering gilded grain and her full breast to an appreciative human family against a ground of gilded Greek characters. At the far right is The Spirit of Progress where the Herculean figure of

FOUR LIMESTONE RELIEFS
Main Entrance, Sixth Avenue
Gaston Lachaise
Installed 1933

"Capital" helps the smaller figures of "Labor" to support a banner with the gilded inscription: "UNDERSTANDING." The top and bottom of each sculptural panel holds a gilded horizontal band on which its respective theme is identified.

Lachaise was known particularly for his three-dimensional images of fecund women. He had executed little architectural sculpture. His work for the RCA Building West, while symmetrically balanced and carefully studied, is somewhat too complicated to be totally effective in its position well above Sixth Avenue. Subtly modeled (perhaps too much so for their high installation), the monumental genii are idealized, and contrast with their smaller wards.[6] Although the panels are not among the sculptor's most representative works, they nonetheless provide relief for the otherwise unornamented facade and introduce a welcome element of human scale. Projecting out from the piers at third story level, they aggrandize the monumental entrance, while creating a spatial tension in their contrast with the recessed vestibule below. In 1935, just months before his death of leukemia at age 53, Lachaise installed a simpler pair of limestone reliefs on the Rockefeller Plaza entrace to the International Building.

RCA BUILDING WEST FOOTNOTES

1. NB77-31.

2. "The Center's New Front Door," RCW, 3 (9/26/35), 10, 13.

3. RCM, 1 (July 1938), 10.

4. "Renting Progress in Rockefeller Center," (plot plan), Real Estate Record & Guide, Sept. 24, 1932, p. 5. See also "Charges Speakeasy Blocks Radio City," NYT, 7/29/31, p. 21:2.

5. NYT, 12/24/33, Sect. 9, p. 9:1.

6. Louis Cross, "The Sculpture for Rockefeller Center," Parnassus, 4 (Oct. 1932) p. 2. See also Eugene Clute, "The Story of Rockefeller Center. IX. The Allied Arts," Architectural Forum, 58 (Feb. 1933), p. 128-132.

RCA WEST BUILDING -- DESCRIPTION

The RCA West Building is a 20-story steel-frame, limestone clad office building on Sixth Avenue, interconnecting with the RCA Building to its east. Its detailing is derived from the RCA Building, including the buff-colored limestone, vertical window-spandrel bays separated by limestone piers, vertically ridged spandrels, terminal foliage, and storefront design. Rising sheer from the lot-line on all three visible elevations, it is articulated solely through the window-spandrel bays. As a slight variation from the RCA Building's treatment, the window-spandrel bays on Sixth Avenue are arranged in pairs and triplets, with the paired rows separated within by narrower piers and from each other by wider piers. Three such pairs on the north and south flank a central triplet of window bays. On the side-street elevations, all the bays are arranged as triplets, with one easternmost single bay.

On the Sixth Avenue facade, the four central wider piers of the upper stories form the three, two-story high bays of the building's triple portal. The portal bays are square-headed and severe. The recessed entranceway behind the portal has broadly chamfered corners. Within the entranceway, a single-story high central series of entrances is flanked by display window, and there is one storefront in the southern chamfered corner. Above the entrance level, the wall is completely covered by the elaborate mosaic of "Intelligence Awakening Mankind" (see p. 78). New canopies have been installed in the portals. On the four central piers, at the fourth-story level, are set four high-relief allegorical sculptures (see p. 79). In the two bays flanking the triple portal, on either side, are two storefronts, one display window, and a subway entrance with a modernistic marquee.

There are no entrances to the building on the southern or northern facades, whose lowest four stories are hidden by two small brick structures. An addition to the roof of the building is set back from the sides but is partly visible from the street.

* * * * *

Significant features include but are not limited to:

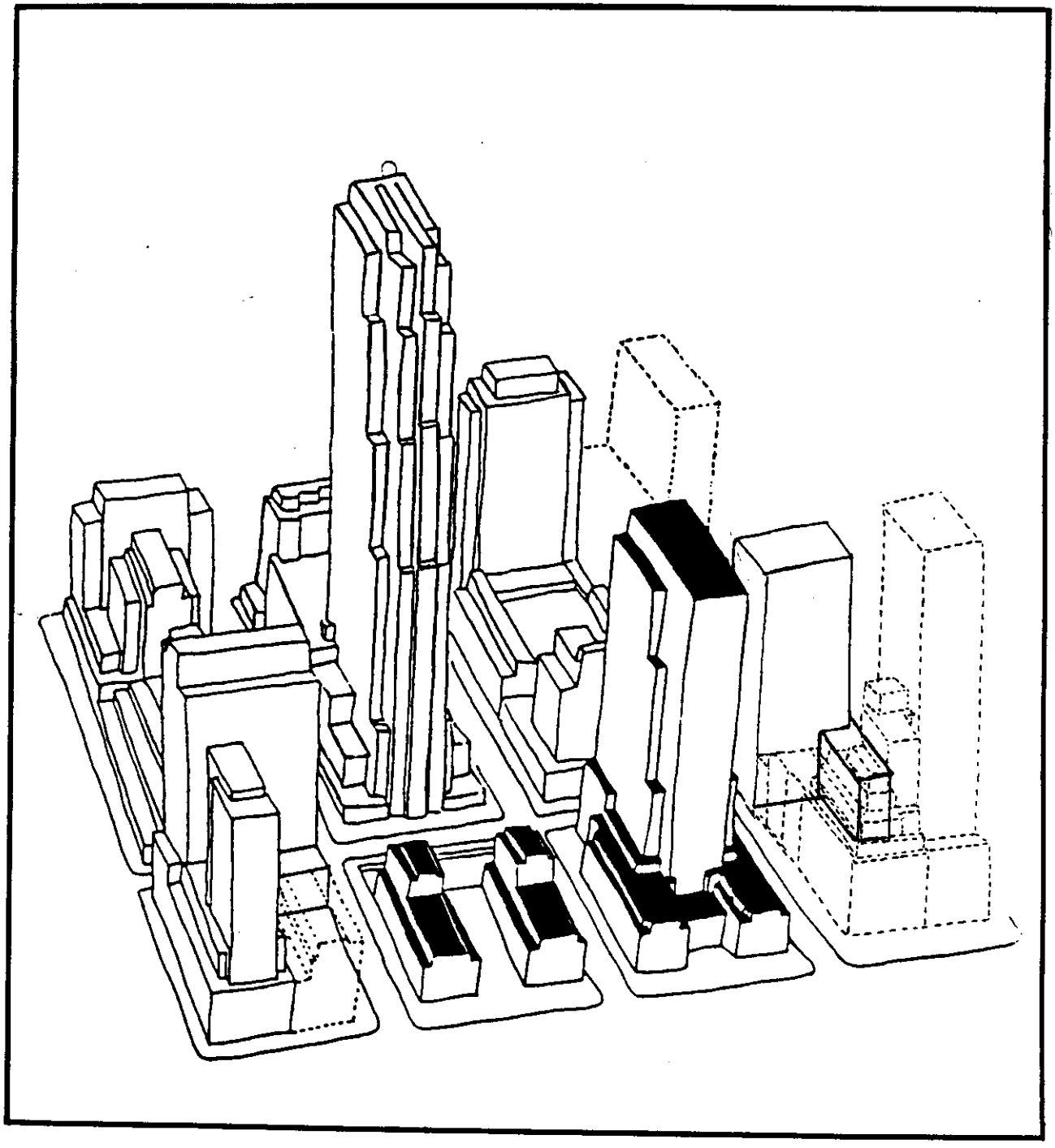
SIXTH AVENUE FACADE

- Buff colored shot sawed Indiana limestone cladding
- Vertically ridged slate-gray aluminum spandrels
- Decorative pier terminations
- Polished granite base
- Three revolving doors set between rounded granite piers
- Bronze-enframed doors
- 2/1 double-hung steel sash
- Beveled bronze framed glass shop fronts
- Bronze framed structural black glass lintels

- Retractable bronze awning frames in concealed vertical housing
- Projecting modernistic marquee over subway entrance
- Terminal foliage of the 4-eyelet variety
- Mosaic of "Intelligence Awakening Mankind" (see p. 78)
- Sculpted allegorical reliefs (see p. 79)
- Bronze light hoods
- "RCA BUILDING" in gilded incised lettering on either side of the portal's outer piers
- Bronze framed announcement boards on portal's inner piers
- "1250" in raised metal numbers over metal banding above entrances

49TH STREET AND 50TH STREET FACADES

- Buff colored shot sawed Indiana limestone cladding
- Vertically ridged slate-gray aluminum spandrels
- Decorative pier terminations
- 2/1 double-hung steel sash



THE INTERNATIONAL BUILDINGS

By 1931 Rockefeller found himself annually responsible for a $3,000,000 property lease, the generating idea behind which (the Opera) had collapsed. Arrangements had been made for the Radio Group to occupy the western half of the site, but the prestigious Fifth Avenue frontage was still undetermined. In the course of evolution the design had variously called for a department store and fashionable shopping arcades leading off Fifth Avenue only to be replaced by a scheme for a grand open plaza in the foreground of the Opera. This plan was succeeded in turn by others, the most notable being Rockefeller's infamous "oilcan." An oval structure intended to draw pedestrians around its curve into the heart of the complex, it was too unconventional for the sedate traditions of Fifth Avenue. In spring 1931, this design was also abandoned when its expected tenant, Chase National Bank, failed to win exclusive banking rights at Rockefeller Center.[1] In subsequent schemes the oval was replaced by paired, low-rise rectanglar blocks. This modification was not only more sympathetic to the scale and character of Fifth Avenue (an aspect which would be continued in the Manufacturers Hanover Trust Building of 1950-52), but had the additional advantage of increasing commercial space. Only one problem remained. The buildings had no tenants, nor were American prospects likely as the Depression forced corporate retrenchment.

Hugh Robertson solved the problem in the spring of 1931 when he suggested occupancy by foreign interests. His proposal was realized during a trip to Europe that autumn when contracts were signed with English and French consortia. The former agreed to take the northern rectangle on Fifth Avenue; the latter, its southern twin. The landscaped passage between these English and French buildings was appropriately dubbed "The Channel Gardens."

From 1932 to 1934 lease negotiations for the other international buildings were conducted with various clients, including representatives from Sweden, Holland, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Germany, China, Japan and even Russia. There were also discussions with a Pan-American group. Aside from favorable publicity, tenant inducements included an attractive federal policy of delayed duty payments and the establishment of a Customs Bureau at Rockefeller Center, thereby obviating costly charges for storage and shipping from port to Customs to final outlet.[2]

Among the potential foreign tenants only the Italian group became a major long term occupant. With the resultant Palazzo d'Italia, in combination with the English and French buildings to the south and the multi-tenant International Building to the north and west, Rockefeller Center became a symbol of cooperation among nations. It was especially significant in the inter-war years when, despite Woodrow Wilson's advocacy, American isolationism prevented the country's membership in the League of

Nations. According to Rockefeller, the buildings in the complex were "symbols in stone and steel of the common interests, mutual understanding and good will" among world powers, representing "the spirit of cooperation and brotherhood among all nations...the only foundation [for] enduring world peace and prosperity."[3] The international theme would later be extended in the United Nations flags which were installed around the Sunken Plaza.

The international units, like all the other buildings in Rockefeller Center, were designed for maximum rental space. Treated as a subcomplex within the larger whole, each structure had similar architectural massing, a nearly identical six-story facade with rooftop garden, the International building with its 41-story tower recessed behind. Each unit had its ground floor devoted entirely to shop fronts with office space above and sculptural reliefs by Lee Lawrie over each of its side entrances. But within this uniformity, John R. Todd stressed the need for uniqueness. It would not do, he said, " to just build square buildings with straight fronts and call a piece the Spanish building and a piece the Swedish building. There must be individuality, quality and appearance."[4] The need was answered primarily by artworks which demonstrated the specific character of the individual tenants and their contributions to art, commerce and world peace.

Beyond their potent cultural significance, the various international units were enormously important integrational factors. This is primarily true along Fifth Avenue but also in the Center as a whole. Not only did they preserve the early scale and genteel character of nineteenth-century New York, but offered, in conjunction with neighboring Saks department store and St. Patrick's Cathedral, the most open and inviting human-scaled space in midtown Manhattan. Moreover, the regularity and understatement of the four six-story masses provide a singularly cohesive visual base for the staggered skyline of the whole Rockefeller complex. Simultaneously, the International Building's 41-story tower, set back from Fifth Avenue, brings the northeastern frontage to a climax and complements, without mimicry or rivalry, the soaring RCA Building to its southwest.

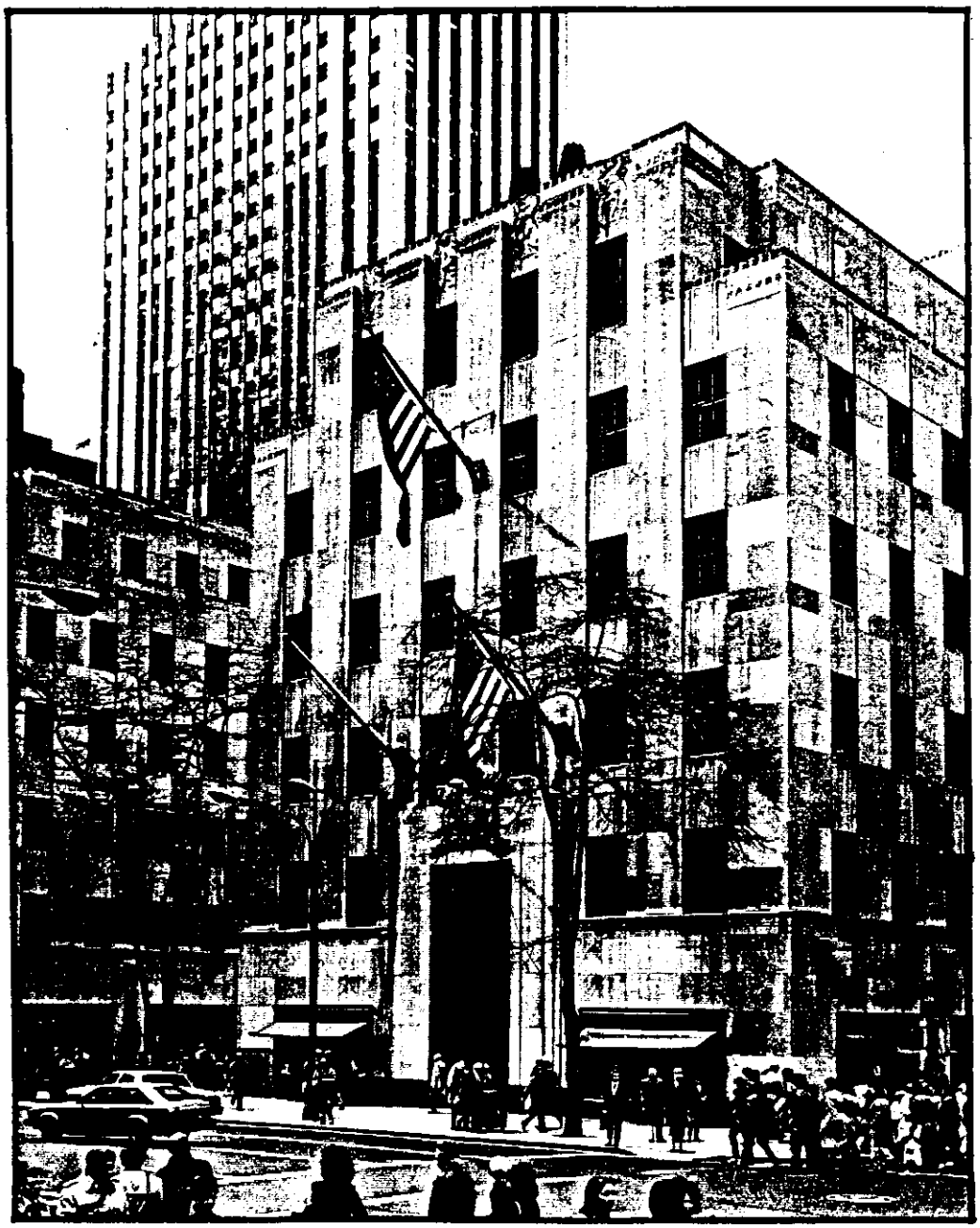
INTERNATIONAL BUILDINGS FOOTNOTES

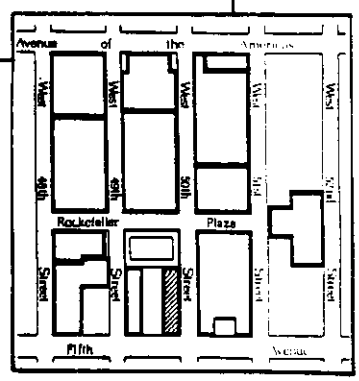
1. Krinsky, p. 59.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 67. See also *British Empire Building in Rockefeller Center* (New York, 1933[?]), p. 6.

3. Balfour, p. 42.

4. John R. Todd to Henry Hofmeister (10/22/32), quoted in Krinsky, p. 150.





British Building
620 Fifth Avenue
Oct. 1932 - May 1933

Excavation for the British Empire Building[1] began in late February 1932.[2] It was the fourth unit undertaken at Rockefeller Center and the first constructed on Fifth Avenue. All previous work had been confined to the Radio group on the western side of the site. After Radio City Music Hall and the Century Theater, it was the first building in the complex to open (May 1, 1933).[3]

The idea of building a British commercial center in America was not new. Already by 1925 the United States had occupied offices in Bush House on the London Strand --- an international office building constructed significantly by Rockefeller Center architect, Harvey Corbett. Meanwhile plans for a reciprocal British center in New York had been drawn up several years prior.[4] Although the latter scheme was abandoned when negotiations failed for a site on Rector Street, the project was easily revived by Hugh Robertson in 1931.

Lord Southborough (chairman of the British Empire Building Syndicate) shared Rockefeller's ideas about world fellowship. He envisioned the British and complementary French and Italian structures as "symbols of a new day, a gateway in New York through which all could enter" in the noble quest for international unity.[5]

Each of the foreign tenants used its building to express the cultural attributes of her own country. France highlighted her artistic legacy with the work of French sculptors and Italy employed Italian artists to document significant aspects of her history. Great Britian was the anomaly, commissioning her decorative work from the German-Americans Lee Lawrie and Carl Paul Jennewein and Rene Chambellan, an American of French descent. Nor did Britain emphasize her native contributions to the arts. Britain's themes were the empire, her natural resources and commerce. The choice was significant. Largely dependent for wealth upon foreign trade, Britain was struggling in the truce years to recover from the disastrous effects of World War I. Her staple exporting concerns had been severely curtailed for years, resulting in the serious over-valuation of the pound, a new high in taxation, and a dangerously low employment rate.[6] The theme of imperial commerce was given great prominence on the building's Fifth Avenue facade where Jennewein designed a cast bronze panel depicting the diverse peoples and industries of the British Empire.[7]

Comprehensive in its scope, the composition nonetheless has an isolated quality. Unlike its counterpart at La Maison Francaise where Alfred Janniot treated the problem as a single, densely filled decorative unit, Jennewein segmented his composition by emphasizing the vertical divisions of his triple doors. He may have later inspired the doors of St. Patrick's

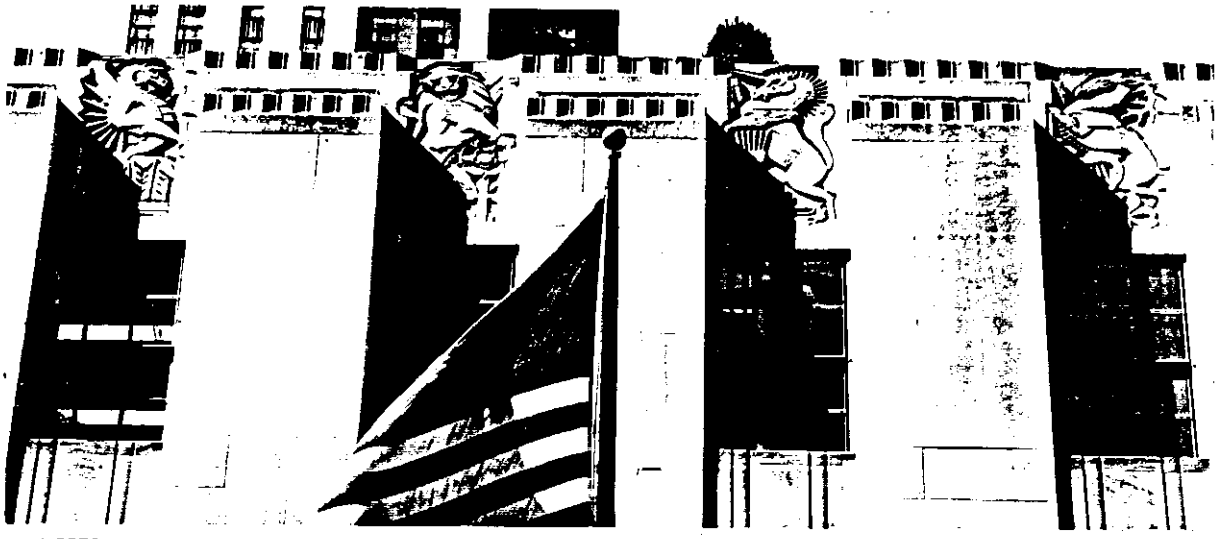
BRONZE PANEL & LIMESTONE CARTOUCHE
Main Entrance
Carl Paul Jennewein
Installed 1933

Cathedral across Fifth Avenue where gilded figures project boldly from their bronze background. The panel consists of nine gold leaf figures (now worn) on a dark blue patina base, arranged in three vertical ribbons over triple doors. Included in various positions are the major industries of the British Isles, each standing upon a corbeled pedestal. Among them are a fisherman, seaman and coal miner, all with appropriate attributes. The commerce of India appears as a man holding sugar cane stalks, a woman carrying a bag of salt and another beside a leafy tobacco plant. Canada is represented by a reaper, Australia by a shepherd with a sheep and Africa by a Negress amid cotton plants. At the bottom center of the composition, just above the middle door, is a radiating sun, symbolic of the empire on which "the sun never sets."

The imperial theme is continued in a polychromed limestone cartouche which Jennewein executed for the over-lintel on Fifth Avenue. A heraldic, gold crowned lion and unicorn (with gilded horn, crown and chain) frame the red, blue and gold British coat of arms. It is encircled by the gilded motto of the Order of the Garter: "Honi Soit Qui Mal y Pense" ("Evil to him who thinks evil"). At the base of the bas relief is a furled rose ribbon inscribed with the gilded motto of the British Royalty: "Dieu et Mon Droit" ("God and My Right").

The imperial theme is similarly elaborated in four limestone reliefs by Rene Paul Chambellan (who also designed the corresponding panels on La Maison Francaise). Carved into the spandrels above the sixth story windows, and recessed slightly behind the facade's chevron-crested piers, these panels represent the coats of arms of the four historical subdivisions of the

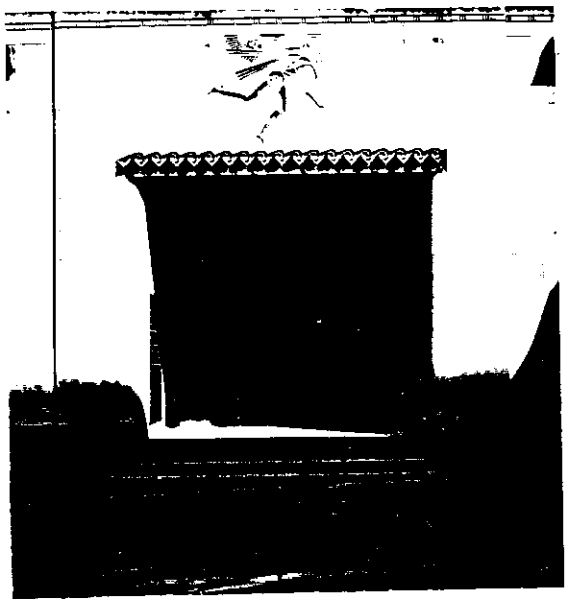
British Empire. Reading from left to right are the griffon and heraldic plumes of Wales, England's lion and Tudor rose, Scotland's unicorn and thistle, and finally, the stag, harp and shamrock of Ireland.

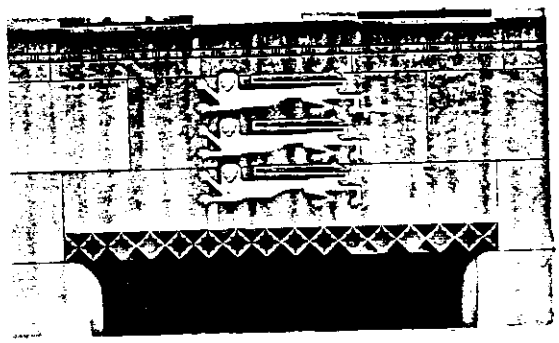


LIMESTONE RELIEFS
Sixth Story, Fifth Avenue
Rene Chambellan
Installed 1933

Depictions of Great Britain's authority likewise appear above the north and south entrances where Lee Lawrie created symbols of the "power arising from [imperial] influence and the respect commanded by the nation."[8] For the 50th Street lintel he designed a series of red Tudor roses on a faceted gold and slate gray ground. Above are three gilded passant-gardant lions. An incised relief, the beasts comprise a moderne representation of the arms of England (an image first used on the shield of Richard the Lionhearted, 1189-99).

For the southern/Channel Garden entrance to the building, Lawrie chose Mercury, the wing-footed god of commerce, to represent the merchant marine which was so important for the establishment of Britain's might. The gilded figure is propelled along a green wave-crested lintel (the lower portion of which is composed of dark blue-black diamonds and faceted gold triangles). His mantel contrasts in a splendid abstract pattern against the radiating sun of the empire. The composition is incised in the building's closely-joined limestone face and is conspicuously set off by its uniform gilding.

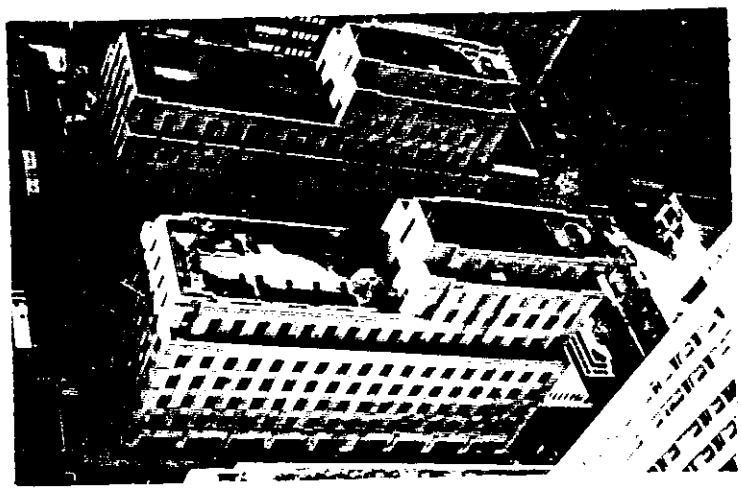




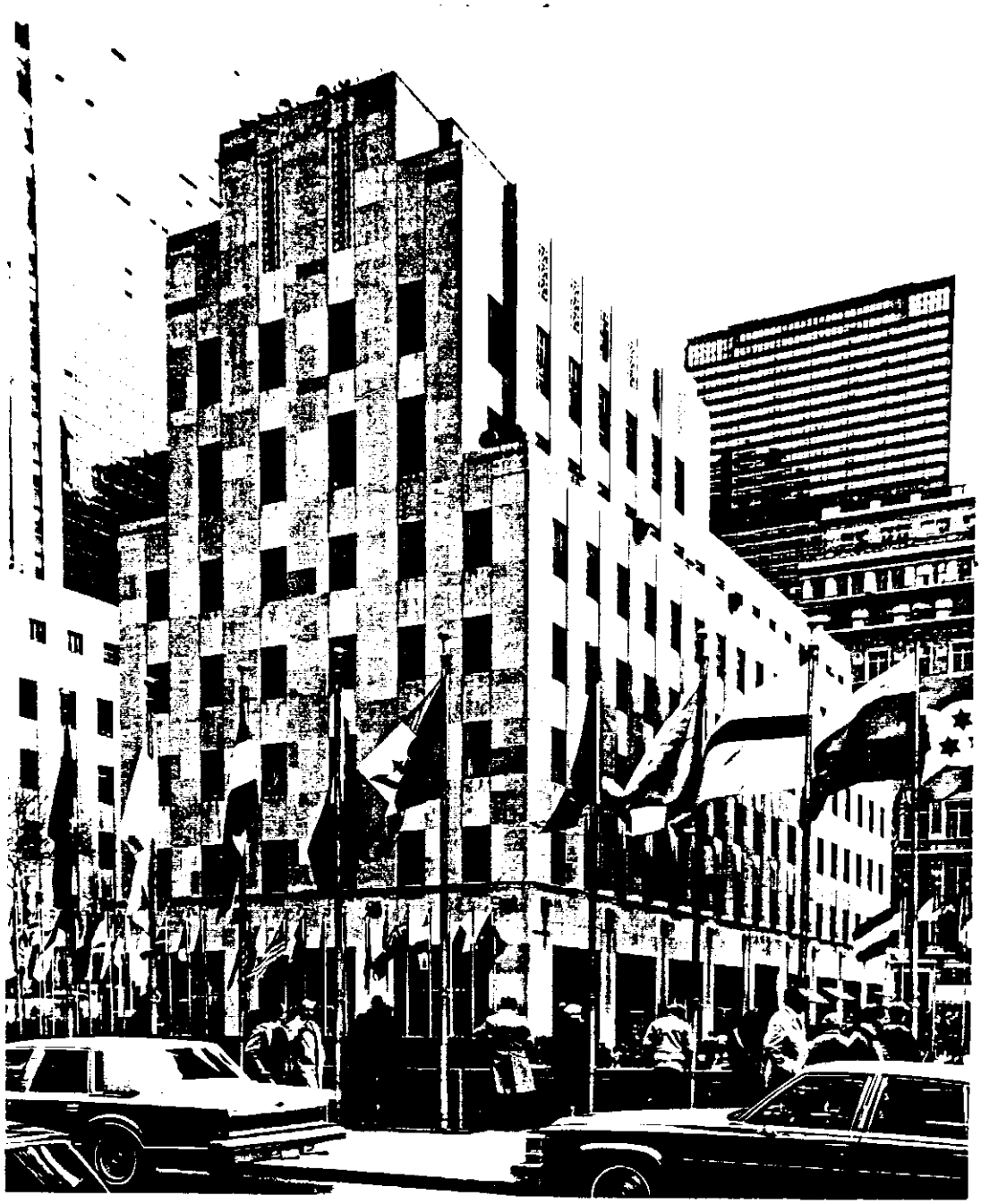
GILDED LIMESTONE RELIEFS
Lee Lawrie
Installed 1933

Left: Mercury, Channel Gardens Entrance
Above: Arms of England, 10 W. 50th St. Entrance

Above the building's sixth floor is a rooftop garden. It is virtually identical to that above La Maison Francaise and like it, was laid out by Ralph Hancock after the architects' plans.[9] The only significant alterations to the exterior of the British Building are the two modern glass doors installed in its Fifth Avenue shopfronts. Each retains its original placement in the center of the shop.[10]



Bird's-eye view from northeast. British Building at center, La Maison Francaise above. International Building, far right.



Rear Facade, View East

BRITISH BUILDING FOOTNOTES

1. Although the "British Empire Building" is now generally known as the "British Building" its name has never been officially changed. Its abbreviated form is one of modern convenience.

2. NB76-31. "Rockefeller Name for Radio City Units," NYT, 2/24/1932; p. 23:2. Reinhard attributed the building to himself and Hofmeister; Corbett, Harrison & MacMurray; Hood & Fouilhoux ("For the Record," Architectural Forum, 88 (Feb. 1948), 26-27.

3. British Empire Building in Rockefeller Center, (New York, [1933 ?]), p. 5.

4. "Rockefeller Center Seen as Aid to Britain," NYT, 1/9/1932, p. 20:2.

5. "British Lay Cornerstone in Rockefeller City," NYT, 7/3/1932, Sect. 1, p. 6:1.

6. Sir James Butler, History of England, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2nd ed., 1963), esp. Ch. 12.

7. "Two Sculptured Doorways," Architectural Forum, 63 (July, 1935), 95-98. See also "Guide to Rockefeller Center," RCW 2, (May 23, 1935), insert, p. 3-4.

8. "Lawrie Gets Contract," NYT, 6/12/1933, p. 19:6.

9. "Guide...," See p.188 below.

10. See "Yardley Shop, Rockefeller Center, New York," Architecutral Forum, 144 (March 1934), 191-94.

THE BRITISH BUILDING -- DESCRIPTION

The British Building is located on the southwest corner of Fifth Avenue and West 50th Street. It is one of Rockefeller Center's four low-rise international units along Fifth Avenue: the independent French and British buildings and the two six-story wings of the International Building. The four units are nearly identical in architectural massing. They differ primarily in their sculptural embellishment and in the seventh-story penthouse atop the French and British buildings (visible at ground level only from an oblique angle).

The British Building is a limestone clad skeletal steel structure which rises five stories before narrowing with lateral setbacks at sixth floor level. A garden of largely original configuration (see p.188 below) occupies the eastern half of the sixth story roof. At west, the building rises one and a half additional stories. On all four facades of the British Building the ground floor is devoted to shopfronts and display windows. A slightly cusped first floor cornice (with an incised bead-and-reel molding) separates the retail space from offices on the 2-7th floors. The walls of the upper floors are articulated with flat limestone piers of uniform width which terminate in a faceted ribbon molding. The same molding appears along the building's lateral setbacks and at roof level, creating a slightly ridged profile against the sky. Between, and slightly recessed behind the piers are steel sash. Over each window is a limestone spandrel whose vertical ridges sympathetically relate the low-rise building to the Center's towers (where ridged aluminum spandrels appear).

The Fifth Avenue Facade is symmetrically arranged around a double-story portal, crowned by a limestone cartouche. As in La Maison Francaise, the triple doors and decorative jambs of the main entrance are recessed behind a broad limestone enframement. The latter projects in four shallow steps. The building's granite base is higher in the southeast corner where the cornerstone is inscribed: "BRITISH//EMPIRE//BUILDING//MCMXXXII." On either side of the main entrance is a bronze-framed shopfront, each of which has a modern door (in original position at the center of each shop). Above the sixth story windows are four limestone bas-reliefs. The facade has three flagpoles which angle over Fifth Avenue.

The northern and southern flanks of the British Building are nearly identical. Each has four broad ground level retail bays located symmetrically on either side of a narrower building

entrance. In each case the deep-set entrance is recessed under a decorative lintel and sculptural relief by Lee Lawrie. The entrances themselves consist of a central revolving door and two single doors set within decorative jambs. A ventilation grill is located above. On the side walls of each entrance are a firedoor and ventilation grill. Both facades step back at sixth story level. The western half of each facade rises with an additional (seventh) story where the six central (of eight) windows are crowned by limestone lattice spandrels. The facades step back again above the seventh floor and terminates in an additional half story (pierced by six limestone lattice screens).

The northern and southern facades differ only in their shop fronts and display windows. The southern (Channel Gardens) facade has five shopfronts. Those in the second and fourth bays from the west, and in the second bay from the east, have recessed entrances in various configurations. The original mullions survive in the display windows located in the first and third bays from the west.

The northern (50th Street facade) has five display windows and three shopfronts. The shop front to the right of the building entrance retains its original bronze-framed glass door in its orignal recessed position at the center of the shop.

The rear (Sunken Plaza) facade rises sheer from the pavement, but narrows with lateral setbacks above the fifth and seventh floors. Divided into three ground level bays, it has no entrance but rather, two large display windows at center and right and a smaller display window at left. The reduced size of the latter results from the staircase which leads up to 50th Street. Each of the facade's four piers holds a bronze light hood. On the northernmost pier is a small bronze-framed display window embossed at top: "ROCKEFELLER CENTER."

* * * * *

Significant features include but are not limited to:

- Buff colored shot sawed Indiana limestone cladding
- Slightly cusped first sory cornice with incised bead-and-reel molding (continuous aound entire building; interrupted only by main entrance on Fifth Avenue)
- Slightly projecting limestone piers of uniform width
- Vertically ridged limestone spandrels
- Faceted ribbon moldings at pier terminations, lateral setbacks and roof level

FIFTH AVENUE FACADE

1ST FLOOR:
- Polished granite base and inscribed conerstone cornerstone (southeast corner)

MAIN ENTRANCE:
- Broad, stepped limestone enframement, slightly projecting; 3 bronze-framed rectangular lights, flush with surface, on either jamb; bronze numerals "620" on either jamb).
- 3 bronze-framed glass doors and decorativejambs
- Decorative bronze panel (See p.94 above)
- Polychromed limestone cartouche (See p.94 above)

TWO SHOPFRONTS with:
- Beveled bronze frames
- Black structural glass lintels
- Bronze awning frames (in concealed vertical housing)

2-6th FLOORS:
- 3/3 steel sash (2-5th flrs); 6/6 steel sash on 6th flr.
- 4 natural limestone bas-reliefs at 6th floor (See p.94)
- 3 wooden flagpoles with bronze globe terminations and anchors
- rooftop garden

7th FLOOR

-central multi-pane metal and glass French doors & transom
-multi-pane sash on either side of doors
-2 limestone lattice windows (7-7 1/2 floors)

SOUTHERN (CHANNEL GARDENS) FACADE

1st FLOOR
- Polished granite base
- 10 Bronze light hoods with ridged tops (one on each pier below first story cornice)
- "PROMENADE," bronze letters affixed at east and west ends of facade, just below first story cornice

ENTRANCE:
- Decorative lintel and limestone relief (See p.95 above)
- Bronze-framed glass revolving door flanked on either side by a bronze-framed glass door
- Horizontally ridged bronze jambs and lintel with embossed roundels
- Bronze ventilation grill over doors
- Bronze firedoor on right wall
- Bronze ventilation grill on left wall
- Four low granite steps

5 SHOPFRONTS:
- Beveled bronze frames
- Black structural glass lintels
- Bronze awning frames in concealed vertical housing

3 DISPLAY WINDOWS:
- Beveled bronze frames
- Black structural glass lintels
- Bronze awning frames in concealed vertical housing

2-7th FLOORS
- 3/3 steel sash (2-5th flrs.)
- 6/6 steel sash (6-7th flrs.)
- Limestone lattice screens (7-7 1/2 flrs.)

NORTHERN (50TH STREET) FACADE

1st FLOOR
- Polished granite base
- 10 Bronze light hoods with ridged tops (one on each pier below first story cornice)

ENTRANCE:
- Decorative lintel and limestone relief (See p.95 above)
- Bronze-framed glass revolving door flanked on either side by a bronze-framed glass door
- Horizontally ridged bronze jambs and lintel with embossed roundels
- Bronze ventilation grill over doors
- Bronze firedoor on left wall
- Bronze ventilation grill on right wall

3 SHOPFRONTS:
- Beveled bronze frames
- Black structural glass lintels
- Bronze awning frames in concealed vertical housing

5 DISPLAY WINDOWS:
- Beveled bronze frames
- Black structural glass lintels
- Bronze awning frames in concealed vertical housing

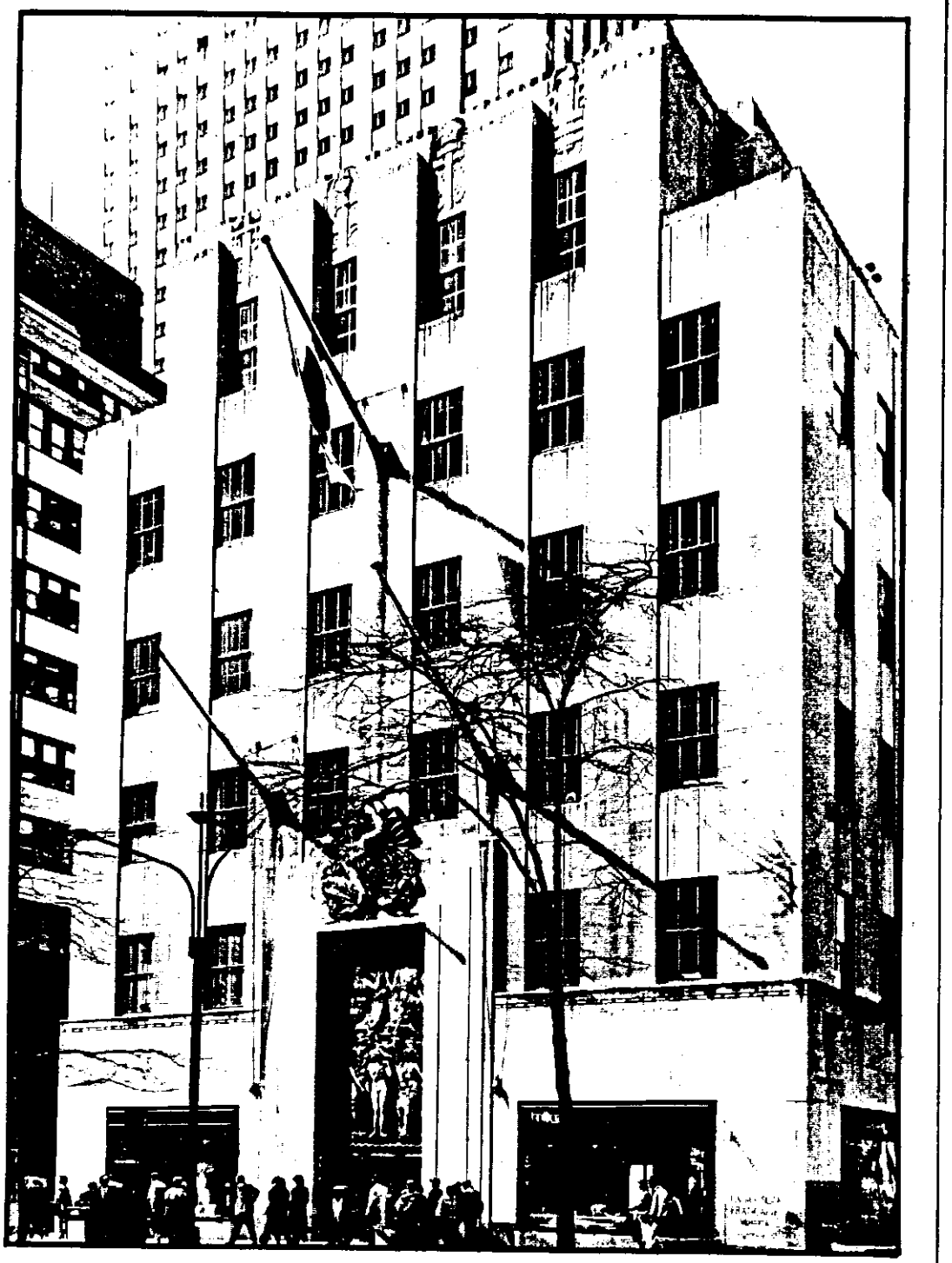
2-7th FLOORS
- 3/3 steel sash (2-5th flrs.)
- 6/6 steel sash (6-7th flrs.)
- Limestone lattice screens (7-7 1/2 flrs.)

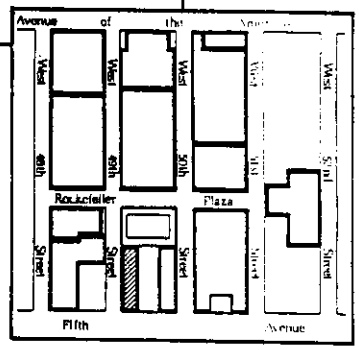
REAR (SUNKEN PLAZA) FACADE

1st FLOOR
- Polished granite base (higher at north)
- 4 bronze light hoods with ridged tops (one on each pier below first story cornice)
- Small bronze-framed display window on northern pier, embossed "ROCKEFELLER CENTER" at top

3 DISPLAY WINDOWS:
- Beveled bronze frames
- Black structural glass lintel (right window)
- Bronze awning frames in concealed vertical housing

2-7th FLOORS
- 3/3 steel sash (2-5th flrs.)
- 6/6 steel sash (6-7th flrs.)
- Limestone lattice screens (7-7 1/2 flrs.)





La Maison Francaise

610 Fifth Avenue

March 1933 - Sept. 1933

Rockefeller's search for foreign tenants led almost inevitably to French involvement. As a result of a trip to France in 1923 he had volunteered more than $3,000,000 for the construction of a new medical school at Lyons, the restoration of palaces at Versailles and Fontainebleau and the repair of Reims Cathedral which was so savagely bombarded during the war.[1] France immortalized Rockefeller by giving his name to two streets and presenting him with the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor. Having once been rescued by the philanthropist, the country reciprocated in his hour of need. Negotiations were completed in March, 1932 for the construction at Rockefeller Center of La Maison Francaise.[2] Aside from its sculptural embellishment, the structure is the identical twin of the British Building to its north. Excavations for both units began in February 1932. The British Building opened in May 1933, followed five months later by La Maison Francaise.[3]

The venture was sponsored by the "French Committee for the Development of Economic and Intellectual Foreign Relations" and dedicated to the industry, art and trade of France. It was hailed by Edouard Herriot, former Prime Minister of France, as a monument to the "prosperity, freedom and peace of the world." The laying of the building's cornerstone, he said, was the cementing of more than a century of friendship between the French and American nations.[4] It was, moreover, an effective means of introducing France to the American "l'homme de la rue de la-bas."[5]

Somewhat less dependent upon foreign trade than Britain, France's relatively well balanced economy fostered a celebration of art and brotherhood at Rockefeller Center. These themes are encyclopedically expressed on the Fifth Avenue facade of La Maison Francaise, especially in the 10-ton bronze panel which Alfred Janniot executed for its main entrance. He conceived of the portal as a single spatial unit, totally dominated by this 11 foot x 18 foot partially gilded high relief. The panel was the first of Janniot's works to be seen in America. It recalled in its overall effect the "tapestry of stone" with which he covered the walls of the Colonial Museum in Vincennes. It contrasts markedly with Jennewein's more restrained entrance on the neighboring British Building.[6]

Installed above the building's triple doors, the panel depicts France and New York joining hands across the sea. The former is crowned and enthroned atop a great sailing vessel. She holds Notre Dame in her lap as a scroll inscribed with the motto of Paris - "Fluctuat nec Mergitur" ("It floats but never sinks") - furls behind. New York, by contrast, is perched on the deck of a modern ocean liner, a banderol bearing the city's name swirling before her lofty skyline. Seagulls flutter in the wave-filled midground above the nearly life-sized muses of "Poesie,"

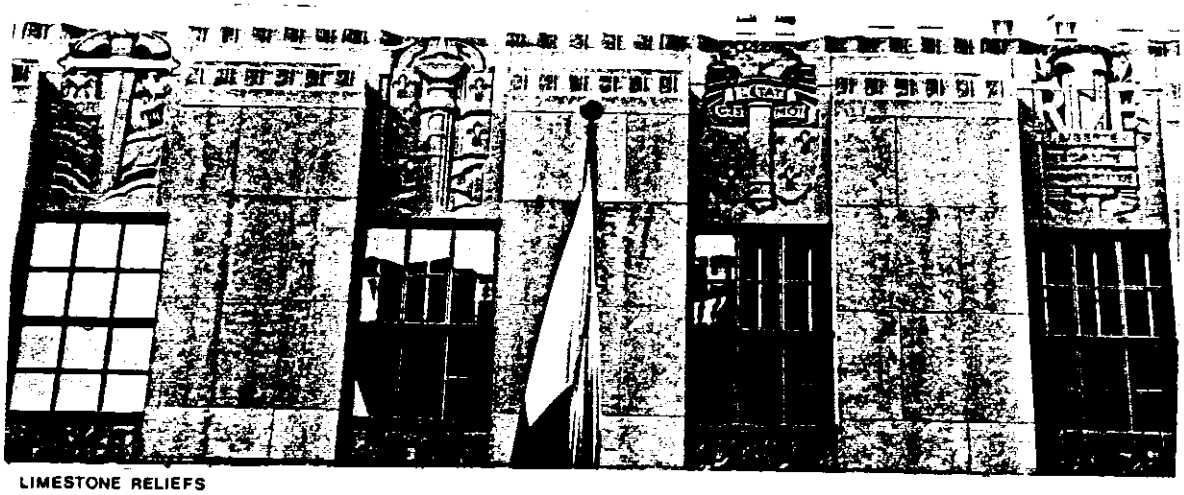
BRONZE PANEL & LIMESTONE CARTOUCHE
Main Entrance
Alfred Janniot
Installed 1934

"Beaute" and "Elegance." Poesie is perched on the wings of Pegasus (whose neck bears the inscription "ALFRED//JANNIOT// SCULPTEUR") while her mates stand among the birds and trees of the two continents. The panel's decorative effect is continued in the bronze undulations of the door jambs below.

Janniot's bronze panel was unveiled in January, 1934 followed six months later by his polychromed cartouche above. Nearly 10 feet high, it features yellow robed "La France."[7] She is a modern Statue of Liberty holding high the torch of freedom (in a pose somewhat reminiscent of the Gorgon on the ancient Greek Temple of Artemis). Amid dramatically swirling gray-greendrapery, she holds with her enormously powerful right hand what appears to be a red maple branch with gilded acorns. She is flanked on either side by other gilded plants. Affixed below in gilded bronze letters is the motto of the French Republic: "Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite."

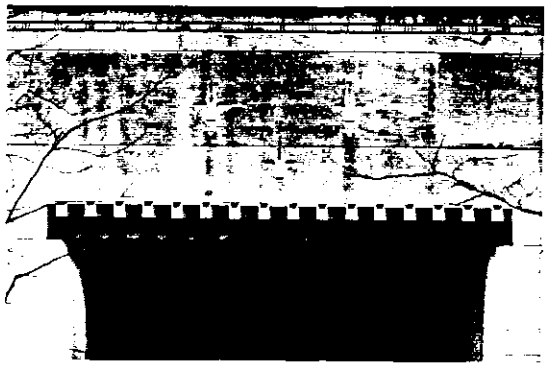
As in the British Building, the sixth story sculptural reliefs of La Maison Francaise were dedicated to historical themes. Installed in 1934, they are one of Rene Chambellan's many works at Rockefeller Center. Reading from left to right, they depict the rise of Charlemagne's Empire where society and religious concerns were subordinated to, and protected by, military power (symbolized by a huge sword). Early influences on France are represented by the Roman insignia, the Celtic bard's harp and Gallic cock. The second spandrel symbolizes the nation's formative period. Clustered spears in the fleur de lys banner of New France signify unity. A chalice denotes the spirit of chivalry and self-sacrifice; a halo, the spiritual state of mind. The third spandrel shows Absolute Monarchy under Louis XIV with a crowned sceptre, two fleur-de-lys shields and a banner inscribed witn the Sun King's motto "L'etat c'est moi." In the

final spandrel the French Republic is represented by the letters "R.F" on either side of a Phrygian cap (signifying democracy) atop bundled fasces (for unity) and the laurel crown (success and reward). Below, the motto of the French Republic is inscribed in three bands.[8]



LIMESTONE RELIEFS
Sixth Story, Fifth Avenue
Rene Chambellan
Installed 1933

Lee Lawrie designed the decorations for the side entrances of La Maison Francaise, just as he did for the British and International Buildings. Over its southern/49th Street portal is a gray and mauve scalloped lintel incised with gilded dentils. Above are three incised and gilded fleur-de-lys, continuing the stylization of the Royal French lily which had begun in the Middle Ages.



Installed 1934

Left: Sowing the Seeds of Good Citizenship
Channel Gardens Entrance

Above: Three Fleurs-de-Lys
9 W. 49th St. Entrance

Gilded fleurs-de-lys appear again on the northern/Channel Gardens entrance to La Maison Francaise where Lawrie cleverly used them as the "seeds of good citizenship" sown by a gilded woman in a Phrygian cap. Her scalloped hem repeats the gilded contour of the green field below. The lintel itself is composed of a lower band of blue-black incised triangles with a mauve incised chevron molding above.

Like its British twin, La Maison Francaise retains its formal rooftop garden.[9] The exterior of the building remains substantially intact except for shopfront and display window alterations. Its bronze mullions have been removed and new glass installed in the four western bays on W. 49th Street, in all the bays on the rear of the building, and in its two western bays along the Channel Gardens.[10] The southern shopfront along Fifth Avenue has also had its originally central door repositioned at left.[11]

LA MAISON FRANCAISE FOOTNOTES

1. Fosdick, p. 356ff.

2. "Rockefeller City Adds French Unit," NYT, 3/31/1932, p. 23:4.

3. "Guide to Rockefeller Center," RCW, 2 (May 23, 1935), insert, p. 3-5. NB76-31. Reinhard attributed the building to himself and Hofmeister; Corbett, Harrison& MacMurray; Hood & Fouilhoux ("For the Record," Architecural Forum, 88 (Feb. 1948), 30.

4. "Herriot Departs Hailing New Amity," NYT, 4/30/1933, p. 2:1.

5. "La Maison Francaise a New York," La Revue Mondiale (Sept. 1932), p. 146-50 (p. 150).

6. "Two Sculptured Doorways," Architectural Forum, 58 (July, 1935), 95-98.

7. "A New Statue of Liberty on Fifth Avenue," NYT, 6/9/934, p. 13:4.

8. "Guide...," op. cit., p. 5.

9. See p.188 below.

10. ALT 1826-33.

11. Illus. RCM, 1 (March 1938), advertisement for Rockefeller Center shops, n.p.

LA MAISON FRANCAISE -- DESCRIPTION

La Maison Francaise is located on the northwest corner of Fifth Avenue and West 49th Street. It is one of Rockefeller Center's four low-rise international units along Fifth Avenue: the independent French and British buildings and the two six-story wings of the International Building. The four units are nearly identical in architectural massing. They differ primarily in their sculptural embellishment and in the seventh-story penthouse atop the French and British buildings (visible at ground level only from an oblique angle).

La Maison Francaise is a limestone clad skeletal steel structure which rises five stories before narrowing with lateral setbacks at sixth floor level. A garden of largely original configuration (see p.188 below) occupies the eastern half of the sixth story roof. At west, the building rises one and a half additional stories. On all four facades of La Maison Francaise the ground floor is devoted to shopfronts and display windows. A slightly cusped first floor cornice (with an incised bead-and-reel molding) separates the retail space from offices on the 2-7th floors. The walls of the upper floors are articulated with flat limestone piers of uniform width which terminate in a faceted ribbon molding. The same molding appears along the building's lateral setbacks and at roof level, creating a slightly ridged profile against the sky. Between, and slightly recessed behind the piers are steel sash. Over each window is a limestone spandrel whose vertical ridges sympathetically relate the low-rise building to the Center's towers (where ridged aluminum spandrels appear).

The Fifth Avenue Facade is symmetrically arranged around a double-story portal, crowned by a limestone cartouche. As in the British Building, the triple doors and decorative jambs of the main entrance are recessed behind a broad limestone enframement. The latter projects in four shallow steps. The building's granite base is higher in the northeast corner where the cornerstone is inscribed: "LA MAISON//FRANCAISE//MCMXXXIII." On either side of the main entrance is a bronze-framed shopfront, each of which has a replacement door. Above the sixth story windows are four limestone bas-reliefs. The facade has three flagpoles which angle over Fifth Avenue.

The northern and southern flanks of La Maison Francaise are nearly identical. Each has four broad ground level retail bays located symmetrically on either side of a narrower building entrance. In each case the deep-set entrance is recessed under a decorative lintel and sculptural relief by Lee Lawrie. The entrances themselves consist of a central revolving door and two single doors set within decorative jambs. A ventilation grill is located above. On the side walls of each entrance are a firedoor and ventilation grill. Both facades step back at sixth story level. The western half of each facade rises with an additional (seventh) story where the six central (of eight) windows is

crowned by a limestone lattice spandrel. The facades step back again above the seventh floor and terminate in an additional half story (pierced by six limestone lattice screens).

The northern and southern facades differ only in their shop fronts and display windows. The southern (49th Street) facade has three shopfronts. Those in the third and fourth bays from the east retain their original bronze and glass doors in their original position (recessed in the center of the shop). All of the display windows to the east of the building entrance have had their original bronze mullions removed.

The northern (Channel Gardens) facade has three display windows and five shopfronts, all of which have replacement doors flush with the facade (the westernmost bay also has a recessed revolving door). The bronze mullions have been removed from the display window in the second bay from the west.

The rear (Sunken Plaza) facade rises sheer from the pavement, but narrows with lateral setbacks above the fifth and seventh floors. Divided into three ground level bays, it has no entrance but rather, two large display windows at center (structural black glass lintel removed) and left, and a smaller display window at right. The reduced size of the latter results from the staircase which leads up to 49th Street. The original bronze mullions of all three display windows have been removed, an alteration which disturbs the facade's delicate scale. Each of the facade's four piers holds a bronze light hood. On the southernmost pier is a small bronze-framed display window embossed at top: "ROCKEFELLER CENTER."

* * * * *

Significant features include but are not limited to:

- Buff colored shot sawed Indiana limestone cladding
- Slightly cusped first sory cornice with incised bead-and-reel molding (continuous aound entire building; interrupted only by main entrance on Fifth Avenue)
- Slightly projecting limestone piers of uniform width
- Vertically ridged limestone spandrels
- Faceted ribbon moldings at pier terminations, lateral setbacks and roof level

FIFTH AVENUE FACADE

1ST FLOOR:
- Polished granite base and inscribed conerstone (northeast corner)

MAIN ENTRANCE:
- Broad, stepped limestone enframement, slightly projecting; 3 bronze-framed rectangular lights, flush with surface, on either jamb; bronze numerals "610" on either jamb).
- 3 bronze-framed glass doors and decorative jambs
- Decorative bronze panel (See p.107 above)
- Polychromed limestone cartouche with motto of the French Republic affixed in gilded letters below (See p.108 above)

TWO SHOPFRONTS with:
- Beveled bronze frames
- Black structural glass lintels
- Bronze awning frames (in concealed vertical housing)

2-6th FLOORS:
- 3/3 steel sash (2-5th flrs); 6/6 steel sash on 6th flr.
- 4 natural limestone bas-reliefs at 6th floor (See p.)
- 3 wooden flagpoles with bronze globe terminations and anchors
- rooftop garden

7th FLOOR

-central multi-pane metal and glass French doors & transom
-multi-pane sash on either side of doors
-2 limestone lattice windows (7-7 1/2 floors)

SOUTHERN (49TH STREET) FACADE

1st FLOOR
- Polished granite base
- 10 Bronze light hoods with ridged tops (one on each pier below first story cornice)

ENTRANCE:
- Decorative lintel and limestone relief (See p.109 above)
- Bronze-framed glass revolving door flanked on either side by a bronze-framed glass door
- Horizontally ridged bronze jambs and lintel with embossed roundels
- Bronze ventilation grill over doors
- Bronze firedoor on right wall
- Bronze ventilation grill on left wall

3 SHOPFRONTS:
- Beveled bronze frames
- Black structural glass lintels
- Bronze awning frames in concealed vertical housing
- Two original bronze-framed glass doors (3rd & 4th bays from the east)

5 DISPLAY WINDOWS:
- Beveled bronze frames
- Black structural glass lintels
- Bronze awning frames in concealed vertical housing

2-7th FLOORS
- 3/3 steel sash (2-5th flrs.)
- 6/6 steel sash (6-7th flrs.)
- Limestone lattice screens (7-7 1/2 flrs.)

NORTHERN (CHANNEL GARDENS) FACADE

1st FLOOR
- Polished granite base (higher at east; steeply banked)
- 10 Bronze light hoods with ridged tops (one on each pier below first story cornice)
- "PROMENADE," bronze letters affixed at east and west ends of facade, below 1st story cornice

ENTRANCE:
- Decorative lintel and limestone relief (See p.110 above)
- Bronze-framed glass revolving door flanked on either side by a bronze-framed glass door
- Horizontally ridged bronze jambs and lintel with embossed roundels
- Bronze ventilation grill over doors
- Bronze firedoor on left wall
- Bronze ventilation grill on right wall

5 SHOPFRONTS:
- Beveled bronze frames
- Black structural glass lintels
- Bronze awning frames in concealed vertical housing

3 DISPLAY WINDOWS:
- Beveled bronze frames
- Black structural glass lintels
- Bronze awning frames in concealed vertical housing

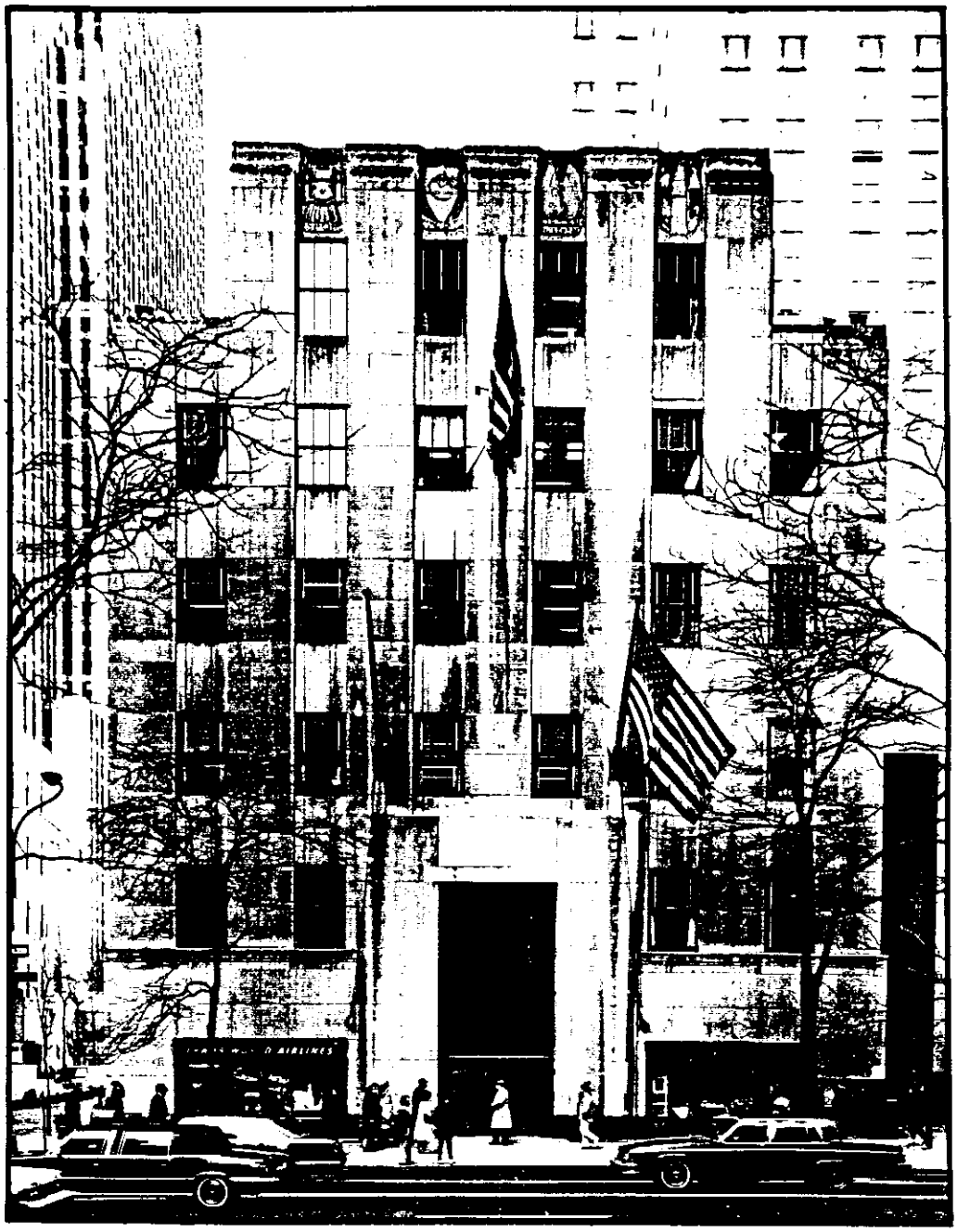
2-7th FLOORS
- 3/3 steel sash (2-5th flrs.)
- 6/6 steel sash (6-7th flrs.)
- Limestone lattice screens (7-7 1/2 flrs.)

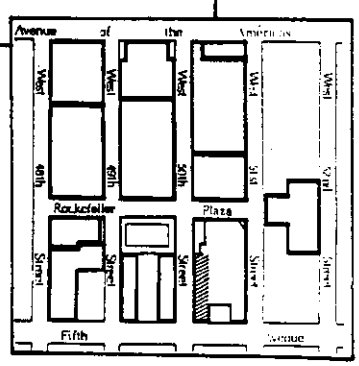
REAR (SUNKEN PLAZA) FACADE

1st FLOOR
- Polished granite base (higher at south)
- 4 bronze light hoods with ridged tops (one on each pier below first story cornice)
- Small bronze-framed display window on southern pier, embossed "ROCKEFELLER CENTER" at top

3 DISPLAY WINDOWS:
- Beveled bronze frames
- Black structural glass lintels (over left and right windows)
- Bronze awning frames in concealed vertical housing

2-7th FLOORS
- 3/3 steel sash (2-5th flrs.)
- 6/6 steel sash (6-7th flrs.)
- Limestone lattice screens (7-7 1/2 flrs.)





Palazzo d'Italia

626 Fifth Avenue

July 1933 - Sept. 1934

On May 8, 1934, Corbett, Harrison & MacMurray filed plans for the completion of Rockefeller Center's international frontage on Fifth Avenue.[1] The application was filed as a single building but it essentially comprised three different units: the six story Palazzo d'Italia on the south, the twin International Building North and the 41-story International Building tower set back from Fifth Avenue and connecting the two smaller structures.

The final scheme was the result of several years' revision. Initial plans envisioned a department store on the site of the six story twins with a 30, and later 45, story north-south slab behind.[2] This proposal was variously modified until summer, 1932 when the Associated Architects designed a tower detached from, but centered between, twin nine story pavilions. The latter were to be connected by a tiered four story shopping galleria with rooftop plantings, emulating the famous arcades of Rome and Milan.[3] It was in this state that Hugh Robertson presented a model of the complex to Benito Mussolini.

Already predicting the rise of the new Italian empire, Mussolini was evidently pleased by the nine-story Italian block (three floors taller than its French and British neighbors, although subsequently reduced to their height). The whole nature of the Rockefeller complex most likely appealed to the Italian Premier who himself attempted the creation of spectacular public buildings. His interest was doubtless peked by the maquettes of the Pantheon and Column of Marcus Aurelius which, in a rather bald appeal to Fascist bravado, the Associated Architects included in the model as points of reference and scale.

Despite Mussolini's initial sanction and months of trans-Atlantic negotiations, a commitment from the Italian government failed to materialize. The venture was largely sustained by American-Italian enterprises under the parent organization "Societa Anonima Palazzo d'Italia" which represented commercial, art, food and tourist corporations.[4] The building was to represent the Italian contribution to "the peaceful understanding among nations and the rebirth of faith in the restoration of individual and public economic conditions."[5] But even as this mandate was explained by the vice president of the Societa, Senator Antonio Masconi, the ground-breaking ceremony (July 12, 1933) was interrupted by choruses of the battle cry of the Fascist legions. As war approached and tensions mounted, the Palazzo d'Italia suffered further indignities. It was quietly seized by the army and FBI with America's entry into World War II[6] and purged of its offensive Fascist decorations.

In 1935, a 10 foot x 16 foot multi-pane Corning glass panel was installed above the Palazzo's main entrance.[7] Smaller, but technically quite as innovative as Lee Lawrie's glass mural for the RCA Building, it was one of a pair executed by Attilio

TWO BRONZE PANELS
Main Entrance
Giacomo Manzu
Installed 1965

Piccirilli (the other being above the main entrance to the International Building North). It portrayed a heroic worker tilling the land with his spade. An inscription above proclaimed "Sempre Avanti, Eterna Giovinezza" (Advance Forever, Eternal Youth"). The figure was flanked by the vertical inscription "Arte e Lavoro...Lavoro e Arte" ("Art is Labor...Labor is Art"). A too grand and conspicuous celebration of Fascist "Laborata," the panel was boarded up in late 1941[8] and subsequently removed. It was replaced in 1965 by Giacomo Manzu's bronze high relief where "ITALIA" is embossed above wheat stalks entwined in a wishbone pattern with grapevines (signed "MANZU//NFMM" in a small roundel at lower right). The fruitful symbol, the sculptor explained, represented the immigrants' search for "the two principal things - eating and drinking." Manzu considered the theme more appropriate than his several alternatives (including Venus, Minerva and Apollo and even the Death of Caesar). Also in 1965 he installed a smaller bas relief depicting an immigrant mother and her child, all their possessions in one small bundle (signed by seal impression: "MANZU//NFMM" below the bundle). Manzu substituted this panel for the center of the Palazzo's three glass doors, his decision justified by the fact that it was "not the entrance to the subway." New door jambs were installed to match the bronze panels.[9]

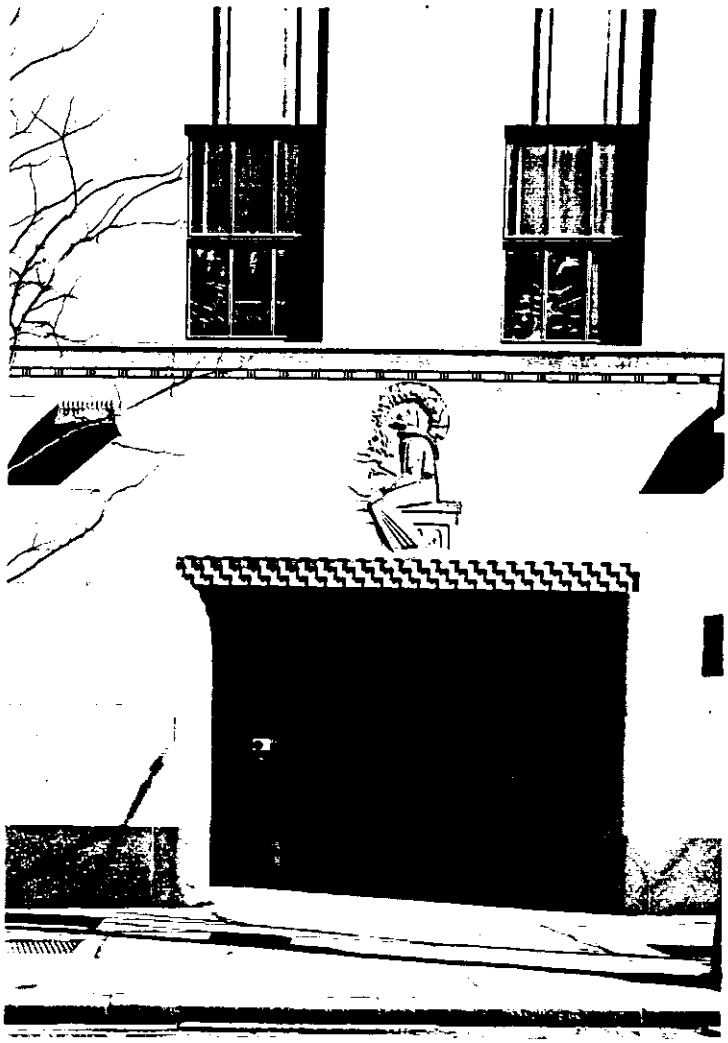
The expunging of Fascist art also led to the removal of Palazzo d'Italia's cartouche which contained the crown of the ruling house of Savoy and the Fascist emblem. Never replaced, the Palazzo is the only one of the four six-story International units to be so denuded at its Fifth Avenue entrance. The same purging impulse affected, although to a lesser degree, the four

FOUR LIMESTONE RELIEFS
Sixth Story, Fifth Avenue
Leo Lentelli
Installed 1935

limestone bas-reliefs which Leo Lentelli designed for the top of the building's facade. Located above the sixth floor windows, and recessed slightly behind the alternating piers, the panels represent the four major periods in Italian history. Reading from left to right are the Roman Empire (represented by a laurel wreath, crown and military uniform with "SPQR" inscribed below); the Renaissance (where a roaring lion head between two helmets surmounts a shield bearing the tools of the painter, sculptor and architect. Below is a banderol inscribed "MCCCC" from which fruit-filled swags rise vertically); Italian Independence of 1870 (shown by grouped flags surmounted by a shining star and inscribed below with two panels reading "Morteo//Liberata") and finally, the Fascist Regime. The latter portrays a wing-spread eagle above the Fascist fasces rods and axes. Originally the panel carried the large inscription "AXII" (a reference to Mussolini's August 12, 1922 march on Rome) but this was effaced in 1949.[10]

The only sculptural work to survive the War intact was the innocent bas relief which Lee Lawrie executed for the Palazzo's West 50th Street entrance. In marked contrast to the imperial overtones of the building's Fifth Avenue decorations, it shows the humble, brown-robed figure of St. Francis of Assisi seated atop a simple two-tone brown bench. Gilded birds form his halo as others eat from the aqua bowl in his outstretched hand. The brown and aqua color scheme is repeated below in the checkerboard lintel formed by overlapping dentil courses.

Above its six story roof the Palazzo's garden remains substantially intact. It has a rectangulat lawn with undulating hedge borders and a cobble path along the south. Embedded in its southern wall are two white marble plaques from the Roman Forum. At the western end of the path is a large stone wall fountain (grotesque mask and lower basin).[11] (For illustration of the roof garden, see fig.138).



LIMESTONE RELIEF, St. Francis of Assisi with Birds
9 W 50th St. Entrance
Lee Lawrie
Installed 1937

PALAZZO D'ITALIA FOOTNOTES

1. NB42-34. Although the architects of record are Corbett, Harrison & MacMurray, Reinhard identified the building as the joint work of Reinhard & Hofmeister; Corbett, Harrison & MacMurrAy; Hood & Fouilhoux ("For the Record," Architectural Forum (Feb. 1948), p. 26-7.

2. Balfour, p. 46; "Rockefeller Center, New York," Architectural Forum, 63 (Nov. 1935), 457-63 [459].

3. "Rockefeller City Alters Plans Again," NYT, 6/1/1932, p.25:4.

4. "Palazzo d'Italia One-third Rented," NYT, 7/5/1933, p. 29:1.

5. "Italy's Unit Begun at Fifth Avenue Center," NYT, 7/13/1933, p. 9:5.

6. Ioth, p. 176.

7. The panel was discussed and illustrated in Josef Vincent Lombardo's Attilio Piccirilli - Life of An American Sculptor, (New York & Chicago, 1944), p. 256-59. See also "Four Ton Glass Panel Glorifying Worker to Decorate Rockefeller Center Building," NYT, 7/3/1935, p. 21:4 and "Glass Sculpture," NYT, 11/7/1935, Sect. 9, p. 11:3.

8. "Italian Building Here is Altered," NYT, 12/13/1941, p. 8:3 and Balfour, p. 149.

9. "Relief from Drabness," Time, May 7, 1965, p. 86. See also "Rockefeller Center to Get Italian Art," NYT, 3/30/65, p. 22:4.

10. Kenneth A. Perko, Jr., Rockefeller Center Properties, Letter to Landmarks Preservation Commission, March 22, 1985.

11. See "Roof Gardens" p.188 below.

THE PALAZZO D'ITALIA -- DESCRIPTION

The Palazzo d'Italia is located on the northwest corner of Fifth Avenue and West 50th Street. It is one the International Building's two six-story wings (the other being the International Building North). Together with the freestanding British Building and La Maison Francaise, it comprises one of Rockefeller Center's four low-rise international units along Fifth Avenue. The four units are nearly identical in architectural massing. They differ primarily in their sculptural embellishment and in the seventh-story penthouse atop the French and British buildings (visible at ground level only from an oblique angle).

The Palazzo d'Italia is a limestone clad skeletal steel pavilion which rises five stories before narrowing with lateral setbacks at sixth floor level. A garden of largely original configuration (see p.188 below) occupies the eastern half of the sixth story roof. The Palazzo's northern elevation forms the southern wall of the International Building's courtyard on Fifth Avenue; the Palazzo's southern elevation is incorporated into the International Building's southern facade which extends the full block between Fifth Avenue and Rockefeller Plaza. The Palazzo's ground floor is devoted to shopfronts and display windows. A first floor cornice separates the retail space from offices on the 2-6th floors. The walls of the upper floors are articulated with flat limestone piers of uniform width which terminate in a faceted ribbon molding. The same molding appears along the building's lateral setbacks and at roof level, creating a slightly ridged profile against the sky. Between, and slightly recessed behind the piers are steel sash. Over each window is a limestone spandrel whose vertical ridges sympathetically relate the low-rise pavilion to the International Building's tower (where ridged aluminum spandrels appear).

The Fifth Avenue Facade is symmetrically arranged around a double-story portal. The Palazzo is the only one of the four international units to have had its cartouche removed. Its main entrance is also unique in its door arrangement. In place of the standard triple doors, it has two bronze-framed glass doors on either side of a bronze relief. A larger bronze panel is installed above the entrance. The entrance is framed by a broad flat limestone enframement which projects slightly from the facade. The Palazzo's granite base is higher in the northeast corner. On either side of the main entrance is a bronze-framed shopfront. That on the south (left) has its original door located on the left. The right shopfront has its original door recessed from the facade on the right. Above the sixth story windows are four limestone bas-reliefs. The facade has three flagpoles which angle over Fifth Avenue.

The southern elevation of the Palazzo d'Italia is described in this report as part of the southern elevation of the International Building. Its northern elevation is included in the description of the International Building's courtyard.

Significant features include but are not limited to:

- Buff colored shot sawed Indiana limestone cladding
- Slightly cusped first story cornice with incised bead-and-reel molding (interrupted by main entrance on Fifth Avenue)
- Slightly projecting limestone piers of uniform width
- Vertically ridged limestone spandrels
- Faceted ribbon moldings at pier terminations, lateral setbacks and roof level

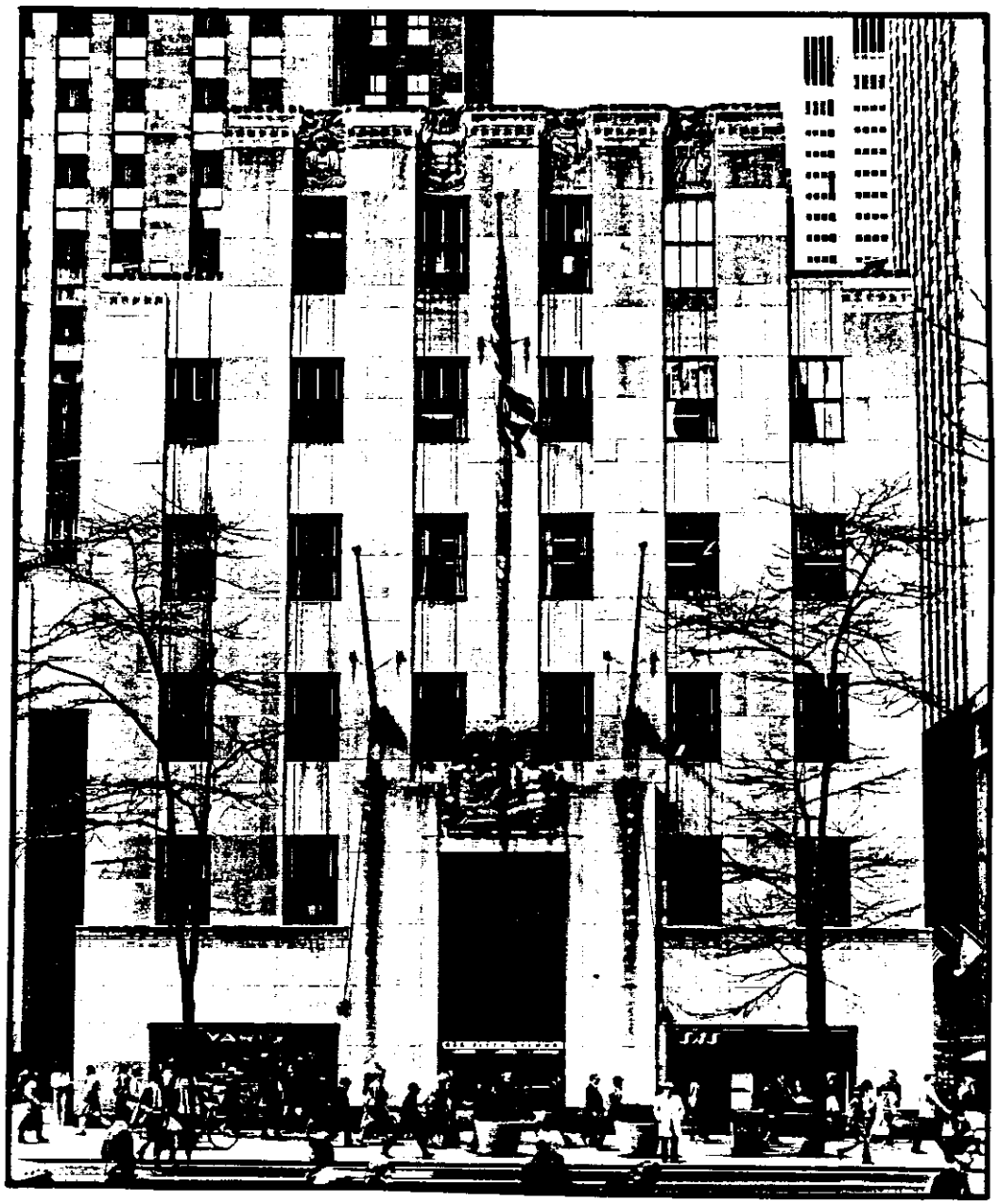
FIFTH AVENUE FACADE

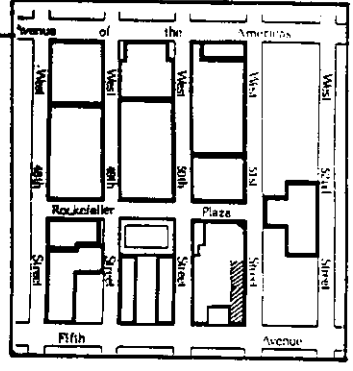
1ST FLOOR:
- Polished granite base

MAIN ENTRANCE:
- Broad,flat limestone enframement, slightly projecting
- 2 bronze-framed glass doors, jambs and projecting beveled lintel
- 2 decorative bronze panels (See p.120 above)

TWO SHOPFRONTS with:
- Beveled bronze frames
- Black structural glass lintel (left shop)
- Bronze awning frames (in concealed vertical housing)

2-6th FLOORS:
- 3/3 steel sash
- 4 natural limestone bas-reliefs at 6th floor (See p. 120-1)
- 3 wooden flagpoles with bronze globe terminations and anchors
- rooftop garden





International Building North

636 Fifth Avenue

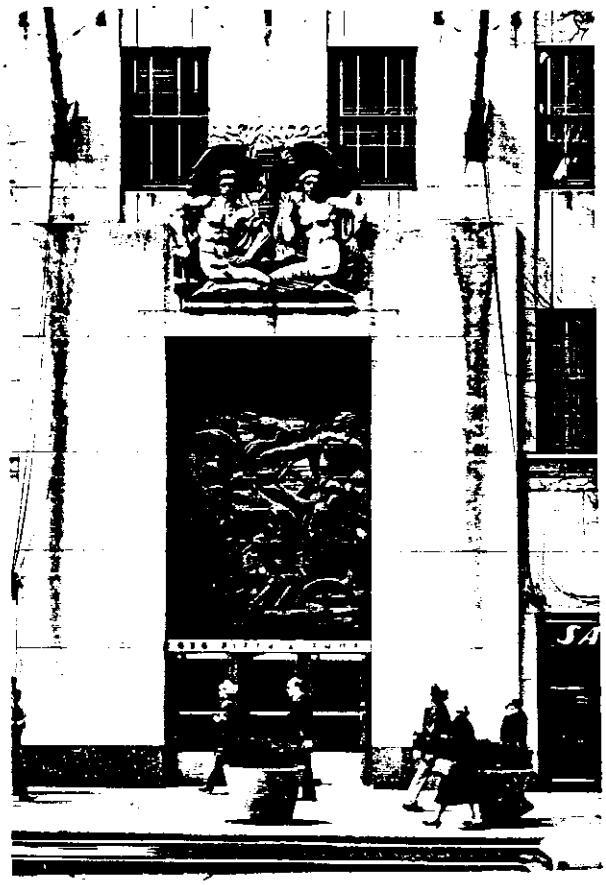
July 1933 - Sept. 1934

As plans progressed for the Palazzo d'Italia, negotiations were undertaken for occupancy of its northern twin by German tenants. Discussions began promisingly in 1932 and continued into the next year but failed rapidly as ground was broken on September 15, 1933.[1] When excavation neared completion in the following month there were serious doubts that the Deutsches Haus would ever materialize. Hitler had assumed power just months prior and his increasingly aggressive policies had all but terminated negotiations. Faced with an unwanted vacancy and the disappointment of his ill-fated plan to promote international peace through commerce, a principled Rockefeller nonetheless decided to stall any contract with Germany.[2]

The decision had considerable impact on the Fifth Avenue frontage of Rockefeller Center. With Italy as the only major tenant in the new triple-unit structure (and thus the only one to be compensated for not having its own building), the two nine story blocks were reduced three floors to a height equal to their French and British counterparts. In turn, the setback tower was enlarged and realigned along an east-west axis.[3] The modification was suggested in February 1934, by Raymond Hood. It comprised his last major contribution to the design of Rockefeller Center before fatal illness prevented his further participation.[4]

After the collapse of negotiations with Germany, occupancy of the northern block was contemplated by the Soviet Union[5] before ultimate tenancy by various foreign clients and its christening as the "International Building North."[6] A clear indication of its new purpose is seen in the four limestone reliefs which Leo Lentelli designed above the building's sixth story windows. Reading from left to right are Asia (represented

LIMESTONE RELIEFS
Sixth Story, Fifth Avenue
Leo Lentelli
Installed 1935



GLASS PANEL & LIMESTONE CARTOUCHE
Main Entrance
Attilio Piccirilli
Installed 1936

by a praying Buddha and the head of a sacred elephant), Europe (whose exploration and control of the sea is symbolically depicted by Neptune and dolphins), Africa (a native amid fruit-bearing plants representative of Egyptian civilization), and finally America (the profile of an Indian in headdress surmounted by a buffalo head from whose horns corn cobs are suspended). The latter motif was borrowed from Lee Lawrie's design on the Nebraska State Capitol.

Attilio Piccirilli's cartouche above the building's main portal was intended to have the same broad appeal, but its style is much more closely related to the Fascistic works he executed for the Palazzo d'Italia (subsequently removed). At left, a powerful male sits on his haunches, his right resting on the brown mallet of industry. To his right is a similarly posed female resting her left arm atop a brown gear. The figures are separated by a brown and gray winged caduceus, symbol of Mercury, god of commerce. Gilded foliage lies behind. The high relief is signed "A. PICCIRILLI Sc." in its lower right corner.

The same sculptor, working in a similar heroic style, executed the great glass panel above the main entrance to the International Building North (signed "A. PICCIRILLI," bottom left). It symbolically depicts the new vision and leadership of youth in world affairs with a young man running abreast a horse-drawn chariot as the sun rises behind. He points out the road ahead to a charioteer who controls his two wildly rearing steeds. The panel is 16 feet x 10 feet and weighs approximately three tons. It was cast by Corning Glass in 45 different molds and connected by transparent cement which oozes onto the screen. It provides a parallel technical achievement to Lee Lawrie's even larger glass mural for the RCA Building. Both are particularly notable examples of the creative use of architectural glass. Unlike Lawrie's mural, however, Piccirilli intentionally clouded

his panel by introducing impurities to achieve a semi-opague tanslucense on a more densely opaque ground. The onyx-like result was known as "Poetic Glass."

The international theme is continued above the West 51st Street entrance to the International Building North where Lee Lawrie designed one of a dozen works for Rockefeller Center's various foreign tenants. It portrays a female in an olive green robe emerging from the clouds to distribute the polychromed contents of a green and gold cornucopia. The horn has been symbolically filled through international trade cooperation. A fairly simple composition, it is animated by the gilded and black edged clouds and lintel of overlapping gold, green, blue and russett scallops. The gilded streaks in the woman's hair and around the horn of plenty have the same effect.

The building's sixth story roof garden remains substantially intact, and roughly follows that on the Palazzo d'Italia.[7] The exterior of the International Building North remains substantially intact. Its only significant alteration has been the installation of modern doors in the shopfronts on Fifth Avenue.

LIMESTONE RELIEF
10 W. 51st St. Entrance
Lee Lawrie
Installed 1937

INTERNATIONAL BUILDING NORTH FOOTNOTES

1. "Work Started on 2 New 9-Story Units in Rockefeller Center," NYT, 9/14/1933, p. 42:3.

2. John D. Rockefeller Jr. memo, 9/3/1933 and letter to Arthur Woods, 9/6/1933, quoted in Balfour, p. 205.

3. Balfour, p. 44-8.

4. Krinsky, p. 151 and n181.

5. "Rockefeller Units to Cost $8,000,000," NYT, 5/9/1934, p. 38:1. See also letter from John R. Todd to Thomas Debevoise (10/10/34), quoted in Balfour, p. 44.

6. "Giant Glass Panel to be Set Up Today," NYT, 5/15/1936, p.23:1. See also Josef Vincent Lombardo, Attilio Piccirilli - American Sculptor (New York & Chicago, 1944) and "The New Buildings Open," RCW, 2 (5/2/35), p. 4.

7. See p.188 below.

THE INTERNATIONAL BUILDING NORTH -- DESCRIPTION

The International Building North is located on the southwest corner of Fifth Avenue and West 51st Street. It is one the International Building's two six-story wings (the other being the Palazzo d'Italia to the south). Together with the freestanding British Building and La Maison Francaise, it comprises one of Rockefeller Center's four low-rise international units along Fifth Avenue. The four units are nearly identical in architectural massing. They differ primarily in their sculptural embellishment and in the seventh-story penthouse atop the French and British buildings (visible at ground level only from an oblique angle).

The International Building North is a limestone clad skeletal steel pavilion which rises five stories before narrowing with lateral setbacks at sixth floor level. A garden of largely original configuration (see p.188 below) occupies the eastern half of the sixth story roof. The pavilion's southern elevation forms the northern wall of the International Building's courtyard on Fifth Avenue; the pavilion's northern elevation is incorporated into the International Building's northern facade which extends the full block between Fifth Avenue and Rockefeller Plaza. The pavilion's ground floor is devoted to shopfronts and display windows. A first floor cornice separates the retail space from offices on the 2-6th floors. The walls of the upper floors are articulated with flat limestone piers of uniform width which terminate in a faceted ribbon molding. The same molding appears along the building's lateral setbacks and at roof level, creating a slightly ridged profile against the sky. Between, and slightly recessed behind the piers are steel sash. Over each window is a limestone spandrel whose vertical ridges sympathetically relate the low-rise pavilion to the International Building's tower (where ridged aluminum spandrels appear).

The Fifth Avenue Facade is symmetrically arranged around a double-story portal, crowned by a limestone cartouche. The triple doors of the main entrance are recessed behind a broad flat limestone enframement which projects slightly from the facade. The building's granite base is higher in the southeast corner. On either side of the main entrance is a bronze-framed shopfront, each of which has a modern door. The door is located on the right of the left shop; on the left of the right shop. Above the sixth story windows are four limestone bas-reliefs. The facade has three flagpoles which angle over Fifth Avenue.

The northern elevation of the International Building North is described in this report as part of the northern elevation of the International Building. Its southern elevation is included in the description of the International Building's courtyard.

* * * * *

Significant features include but are not limited to:

- Buff colored shot sawed Indiana limestone cladding
- Slightly cusped first story cornice with incised bead-and-reel molding (interrupted by main entrance on Fifth Avenue)
- Slightly projecting limestone piers of uniform width
- Vertically ridged limestone spandrels
- Faceted ribbon moldings at pier terminations, lateral setbacks and roof level

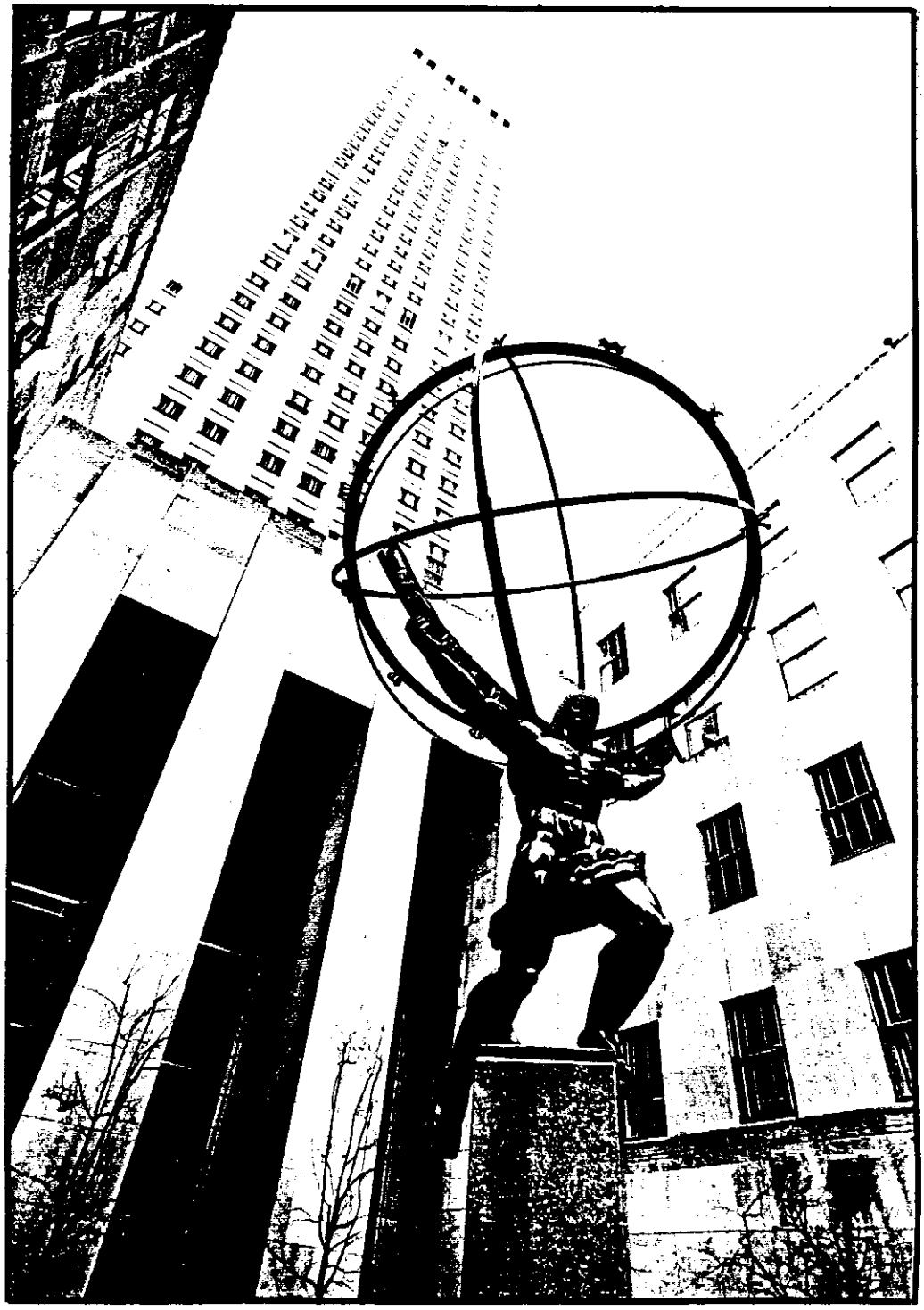
FIFTH AVENUE FACADE

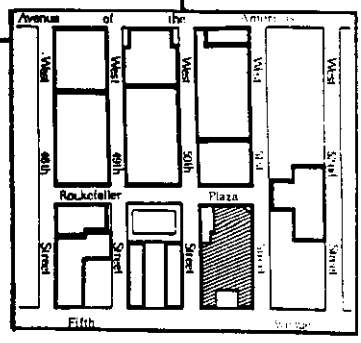
1ST FLOOR:
- Polished granite base

MAIN ENTRANCE:
- Broad, flat limestone enframement, slightly projecting
- 3 nickel-plated bronze-framed glass doors, jambs and lintel bearing the unit's address in applied nickel-plated bronze letters: "636 FIFTH AVENUE"
- Decorative multi-panel glass screen (See p.130 above)
- Polychromed limestone cartouche (See p.130 above)

TWO SHOPFRONTS with:
- Beveled bronze frames
- Black structural glass lintel (right shop)
- Bronze awning frames (in concealed vertical housing)

2-6th FLOORS:
- 3/3 steel sash
- 4 natural limestone bas-reliefs at 6th floor (See p.129-30)
- 3 wooden flagpoles with bronze globe terminations and anchors
- rooftop garden





International Building

630 Fifth Avenue

July 1933 - Sept. 1934

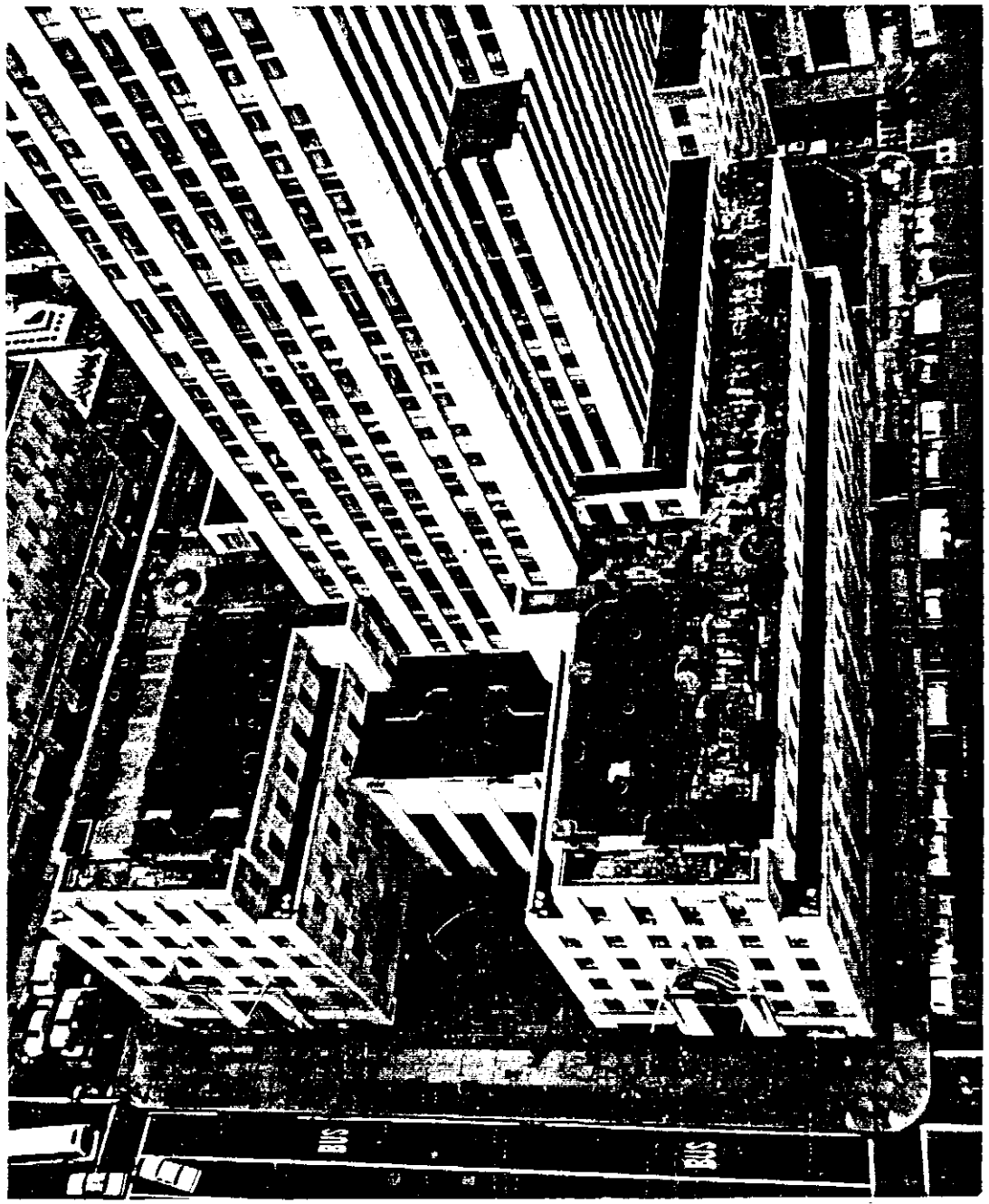
International Building from the northeast. St. Patrick's Cathedral at left, RCA Building in center.

The International Building (together with its two six story wings) was the seventh unit to open at Rockefeller Center.[1] Forty-one stories high,[2] it was one of only two skyscrapers completed in Manhattan in 1935 (the other being Cass Gilbert's 36-story Federal Court Building in Foley Square).[3] It had the added distinction of setting a new record for safety and speed of construction. Rising at an average of 4 feet per day, only 136 working days elapsed from the setting of the first steelwork in the excavations until the opening of the 512 foot slab.[4] The building was also noted for its innovative "Selective Cooling System" ("the most important single advance since the genesis of the air cooling industry")[5] as well as for the fine craftsmanship, materials and design. It is also distinctive for the dramatically open mechanical housing on its upper floors along Fifth Avenue.

A tall office building had been envisioned for this site ever since the Associated Architects had worked up their earliest commercial plans in 1929-30. It was intended to have a N-S axis, thereby complementing a similar building two blocks south (as ultimately realized in the old Time-Life Building). Early landscaping plans also called for its connection by a bridge to a full network of rooftop gardens. Over the years the bridge was abandoned while the tower's projected height fluctuated between 14 and 45 stories, at one time being dismissed all together. But financial pressures required that the tower be reinstated.

When the Palazzo d'Italia and International Building North were reduced from nine to six stories, the tower was enlarged by realignment along an east-west axis, its lobby essentially replacing the galleria originally planned between the two smaller Fifth Avenue pavilions. In consequence of the modification the northeast block became an important integrational hinge in the complex: its tower echoed at smaller scale the RCA Building to its southwest while its two wings continued the genteel scale of the six story units along Fifth Avenue. The solution was one of the most effective architectural statements in the complex. Lewis Mumford thought it the best.[6]

Like the earlier RCA Building, the International Building was designed for maximum rental space. It was, however, set back as far as possible from Fifth Avenue while still allowing reasonable return. In an admirable display of urbanity, developer John R. Todd had instructed Hofmeister to recess the tower sufficiently behind its six story pavilions in order to "retain [their] beauty, charm and light."[7] The architects went further and offset the Palazzo d'Italia and International Building North by giving the slab a single story entrance, the monumental (Egyptian-like) simplicity of which emphasizes the two



Bird's-eye view of the International Building. Palazzo d'Italia at left, International Building North at right.

lower wings while subtly compensating for its own soaring shaft. Before Attillio Piccirilli's glass mural was removed from the Palazzo d'Italia, the correspondence among the three units was even greater, each of the trio using a broad glass expanse above its entrance. Although the glass in the tower entrance is clear, non-figural plate glass, it is animated by the reflection --- as exciting as it is unexpected ---of St. Patrick's Cathedral from across Fifth Avenue. The glass also mirrors the orb which Atlas shoulders in the building's forecourt.

It has been observed that the courtyard itself is too small to have the six story wings function effectively as embrasures for the lofty tower.[8] It nonetheless plays an important integrational role by echoing the open space of the Channel Gardens and West 50th Street, and thus creates a regular pattern among the international units of spaces which alternately project and recede from Fifth Avenue. The relatively small courtyard, compressed between the building's wings, creates a spatial tension --- one emphasized by the courtyard's pink and gray pavement (laid in a geometric pattern). The spatial tension is dramatized by the 14,000 lb. bronze statue of Atlas which dominates its center. Designed by Lee Lawrie and cast in twelve parts by the Roman Bronze Works, with the assistance of Rene Chambellan, this somewhat bulbous mythological giant is among the most popular works in Rockefeller Center.[9]

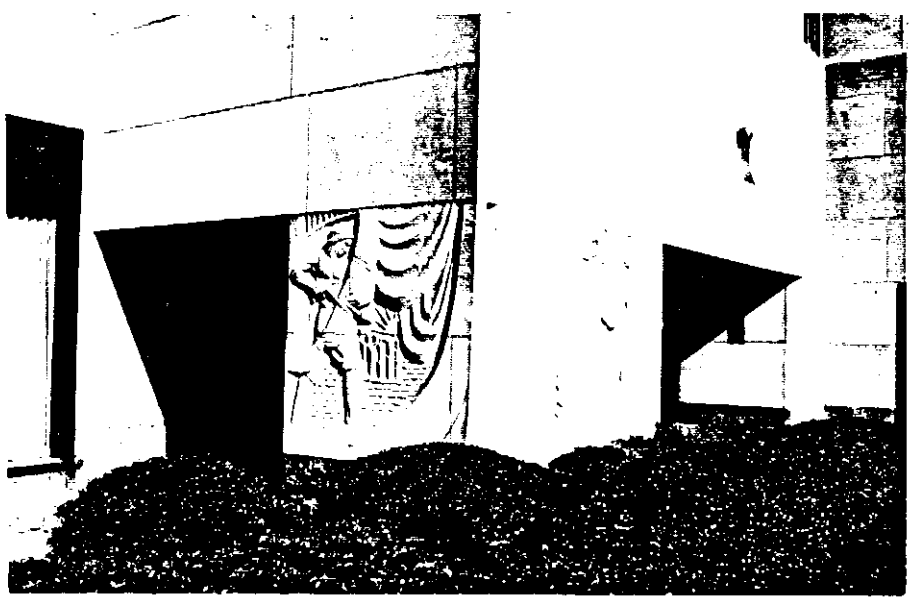
The fifteen foot tall Atlas presses dramatically on one leg above a 9 foot high gray granite pedestal (encircled by plants and a bench) and holds in his six foot armspan a 21 foot armillary sphere, an ancient astronomical instrument whose concentric rings represent the universe. This is a deviation from traditional images of Atlas where he is seen supporting the world in punishment for his uprising against Zeus. The aberration may have been inspired by the sculptor's son and technical advisor, Milton Lawrie, a registered architect and passionate amateur astronomer.[10] Atlas was designed as a companion piece to his mythological brother, Prometheus, and like him is surrounded by zodiacal signs. The axis of the sphere points to the north star; the whole is said to be in correct relationship to the solar system.

Atlas was somewhat more celestial than international in its imagery, straying from the concerns for global commerce which Rockefeller indefatigably pursued as a means to world peace. The spirit of international cooperation was revived on the building's side street entrances. Above the West 51st Street portal, for example, Lee Lawrie designed a vertically ridged gray-green lintel with gilded trim whose stepped profile complements the building's three-unit massing. Overlaying this faceted ground are 14 polychromed coats of arms, arranged three over eleven. The whole relief is surmounted by the gilded inscription

LIMESTONE RELIEF
20 W. 51st St. Entrance
Lee Lawrie
Installed 1937

"INTERNATIONAL BUILDING." The faceted pattern of the lintel is uniquely repeated in the pink and gray granite pavement and brass address plate in the sidewalk below. It is also complemented by the decorative bronze plates around the bases of two trees on the sidewalk near the entrance.

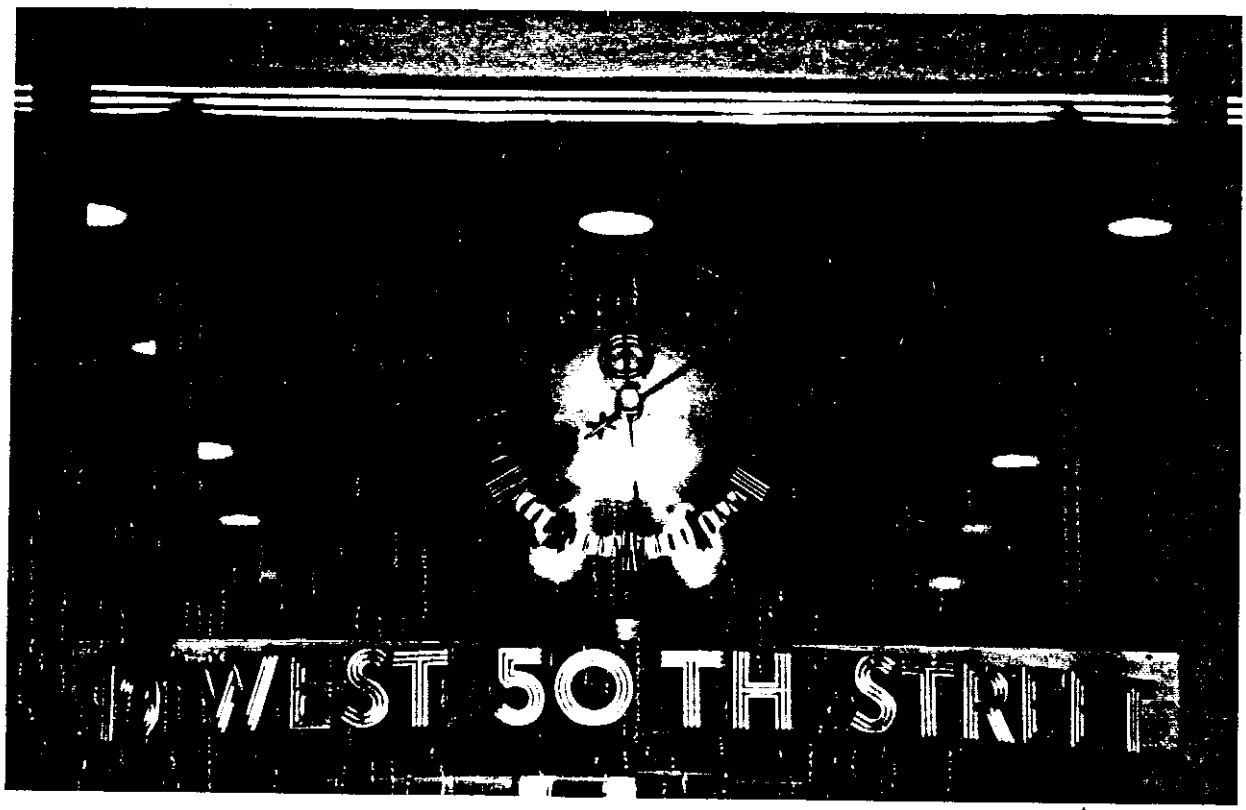
Perfectly straightforward on the West 51st Street entrance, Rockefeller's theme of world peace was more discreetly, if more personally, displayed above the International Building's West 50th Street entrance where a gilded plow and crossed swords float above the doorway. [11] The simplicity and small size of this incised relief contrasts profoundly with



THREE LIMESTONE RELIEFS
19 W. 50th St. Entrance
Lee Lawrie
Installed 1937

its message. Inscribed simply "ISAIAH//II//IV," it recalls the Biblical passage: "And He shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."

As an additional means of distinguishing this portal, Lawrie left the image isolated above an unrelieved lintel, in stark contrast to the decorative lintels above every other side entrance in the international complex. Here the theme of global cooperation is continued on two sides of a free standing pier at left which portray America's hospitality to the world. On the pier's southern wall a female passenger debarks a ship and is greeted by Columbia. The twin spires of what appear to be St. Patrick's Cathedral and a section of the Brooklyn Bridge form part of New York's lofty skyline in the background. The ship's prow rises at the southwestern corner of the pier and is continued on its western face where a boatman furl's the ship's sails in the New York harbor. Atop the revolving door of the deeply recessed entrance is a bronze globular clock, typical of those above many of the building entrances at Rockefeller Center. The clock is mounted on a fluted circular base, in front of which the building address appears in freestanding stainless steel letters.



LIMESTONE SCREEN
25 W. 50th St. Entrance
Lee Lawrie
Installed 1935

Slightly further west is an elaborate entrance to the International Building where the structure narrows behind two large rectangular planters. Its four doors are crowned by a 15 1/2 feet x 21 1/2 feet pierced limestone screen (designed for backlighting) in which the history of ancient and modern internationalism is told in 15 polychromed hieroglyphics. According to the sculptor it represents "the deep forces, eternal forces that tend to draw all men, men of all races, together."[12] The message begins in the bottom of the panel directly above the double entrance doors. The red, white, yellow and black races are represented by four men distinguished by their attributes and not by their paradoxically uniform skin color. Above are the ship of trade, three male representations of art, science and industry (cultural attributes which promote higher civilization) and the reclining figure of Mercury, god of commerce. Shining down upon him are the gilded rays of the sun, the face of which consists of a functioning stone clock (6 feet in diameter). The two hemispheres are represented by the Big

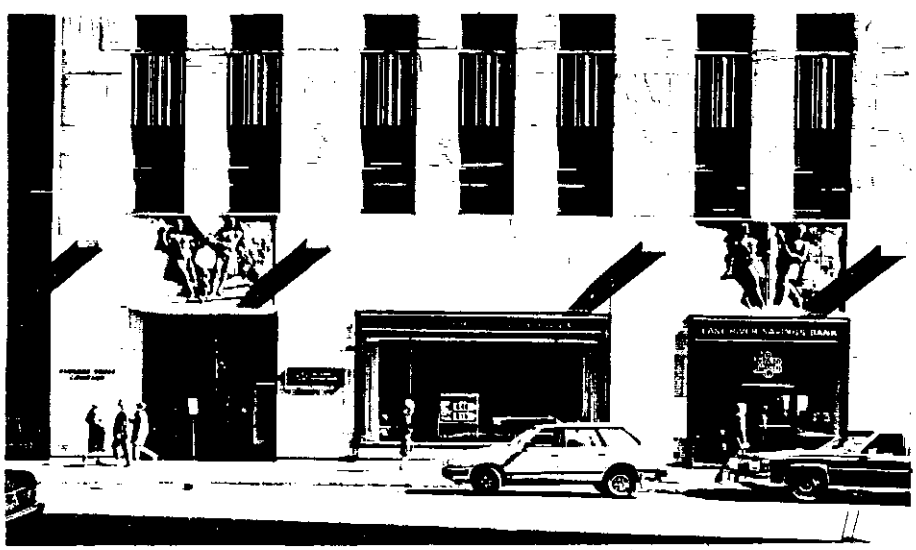
Dipper at top left and the Southern Cross (top right). Man's four habitats are represented by a seagull and whale fluke (north), palm trees (south), an Aztec temple (west) and an eastern mosque. To the right of the ship is a Norman tower and lion (symbols of ancient authority), contrasting at left with symbols of the modern age: a factory with smoke stacks and a republican eagle.

The screen was executed from a sketch by Lee Lawrie. It was reproduced in a full size clay model by Rene Chambellan. From this a plaster cast was made and brought to Rockefeller Center in four parts to serve as a guide for stone cutters. Installed in August 1935, the stone screen was among the earliest works of art to be completed at the International Building.[13]

The International Building is unique among the international units in having sculptural reliefs on its rear/Rockefeller Plaza facade. These comprise two of the six bas-reliefs executed at the Center by Gaston Lachaise (the other four being above the Sixth Avenue entrance to the RCA Building West).

Throughout the course of construction Rockefeller maintained a policy of rewarding the good craftsmanship of the workers who made his development possible. Lachaise's panels pay similar tribute in stone. They were unveiled in May 1935, just one month after 31 building mechanics had been honored for their work on the International Building[14] and just five months before the sculptor's death of leukemia.

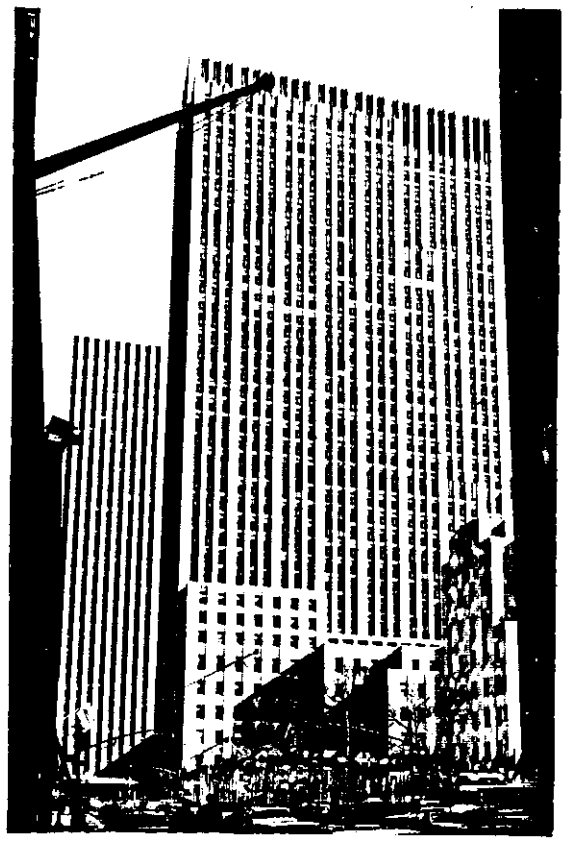
Lachaise was apparently inspired by construction photographs[15]. Over the building's entrance on Rockefeller Plaza (currently off-center, but originally one of two entrances



TWO LIMESTONE RELIEFS
45 Rockefeller Plaza
Gaston Lachaise
Installed 1935

on the private street), Lachaise depicted two muscular steel workers atop a hoisted I-beam in convincing spatial recession (signed "G. LACHAISE," bottom right). At right, over a shop front (altered from the original building entrance), is a companion relief showing two laborers clearing the site for Rockefeller's buildings. One of the workers holds a crowbar. Clad in a sheer skirt, his ballet-like stance contrasts curiously with his powerful torso. To his right, a face-masked worker raises an acetylene torch in front of a fluted column. An interesting comparison can be made between these reliefs and the two executed by Jennewein for the Rockefeller Plaza entrance to the former Time-Life Building.

In the course of its 51 year existence, the International Building has had several shopfront alterations. The most significant occured in 1945-46 when the building's western wall was relocated to form a unique northwest corner (the only angled corner in the complex). The new bowed glass and metal entrance has a vertically ridged lintel which, together with its metal jambs, matches Noguchi's stainless steel panel above the entrance of the Associated Press Building. Another notable alteration was the substitution of a shopfront for the building entrance originally located under the southern relief by Gaston Lachaise on Rockefeller Plaza. The building was also altered to include a new restaurant entrance (immediately east of the building's 20 West 51st Street entrance.[16]



View from southwest; Warner Communications Building at left.

INTERNATIONAL BUILDING FOOOTNOTES

1. NB42-34. For architects, see Palazzo d'Italia n.1.

2. The number of stories includes those occupied by mechanical housing.

3. "Two Skyscrapers Near Completion," NYT, 2/3/1935, Sect. 9 & 10, p. 1:8. See also "The New Buildings Open," RCW, II n18 (5/2/35) p. 20.

4. "New Skyscraper Record," NYT, 6/26/1935;p40:6.

5. "Rockefeller Center, New York," Architectural Forum (Nov. 1935), p. 457-68.

6. Mumford quoted by Balfour, p.148.

7. Gill, p. 63.

8. Krinsky, p. 151.

9. "Statue of Atlas Set Up," NYT, 1/26/1937, p. 23:6 and "Rockefeller Center to Have New Statue," NYT, 12/28/1936, p. 19:5. See also Balfour, p. 148-9.

10. "Rockefeller Atlas," Time (1/11/37) p. 41.

11. "New Sculpture Shown," NYT, 9/12/1934, Sect. 2, p. 8:6 and Art Digest (Rockefeller Center), p. 5.

12. Andrews, op. cit, p. 20.

13. "Rockefeller Screen Depicts Man's History," NYT, 8/11/1935, Sect. 2, p. 7:4; "Lawrie-Chambellan Sculpture," Architectural Forum, 62 (May 1935), 13.

14. "31 Workers Get Rockefeller Awards," NYT, 4/21/1935, Sects. 10 & 11. p. 1:6.

15. Balfour, illus. 300-303.

16. AITs 2679-36; 2685-37; 4653-37; 82-45.

INTERNATIONAL BUILDING DESCRIPTION

The International Building is a 41-story limestone clad skeletal steel structure with a projecting monumental entrance and two 6-story wings which extend two bays out to Fifth Avenue. The facades of the two wings are individually described in this report under the entries for the Palazzo d'Italia (southern wing) and the International Building North (northern wing). The monumental entrance is screened by four flat limestone piers, the central pair of which is freestanding. A narrow outer vestibule separates the piers from the corresponding pilasters on either side of the building's three revolving doors. Each door is encased in a bowed granite housing above which the building address appears in freestanding characters. Each revolving door is surmounted by a tall window (each with four vertically mounted panes of plate glass).

The monumental entrance forms the western elevation of a small courtyard, the pink and gray granite of which leads in a geometric pattern out to Fifth Avenue. The courtyard is dominated at center by a bronze statue of Atlas, the granite base of which is surrounded by plants and a circular wooden bench. The courtyard is bordered on the south by the Palazzo d'Italia; on the north, by the International Building North. Both of these side elevations have a shopfront and display window (the structural glass lintels of which have been removed). A first story cornice runs above the retail space and continues briefly onto the monumental entrance. The side elevations rise sheer above the cornice before setting back above the fifth story. They rise an additional floor, projecting with narrow two-story masses that give entrance to the planted rooftop of the monumental entrance. Above the monumental entrance the tower rises sheer to its full 41-story height, its upper mechanical housing floors being left open in the east, south- and northeast. The tower has three narrow setbacks on its north and south sides as well as a single story base which rises from the roofs of the Palazzo d'Italia and International Building North. The latter base rises two additional stories at the west of the tower.

The West 51st Street facade is articulated in four major masses which rise toward the west. At the east is the six-story side elevation of the International Building North (setback above the 5th floor), followed in the west by a 7-story, and finally a 9-story mass which fronts on Rockefeller Plaza. The 41-story east-west slab with its three major setbacks rises above. The 51st street facade runs continuously along the lot line, pierced by two ornamented and deeply recessed building entrances, 5 display windows and and four shopfronts. All of the shopfronts retain their original doors except that immediately east of the 20 West 51st Street entrance where the shopfront has been modernized. The retail space is separated from upper story offices by a first story cornice (which is interrupted by the 20

West 51st Street entrance). The northwest corner of the facade was cut back to form a unique angled corner; a planted terrace is visible above. The rooftop garden of the International Building North is partially visible from the street.

Unlike the West 51st Street facade, the International Building's southern (West 50th Street) elevation steps back from the lot line in three major masses. In the east is the side elevation of the six-story Palazzo d'Italia (pierced by the decorated and deeply recessed 9 West 50th Street building entrance, 3 display windows and 5 shopfronts all of which retain their original doors). A first story cornice divides the retail space from upper story offices. It wraps around the western end of the Palazzo where the building narrows and rises to its second major mass. This seven story portion of the building has a large freestanding pier at left (west), creating a deeply recessed vestibule which leads to a second (the 19 West 50th Street) building entrance. West of the 7-story mass, the building narrows and rises again to a nine story mass which fronts on Rockefeller Plaza. In the center of this third section of the building is an entrance topped by a large pierced limestone screen. The screen is flanked on either side by a display window. The mini-plaza created by the narrowed building mass is bordered on the south by two large rectangular planters. The 42-story east-west slab of the International Building dominates the western 3/4 of the West 50th Street elevation.

On the (rear) Rockefeller Plaza facade of the International Building the 41-story slab rises sheer from the pavement. It is flanked on the right (south) by two recessed staggered setbacks, each with a display window on the ground floor. Display windows also appear in the three recessed setbacks on the left (north) of the slab. The slab itself has a central display window flanked on the left by a deeply recessed building entrance, and on the right, by a shopfront (a replacement for a second building entrance from Rockefeller Plaza). Sculptural reliefs appear above the latter shopfront and above the building entrance.

* * * * *

Significant features include but are not limited to:
-Buff colored shot sawed Indiana limestone cladding
-Polished granite base

FIFTH AVENUE FACADE

Courtyard
-Bronze statue of Atlas atop granite base (See p. 139)
-Pink and gray granite pavement laid in geometric pattern
WEST ELEVATION/MONUMENTAL ENTRANCE:
-2 engaged and 2 freestanding piers with high granite bases, slightly projecting from limestone lintel

-Gilded inscriptions:
"INTERNATIONAL BUILDING" (east face of left center pier)
"630 FIFTH AVENUE" (east face of right center pier)
-3 nickel-plated bronze revolving doors with bowed granite housing and cabled granite jambs
-3 bowed bronze address plates with applied metal characters: "630 FIFTH AVENUE" above revolving doors
-3 vertical plate glass windows (each with 4 panes vertically mounted)
-Planted rooftop

NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN ELEVATIONS
-2 Display windows (one at east of each elevation) with:
-Beveled bronze frames
-Retractable bronze awning frames in concealed vertical housing
-2 Shopfronts (one at west of each facade)
-Beveled bronze frames
-original bronze framed glass doors (recessed from facade)
-Slightly cusped first floor cornice with incised bead and reel molding
-6/6 steel sash (slightly recessed)
-Vertically ridged limestone spandrels
-Faceted ribbon molding at pier terminations, setbacks and roof levels
-4 bronze light hoods with ridged tops below 1st story cornice (2 on each elevation)

Eastern elevation of slab
-2/1 steel sash (slightly recessed)
-Wide and narrower limestone piers
-Vertically ridged slate gray cast aluminum spandrels
-Stepped slate gray cast aluminum spandrels on setbacks
-Slate gray cast aluminum foliate spandrels (2 eyelet variety) above open mechanical housing bays (stepped spandrels below)
-Wooden flagpole with bronze globe termination and anchor angled over Fifth Avenue (below mechanical housing)

WEST 51ST STREET (NORTHERN) FACADE

1st FLOOR
-Polished granite base
-Slightly cusped 1st story cornice with incised bead and reel molding (interrupted at 20 W. 51st Street entrance)
-13 Bronze light hoods with ridged tops (on piers below 1st story cornice)
-Planted rooftop above three westernmost bays
-Angled northwest corner with revolving door and faceted metal lintel

Northwest corner, 51st St. & Rockefeller Plaza

10 WEST 51ST STREET ENTRANCE:
-1 nickel plated bronze revolving door flanked on either side by a vertical glazed light and nickel plated bronze door;
-Bowed bronze lintel surmounted by address in freestanding metal characters
-Bronze globular clock on fluted circular base (above revolving door)
-Polychromed lintel and relief (See p.131)

20 WEST 51ST STREET ENTRANCE
-1 nickel plated bronze revolving door flanked on either side by a vertical glazed light and nickel plated bronze door;
-Bowed bronze lintel surmounted by address in freestanding metal characters
-Bronze globular clock on fluted circular base (above revolving door)
-Polychromed lintel and relief (See p. 139)
-Pink and gray pavement with bronze address plate ("WEST 20 51st")
-Fluted bronze firedoor in left jamb

3 ORIGINAL SHOPFRONTS
-Beveled bronze frames
-Black structural glass lintels
-Retractable bronze awning frames (concealed vertical housing)
-Original bronze-framed glass doors recessed from facade

5 DISPLAY WINDOWS
-Beveled bronze frames
-Black structural glass lintels
-Retractable bronze awning frames (concealed vertical housing)

2nd-9th FLOORS
-3/3 steel sash (slightly recessed)
-Vertically ridged limestone spandrels
-Limestone piers of uniform width
-Faceted ribbon moldings on pier terminations, setbacks and roof levels
-Rooftop garden above International Building North

Northern elevation of east-west slab
-2/1 steel sash (slightly recessed)
-Wide limestone piers alternating with two narrower piers
-Vertically ridged slate gray cast aluminum spandrels
-Stepped slate gray cast aluminum spandrels on setbacks and western mass of slab
-Slate gray cast aluminum foliate spandrels (2 eyelet variety) above 9 open easternmost bays of mechanical housing (stepped spandrels below)

WEST 50TH STREET (SOUTHERN) FACADE

1st FLOOR
-Polished granite base
-Slightly cusped 1st story cornice with incised bead and reel molding (terminates on west wall of Palazzo d'Italia)
-13 Bronze light hoods with ridged tops (on piers below 1st story cornice)

9 WEST 50TH STREET ENTRANCE:
-1 nickel plated bronze revolving door flanked on either side by a vertical glazed light and nickel plated bronze door
-Bowed bronze lintel surmounted by address in freestanding metal characters
-Bronze globular clock on fluted circular base (above revolving door)
-Polychromed lintel and relief (See p. 120-1)

19 WEST 50TH STREET ENTRANCE
-1 nickel plated bronze revolving door flanked on either side by a vertical glazed light and nickel plated bronze door;
-Bowed bronze lintel surmounted by address in freestanding metal characters
-Bronze globular clock on fluted circular base (above revolving door)

-Three bas-reliefs (See p. 140)
-Bronze framed display window on west wall of outer vestibule
-6 rectangular lights inset on upper walls of outer vestibule (3 on either side)

25 WEST 50TH STREET ENTRANCE
-Pierced limestone screen (See p.142)
-1 bronze framed glass revolving door flanked on either side by limestone jambs and a bronze-framed glass door
-2 large polished granite rectangular planters in foreground

-3 wooden flagpoles with bronze globe terminations and anchors (1 on either side of entrance at 3rd story, 1 centered above entrance at 6th story)

5 ORIGINAL SHOPFRONTS
-Beveled bronze frames
-Black structural glass lintels
-Retractable bronze awning frames (concealed vertical housing)
-Original bronze-framed glass doors

5 DISPLAY WINDOWS
-Beveled bronze frames
-Black structural glass lintels
-Retractable bronze awning frames (concealed vertical housing)

2nd-9th FLOORS
-3/3 steel sash (slightly recessed)
-Vertically ridged limestone spandrels
-Limestone piers of uniform width
-Faceted ribbon moldings on pier terminations, setbacks and roof levels
-Rooftop garden above Palazzo d'Italia

Southern elevation of east-west slab
-2/1 steel sash (slightly recessed)
-Wide limestone piers alternating with two narrower piers
-Vertically ridged slate gray cast aluminum spandrels
-Stepped slate gray cast aluminum spandrels on setbacks and western mass of slab
-Slate gray cast aluminum foliate spandrels (2 eyelet variety) above 9 open easternmost bays of mechanical housing (stepped spandrels below)

ROCKEFELLER PLAZA (REAR) ELEVATION

1st FLOOR
-Polished granite base
-9 Bronze light hoods with ridged tops (on piers)

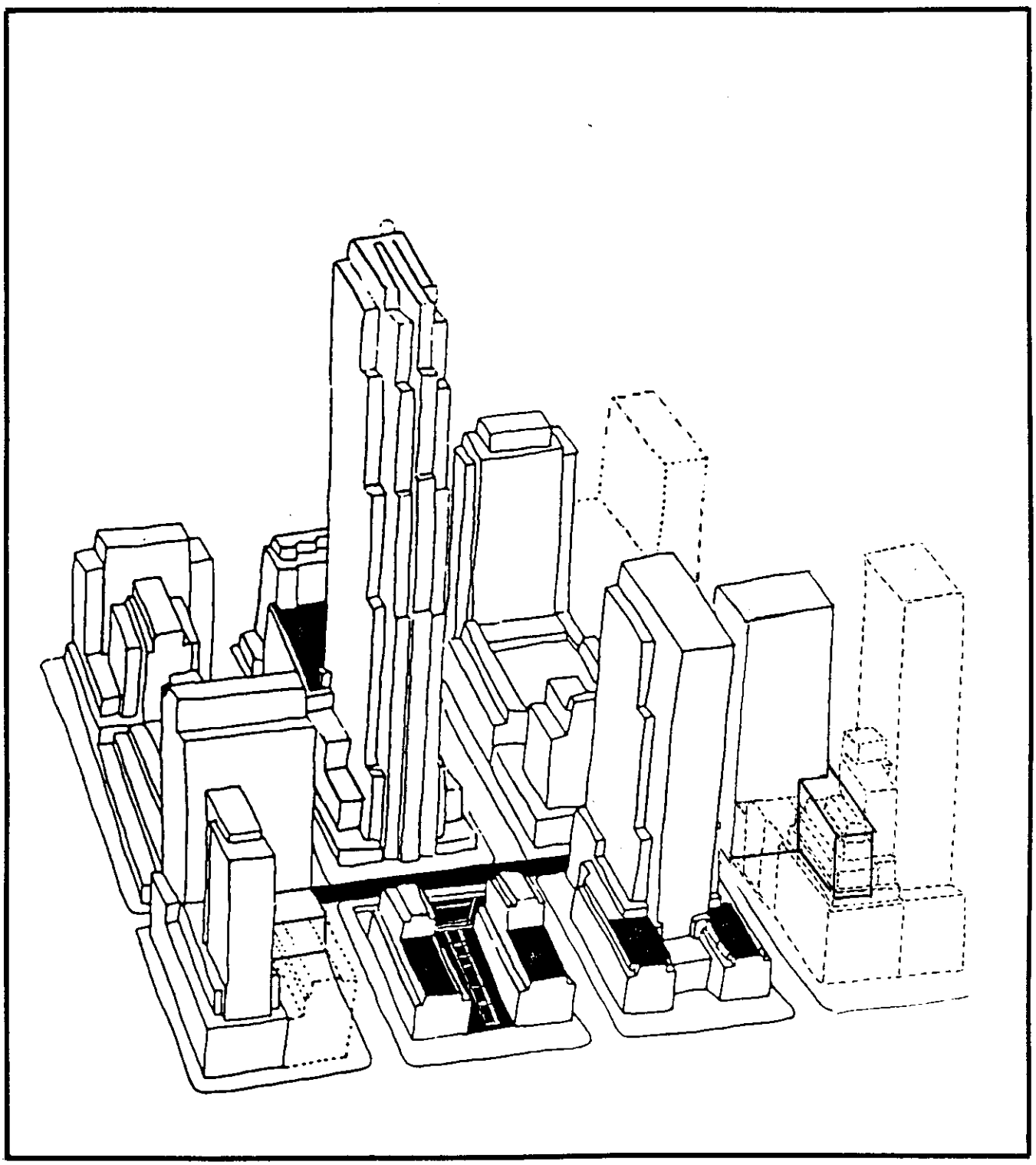
45 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA ENTRANCE:
-1 nickel plated bronze revolving door flanked on either side by a vertical glazed light and nickel plated bronze door
-Bowed bronze lintel surmounted by address in freestanding metal characters

-Bronze globular clock on fluted circular base (above revolving door)
-Fluted bronze firedoor on left jamb
-Bas-relief (See p.143)

-Bas-relief over modernized shopfront (no awning)

6 DISPLAY WINDOWS
-Beveled bronze frames
-Black structural glass lintels
-Retractable bronze awning frames (concealed vertical housing)

2nd-41st Floors
-2/1 slightly recessed steel sash (3/3 in 9 story extensions)
-Wide limestone piers alternating with narrower piers
-Vertically ridged slate gray cast aluminum spandrels
-Faceted limestone ribbon molding at terminations of 9 story extensions
-Stepped slate gray cast aluminum spandrels
-Slate gray cast aluminum foliate spandrels (2 eyelet variety) above open mechanical housing (stepped spandrels below)



GARDENS & PUBLIC SPACES

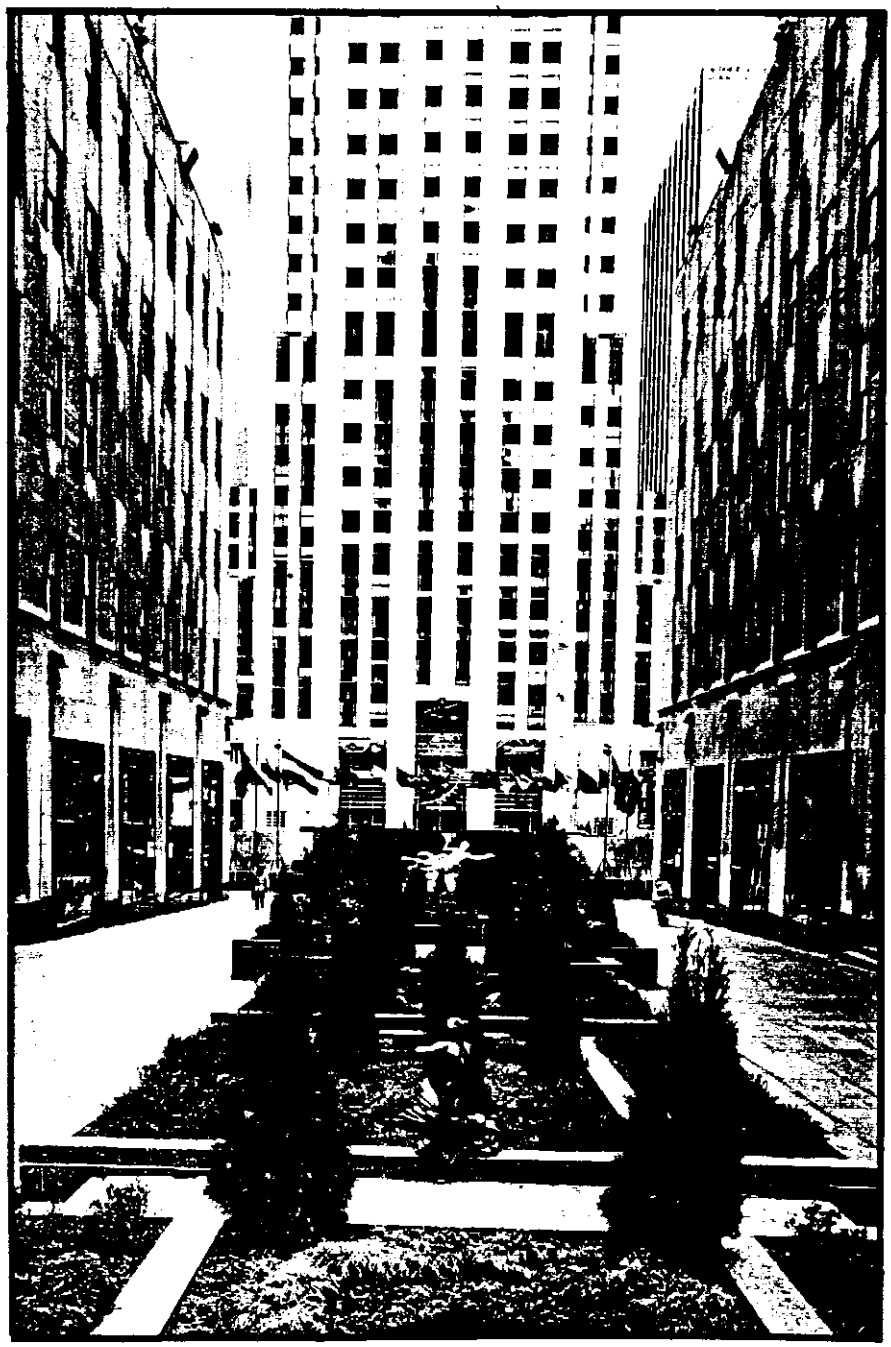
Designed as a private commercial enterprise in the teeth of the worst Depression this country has ever known, Rockefeller Center emerged as an unparalleled achievement in modern urban planning. Its success depended not only upon well designed, cost efficient buildings, but on the inter-relationship of those buildings and on the treatment of space above, below and around.

Residential, hotel and even industrial landscaping were common enough in outlying districts where real estate was comparatively inexpensive. But the idea of sacrificing precious high income property to public gardens and traffic free space was unprecedented in a commercial urban development. Traditionally, the choice had been economics and not aesthetics. At Rockefeller Center it was aesthetic economics. Through the combination of pure functionalism, sound business sense, chance and poetry, the Center became a vibrant focus for midtown Manhattan.

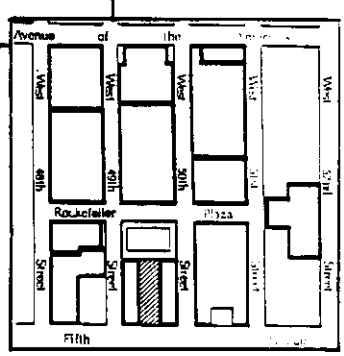
It established a unique identity by introducing a new street which interrupted the city grid while simultaneously aiding its traffic flow. This was true above and especially below ground where a truck route helps to keep the surrounding streets delivery free. The effort is aided by a commercial parking garage --- the first in midtown Manhattan (See p.192).

The vehicular achievement was only surpassed by pedestrian amenities. Beyond the subterranean shop-lined concourse which links all Center buildings and leads to the subway (See p.67), the complex provides uncommonly wide sidewalks and roughly two acres of open space in the thick of midtown congestion. It also provides some of the only public seating in the area. The Channel Gardens have become a cherished tradition; the Sunken Plaza, an institution. Together they form a lively and genuinely centripetal urban corridor and a focus for Fifth Avenue. They work as the pulsating heart of the complex, the center of the Center.

In addition to ground level landscaping, the development offers a range of rooftop gardens. An unprecedented display of urbanity in a commercial enterprise, they were designed to improve the visible environment of skyscraper office workers. Only a fragment of the grand garden scheme was executed, and of that only a portion survives. But its impact, together with the Center's art works and other open spaces, do much to realize the ideal of the modern metropolis. As in so many other respects, Rockefeller Center's public amenities set the standard for later commercial developments. And while its model is frequently invoked, the original remains unsurpassed.



PROMENADE & CHANNEL GARDENS



From the beginning plans for Rockefeller Center included a traffic-free passage from Fifth Avenue. In the course of its evolution it took on many forms including a broad open plaza for opera goers, a conduit which funneled pedestrians around Rockefeller's "oilcan" into the Center's core and later as a broad mosaic-paved corridor between the rectangular blocks of the anticipated French and English buildings.

It was not until 1932 when the decision was made to sink the Plaza below ground that the Channel Gardens and Promenade took on their final form: an approximately 200 foot long steeply banked corridor which led pedestrians, virtually by force of gravity, down into the Plaza. Divided by a spine of seasonal plantings into two lanes (thereby keeping shoppers near storefronts), it has the form of Park Avenue while serving practically as a north-south extension of the Fifth Avenue shopping district. It has a variously colored flagstone pavement and is sixty feet wide (as broad as Fifth without its sidewalks). The corridor is strongly contained within the walls of La Maison Francaise and the British Building (a fact which gave rise to the Channel Gardens' name), and provides a linear artery into the more open heart of the complex. It has as its primary focus the narrow vertical shaft of the RCA Building. This gives way, as one nears the Plaza, to a more immediate focus on the gilded visual magnet of Prometheus. By providing a congregational space where pedestrians stroll, relax, observe, eat, exercise and shop, the Channel Gardens/Promenade act as the stem of the T-shaped "lobby" of this city within the city.[1] They are essential to the success of Rockefeller Center.

The corridor itself achieves its effect by uniformity. The regularity of fashionable shopfronts and the nearly identical facades of the flanking British and French buildings allow the

View east (toward Fifth Avenue).

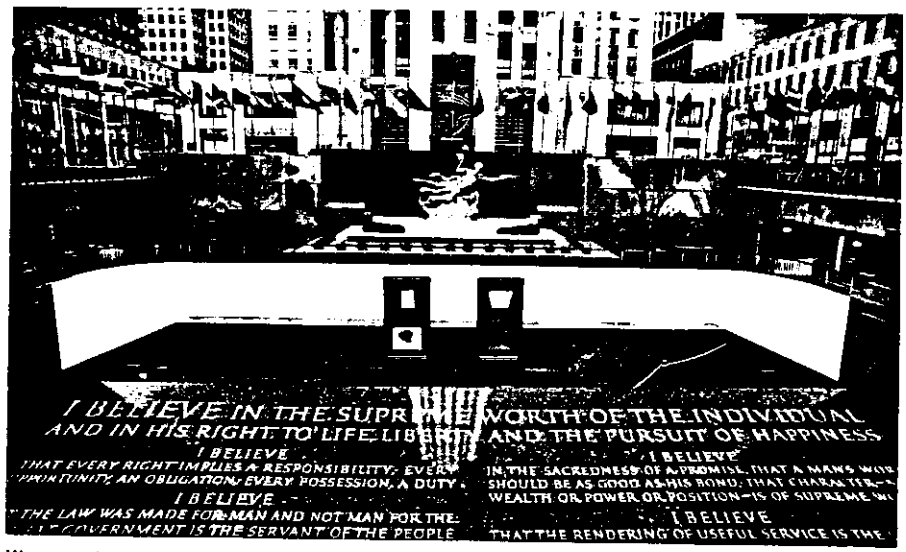
display of the Channel Gardens to predominate. Seasonally planted, they have become one of New York's most cherished traditions. The Gardens consist of four square and six large rectangular Deer Island granite planters. Between the first & second, second & third, fourth & fifth and fifth & sixth rectangular planters is a narrow raised passage approached by two granite steps on the north and south. The sides ofthe planters (together with seasonal benches) provide some of the only public seating in midtown Manhattan. Seating was not part of the original scheme which saw the Promenade less as a place to linger than as a corridor to the Sunken Plaza and shopping concourse. In the center of each large planter is a 4 foot long rectangular granite pool with a structural glass brick bottom. For the eastern end of the pools Rene Chambellan designed a variety of bronze fish fountainheads, each ridden by a Triton or Nereid. The water which seasonally flows from the fish mouths both cools and activates the surrounding space.

Nereids are mythological sea goddesses; Triton, the son of Poseidon. Under the influence of the theme-orchestrating Professor Alexander, they were made to symbolize at Rockefeller Center the attributes which have fostered human progress. Reading from Fifth Avenue down to the sunken Plaza, are a Triton blowing into a conch shell (symbolizing Leadership), followed by Will, Thought, Imagination, Energy, and Alertness. In the western ends of the pools are small bronze drainheads (seasonally installed) which are decorated with sea creatures such as an octopus crab, turtle.

The Channel Gardens' east-west axis is intersected by a north-south passage which connects the entrances to the British Building and Ia Maison Francaise. This corridor is bordered on either side by two square planters which project out from the Gardens' more dominant east-west axis. The third and fourth rectangular planters complement their form by square insets at their corners.

To the west of the transverse corridor, on the short side of the fourth rectangular planter, is a bronze plaque commemorating the Channel Gardens' predecessor.[2] It reads: "IN MEMORY OF//DAVID HOSACK//1769 - 1835//BOTANIST, PHYSICIAN, MAN OF SCIENCE//AND CITIZEN OF THE WORLD//ON THIS SITE HE DEVELOPED//THE FAMOUS ELGIN BOTANIC GARDEN//1801 - 1811//FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF MEDICAL RESEARCH//AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF PLANTS".

At the end of the Promenade is a monument to John D. Rockefeller, Jr. It was installed in 1962 by (Wallace) Harrison & (Max) Abramowitz (partners since 1940). The monument is placed at the head of the stairs which descend to the sunken Plaza. The sloped eastern face of this emerald green granite block bears the gilded inscription: "I BELIEVE..." followed by Rockefeller's ten



View west.

point personal credo.[3] A 17 inch bronze portrait medallion of Rockefeller ornaments its eastern face. Under the bas-relief is the gilded inscription: "JOHN D ROCKEFELLER JR// 1874 - 1960// FOUNDER OF ROCKEFELLER CENTER."

The steps themselves lead down one flight to a landing where they divide into a double staircase along the eastern edge of the skating rink. This arrangement provides a somewhat abrupt termination to the Promenade. In the original arrangement, a central flight opened onto a landing with five sides, each of which stepped down to the Sunken Plaza in a sprawling display of staircase architecture. The lower flight was removed and the current steps and retaining wall installed in 1940 to allow installation of an enlarged, permanent skating rink.[4]

CHANNEL GARDENS FOOTNOTES

1. Professor William Jordy's chapter on "Rockefeller Center and Corporate Urbanism" provides the most insightful consideration of the Channel Gardens and other public space in the complex. This text draws frequently from his study.

2. See "Eighth Wonder of the World," Holiday, 15 (April 1954), 152-153.

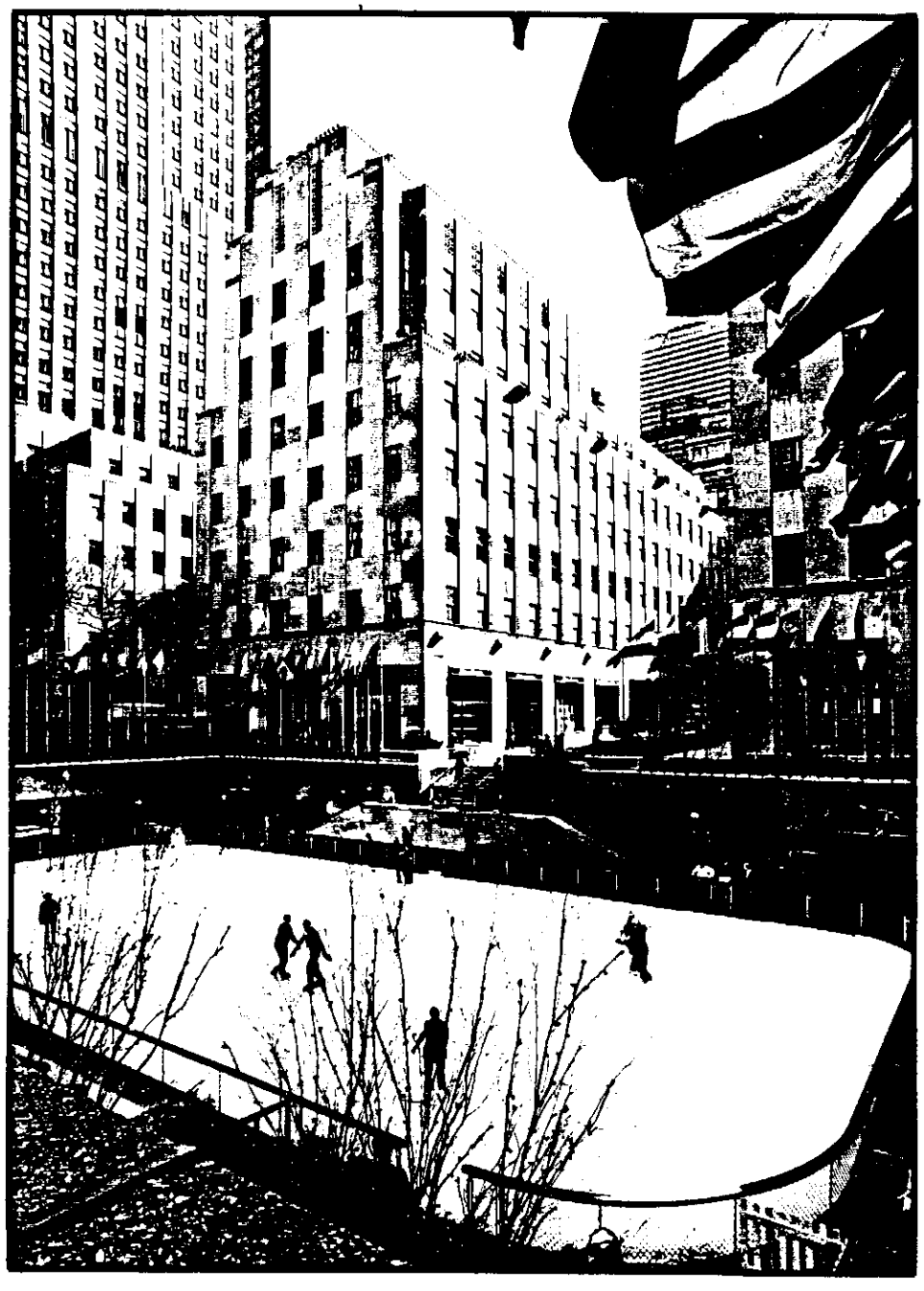
3. The full text of Rockefeller's Credo is printed in the Art Digest (R.C.), p. 17.

4. ALT3444-39.

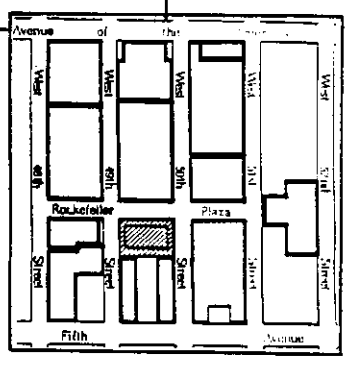
PROMENADE AND CHANNEL GARDENS DESCRIPTION

Significant features include but are not limited to:

-Steeply banked flagstone pavement descending toward west
-6 rectangular polished granite planters with basins having structural glass brick bottoms (square planter extensions on the western corners of the 3rd planter from east and on the eastern corners of the 4th planter from east
-4 square polished granite planters
-Granite steps and raised paved passages between planters
-2 bronze triton-mounted fish fountainheads (one on the eastern end of the basins in the 1st and 6th rectangular planters)
-4 bronze nereid-mounted fish fountainheads (one on the eastern end of the basins in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th rectangular planters)
-Bronze memorial plaque on the eastern face of the fourth rectangular planter
-Decorative bronze drainheads in the western ends of the basins in the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th rectangular planters (two decorative drainheads in 6th basin).



SUNKEN PLAZA; SKATING RINK

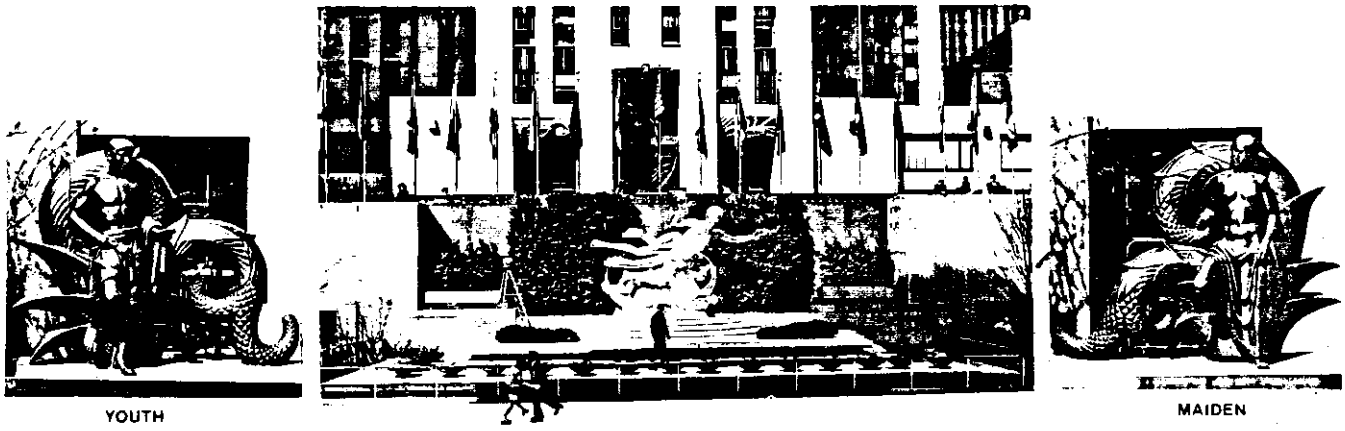


The genesis of Rockefeller Center's sunken Plaza dates back to 1927 when Benjamin Wistar Morris was commissioned to prepare designs for the Metropolitan Opera Company. After a trip to Europe where he studied opera design and such famous piazzas as that in front of St. Peter's in Rome and the Place de la Concorde and Place Vendome in Paris, Morris argued that the success of the entire project depended "on the amount of increased revenue obtainable due to the creation of an open square."[1] The Plaza was to be located in front of the Opera house and girdled by a two-story shopping terrace. In subsequent developments the specifics of the plan were greatly modified, but the core concept of an open plaza remained intact.

When the Opera backed out of the project in late 1929 the plaza was retained for purely commercial reasons. It was seen as a ground level continuation of the shop-lined corridor now known as the Channel Gardens. Increased financial pressures, however, led in 1931 to a further modification of the plan, including most notably a subterranean shopping area. It was to be connected to a parking garage, bus terminal and the anticipated Sixth Avenue subway, thus channeling the commuter past the concourse shops on his way to and from work. As a further means of luring the much-sought shopper, the plaza was sunk below ground, planted and enlivened by a fountain. It was intended to draw Fifth Avenue pedestrians down to the lower level and into the shopping concourse.

An early plan of 1931 showed a sunken oval plaza with a central fountain and plants, connected to street level by stairways on its east and west. This plan was abandoned, however, as it allowed pedestrians to "escape" without entering the shopping concourse. The scheme as constructed sealed off the western ("escape hatch") stairway. Instead, Fifth Avenue pedestrians were lured --- both by curiosity and gravity --- down the steeply sloped Promenade to stairs which led to a now rectangular sunken Plaza about 18 feet below ground level.[2] Having made the descent, strollers had the option of entering the shopping concourse or retracing their steps in an uphill direction. As the architects realized, most people would avoid the latter. Other stairways were provided along the rear facades of the French and British buildings but these were clearly designed as subsidiary passages. The shopping concourse was further emphasized by moving the fountain from its intended location in the center of the Plaza, to its current position against the Plaza's western wall, between the concourse entrances.

Aside from the open space itself, the Plaza's focal point is Paul Manship's bronze statue of Prometheus which, illuminated at night, dominates the center of a tiered gray granite rectangular



YOUTH

MAIDEN

THREE GILDED BRONZES
Paul Manship
Installed 1934
Above: PROMETHEUS

fountain (60 feet x 16 feet lower basin). 18 feet high and weighing nearly eight tons, Prometheus is covered by more than a pound of gold leaf (regilded several times since its installation in 1934).[3] The Titan is flanked on either side by the smaller figures of "Youth" and "Maiden." Each stands before thick serpentine foliage, positioned atop a pedestal. Originally these smaller bronzes (covered in gold leaf) were located on the ledges of the fountain's upper basin. Upon installation, however, Manship sensed a conflict in scale.[4] As a result, they were transferred to the roof garden of the Palazzo d'Italia, and returned to the Sunken Plaza only in 1984.[5]

The fountain is seasonally enlivened by decorative lateral fountainheads. For a while it was also animated by the "Fountain of Lights" behind[6] —— as well as by sea lions and penguins at various times.[7] The sculptural group stands against a red Balmoral granite wall, inscribed with a gilded quotation: "PROMETHEUS, TEACHER IN EVERY ART, BROUGHT THE FIRE THAT// HATH PROVED TO MORTALS A MEANS TO MIGHTY ENDS.//AESCHYLUS."

According to some accounts Prometheus fashioned the human race out of clay. Whether or not he was man's mythological creator, Prometheus was certainly his immortal benefactor, stealing for him fire from the sun and bringing him civilization with all manner of arts and sciences. Unfortunately, his gifts to man outraged the mighty Zeus. In punishment Prometheus was hideously chained to Mount Caucausus where his liver was daily ravaged by a vulture, only to heal during the night and be eaten again the next day, a pattern which was to continue eternally.

Manship's bronze does not fully depict the drama of this myth. Flying over a cloud-crested mountain (representing earth) and holding the gift of fire in his hand, the god is encircled by a zodiacal ring (relating him to his mythological brother Atlas at the entrance to the International Building). Rather awkwardly posed, Prometheus was greeted by a torrent of criticism. Some suggested that the god was about to leap into the soup plates of

restaurant patrons[8] or alternately, that he had just fallen from the top of the RCA Building.[9] However, the sculpture's placement in a sunken plaza below a 70 story building presented significant problems.[10] Manship himself lamented the fact that he didn't have more time to study the problem.[11] The fact that Prometheus is not overwhelmed by his architectural setting is a considerable tribute to the decorative merit of the bronze. And despite certain shortcomings, Prometheus remains an extremely effective visual focus in the heart of the complex and one of the most popular works at Rockefeller Center.

The Associated Architects had hoped that Manship's sculpture would rank the fountain among its famous European counterparts[12] and more particularly, draw shoppers into the concourse shops. Their plans were thwarted --- at least temporarily. Delays in construction of the Sixth Avenue subway (opened only on Dec. 15, 1940) made the Plaza a dead end. Offering no attraction to commuters, it was largely deserted and consequently the shopping concourse suffered. Attempts to enliven the space included installation of the Center's Christmas tree and various exhibitions in the Sunken Plaza,[13] and finally the more successful substitution of restaurants for shops. But it was not until late 1936 that the Plaza's full potential was realized. It was transformed into "the first 'old fashioned' [skating] pond on Fifth Avenue since 1869," the last having been on the site of the present Plaza Hotel.[14] It was an experiment of desperation which took advantage of new techniques for artifical freezing. The temporary venture was so successful that in 1939-40 part of the Plaza's granite stairs were removed for the installation of a permanent skating rink (approximately 120 feet x 60 feet).[15] Shortly thereafter a brief attempt was made to modify it for springtime roller skating.[16] The idea was contagious. It even generated plans to install a skating rink in the orchestra of the unprofitable Center Theater.[17]

Since the introduction of skating, the Plaza has served as the heart of Rockefeller Center rather than just a pedestrian mall. From October until April it conveys the fantasy, as Polish architect Jerzey Soltan said, of "Hansel and Gretel skaters dancing in the skyscraper forest."[18] In summer it is transformed into an equally popular outdoor restaurant.

In 1943 the Plaza was further animated by the installation of metal flagpoles (18 feet high), one for each of the United Nations (The U.N. itself was completed only in 1953).[19] The flags continued the international theme which Rockefeller had inaugurated in the early 1930s (and which was enlarged in 1945 when Sixth Avenue was offically rechristened "Avenue of the Americas"). The poles surround the top of the Sunken Plaza on all four sides, interrupted only by the entrance to the Channel Gardens. On the Plaza's north, south and eastern walls the poles

are connected by angled struts to low-lying planters, the fluted faces of which echo the decorative roofline terminations of the nearby international buildings. A walkway surrounds the top of the Plaza on the same three sides and leads up to the more elevated street level by two staircases in the west, and one adjacent to the rear of both the British Building and La Maison Francaise. Because the number of United Nations members has increased from the original twenty-six, an additional row of flags lines the outer edges of the north and south walks, breaking on either side of three recessed light wells with structural glass brick bottoms.

Although the Plaza is not without its critics,[20] it is one of the most distinguished achievements of modern urban design. Together with the Channel Gardens to its east and the private road (Rockefeller Plaza) to its west, it provides nearly two acres of open space in the dense congestion of midtown Manhattan. Considered by I.M. Pei "the most successful open space in the United States, perhaps in the world,"[21] it has inspired similar developments both here and abroad.[22]

SUNKEN PLAZA FOOTNOTES

1. Weisman, "The First Landscaped Skyscraper," p. 54. The substance of this chapter depends in large part on the above work by Dr. Weisman and on Professor Jordy's "Rockefeller Center and Corporate Urbanism," esp. pp. 1-25.

2. NB90-32.

3. Prometheus was regilded in 1947, 1958, 1963, 1974 and 1982. Kenneth A. Perko, Jr., letter to Landmarks Preservation Commission, 3/22/85.

4. Kenneth Andrews, "What Paul Manship Thinks of Prometheus," RCW, 2 (Jan. 17, 1935), 5, 22.

5. NYT, 4/8/84, Sect.1, p. 1:2.

6. Installed in 1958 (Gill, p. 158); no longer used.

7. "Two Baby Sea Lions Here," NYT, 7/18/1941, p. 21:7 and "Annie Will Arrive Today," NYT, 8/15/41, p.19:7.

8. "Prometheus Unbounding," NYT, 8/3/38, p. 18:6.

9. Balfour, p. 149.

10. Edwin Murtha, The Sculpture of Paul Manship, New York: Macmillan Co., 1957, p. 6.

11. Andrews, p. 22.

12. "Gets Fountain Award," NYT, 11/30/33, p. 11:6.

13. RCW, 1 (Nov. 19, 1934), 3 and 1 (Dec. 20, 1934), 4.

14. "Skating Pond to Open on Rockefeller Plaza," NYT, 12/10/36, p. 15:2.

15. AIT3444-39. See also p.161 above.

16. "Trees and Birds to Stir in Sixth Avenue," NYT, 4/18/40, p. 21:6.

17. AIT 1925-40.

18. Douglas Haskell, "Unity and Harmony at Rockefeller Center," Architectural Forum, 124 (Jan.-Feb. 1966), 45.

19. Perko

20. Jordy, p. 21ff.

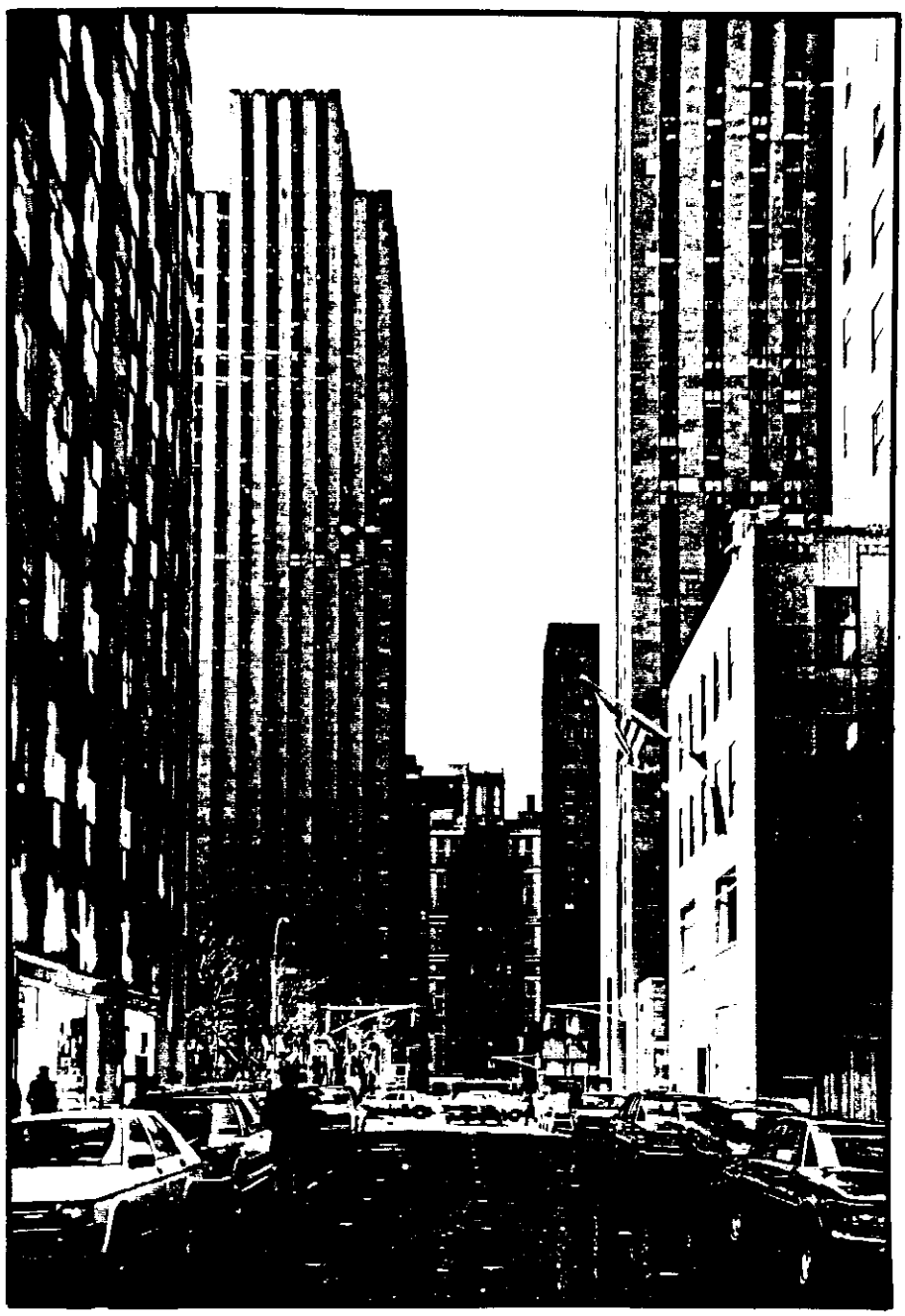
21. Cited by Balfour, p. 223.

22. Krinsky, p. 7.

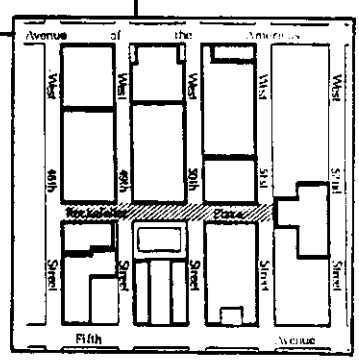
SUNKEN PLAZA; SKATING RINK -- DESCRIPTION

Significant features include but are not limited to:

- Configuration of the sunken plaza and its staircases
- Polished granite walls
- Metal flag poles with globe terminations
- Staircases at north and south descending from Rockefeller Plaza to seating level
- Flagstone paving at seating level
- Double staircase descending from Channel Gardens to sunken plaza
- Modernistic planters to either side of the double staircase descending to the plaza
- Modernistic planters down center of double staircase descending to the plaza
- Two modernistic bronze framed announcement boards on the landings of the double staircase
- Bronze-enframed windows and doors in sunken plaza
- Limestone piers framing windows and doors in the western wall of the sunken plaza
- Tiered gray granite rectangular fountain
- "Prometheus," "Youth," and "Maiden" statues (see p. 167)
- Red Balmoral granite wall and its Prometheus inscription
- Memorial monument to John D. Rockefeller, Jr. with bronze portrait medallion



View south.



ROCKEFELLER PLAZA

Like the central corridor leading off Fifth Avenue, a north-south street was envisioned from the start. As early as summer 1928 Rockefeller's real estate consultants had recommended it as part of the Metropolitan Opera development.[1] Not only would it increase valuable commercial frontage, but would provide the development with its own unique character, disrupting the regular city grid while simultaneously aiding traffic flow as an additional artery in the larger network. The introduction of a new thoroughfare as part of a building complex had already been tried, and proved successful by the creation of Vanderbilt Avenue at Grand Central Terminal (1903-13).[2]

In the course of evolution the street shrank from the grand "Metropolitan Boulevarde" proposed by Benjamin W. Morris as a link between the Opera and Penn Station, to the three block corridor which stretches from West 48th to West 51st Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues. An early plan called for the site to be transversed by two north-south roads but the western link was omitted as negotiations with RCA neared finalization. The Radio Group intended to build theaters along the site's western boundary which, by the summer of 1930, extended all the way to Sixth Avenue. Unlike commercial shops, the theaters didn't require street front windows for the display of their wares nor access for deliveries. As a result, the reclaimed acreage was given over to corporate development.

The surviving street was built in three one-block sections, the first of which was completed in front of the RCA Building (still under construction) in December 1932.[3] The second section, between West 50th-51st Streets, was finished in late 1934,[4] followed by the completion of the southern block and the opening of the street's full 720 foot length on April 1, 1937 (coinciding with the opening of the former Time-Life Building).[5] The road was christened "Rockefeller Plaza" on January 15, 1933, while still under construction.[6] Although somewhat confusing, the name underscored Rockefeller Plaza's spatial unity with the Sunken Plaza to its east and the Channel Gardens which connect the various levels to Fifth Avenue.

Rockefeller Plaza is thirty feet wide, the same width as any crosstown street. And like other city streets, it has standard curbs and asphalt pavement. Rockefeller Plaza's sidewalks, however, are more generous and vary in width, giving the street the much broader aspect of an avenue. It is also distinguished from other city streets in that its asphalt pavement is just the roof of a 600 ton structural steel skeleton which accommodates a subterranean shopping concourse, truck route (entrance on the West 50th St. facade of the Associated Press Building) and lower storage levels.[7] Its crowning steel plates were covered by a 14-1/2 inch blanket of concrete and waterproofing as a guarantee of imperviousness.

Above ground, the street's 1/3 mile frontage was intended for development as a "new section of the Fifth Avenue shopping district."[8] While this aspiration was never fulfilled, Rockefeller Plaza succeeded in binding the complex together along a north-south axis as well as insuring ample light, air and access to the six buildings which immediately flank it. Although lightly traveled, this one way (north) street nonetheless aids midtown traffic flow. It would have been even more important in the latter respect had plans for its northern extension been realized.

In addition to other real estate purchases on West 51st Street and north, Rockefeller bought the midblock land between West 51st and West 52nd Streets in October, 1934. A similar purchase one block further north would have axially connected Rockefeller Center with the Museum of Modern Art, the land for which was donated by Rockefeller in 1936. Another northern block extension would have connected it with the new Rockefeller Apartments on West 54th-55th Streets. Had the scheme materialized, Rockefeller's private road would have become the spine of a cultural center.[9] This was especially true as Mayor Laguardia planned to develop the West 51st-52nd Street blocks with a Municipal Art Center. Like the complex finally realized at Lincoln Center some three decades later (1962-68), it was to offer facilities for both symphony and opera as well as a new home for the New York Public Library's music collection. There were also plans to house the Guggenheim art collection, a costume museum and the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS).

Ultimately the grand project collapsed for a variety of reasons, including the obstinate refusal of the "21 Club" to relocate from its quarters at 21 West 52nd Street, directly in the path of the proposed street extension. Rockefeller began selling off his various parcels of land in 1938. The dream of the street extension lingered several years longer, but its final blow came in 1946 when construction began on the Esso (now Warner Communications) Building. This structure closed Rockefeller Plaza at its northern head, creating for it an imposing terminus at West 51st Street.

Designed as a private road, Rockefeller Plaza's asphalt pavement was originally embedded with bronze plaques which identified the site as the property of Columbia University. These were recently removed in recognition of property's new ownership by Rockefeller Center, Inc. When Rockefeller originally leased the land he was bound by contract to annually close the street in July (when the city was less populated) for 12 hours between sunset and sunrise in protection of its private ownership by Columbia University. The recent sale has nullified this requirement, although it may be continued as a matter of tradition and as an assurance of (new) private ownership.

Although the inscribed plaques were removed, Rockefeller Plaza largely retains the small rectangular bronze markers which were set into the asphalt at the intersections of crosstown streets. A number of these markers have been removed; they are totally missing on the northern side of the 49th Street intersection. In the block between 50th and 51st Streets, Rockefeller Plaza is studded with rows of small bronze roundels. In the height of the Music Hall's popularity, thousands of theater-goers lined up on this section of Rockefeller Plaza while waiting to be admitted into the auditorium. The bronze roundels are the bases of the posts which were used to define the the waiting lines.

ROCKEFELLER PLAZA FOOTNOTES

1. Krinsky, p. 31-32. Much of the following likewise depends on Dr. Krinsky's study.

2. James Marston Fitch, Grand Central Terminal and Rockefeller Center: A Historical-critical Estimate of Their Significance, Albany: New York State Parks and Recreation, Division for Historic Preservation, 1974.

3. "Rockefeller Center Builds a New Street," NYT, 12/11/1932, p. 1:4.

4. "4-Deck Road to Open in Rockefeller City," NYT, 9/7/1934, p.19:5.

5. "Rockefeller Unit Ready for Opening," NYT, 3/31/37, p. 41:3.

6. "'Rockefeller Plaza' Joins City Directory," NYT, 1/16/1933, p.17:4.

7. "The Robot City Nobody Sees," NYT Mag., 6/18/44, p. 20-21, 35-36. See also, p. below.

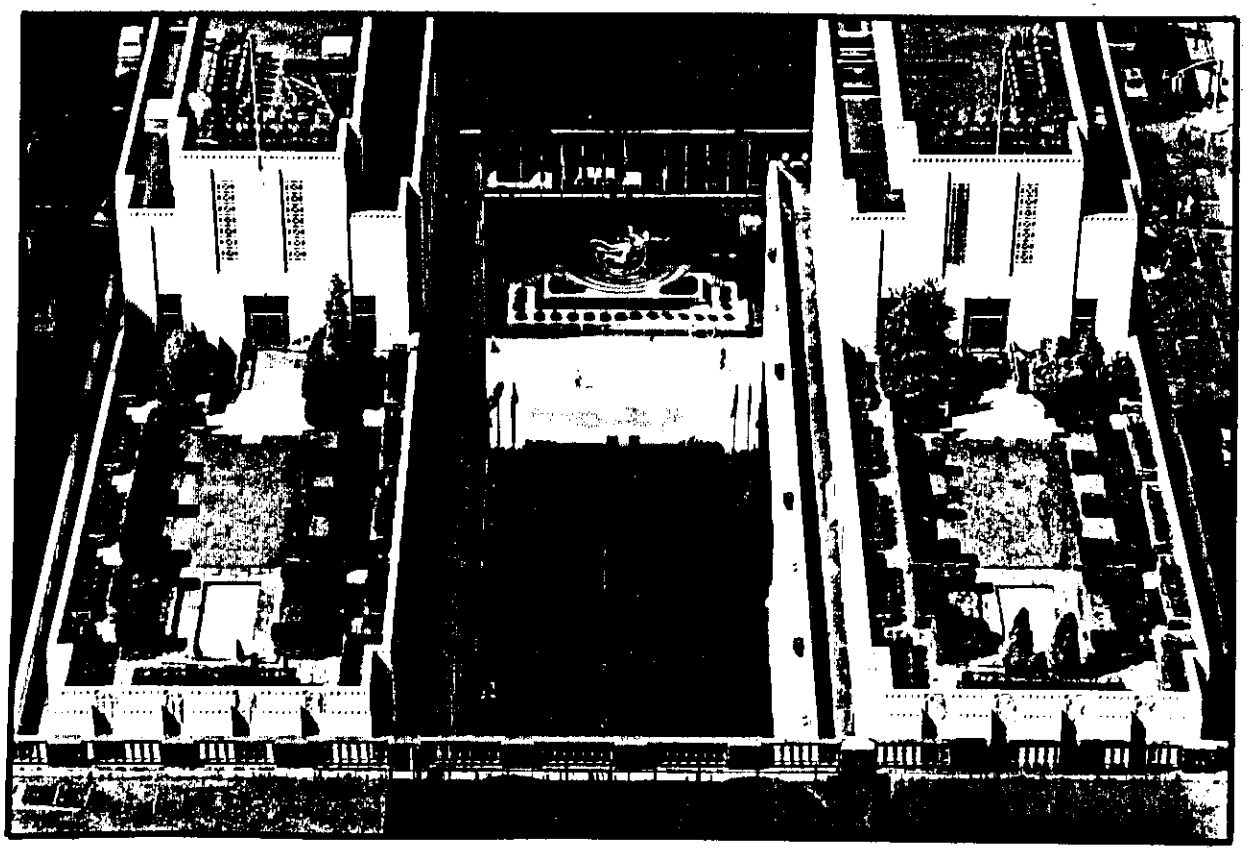
8. "...Joins City Directory," p. 17.

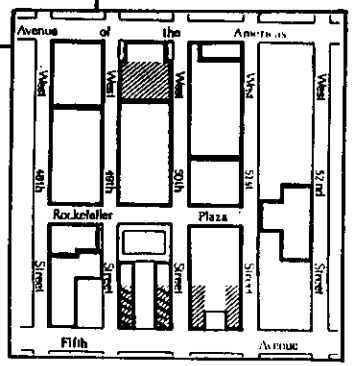
9. In addition to Krinsky, See Jordy, p. 22-25.

ROCKEFELLER PLAZA -- DESCRIPTION

Significant features include but are not limited to:

-Street width
-Sidewalk width
-Brass strips in sidewalk marking the division between private property and the public sidewalk
-Round brass markers in sidewalk in front of RCA Building and on both sides of the street in the block between 50th and 51st Streets





ROOFTOP GARDENS

In addition to the above ground public space provided by Rockefeller Plaza, the Sunken Plaza and Channel Gardens/ Promenade, Rockefeller Center included expansive rooftop gardens. Some were designed for popular access, others to be publicly enjoyed only as scenic amenities from windows overhead.

The inclusion of rooftop gardens was suggested by the ever-resourceful Raymond Hood, although it should be noted that Benjamin Morris had included planted terraces on the setbacks of his "Symposium Project" of May 1929. Other contemporary schemes by Le Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright and at the Chicago Fair likewise entertained rooftop planting.[1] There was, moreover, the precedent of theater roof gardens such as at Madison Square and at the more countrified "Dutch Farm" atop the Theatre Republic (now Victory Theater) on 42nd Street.[2]

Unlike ground level gardens, rooftop landscaping entailed no loss of commercial space. Quite the contrary, they enhanced rental values by improving the quality of the visible environment. They were designed for the office worker whose outlook from skyscraper windows had previously fallen on a dissheveled display of tarpaper and water towers. The modern urban architect, Hood insisted, "could no more afford to neglect the roofs that continually spread out below him than the country architect can afford to neglect the planting around a house."[3] Reinhard thought this particularly true since the airplane had become an accepted mode of transportation.[4]

A modern equivalent of Babylon's gardens was especially appropriate for Rockefeller Center, built as it was on the former site of Dr. Hosack's Elgin Garden. Pragmatically it was also suited to the complex where tall buildings overlooked the tops of low-lying theaters --- a situation forced by the legal prohibition of construction above theater auditoriums. First proposed by the Associated Architects in 1930, rooftop gardens had become central to Rockefeller's thinking three years later. "Any savings to be realized from their omission," he wrote, "would...be more than offset by the loss" to rentals, tenants and the general public.[5]

The architects initially prepared a grand design for the landscaping of virtually all the lower units in the complex, only to replace it with an even more elaborate scheme in 1932. The new plan called for a wide variety of rooftop gardens to be spread over all three blocks of the site. A series of rooflevel bridges would span the streets below and provide continuous passage through seven acres of garden, replete with a restaurant, music conservatory, sculpture exhibit, marionette theater and more.[6]

Only a portion of this spectacular plan was realized. Financial pressures prevented construction of the roof bridges and thereby continuous passage around the site. Realignment of the International Building from a north-south to an east-west axis further reduced its grandeur, only to have the scheme shattered in 1938 by construction of the Associated Press Building, succeeded by the Eastern Airlines Building in the following year. Respectively 15 and 16 stories, these two units replaced the low-rise structures which were originally intended and essential to an integrated garden plan.

Ultimately formal gardens were installed on the roofs of the four six-story international units along Fifth Avenue. A recreational "Sports Garden" with planted urns was constructed for theater employees above the Music Hall (no longer extant) and the terraces of various buildings were landscaped.[7] But it was only on the RCA Building's eleventh story roof (above NBC's studios) that the garden spectacular survived.[8]

Nearly 3/4 of an acre was given over to a bird sanctuary and various gardens including vegetable, rock and modern gardens as well as one for children, designed in a borough-wide competition among school children.[9] The most important installations, however, were the "Gardens of the Nations," laid out by Ralph Hancock. Separated by brick walls for wind blockage and to prevent confused effect, the various gardens were a romantic extension of the international theme at Rockefeller Center (an aspect which would later be continued in the flags of the United Nations around the Sunken Plaza). Included were the American garden with its native wild flowers, a hacienda-like patio for Spain, a small Japanese tea house, the crisply planted gradens of Holland and France and a sculptural loggia and putti-supported fountain for Italy, all landscaped with appropriate flowers and perennials. The largest of all was the English garden whose 150 foot length was framed by two brick and stone Tudor arches. It included a shaved lawn, flagstone path and shallow reflecting pool.

In their prime RCA's skygardens offered an attraction where, for a small admission fee, tourists could stroll in what was essentially a horticultural World's Fair. The installations were largely dismantled in the late 1930s by which time popular interest had waned. Only the rock garden survives intact, its waterfall and 125 foot meandering stream now dry and its 2,000 specimens of conifers and alpines considerably dwindled. On the remainder of the roof are sundry flower beds and planted terraces which, although not accessible to the public, continue to provide a delightful visual oasis for spectators in its towering neighbors.

In addition to the above ground public space provided by Rockefeller Plaza, the Sunken Plaza and Channel Gardens/ Promenade, Rockefeller Center included expansive rooftop gardens. Some were designed for popular access, others to be publicly enjoyed only as scenic amenities from windows overhead.

The inclusion of rooftop gardens was suggested by the ever-resourceful Raymond Hood, although it should be noted that Benjamin Morris had included planted terraces on the setbacks of his "Symposium Project" of May 1929. Other contemporary schemes by Le Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright and at the Chicago Fair likewise entertained rooftop planting.[1] There was, moreover, the precedent of theater roof gardens such as at Madison Square and at the more countrified "Dutch Farm" atop the Theatre Republic (now Victory Theater) on 42nd Street.[2]

Unlike ground level gardens, rooftop landscaping entailed no loss of commercial space. Quite the contrary, they enhanced rental values by improving the quality of the visible environment. They were designed for the office worker whose outlook from skyscraper windows had previously fallen on a disheveled display of tarpaper and water towers. The modern urban architect, Hood insisted, "could no more afford to neglect the roofs that continually spread out below him than the country architect can afford to neglect the planting around a house."[3] Reinhard thought this particularly true since the airplane had become an accepted mode of transportation.[4]

A modern equivalent of Babylon's gardens was especially appropriate for Rockefeller Center, built as it was on the former site of Dr. Hosack's Elgin Garden. Pragmatically it was also suited to the complex where tall buildings overlooked the tops of low-lying theaters --- a situation forced by the legal prohibition of construction above theater auditoriums. First proposed by the Associated Architects in 1930, rooftop gardens had become central to Rockefeller's thinking three years later. "Any savings to be realized from their omission," he wrote, "would...be more than offset by the loss" to rentals, tenants and the general public.[5]

The architects initially prepared a grand design for the landscaping of virtually all the lower units in the complex, only to replace it with an even more elaborate scheme in 1932. The new plan called for a wide variety of rooftop gardens to be spread over all three blocks of the site. A series of rooflevel bridges would span the streets below and provide continuous passage through seven acres of garden, replete with a restaurant, music conservatory, sculpture exhibit, marionette theater and more.[6]

The rooftop gardens of the four international units survive largely intact. Formally designed and measuring 229 feet x 52 feet, they were not intended to have public access (currently accessible only on guided tours). The twin gardens above the British Building and La Maison Francaise were the work of Ralph Hancock. Each includes privet hedges around a central rectangular lawn (bowed in the center to increase surface area and make the lawn appear larger when viewed from above).[10] Each has a shallow 12 foot x 6 foot pool at its eastern end above Fifth Avenue.

The rooftop gardens above the Palazzo d'Italia and International Building North were designed by A.M. Van den Hoek in 1936 as similar, although not identical, twins. The former has an ivy lawn bordered on either side by undulating hedges. To its south is a cobblestone walkway ornamented at its western end by a large stone fountain (a grotesque mask with basin below). The southern garden wall is embedded with two white marble plaques from the Roman Forum.

The International Building North likewise has an ivy bed bordered on its southern side by undulating hedges. Its northern side leads down three steps amid four large planters to a generous paved walkway.

Part of the landscaping program at Rockefeller Center called for sidewalk tree planting. Intended to provide "a natural setting" for the complex,[11] it gave back to Fifth Avenue some of the foliage it lost in 1909-14 when the street was widened 15 feet.[12] Small Oriental planes were planted along the side streets in 1938-39 (subsequently replanted with additions); larger trees of the same type, around the Sunken Plaza. Two American elms (replacing the less hardy English variety) were planted in front of each building along Fifth Avenue in 1948.[13] The later Manufacturers Hanover Trust Building (1950-52) subsequently received the same treatment. Together with the trees along the sides of St. Patrick's Cathedral, those at Rockefeller Center provide a generous relief from the more commonly bleak midtown streetscape.

ROOFTOP GARDENS FOOTNOTES

1. Krinsky, pp. 39, 62.

2. "Paradise Gardens," NY Daily Mirror, 6/8/1901, p. 9.

3. Quoted in Balfour, p. 49.

4. Benjamin F. Betts, interview with L. Andrew Reinhard, "Gardens on the Roofs of Radio City," American Architect, 140 (Nov. 1931), 34-35, 74-76 (35).

5. JDR, Jr. to John R. Todd (4/10/33), quoted in Balfour, p. 50.

6. Weisman, "The First Landscaped Skyscraper," p. 58.

7. "Sky Gardens," Better Homes and Gardens (Jan. 1939), 50 and "3 New New Rooftop Gardens," NYT, 9/28/39, p. 27:7.

8. The various installations were described in "Sky Gardens," and "Nature's Garlands on a Skyscraper," NYT, 4/14/35, Sect. 7, p. 12ff. They were also briefly discussed and illustrated (nos. 125-137) in Balfour.

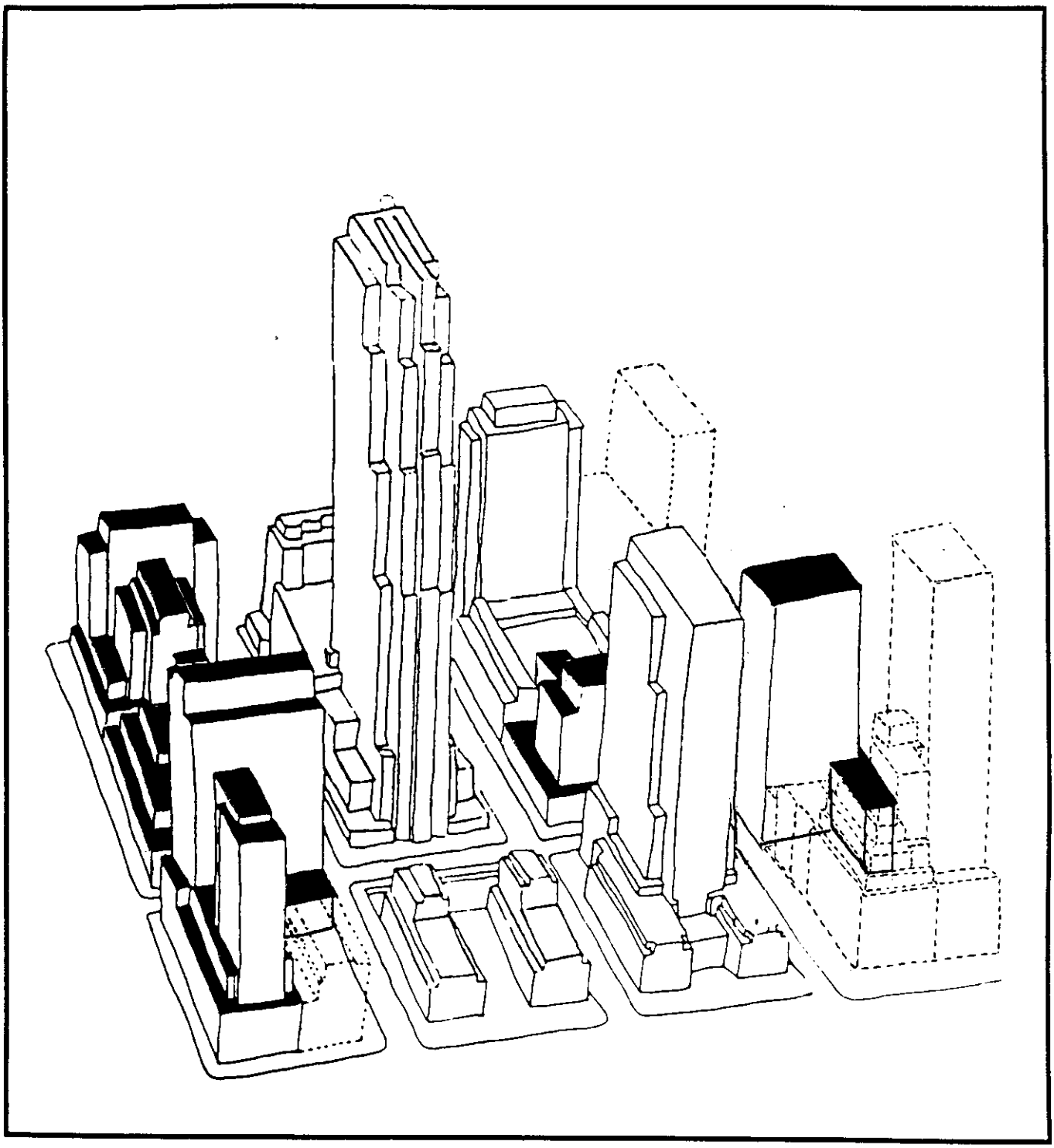
9. "Garden Awards Today," NYT, 7/1/35, p. 19:1.

10. "Design Notebook," NYT, 12/16/82, p. C10.

11. "Planting of Trees at Rockefeller Center," NYT, 11/8/39, p. 25:3.

12. Fitch, p. 10.

13. "Center Gets New Tree," NYT, 4/23/48, p.18:3.



COMPLETION OF THE ORIGINAL COMPLEX

By 1935 the Center's entertainment and international complexes were complete. They comprised ten units constructed over the course of four years. Four sites remained to be developed. Two were realized with new buildings for Time-Life and the Associated Press, both of which extended the Center's family of communications tenants to include news and publication. Construction of the Eastern Airlines Building in 1939 expanded the network still further, while simultaneously advancing its contacts with modern industry. The latter trend was continued by the U.S. Rubber Company Building and its subsequent addition.

When Rockefeller drove home the last rivet in the Rubber Company Building on November 1,1939, he marked the official completion of the fourteen unit complex. The structural form of the self-contained city had emerged. Now, said Master of Ceremonies, Nelson Rockefeller, "The Center really begins."[1] Actually, it had already begun some years prior. Early ridiculed as "Rockefeller's folly," the Center was now celebrated in a Broadway show tune,[2] by hundreds of thousands of locals and tourists as well as by increasingly more appreciative architectural critics. It was the "world of tomorrow,"[3] --- one which by 1938 had begun to show its first return on investment.

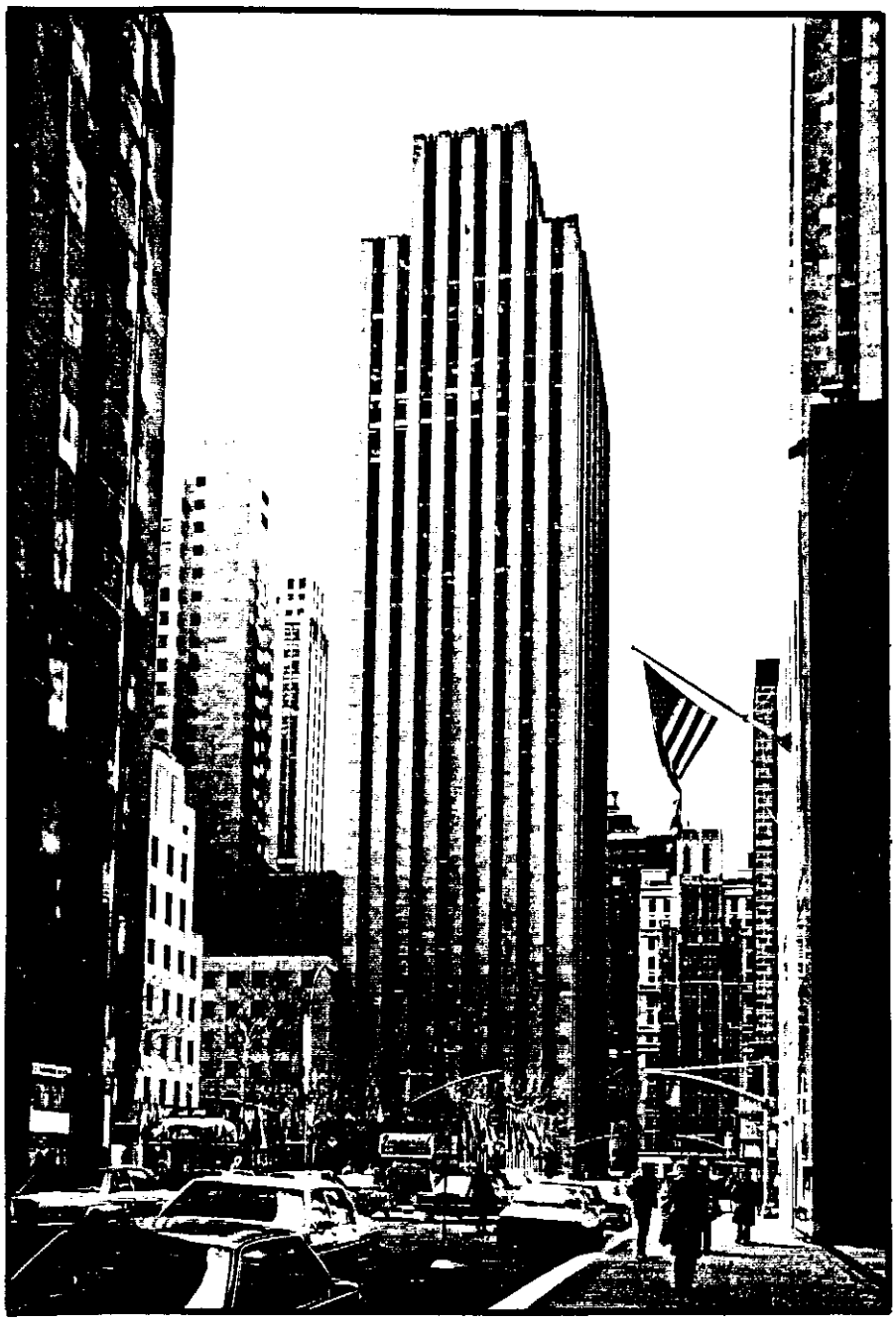
Nor was the completion of John D. Rockefeller, Jr.'s city the end of construction. Under his sons the Center would be expanded with a new structure for Standard Oil (Esso Building) in 1946-7, followed in 1963 by the purchase of the independent but stylistically related tower at 600 Fifth Avenue, thus rounding out the site. The latter structure is the subject of an independent designation report (LP-1447). The Center was, moreover, to jump across to the west side of Sixth Avenue where, beginning in 1957, it erected four additional buildings. Construction of the final unit in 1973 marked the completion of the largest private commercial development ever undertaken. (The buildings on the west side of Sixth Avenue are not part of this designation).

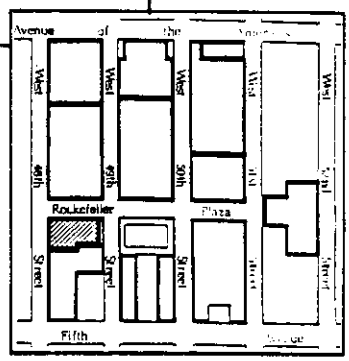
COMPLETION OF THE COMPLEX FOOTNOTES

1. The Last Rivet: The Story of Rockefeller Center, a City Within a City, as Told at the Ceremony in which John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Drove the Last Rivet of the Last Building, Nov. 1, 1939 (New York: Rockefeller Center, Inc., 1939).

2. George & Ira Gershwin, "They All Laughed," from Shall We Dance, copyright, 1937 by Gershwin Publishing Corp. (Quoted in Krinsky, p. 88).

3. Henry R. Luce, 2/5/41 (quoted in Balfour, p. 221).





ONE ROCKEFELLER PLAZA
(Orignally Time & Life Building)
Sept. 1936 - April 1937

On May 19, 1936, plans were filed for the eleventh building in Rockefeller Center.[1] It was the first unit to be erected on the Center's southern block which, up to this point had served as a parking lot.[2] Situated on an irregular site (forced by uncontrolled property), it fronted on the third (48th-49th St.) section of Rockefeller Plaza.

Plans as filed called for a 32-story building. It was subsequently increased to 36 with a lateral setback high up on its east and west sides, taking advantage of the unused air rights from a plot on the west side of Rockefeller Plaza (site od the former Eastern Airlines Building) which was set aside for potential use of the Opera. The building, which was executed after Raymond Hood's death, underlines the importance of Reinhard and Harrison in the later development of the complex.[3] They recessed the structure back from the 48th Street property line, thereby allowing its facade to rise sheer from the pavement. It resulted in the Associated Architects' closest realization of a true slab to date and the third tallest building (490') in the original complex. By contrast, the 48th Street facade is set back above the tenth story. Aside from its distinctive roofline adjustment the building was constructed largely according to a plan of 1931, maintaining the north-south axis which was intended, but ultimately abandoned, at the 41-story International Building two blocks further north.

The structure set a new record for speed in skyscraper construction. Its steel frame was begun on September 25, 1936 and completed 43 working days later.[4] Immediately thereafter the site was swarmed by 1,100 men who finished the building in late March 1937, one month ahead of schedule.[5] Its opening on April 1st coincided with the opening of the full length of Rockefeller Plaza.

The new structure was originally known by its street address "9 Rockefeller Plaza" (subsequently changed to No. 1). Unlike its ten predecessors in the complex, it was not designed for the needs of a major tenant. It was planned as an all-purpose office building, housing everything from sales and advertising agencies to the National Headquarters of the Girl Scouts of America. It also housed the Museum of Modern Art until its new structure on West 53rd Street was completed in 1939. It was not until late April 1938, that Time-Life occupied the seven upper floors and gave its name to the building.[6]

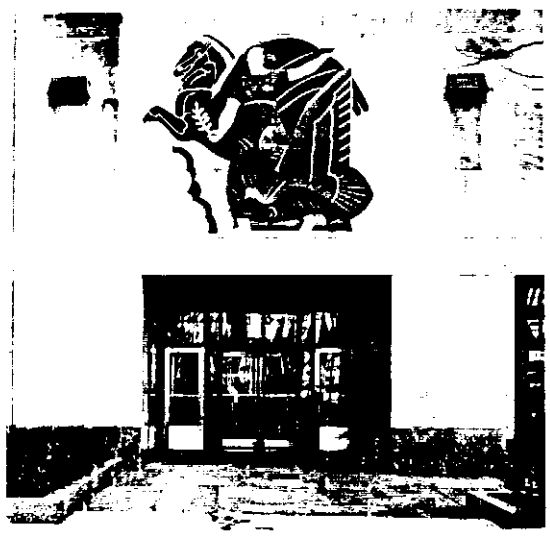
The move marked the 15th anniversary of Time magazine. Since its establishment by two Yale graduates in 1923 the publication had enjoyed unstemmed success. It flourished --- indeed, expanded --- during the Depression with the founding of

Fortune magazine in 1930. This was followed one year later by the production of "The March of Time," a radio news program. Beginning in 1935, Time also produced newsreels for cinema viewing. In 1932 it bought the 40 year old Architectural Forum and increased its circulation six-fold. The company's expansion became even more prodigious in 1936 when the waning Life magazine was bought and revitalized. Within weeks of its first issue, the new Life surpassed all circulation records for the publication of any magazine in its first year.[7]

In the course of its 15 year existence Time Inc. had occupied at least five different premises. Its new stature as a periodical empire required a permanent base of operations. Having outgrown its two floors in the Chrysler Building, Time Inc. moved to Rockefeller Plaza where it remained until 1959 when the company commissioned Harrison, Abramowitz & Harris to design the first building in Rockefeller Center on the west side of Sixth Avenue.[8] When the company moved into its new quarters, its former home was renamed for General Dynamics, a small submarine-building concern which in the course of a decade had become a vast industrial complex.[9] General Dynamics remained in the building until its relocation to St. Louis in 1971 at which point the building name reverted to its street address (now 1 Rockefeller Plaza).[10]

Time-Life's occupancy at Rockefeller Center in 1938 extended the communications tenants from radio to the press. It was joined in this by the construction of the Associated Press Building in the same year. The communications network was given yet another dimension in 1939 when the Eastern Airlines Building was erected at 10 Rockefeller Plaza.

As the structure at 1 Rockefeller Plaza was designed with no particular tenant in mind, its sculptural decorations were devoted to general life themes. Despite the building's address, its most prominent entrance appears to be on West 48th Street where the recess of the building from the property line creates a mini-plaza with one rectangular and four square planters. Above its portal is a polychromed bas-relief by Lee Lawrie. Similar in imagery to that used by Garrison for the facade of the former RKO Building, it symbolizes human progress. A black Pegasus

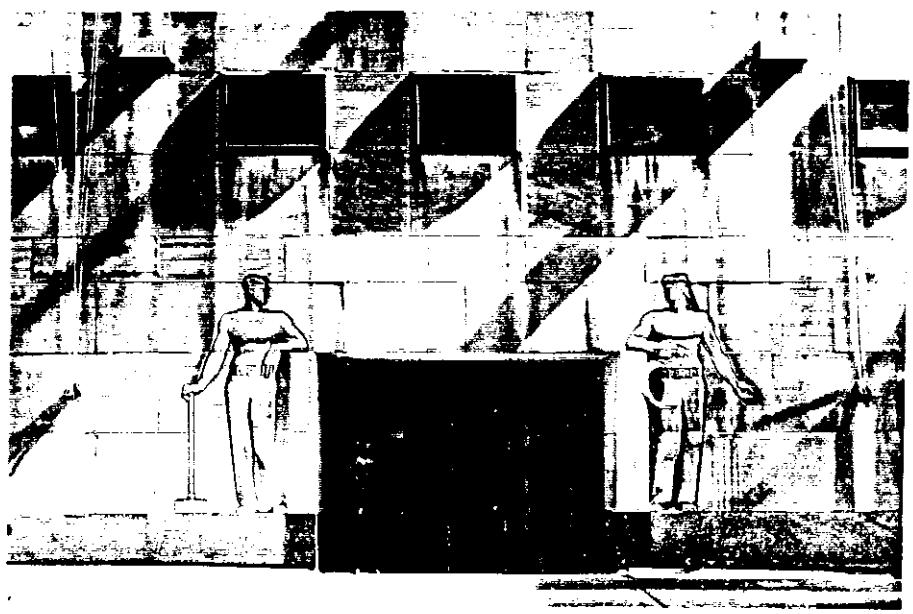


LIMESTONE RELIEF
14 W. 49th St. Entrance
Lee Lawrie
Installed 1937

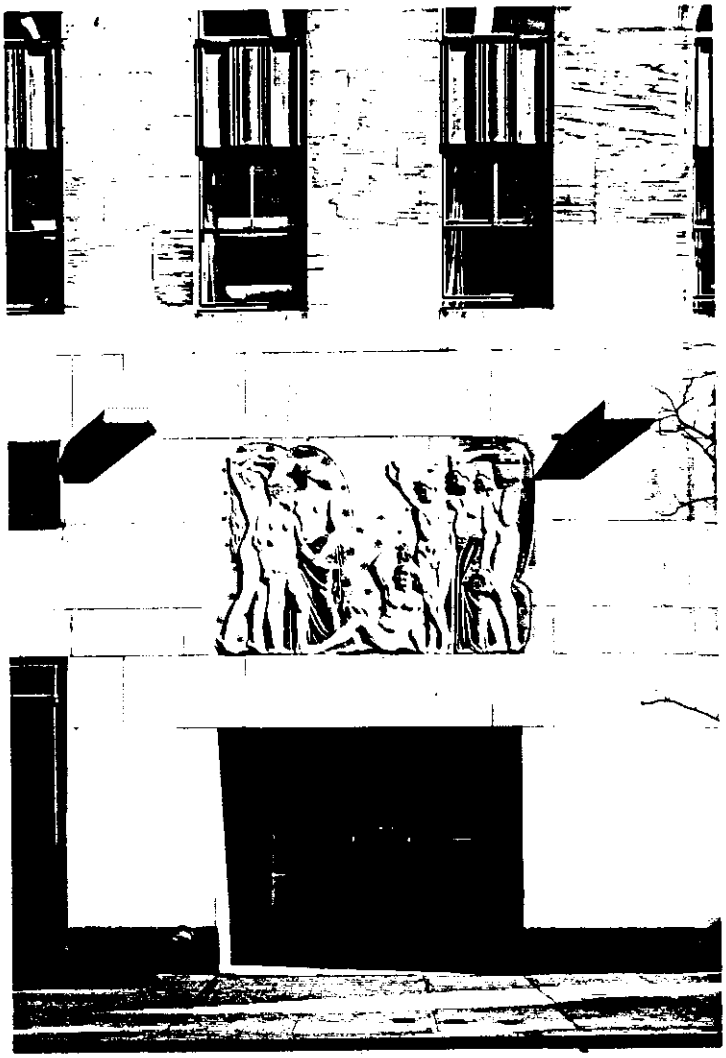
represents poetic "Inspiration," the brown eagle "Aspiration" and the gray-robed figure, "Progress." She holds a branch of bay in one hand, a pan of divine fire in the other. At the left of the composition are several stars, gilded as are all the linear details on the relief (including the edges of its three-tone brown clouds).[11]

On Rockefeller Plaza the severe, deep-set entrance is dramatically cut into the building's sprawling limestone wall. The drama is enhanced by the varied play of shadows from window frames and light hoods above. The portal is framed by Carl Paul Jennewein's figures of "Industry" and "Agriculture," their incised profiles uniformly gilded. Holding tools and resting an arm atop the limestone jambs, they look at each other across the expansive doorway. The figures are simply conceived and skillfully executed. Dressed in modern attire, they provide a significant contrast to the skirted workers which Lachaise designed for the Rockefeller Plaza entrance of the International Building.

Above the West 48th Street entrance is Attilio Piccirilli's only limestone relief at Rockefeller Center. It portrays the "Joy of Life" in which a young Bacchus, suspending gilded grapes above his head, sits oblivious to the tribulations of adult life around him.[12] The two serene groups on either side are partially draped in brown. They stand with golden jugs against an amoeboid, light green ground. The latter is highlighted with black and gold flowers, reminiscent of these which Hildreth Meiere used for the image of Drama on the exterior of Radio City Music Hall. Each of the seven figures has gilded hair.



AGRICULTURE & INDUSTRY, Limestone Reliefs
1 Rockefeller Plaza Entrance
Carl Paul Jennewein
Installed 1937



JOY OF LIFE, Limestone Relief
15 W. 48th St. Entrance
Attilio Piccirilli
Installed 1937

The building remains substantially intact. Its only significant exterior alteration was the installation of a new shopfront (the westernmost on 48th Street).[13]

ONE ROCKEFELLER PLAZA BUILDING FOOTNOTES

1. NB101-36. See also "Rockefeller City to Add Skyscraper," NYT, 5/20/36, p. 23:8.

2. "Park Your Car, Mister?," RCW, 2 (June 27, 1935), 10.

3. Krinsky, p. 155. Reinhard attributed the building to himself and Hofmeister; Corbett & MacMurray; Harrison and Fouilhoux ("For the Record," Architectural Forum, 88 (Feb. 1948), 30.

4. "Steelwork Finished on Rockefeller Unit," NYT, 11/28/36, p.15:5.

5. "Rockefeller Unit Ready for Opening," NYT, 3/31/37, p.41:3.

6. "Business Moving Marked by Speed," NYT, 5/2/38, p. 33:1. See also Robert T. Elson, Time Inc.: The Intimate History of a Publishing Enterprise, 1923-1941, 2 vols., New York: Athenaeum, 1968-73, vol. I, 334.

7. Elson,p. 297. See also "Time Marches In," RCM, 1 (Ap. 1930), 1-3, 46.

8. Elson, vol. 2, p. 333-35.

9. "Radio City Lease Takes in 6 Floors," NYT, 1/12/60, p. 38:3.

10. "General Dynamics Corporation Moving Headquarters Out of City," NYT, 2/11/71, p. 39:3.

11. Balfour, illus. 317. Art Digest (R.C.) p. 13 and "Three Sculptures Shown," NYT, 9/9/37, p.21:2.

12. Lombardo, Attilio Piccirilli - American Sculptor, p. 261-62.

13. AIT 2686-37

ONE ROCKEFELLER PLAZA (ORIGINALLY TIME & LIFE BUILDING) -- DESCRIPTION

One Rockefeller Plaza faces onto Rockefeller Plaza from the east and extends through the block from 48th Street to 49th Street. The building is a limestone-clad skeletal steel structure consisting of a 36-story tower running north-south with asymmetrically massed setbacks when viewed from Rockefeller Plaza and 48th Street. The walls of the upper floors are articulated with flat limestone piers of uniform width. Between, and slightly recessed behind the piers are steel sash. Over each window is a ridged aluminum spandrel. These spandrels terminate at the roofline. On 49th Street the tower is set back from the lot line to create a small bluestone-paved plaza. A recessed entranceway, accented by Lee Lawrie's polychromed bas relief, is at the eastern end and three shopfronts are at the west. The westernmost shop has a modern door. The tower rises 32 stories before tapering in at each side in a setback. Gray cast aluminum stepped terminations distinguish the lateral setbacks from the central tower with gray cast aluminum terminal foliage. The Rockefeller Plaza elevation reads as a slab except for the ten-story section at the south. The center entrance is flanked by Carl Paul Jennewein's relief figures of "Industry" and "Agriculture." Four display windows and a shop front also flank the entrance. Bronze-framed square windows with single panes of glass at the second story contrast with the regularly-spaced steel sash windows above. Gray cast aluminum stepped terminations accent the parapets of the 32nd story setback, tower, and ten-story section at the south. The 48th Street elevation is the most complex with ten stories rising up from the building line, then the tower setting back to rise to 32 stories, then tapering in at the sides in additional setbacks to the 36th story. A seven-story section at the eastern end links the tower to the Manufacturers Hanover Trust Building. The differing setbacks on this elevation are accentuated by gray cast aluminum terminal foliage on the central tower and gray cast aluminum stepped terminations on all other setbacks and parapets. The recessed entrance is emphasized by Attilio Piccirilli's polychromed sculptural relief. Display windows are to the west. The second display window from the west has been modified for a bank entrance. At the second story are bronze-framed square window openings with single sheets of glass. Several have been filled in by ventilation grilles. A two-story shop with sheets of glass framed by bronze accents the seven-story eastern section.

* * * * *

Significant features include but are not limited to:

-Buff-colored smooth and shot-sawed Indiana limestone cladding
-Slightly projecting piers of uniform width

49TH STREET FACADE

1ST FLOOR:

-Polished granite base
-Bluestone pavement on plaza out to the lot line, gray concrete sidewalk beyond
-Bronze grates in pavement at lot line
-Polished granite planters
-Five bronze light hoods

ENTRANCE:

-Recessed with one set of revolving doors, flanked by single leaf doors, all of brass and glass, framed in bronze set below a transom
-"14 WEST 49TH STREET," in bronze letters above revolving door
-Brass fire stair door on east wall of recess
-Bronze-framed display window on west wall of recess
-Polychromed relief (See p.198 above)

THREE SHOP FRONTS with:

-Beveled bronze frames
-Black structural glass lintels
-Bronze awning frames (in concealed vertical housing)

3RD-36TH FLOORS:

-2/1 steel sash
-gray cast aluminum vertically ridged spandrels above windows
-gray cast aluminum stepped terminations at 32nd floor
-gray cast aluminum terminal foliage at 36th floor

ROCKEFELLER PLAZA FACADE

1ST FLOOR:
- -Polished granite base
- -Bluestone paving next to building, gray concrete sidewalk

MAIN ENTRANCE:
- -Recessed, with one set of revolving doors of brass and glass flanked by single leaf doors of nickel bronze and glass, framed in bronze, set below a transom
- -Single leaf brass doors in side walls of recess
- -"1-9 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA," in bronze letters above revolving door
- -Bluestone paving in recess
- -Relief flanking entrance (See p.199 above)

ONE SHOP FRONT with:
- -Beveled bronze frames
- -Black structural glass lintel
- -Bronze awning frame (in concealed vertical housing)

FOUR DISPLAY WINDOWS with:
- -Beveled bronze frames
- -Black structural glass lintels
- -Bronze awning frames (in concealed vertical housing)

2ND FLOOR:
- -Bronze-framed square windows with single panes of glass
- -Eight bronze light hoods

3RD-36TH FLOORS:
- -Two wooden flagpoles with brass globe terminations and bronze anchors
- -2/1 steel sash
- -Gray cast aluminum vertically ridged spandrels above windows
- -Gray cast aluminum stepped terminations at parapets of southern 10th floor section, 32nd floor setback, and 36th floor

48TH STREET FACADE

1ST FLOOR:
- -Polished granite base
- -Remnants of bluestone paving next to the building, gray concrete sidewalk

ENTRANCE:
- -Recessed with one set of revolving doors flanked by single leaf doors, all of brass and glass, framed in bronze and set below a transom
- -"15 WEST 48TH STREET," in bronze letters above the revolving door
- -Brass stair doors on side walls of recess
- -Bluestone paving in recess
- -Polychromed relief above entrance (See p.199 above)

DISPLAY WINDOWS with:
- -Beveled bronze frames
- -Black structural glass lintels
- -Bronze awning frames (in concealed vertical housing)

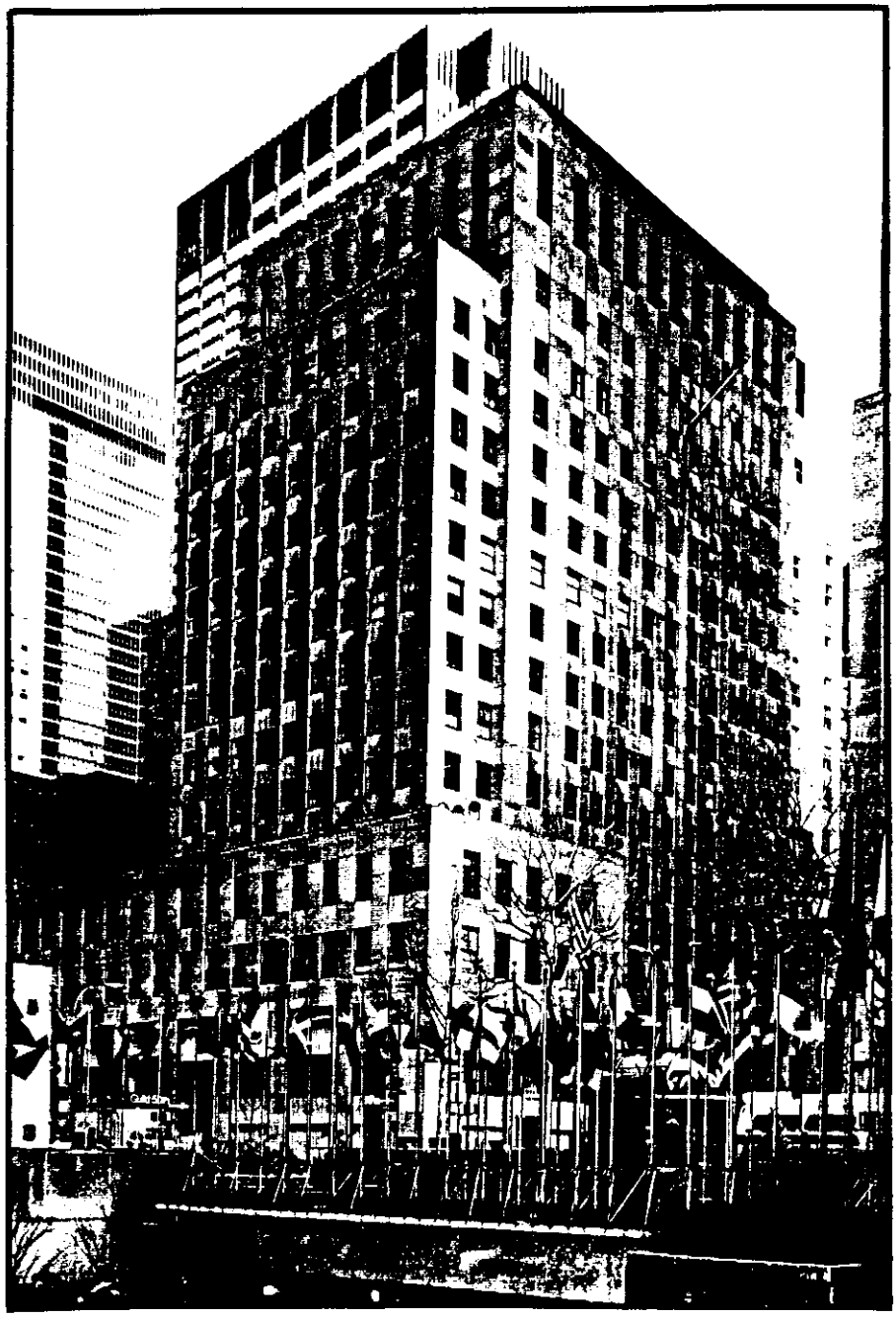
SHOP FRONT with:
- -Beveled bronze frames (continuing into 2nd story)
- -Bronze awning frame (in concealed vertical housing)

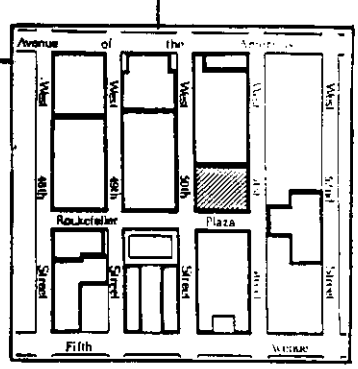
2ND FLOOR:
- -Bronze-framed square windows with single panes of glass
- -Six bronze light hoods

3RD-36TH FLOOR:
- -2/1 steel sash
- -Gray cast aluminum vertically ridged spandrels above the windows
- -Gray cast aluminum stepped terminations at 7th story eastern section, 10th story setback, and 32nd story lateral setbacks
- -Gray cast aluminum terminal foliage at 36th floor

EASTERN ELEVATION (FACING 600 FIFTH AVENUE)

ALL FLOORS:
- -2/1 steel sash
- -Gray cast aluminum vertically ridged spandrels above the windows
- -Gray cast aluminum stepped termination at 32nd floor
- -Gray cast aluminum terminal foliage at 36th floor





ASSOCIATED PRESS BUILDING

50 Rockefeller Plaza

Feb. 1938- Nov. 1938

Although excavation had been completed several years prior and foundations partially laid, construction of the Associated Press Building did not begin until April 1938.[1] Its steelwork was completed in 29 days.[2] The entire building was ready for occupancy on December 17, 1938.[3]

Construction of the Associated Press Building was significant in several respects. Early plans had variously called for its site to be developed with a hotel, department store, or an extension of the International Building, in each case respecting the low-rise roofline of the adjacent Radio City Music Hall to the west.[4] Financial pressures, however, ultimately dictated construction of a 15-story building. Its realization, together with that of the 16- story Eastern Airlines (now 10 Rockefeller Plaza) Building in the following year, proved the fatal blow to plans for a continuous network of rooftop gardens atop the entire Rockefeller complex.

More important was the fact that, as the twelfth unit to be built at Rockefeller Center, it was the first office building to deviate from the 27 1/2 foot window-to-corridor standard. Contrary to most tenants (but similar to NBC), the Associated Press's primary requirement was not naturally lit and ventilated office space, but large open expanses. These were needed to accommodate A.P.'s technical laboratories, photoengraving department and radio reception (installed on the fifth floor), and especially its 5 foot x 12 foot switchboard --- the nerve center which connected A.P. to 1,400 offices nationwide with 4,000,000 feet of wire (installed in covered channels in the Associated Press Building's fourth floor).[5] The feature photo and news departments were all grouped around this focal point. Air conditioning compensated for the lack of natural ventilation.

To the rear of the chunky Associated Press Building tower, set back above its four-story wings, is an east-west slab which abuts the Music Hall. Below, on 50th Street is a truck ramp which descends through the concourse to a service and delivery route and to lower level storage. Equipped with a sophisticated ventilation system for the monitoring and dispersing of carbon monoxide, the ramp plays a critical role in supplying the complex while keeping the surrounding streets free from truck congestion. Together with the parking garage (in the former Eastern Airlines Building), Rockefeller Plaza, the shopping concourse and Channel Gardens/Promenade, it forms part of the vast traffic network which contributes to Rockefeller Center's unparalleled urban design success.[6]

Truck entrance, 41 W. 50th Street.

Like the former Time-Life Building, A.P. provides an important display of Wallace Harrison's emergence among the Associated Architects. Following Raymond Hood's death in 1935 Harrison had separated from his partners Corbett & MacMurray and contracted independently with the Rockefeller developers. Harrison succeeded Hood as the dominant influence on design.[7]

The Associated Press Building was also significant for extending the scope of the "communications tenants" at Rockefeller Center, an aspect particularly notable given the early rivalry between the traditional press and new radio programming. By the late 1930s media cooperation had replaced earlier competition. Time magazine, for instance, broadcast "The March of Time" over the radio, and the Associated Press Building included a newsreel theater (now occupied by the Guild Theater) in the curve of its truck ramp. Aside from its technical advances (and seats "so capacious that the fat man [would] not run over the edges"),[8] the theater was important in joining the Music Hall and Center Theater as yet another entertainment attraction in the complex. The press-radio alliance was further celebrated in an hour-long NBC broadcast on Christmas day, 1938 marking the 90th anniversary of the Associated Press and the opening of its new building.[9]

The Associated Press was first established in 1848 when the publishers of six New York City dailies jointly funded a telegraphic relay of foreign news from Boston (the first American port-of-call for trans-Atlantic ships). The venture was subsequently reorganized and in 1893, the Associated Press was incorporated as the first national press association in the country. Its impact was profound. Through the simultaneous publication of news events on the same day of occurrence and in the same words nationwide, the Associated Press became a potent unifying force -— much as radio would be in later years.

Technological progress kept pace with network expansion and on January 1, 1935, A.P. used the new "Wirephoto" to transmit the first high fidelity images to newspapers across America.[10] Subsequent cable contact with London news bureaus made a great advance in trans-Atlantic communications and encouraged the media giant to seek a permanent home which would allow "some dignified display of showmanship...in a conspicuous location."[11] Since the turn of the century, A.P. had been variously housed in the old Western Union Building at 195 Broadway, later at 51 Chambers Street, and still later at 383 Madison Avenue. It then leased four full floors at Rockefeller Center and gave the new building its name. According to Associated Press president Kent Cooper, the structure was a "monument to the association's newspaper members and employees."[12] The building was shared with the National Cash Register Company, its second major tenant. With a 95 percent occupancy rate in the first year of its opening, the A.P. Building became the first unit in Rockefeller Center to show a profit.[13]

The commemorative aspect of the building is reflected above its main entrance on Rockefeller Plaza where a 10-ton high relief (23 feet x 18 feet) pays tribute to the men who gather, edit and distribute the news. Five figures are centrally grouped with the tools of their trade: a telephone, reporter's pencil and notebook, camera, wirephoto and teletype. Stretching diagonally behind the group are the wires which transmit A.P.'s news worldwide. They focus in the lower right on the abstract figure of man, the focus of the news.[14] The panel is signed "Isamu Noguchi//1940," lower left.

The sculpture is more modernistically styled than any other work in the original complex and does not display the heavy cosmic themes which characterize most. It is among the finest works of art at Rockefeller Center --- if not the very best. It is charged with an unparalled immediacy and dominates its portal with a dynamic expression of the activities housed within. The work is also technically advanced, being the first piece of heroic sculpture ever cast in stainless steel. The medium was the artist's choice.

In January, 1938 a competition was announced for the design of a bronze panel for the Associated Press Building's entrance.[15] It was one of only two contests staged at Rockefeller Center (the other was a limited contest for the interior decorations of Radio City Music Hall and RKO Roxy Theater). Significantly the competition was limited to American sculptors (most likely in response to the controversy over the employment of foreign artists for the interior of the the RCA Building).[16] Of the 188 proposals submitted, two were entered by Noguchi. He worked on one for two months, the other for three days. The latter won.[17]

Insistent upon glittering and rustproof stainless steel, the 34 year old sculptor oversaw the new casting techniques which had to be developed for the panel. He ground the finished sections to an accuracy of 2/1000th of an inch, making the relief's seams virtually invisible. The sculpture was unveiled on April 29, 1940 in a ceremony attended by Nelson Rockefeller. Speaking as president of Rockefeller Center, Inc., John D. Rockefeller Jr.'s son expressed his hope that the panel would be appreciated as a celebration of America's intellectual freedom and a censure of the "insidious intellectual imperialism...of totalitarian ideologies."[18] His message was fraught with urgency: just six months prior A.P. had relayed the dreaded news that Chamberlain had proclaimed Britain at war with Germany.

The building's exterior remains intact. It has not undergone any significant change.

NEWS
Stainless steel panel
Main Entrance, Rockefeller Plaza
Isamu Noguchi
Installed 1940

ASSOCIATED PRESS BUILDING FOOTNOTES

1. NB14-38. See also "Rockefeller City Rents Space to A.P.," NYT, 1/25/38, p. 23:1.

2. "Steel Work Finished," NYT, 6/17/1938, p. 40:2.

3. "Associated Press Moved in 9 Hours," NYT, 12/18/38, Sect. 3, p. 8:2.

4. Balfour, p. 54.

5. "Fourth Estate," Newsweek (Dec. 26, 1938), p. 18-19. See also Jordy, p. 48-49.

6. "General Purpose Office Building," Architectural Record, 84 (Dec. 1938), 104; See also Jordy, p. 51-53; Gill, p. 54-55.

7. Balfour, p. 53-54 and Krinsky, p. 90. Reinhard attributed the building to himself & Hofmeister; Corbett & MacMurray; Harrison and Fouilhoux ("For the Record," Architectural Forum, 88 (Feb. 1948), 30.

8. "A.P. Building Newsreel Theater to Open," NYT, 12/2/38, p. 27:5.

9. "Associated Press Reviews 90 Years," NYT, 12/26/38, p.25:8.

10. Oliver Gramling, A.P.: The Story of the News, Port Washington, NY and Toronto: Farrar and Rinehart, 1940, p. 392ff.

11. Kent Cooper and the Associated Press: An Autobiography, New York: Random House, 1959, p. 271.

12. Ibid., p. 270.

13. "45,000 Feet Leased in New A.P. Building," NYT, 1/6/38, p. 37:1. See also Krinsky, p. 95.

14. "Noguchi Did This in Three Days...," Art Digest, 13 (Oct. 15, 1938), 15.

15. "Upon the Local Horizon," NYT, 1/26/38, Sect. 9, p. 7:7.

16. See, for example, "Suggesting American Murals," NYT, 10/13/37, p. 22:7.

17. "Stainless Steel Sculpture," NYT, 5/5/40, Sect. 2, p. 8. See also RCM, 3 (Feb. 1940), 16-17.

18. "Huge Plaque Symbolizing Press Freedom is Unveiled at Associated Press Building," NYT, 4/30/40, p. 12:3.

ASSOCIATED PRESS BUILDING -- DESCRIPTION

The Associated Press Building is a fifteen-story slab with abutting five-story wings on the north and south, and a rear wing to the east. The slab, with its central entrance on Rockefeller Plaza, is recessed by one bay between the corner wings; above the wings, the slab is flanked on the north and south by a slightly recessed, slightly lower two-bay wide portion.

The first- through third-story levels on the Rockefeller Plaza facade are given over to triple-height bays, two each of windows on the lower wings, and two each of windows in the center of the slab, flanking a central entranceway. The triple-height window bays in the north wing have structural black glass lintels in their central portions, presumably the original treatment for all of them.

The central entrance comprises two bronze-enframed revolving doors flanking central paired doors, rising above which is the two-story stainless-steel sculpture of "News" (see p.211). The entrance is slightly recessed, and on the narrow side-walls thus formed are triple-story bronze grilles. Besides this central entrance, each wing has a subsidiary single-story entrance set between its two triple-height windows.

The remainder of the slab and its wings is articulated with typical vertical window-spandrel bays set between limestone piers; the spandrels, vertically ridged, are also limestone. The window bays in the wings rise to decorative pier and roofline terminations, as do those in the slab. Two stories of bays at the top of the slab hold grilles instead of windows.

On the 51st Street facade, the five-story wing continues down the street, with the slab rising behind and above it. Its architectural treatment is identical to that on Rockefeller Plaza, with triple-story window bays at the base and a central recessed entrance in the same configuration. Most of the triple-story window bays retain their structural black glass lintels. The entrance includes two bronze enframed revolving doors, and is framed by a triple-height band of diagonally-set, vertical bronze slats.

The 50th Street facade is treated identically to the 51st Street facade, but in place of a central entrance there is the entrance to the Guild Theater, with a new marquee, and three theater exits in the bays to the west; the two westernmost bays of the elevation at the ground floor level open to the ramp of the Center°s truck entrance.

The western central wing that projects from the rear of the main slab of the building is visible from either street.

* * * * *

Significant features include but are not limited to:

ROCKEFELLER PLAZA FACADE

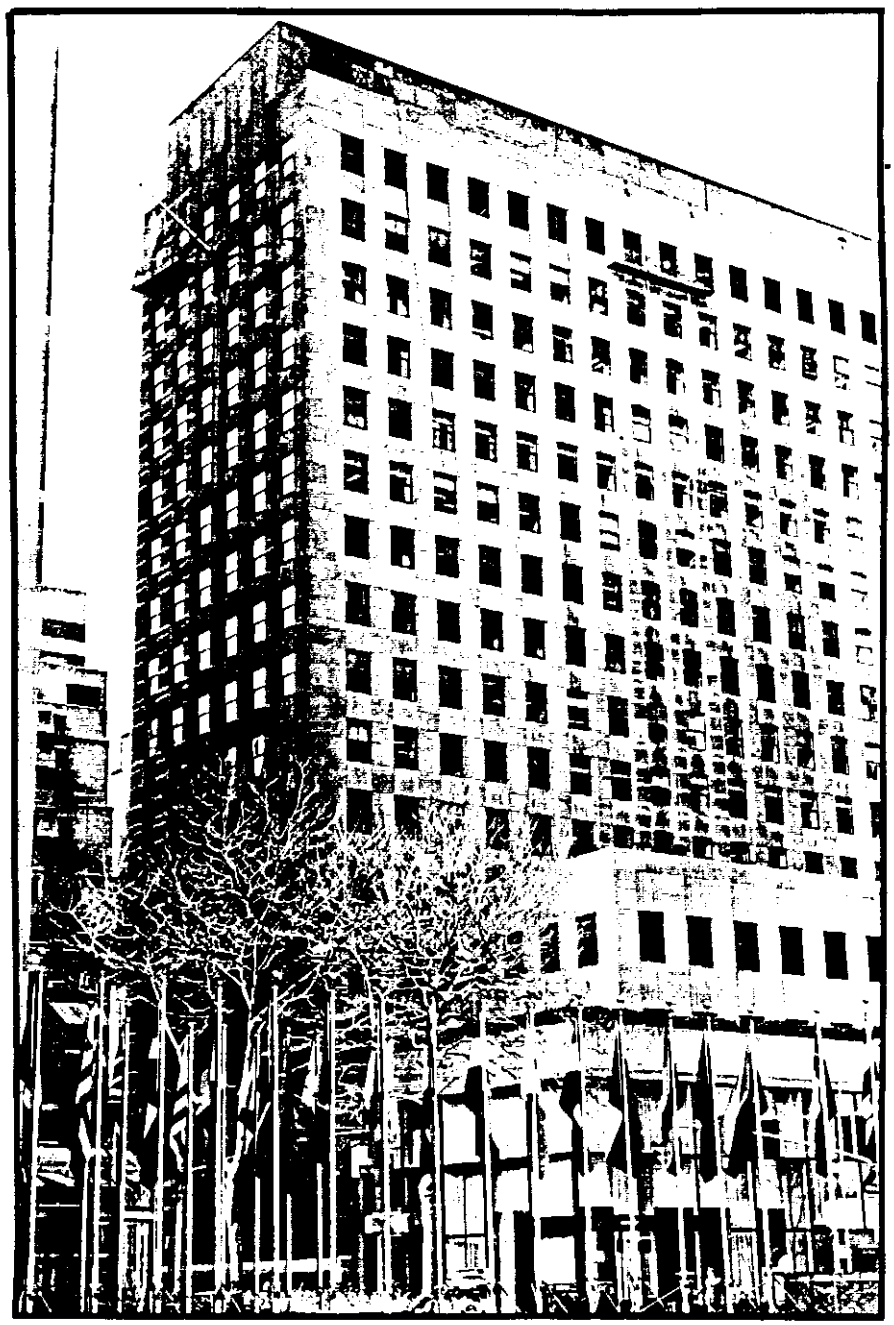
- Buff colored shot sawed Indiana limestone cladding
- Vertically ridged limestone spandrels
- Decorative pier and roofline terminations
- Low polished granite base
- Bronze-enframed doors
- Three-story high vertical bronze grilles at entrance
- 2/1 double-hung steel sash
- Bronze framed large single panes
- Triple-height display windows with beveled bronze framed glass fronts
- Bronze framed structural black glass lintels
- Stainless steel sculpture of "News" (see p.211)
- Raised lettering spelling "THE ASSOCIATED PRESS BUILDING," on either side of the central entrance
- Raised lettering spelling "50 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA" over entrance
- Large metal hinge in the pavement running between the two lower wings at the lot line

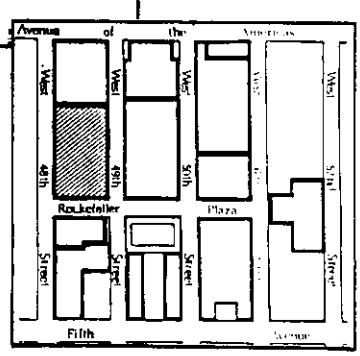
WEST 50TH STREET FACADE

- Buff colored shot sawed Indiana limestone cladding
- Vertically ridged limestone spandrels
- Decorative pier and roofline terminations
- Low polished granite base
- Bronze-enframed theater entrances and exits
- Bronze-enframed modernistic ticket booth
- 2/1 double-hung steel sash
- Bronze framed large single panes
- Bronze framed structural black glass lintels
- Raised bronze lettering spelling "ROCKEFELLER CENTER TRUCK ENTRANCE 41 WEST 50 ST" over the truck entrance

WEST 51ST STREET FACADE

- Buff colored shot sawed Indiana limestone cladding
- Vertically ridged limestone spandrels
- Decorative pier and roofline terminations
- Low polished granite base
- Bronze-enframed revolving doors
- Triple-height band of diagonally-set, vertical bronze slats at entrance
- 2/1 double-hung steel sash
- Bronze-enframed large single panes
- Bronze framed structural black glass lintels
- Bronze framed large single panes
- Raised letters spelling "THE ASSOCIATED PRESS BUILDING," on either side of the entrance
- Raised letters spelling "34 WEST 51ST STREET" over entrance





IO ROCKEFELLER PLAZA

(Originally Eastern Airlines Building)
Feb. 1939 - Oct. 1939

The decision to develop the property at 10 Rockefeller Plaza terminated all plans for the establishment of a new Opera house at Rockefeller Center. For years this plot had been set aside for the purpose, but financial pressures --- and the desire to finish the conspicuously incomplete southern block of the complex --- led to the scheme's abandonment in 1937.[1] The decision also killed any lingering hopes for a system of connected gardens atop low-rise roofs, a plan likewise disrupted by the construction of the Associated Press Building in 1938.

Rockefeller had hoped to have the complex completed by the mid-1930s but for years the full southern block (east of the Center Theater) was used as a parking lot --- the largest in New York.[2] Its specific development, although not enthusiastically endorsed by Rockefeller, was a practical maneuver. Writing to his father in autumn of 1938, Nelson Rockefeller expressed the frank opinion that the project would never be seriously considered were it an outside investment, but under the circumstances he thought it "an extremely sound step to take."[3]

When the proposal to build was publicly announced, the developers would only classify the new structure as a "special building."[4] They had several tenants in mind. Among them was the Holland House Corporation of the Netherlands, an organization of Dutch cultural and commercial interests. Negotiations were finalized with the latter in September 1939, for the construction of a building. It was meant to "symbolize in a tangible way efforts to [commercially] link the United States and the Netherlands" and foster "a better understanding of their respective educational and cultural achievements."[5] It was to include Dutch shops, restaurants and an exhibition hall, thereby extending the commercial, entertainment and international themes of the complex. An adjacent garage (between Holland House and the Center Theater) was to continue the site's current parking lot function. Pending completion of their new quarters, the Dutch tenants occupied space on the twelfth floor of the International Building. They moved into their new home in March 1940, four months after its completion in November 1939.[6] Full realization of Dutch occupancy was cut short, however, by Hitler's invasion of the Netherlands. Ten Rockefeller Plaza served as the temporary offices of the government-in-exile.

Happily, the Rockefeller developers had been negotiating simultaneously with Eastern Airlines (which included among its board of trustees Laurence Rockefeller, son of John D. Rockefeller, Jr.). The corporation was flourishing after a decade of checkered success.

Like all of America's early commercial airlines, Eastern was born of the mail routes established in 1925. It launched its first regularly scheduled service for mail, passengers, and express on April 1, 1926.[7] Four years, a change of ownership, and several mishaps later, it inaugurated the first passenger service between Washington and a shed at North Beach (now LaGuardia Airport) to which intrepid passengers were rushed by speedboat from the city. The company was determined to establish an airlink over the industrialized East and extended its routes to Miami with the first sleeper plane in late 1930. The flight offered transit from New York in a speedy fourteen hours --- with eleven stops.

Temporary suspension of the mail contract and the Depression in general brought enormous deficits and purchase of Eastern by General Motors in 1933. Two years later, under general manager Eddie (ace pilot) Rickenbacker, Eastern Airlines showed its first profit. When Rickenbacker became president in April 1938, air routes were forged between the principal eastern cities, and the now prospering company contracted for new offices at Rockefeller Center. The Eastern Airlines Building was dedicated on October 15, 1940, as Mayor LaGuardia offered thanks that airplanes in America were still used for peaceful pursuits.[8] Barely one year later they were called to war.

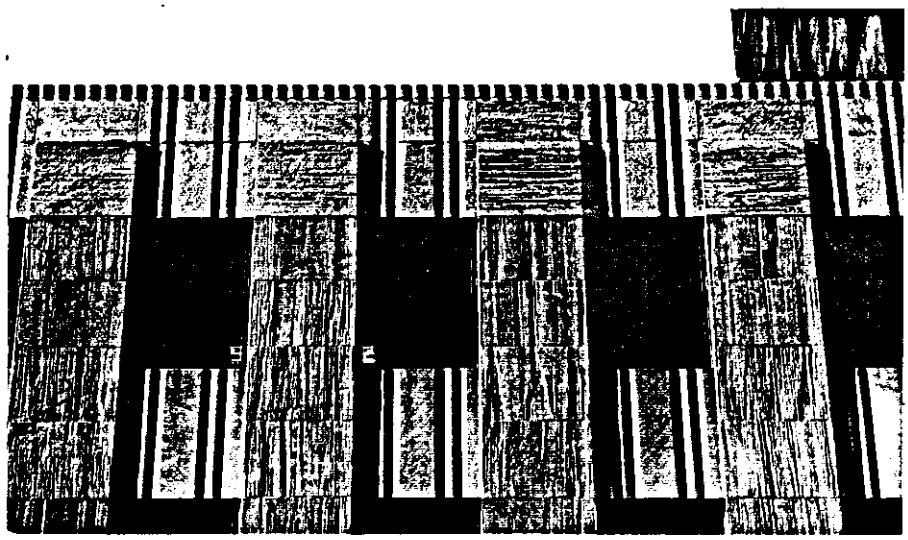
Beyond the benefits of leasing a large amount of space (a lease which Rickenbacker signed in midflight), Eastern Airlines added yet another dimension --- that of transportation --- to the communications tenants at Rockefeller Center. In addition to the company's air transport, Eastern Airlines also established a ground shuttle to LaGuardia Airport.[9] The transportation theme was further extended by the parking garage adjacent to the Eastern Airlines Building, by the Sixth Avenue subway (opened in 1940), and by the tenancy at Rockefeller Center of the U.S. Rubber Company and later, by the construction of the Esso Building (1946-47).

Excavation for the building began in October 1938. Its steelwork topped out six months later.[10] The building design was selected from among ten presented to the developers in the preceding year.[11] As actualized, it included a 16-story slab. Preferred as an architectural form by the now-dominant designer Wallace Harrison, it was essentially a smaller and more refined version of the Time-Life Building which preceded it by two years.[12] The naturally ventilated slab structure was flanked on the north and south by four story air conditioned wings, set back above double-story glass-front shops and exhibition space.

Front elevation, view north along Rockefeller Plaza.

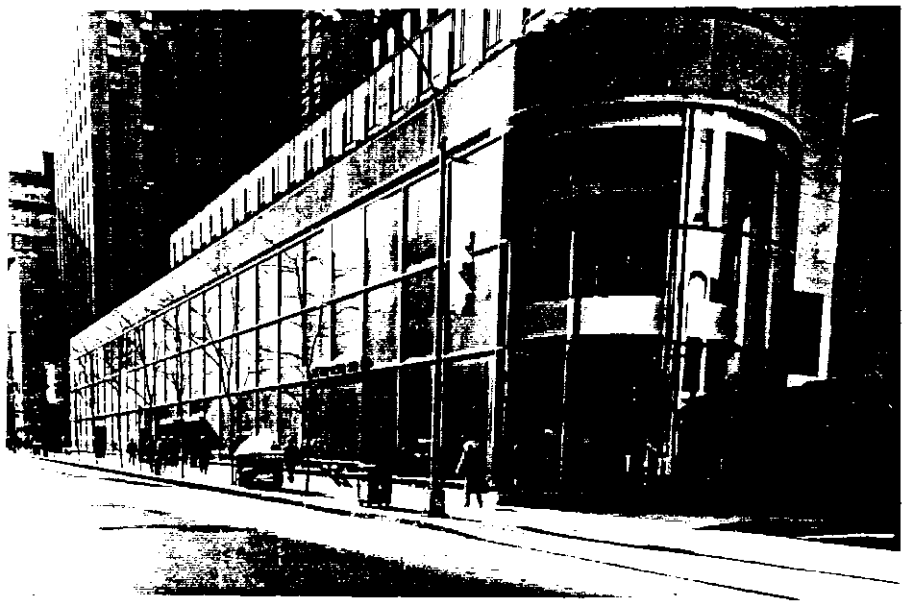
West 48th Street elevation, view east.

Unlike all previous units in the complex (which retained a masonry aesthetic despite their skeletal frames), the Eastern Airlines Building exploited the new machine aesthetic with its 200 foot long expanses of Satinol Louvrex (a new type of glass).[13] It depended for effect on the contrast between its glass wings and the severe masonry slab above. The shot sawed finish of the limestone cladding adds texture as do the vertically ridged spandrels and cabled cornice. The latter is rendered in a rounded, more moderne version of the faceted moldings atop the low-rise international units.



Fourth story roofline, W. 49th Street.

The Eastern Airlines Building was also unique in having no exterior ornament. Instead, its glass entrance on Rockefeller Plaza (a streamlined version of that on the International Building) reveals the lobby mural within. Also new was the building's rounded moderne corner on West 48th Street (which later inspired a twin in the Simon & Schuster Building's extension). The curve leads one naturally into the adjacent parking garage, much as Rockefeller's "oilcan" was intended to draw pedestrians off Fifth Avenue.



West 49th Street elevation, view east.

The glass enclosure was designed for the "utmost flexibility in renting purposes."[14] But for years prospective tenants were "baffled" by the space. Aside from temporary exhibitions, it was a "war time white elephant" which remained largely vacant. The situation improved after Carson & Lundin (the Center's successor architects) dropped an office mezzanine from the double story ceiling and indirectly lit the lower space from behind louvered metal fascia.[15] Their modification was subsequently altered, but the mezzanine format was retained.

At the western end of the building is a six-story parking garage, occuping the midblock area which was less desirable for office space (much as the NBC studios lie between the RCA Building and RCA Building West, and the Music Hall between the Associated Press and RKO buildings one block further north). The garage perpetuated the site's original use as a parking lot and, like the private street and subterranean truck route, helped to reduce surface level congestion around the complex. It also facilitated access to the Center for those who could not, or would not, use the subway.

Until the Zoning Resolution was amended in 1935, midtown parking grages had been prohibited. The one constructed at Rockefeller Center was unprecedented in the area (although the Sofia Bros. had constructed one at 61st Street and Columbus Avenue in the late 1920s, while other early examples appeared in Detroit, Montreal, and elsewhere).[16] The six-story facility had three floors below ground, one at street level, and two above. Access for 800 cars was provided by three one-way entrances on 48th Street and two on 49th (each of which is 20 feet wide). Careful attention was paid to patron's comfort. Attendants slid down bronze firepoles to retrieve automobiles in record time as car owners relaxed in a spacious lounge. A chauffeurs' room with a ping pong table and other recreational facilities was also provided.

The garage was opened for business in late June 1939, four months before the adjacent Eastern Airlines Building was completed. Originally two separate structures, they were joined in 1940.[17] The exterior of the building remains substantially intact. Its most significant alterations were the installation of an additional bronze muntin in the southern glass block along West 48th Street and Rockefeller Plaza, and a new door, jambs and lintel in a 48th Street shopfront.

TEN ROCKEFELLER PLAZA BUILDING FOOTNOTES

1. "Rockefeller Center Abandons Opera Plans...," NYT, 5/11/37, p. 1:6.

2. "Park Your Car, Mister?," RCW, 2 (June 27, 1935), 10.

3. 9/11/38, quoted in Krinsky, p. 97-98.

4. "Abandons Opera...," p. 1.

5. "One of Final Rockefeller Center Units Will Be Occupied by Netherlands Group," NYT, 9/6/38, p. 32:2.

6. NB15-38.

7. Floyd D. Hall, Sunrise at Eastern: Rebirth of Pioneer Airline, New York, 1965, p. 7ff.

8. "Airline Building is Dedicated Here," NYT, 4/7/39, p.40:2.

9. Krinsky, p. 96-97.

10. "New Rockefeller Unit is Topped Out," NYT, 4/7/39, p.40:2.

11. Krinsky, p. 156.

12. The building was filed under the names of Reinhard & Hofmeister; Harrison, Corbett & MacMurray; and Hood[deceased] & Fouilhoux. Reinhard, however, attributed it to himself and Hofmeister, Harrison and Fouilhoux("For the Record,"Architectural Forum, 88 (Feb. 1948), 30. See also Krinsky, p. 90.

13. RCM, 2 (Dec. 1939), 18.

14. "Building No. 11," Architectural Forum, 72 (Jan. 1940), 23-28.

15. "RCA Exhibition Hall...", Architectural Forum, 87 (Aug. 1947), 58-59.

16. "Automobiles in the News," NYT, 7/9/39, Sect. 10, p. 8:1.

17. ALTs 101-40 and 2602-40.

TEN ROCKEFELLER PLAZA (ORIGINALLY EASTERN AIRLINES BUILDING) -- DESCRIPTION

The building at 10 Rockefeller Plaza faces onto Rockefeller Plaza from the west, extends through the block from 48th Street to 49th Street, and is connected to the addition of the Simon and Schuster Building at the west. The building is a limestone-clad skeletal steel structure which rises as a sixteen-story slab running east-west above two tiers of shops, parking garage, and offices. From Rockefeller Plaza the tiers symmetrically flank the slab with the upper level of four-story office tiers extending westward to the Simon and Schuster Building on 48th Street and the length of the slab on 49th Street. The walls of the slab and the office tiers are articulated with flat limestone piers of uniform width which terminate in a cabled cornice. Between and slightly recessed behind the piers are steel sash. Above the windows are limestone spandrels with vertical ridges. Below the setback office tiers, accented by roof gardens, are three-story tiers with shops and showrooms extending outward to the lot line. The main building entrance with revolving doors and lobby windows is centered below the slab on Rockefeller Plaza. The shop tiers feature walls of glass framed in bronze, which wrap around the Rockefeller Plaza corners and terminate in a streamlined curve at the western end on 49th Street. Two-story polished chrome columns may be seen behind the 49th Street wall. Some modifications have been made to these glass walls with the insertion of revolving doors and a pair of solid brass service doors on 49th Street, the insertion of a glass door in the northern tier on Rockefeller Plaza, and the insertion of a glass door in the eastern section on 48th Street. At the western end of this tier on 48th Street, opaque rather than clear glass indicates the presence of a parking garage. Modern brass and glass doors are placed in the recessed entrance on 48th Street, and a modern doorway has been added to the shop east of the parking garage. On 48th Street is a large opening for the parking garage, indicated by large round columns, painted brown, and a fixed projecting canopy over the sidewalk. On 49th Street a limestone-faced office section linked to the Simon and Schuster Building rises above the garage entrance with large round columns, also painted brown, and a V-shaped projecting canopy.

* * * * *

Significant features include but are not limited to:

-Buff-colored smooth and shot-sawed Indiana limestone cladding
-Slightly projecting limestone piers of uniform width
-Vertically ridged limestone spandrels
-Cabled cornice at office tiers, lateral setbacks and roof

49TH STREET FACADE

1ST FLOOR:
-Polished granite base
-Gray concrete pavement

GARAGE ENTRANCE with:
-round columns
-V-shaped projecting canopy

1ST-3RD FLOORS:

THREE-STORY SHOP TIER with:
-Beveled bronze frames surrounding sheets of glass
-Roof garden

UPPER OFFICE FLOORS:
-2/1 steel sash

ROCKEFELLER PLAZA FACADE

1ST FLOOR:
-Polished granite base
-Gray concrete pavement

MAIN ENTRANCE:
-Polished white marble slab above doors and lobby windows
-Three sets of revolving doors
-Two solid brass fire doors
-Bronze framed lobby windows
-Bronze grates at building line in pavement

1ST-3RD FLOORS:

-Double-height windows with single sheets of glass above main entrance
-Two wooden flagpoles with brass globe terminations and bronze anchors
-Bronze-framed windows with large sheets of glass in shop tiers
-Roof gardens

OFFICE FLOORS:
-2/1 steel sash

48TH STREET FACADE

1ST FLOOR:
- -Polished granite base
- -Gray concrete pavement
- -Brass fire stair door

SHOPFRONTS with:
- -Beveled bronze frames
- -Black structural glass lintels

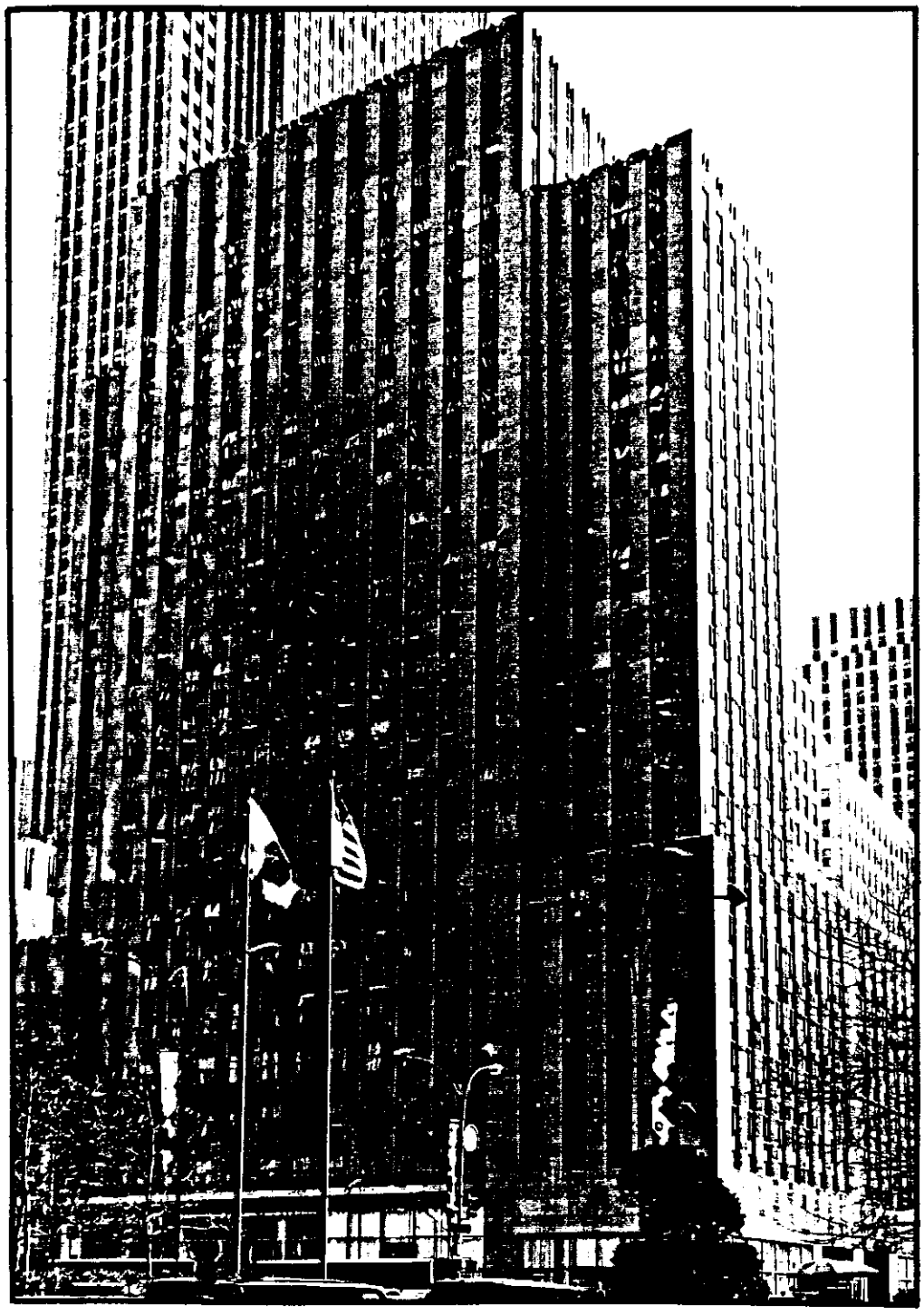
GARAGE with:
- -round columns
- -projecting canopy

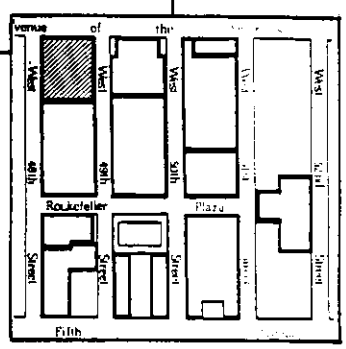
1ST-3RD FLOORS:
- -Bronze-framed opaque sheets of glass in parking garage section above shops
- -Bronze-framed sheets of glass in shop tier at eastern end
- -Roof gardens

UPPER OFFICE FLOORS:
- -2/1 steel sash

WESTERN FACADE (FACING SIMON & SCHUSTER)

ALL FLOORS:
- -2/1 steel sash





SIMON & SCHUSTER BUILDING

(Originally U.S. Rubber Company Building & Addition)

May - Nov. 1939, Dec 1954 - Dec. 1955

Construction of the Time-Life (1936-37) and Eastern Airlines (1939) buildings left only one site vacant. Its development completed the Center's southern block (48th-49th Sts.) --- and the entire original complex, the largest private building project ever undertaken. The scheme was fully realized in 1939-40 when the U.S. Rubber Company Building was erected on Sixth Avenue. Although six more structures would subsequently be added (four on the west side of Sixth Avenue), they were due to Rockefeller's sons. John D. Rockefeller, Jr.'s Center was complete.[1]

The new structure was located on an irregular plot to the southwest (in front of) and partially over the Center Theater. The land was purchased only after the Radio Group had been completed. For years it had been an undesirable location but zoning revisions in 1936 and the demolition of the El three years later breathed new life into previously shabby Sixth Avenue.

In 1938-39 the U.S. Rubber Company received an irresistable offer to lease space in Rockefeller Center.[2] As a result, the Company left its home at 1790 Broadway, which had been built in 1912 as its headquarters and tire distribution center in what was then New York's "Automobile Row."[3] The company's relocation had great significance for Rockefeller's complex as it lured away a major tenant from the competition of Columbus Circle --- an area which was (and still is) awaiting full development of its entertainment and commercial potential. The deal simultaneously brought to Rockefeller Center an important long-term lease while expanding the profile of its large corporate tenants from communications and international concerns to modern industry.

The U.S. Rubber Company was cresting on an almost miraculous recovery from near bankruptcy ten years prior. Established in 1892 by the merger of nine domestic manufacturers, its profits were based in large part on the sale of tires and especially rubber boots and shoes. It prospered during World War I from the production of gas masks and military rainwear and flourished in its aftermath as a result of America's automobile craze and the new highways which encouraged it. Unfortunately for the U.S. Rubber Company, the Depression found few cars on the road while unusually mild winters generated little call for rubber footware. In 1932 president Francis B. Davis informed his staff that the company was "hanging by a [Lastex] thread."[4] It proved golden. A newly developed rubber extrusion, Lastex became the "miracle yarn" and rescued the company with its use in the production of corsets, hosiery and swimsuits. The introduction of foam rubber (the happy result of a laboratory accident) in 1934 aided

financial recovery with its widespread use in bus seats, mattresses and streamlined sleeper trains. In December 1938, the U.S. Rubber Company resumed dividend payments after a ten-year hiatus.

Excavation of the new building began in May 1939.[5] Its steelwork was completed six months later when, in a nationally broadcast ceremony, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. drove home a 2-lb. silver rivet (currently on view in the Simon & Schuster Building's lobby).[6] The program celebrated the structural completion of Rockefeller Center and lauded its employment of thousands of workers during the Depression. Mayor LaGuardia praised the complex for its enlightened urban planning while David Sarnoff identified it as "the keynote for all cities and buildings of tomorrow's better world."

Early plans had envisioned a tall building on the site and in anticipation the Center Theater had been structurally reinforced to bear additional load. The new building overlapped the lobby of the theater at the eighth floor, creating a similar arrangement as in the Music Hall-RKO Building whose Sixth Avenue facade it was clearly intended to complement. The new structure rose 20 floors, set back behind a double story glass entrance. It was flanked on the north by the Center Theater's projecting lobby and on the south by a corresponding eight-story office wing. The building was completed in March 1939, and occupied early the next month.[7]

In subsequent years the U.S. Rubber Company continued its prodigious growth, aided by the construction of synthetic rubber plants and by the production of World War II attack boats, munition supplies and military rainwear. By the early 1950s it needed additional space. It was accommodated by the demolition of the Center Theater and construction of a 19-story office extension in its place.

Since its construction in 1931-32 the Theater had been problematic. Planned as Roxy's showcase for a combined bill of stage and screen entertainment, it was largely eclipsed by the bigger and more sumptuous Music Hall. Just two weeks after the latter's opeing in late December 1932, its supra-vaudeville programming was replaced by a mixed bill similar to that at the "Roxy" (later Center) Theater.[9] Thus overshadowed, the theater had a checkered career. In 1936 its stage was extended for the production of lavish (and successful) musicals, followed four years later by the removal of 380 orchestra seats and the installation of a rink for ice skating spectaculars.[10] Supervised by Norman Bel Geddes, this alteration was seemingly inspired by the new success of the Center's Sunken Plaza. The

new programming gave back to the theater its unique identity, only to be outweighed in 1950 by NBC's requirement for additional studio space. It was then modified for use as the largest television studio in the world. But within three years its facilities were no longer adequate. NBC moved out just as the Rubber Company sought expansion. Rather than lose the latter as a tenant, Rockefeller Center sacrificed the theater.

Plans for the destruction of the Center Theater had been entertained as early as 1937 when schemes were submitted for the development of the Center's southern block.[11] They were realized in May 1954, Nelson Rockefeller explaining that the house "had not yet found itself."[12]

The new extension took the form of a 19-story air conditioned slab set perpendicular to the original U.S. Rubber Company Building on Sixth Avenue.[13] Its two lower stories were designed to echo the round-cornered glass exhibition space of the Eastern Airlines Building, located immediately east of the abutting parking garage. The building was designed by Wallace Harrison and Max Abramowitz, partners since 1941. It broke new new architectural ground, being instead a sympathetic continuation of the Center's earlier limestone clad buildings. Its east-west axis followed the line of the the Eastern Airlines Building slab and made optimal use of the midblock site on which it was erected.

W. 48th Street, view west. Original buildinal and perpendicular extension. Former Eastern Airlines Building at right.

W. 49th Street, elevation, view west.

The building and extension housed the U.S. Rubber Company for a total of 34 years. It was renamed "Uniroyal" in the mid-1960s in response to the company's global expansion. In 1974 Uniroyal moved its headquarters to Middlebury, Connecticut whereupon the building's use changed from the corporate headquarters for modern industry to an extension of the communications family at Rockefeller Center. The building was rechristened for Simon & Schuster, its major tenant since 1976.[14]

The exterior of the building remains substantially intact. Its only significant alteration was made in 1957 when a door on 48th Street was replaced by a shopfront.[15]

SIMON & SCHUSTER BUILDING FOOTNOTES

1. The structure was filed as an alteration of the Center Theater (ALT240-38). Reinhard attributed the building to himself & Hofmeister, Harrison and Fouilhoux ("For the Record," Architectural Forum, 88 (Feb. 1948), 30.

2. Krinsky, p. 99.

3. Glenn D. Babcock, History of the United States Rubber Company: A Case Study in Corporate Management, (Blooington: Indiana University Press, 1966), 115. See also G.R. Vila, The Story of Uniroyal, Inc.: 75 Years of Progress, (New York: Newcomen Society in North America, 1968).

4. Babcock, p. 326.

5. "Sixth Avenue Corner Site is Being Cleared," NYT, 5/3/39, p. 43:2.

6. "Rockefeller Center is Completed," NYT, 11/2/39, p.1:2. See also The Last Rivet: The Story of Rockefeller Center, a City Within a City, as Told at the Ceremony in Which John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Drove the Last Rivet of the Last Building, (New York: Rockefeller Center, Inc. 1939).

7. "Rockefeller City is Now Complete," NYT, 3/29/40.

8. NB75-31. For the Center Theater, see Krinsky, p. 187-195 and "Radio-Keith-Orpheum Theater," American Architect, 142 (Dec. 1932) 41-54.

9. The theater was originally named the "RKO Roxy" after its famous manager Samuel ("Roxy") Rothafel. It was rechristened the "Center Theater" in 1934 as a result of legal proceedings by William Fox. The latter owned the original Roxy Theater on 50th St. and Seventh Avenue and while he lost its namesake manager to Rockefeller Center, he sued to retain exclusive rights to Roxy's name (See "Old Roxy Keeps Right to its Name," NYT, 5/16/33, p. 15:1).

10. AIT 1925-40.

11. Krinsky, p. 156.

12. "Center Theater to be Torn Down," NYT, 10/22/53, p. 1:5. See Balfour, p. 98 for illus. of the demolition.

13. ALT85-54. For original rendering cf. "The Disciplines of Fenestration," Architectural Record, 117 (April, 1955) 200-224 (208).

14. "Now It's Uniroyal," NYT, 2/28/67, p. 58:3 and "Simon & Schuster Takes New Lease in New York," NYT, 7/8/76, p.54:5.

15. ALT 105-57.

SIMON & SCHUSTER BUILDING DESCRIPTION

The Simon & Schuster Building is a limestone clad skeletal steel structure located on the east side of Sixth Avenue between 48th and 49th Streets. It consists of a 23-story north-south tower and 20 story addition set perpendicular to the east. The central tower of the symmetrical Sixth Avenue facade is flanked on the north and south by a seven-story wing. The wings are connected by a broad double-story glass and bronze-mullion lobby wall. The tower is setback above the lobby's planted roof from which it rises sheer to its foliate crested roofline. Above the seventh story (at which level the wings terminate), the tower has a lateral setback on its north and south sides where recessed tower extensions rise to their foliate terminations on the 21st floor.

The building's extension (constructed in 1954-55) rises in five setbacks to a total 20 story height. It abuts Rockefeller Center's parking garage on the east. The extension's complex massing differs on the south and north. The former continues the limestone-aluminum spandrel aesthetic of the earliest buildings at Rockefeller Center; the latter takes on the more moderne, machine aesthetic introduced in the adjacent 10 Rockefeller Plaza (originally Eastern Airlines) Building. The West 49th Street elevation of the Simon & Schuster Building rises from the ground with a 3-story glass and bronze mullion wall (terminated by a limestone lintel with simple incised string course) whose rounded eastern corner echoes that of the original Eastern Airlines Building. The extension rises in four additional tiers, all with limestone-clad walls. The first (two-story) tier is setback from the planted rooftop of the glass base. The next tier rises ten additional stories before setting back again. A final setback occurs on the 18th floor above which the extension rises two more stories to its full height.

Unlike the 3-story glass front on West 49th Street, the southern (West 48th Street) elevation continues the height, wall plane and limestone massing of the building's seven-story southern wing on Sixth Avenue. The latter (original) wing joins the building extension in a broad pier with a conspicuous vertical joint. The ground floor of the extension is pierced by three large display windows, a modern restaurant entrance (which retains the original bronze frame) and three freight bays. The continuous 48th Street facade rises sheer from the street before setting back above the seventh story. It rises two additional stories before setting back again on the ninth floor. The third setback occurs above the 17th floor. The elevation sets back for a fourth time at the 18th floor after which the building terminates with two additional stories.

Although the eastern elevation of the Simon & Schuster Building abuts Rockefeller Center's parking garage, it reveals the structure's complex massing. Visible is the central slab of the extension with upper lateral setbacks, flanked on either side by successively recessed tiers. The seventh story limestone wing

on 48th Street wraps around the extension's southeastern corner (rising above the garage), its wall pierced by a large ventilation grill and terminating in foliate spandrels. The northeastern corner, by contrast, is articulated by the rounded termination of the three-story glass wing, above and behind which is the blind limestone wall of the second setback. The five tiered extension is centered behind (to the east of) the original north-south slab along Sixth Avenue. Unlike the slab's southeast elevation, its northeast wall has a gentle ninth-story setback below which the slab is largely faced in long aluminum spandrels. The building's northern Sixth Avenue wing is recessed west of the slab's eastern wall.

* * * * *

Significant features include but are not limited to:

-Buff colored shot sawed Indiana limestone cladding
-Slightly projecting limestone piers, wider at corners but otherwise of uniform width
-Polished granite base

SIXTH AVENUE FACADE

1st-2nd Stories

LOBBY:
-Glass lobby curtain wall with bronze angular muntins and rounded mullions
-Polished granite lintel above glass lobby wall
-6 truncated pyramidal bronze light hoods on granite lintel (6 additional light hoods on north and south wings)
-Planted lobby rooftop
MAIN ENTRANCE:
-2 bronze-framed glass revolving doors with curved polished granite outer jambs, bowed bronze lintels surmounted by freestanding bronze numerals: "1230"

3 GLASS SHOPFRONTS with:
-bronze angular muntins and rounded mullions
-Northern shop: 2 bronze-framed glass doors, glazed vertical light (at left of doors), bronze jambs (entrance located at left of shop)
-Left center shop: veined black marble left jamb, glass and bronze right jamb (entrance located at left of shop)
-Southernmost shop: central revolving door with splayed bronze jambs

SUBWAY ENTRANCE:
-Vertically ridged bronze jambs
-Projecting bronze and black metal moderne subway sign

7-story wings, central tower and lateral tower extensions
-2/1 steel sash (slightly recessed)
-vertically ridged slate gray cast aluminum spandrels
-Slate gray cast aluminum foliate spandrels (2 eyelet variety) on all setbacks; elongated version on central tower's uppermost mechanical housing floors
-Gothic arcade (central tower and southern wing)
-2 wooden flagpoles with bronze globe terminations and anchors, angled over Sixth Avenue at fourth story

SOUTHERN (48TH STREET) FACADE

1st Floor

-Polished granite base (higher on either side of the two westernmost freight bays)

ENTRANCE:
-Bronze-framed glass revolving door flanked on either side by a glazed vertical light and bronze-framed glass door; surmounted by broad glazed transom
-Bronze lintel and jambs

1 SHOPFRONT:
-original bronze frame (otherwise modified)

3 LARGE DISPLAY WINDOWS:
-Bronze frames, mullions and muntins (rounded mullions in easternmost window)

3 FREIGHT BAYS

1st Tier (2nd-7th floors) & Southern Elevation of Original Tower
-2/1 steel sash (slightly recessed)
-Vertically ridged slate gray cast aluminum spandrels
-Slate gray cast aluminum foliate spandrels (2 eyelet variety) at roof levels

2nd-5th Tiers of Extension
-2/1 steel sash (slightly recessed)
-Vertically ridged limestone spandrels
-Vertical cable molding at roof levels

NORTHERN (49TH STREET) ELEVATION

1st Floor
-Polished granite base (rising toward west)

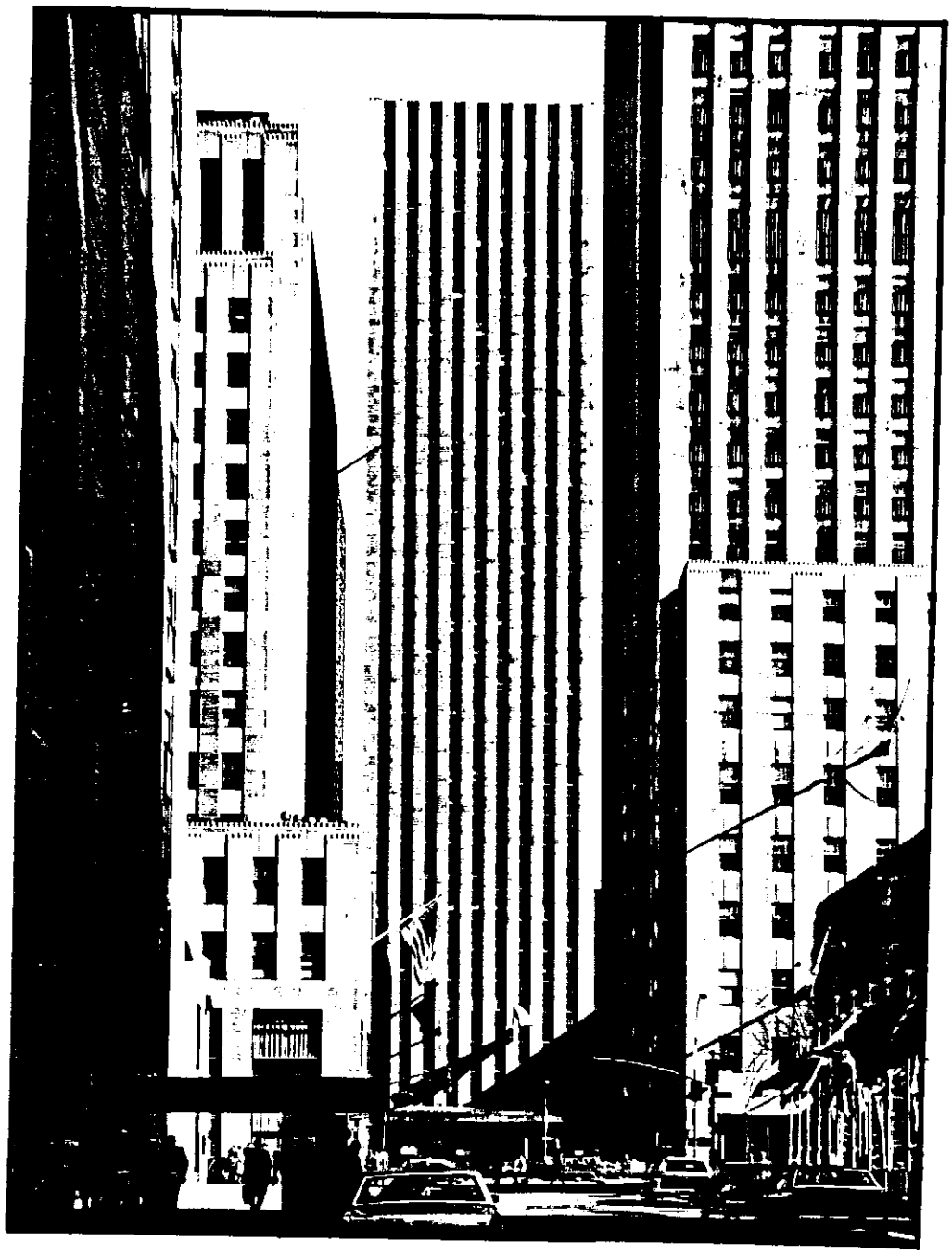
GLASS EXTENSION:
-Bronze mullions and muntins (uniformly square in section)
-Limestone lintel with incised upper string course
-Planted rooftop
-Building entrance: 2 bronze-framed glass doors flanked on either side by a vertical glazed light and a bronze-framed glass revolving door; splayed limestone jambs
-Left center entrance: 2 bronze-framed glass revolving doors on either side of central glazed light; bronze and glass jambs

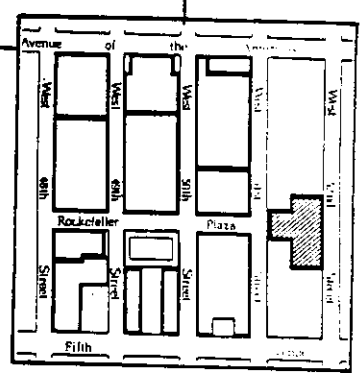
2nd-5th Tiers of Extension:
-2/1 steel sash (slightly recessed)
-Vertically ridged limestone spandrels
-Vertical cable molding at roof levels

Northern elevation of Sixth Avenue Wing and Tower:
-Shopfront with bronze muntins and rounded bronze mullions
-Bronze jambs of entrance at west
-2/1 steel sash (slightly recessed)
-Vertically ridged slate gray aluminum spandrels
-Slate gray cast aluminum foliate spandrels (2 eyelet variety) at roof levels

REAR (EASTERN) FACADE

-2/1 steel sash (slightly recessed), used uniformly except for the:
-3/3 steel sash (slightly recessed) which appear in the 16th-20th floors of the extension's central mass and 7th floor of the southern extension
-Vertically ridged slate gray cast aluminum spandrels on Sixth Avenue tower and wings and above 6th story of the southern extension
-Slate gray cast aluminum foliate spandrels (2 eyelet variety) on setbacks and roofs of the Sixth Avenue tower and its northern wing, and on the 7th story of the southern extension
-Vertically ridged limestone spandrels (used uniformly in extension)
-Vertical cable molding on all roof levels of extension
-Rounded corner of glass extension





WARNER COMMUNICATIONS BUILDING

(Orignally ESSO Building)
75 Rockefeller Plaza
July 1946 - Sept. 1947

In 1941 America entered the war which Rockefeller had for years attempted to forestall through the promotion of international commerce. Its impact was significant on his Center which now solidified its central role in the city as the site of Victory Gardens and many a war-time rally. Moreover, limited manpower and restrictions on building supplies insured the Center's uniqueness and prevented construction of more up-to-date developments elsewhere. Throughout the war it remained the most fashionable and prominent commercial complex in the world.[1]

From 1941 the Center was rented to capacity, bulging with occupants who had outgrown their original quarters. When the war ended in 1945, Rockefeller had no choice but to expand the complex with additional office space or lose important corporate tenants. Development plans were announced as early as May 1944.[2]

Among the tenants most pressed for space was Rockefeller's own Standard Oil Company which in the course of a decade had far outgrown its three- and finally eight-story lease in the RCA Building.[3] Various sites were discussed but ultimately it was decided to use the midblock property between West 51st-52nd Streets. The decision terminated for good any lingering plans for a northern extension of Rockefeller Plaza.

The idea was approved in July 1944, and plans for a 16-story building entertained. But financial pressures more than doubled its size for a final total of 33-stories. Rising to a height of 424 feet, this fifteenth unit became the fourth tallest in the complex. It was begun in March 1946, and completed in early autumn of the same year.[4] The building was designed by Robert Carson and Earl Lundin, partners since 1941, with Wallace Harrison consulting. For years Carson & Lundin had worked for the Associated Architects and ultimately succeeded them as resident architects of the Center. The Esso building was just one of several which Carson & Lundin designed for Standard Oil and one of two executed by the firm at Rockefeller's complex.[5]

The building was designed to maintain the limestone and aluminum spandrels of the earlier Center buildings, and it likewise retained their aesthetic of continuous vertical piers and slightly recessed windows. It deviated, however, from their 27-1/2 foot standard, replacing the earlier slab or setback massing with a tower of greater bulk. It was anticipated in this by the Associated Press Building in 1938 where tenant requirements for unobstructed space occasioned a chunky air-conditioned block with a naturally ventilated slab set behind. The Esso Building extended this form vertically. It had the distinction upon its completion in 1946 of being the first fully air conditioned office building in New York. It was preceded in

this by the Milam Building in San Antonio, Texas (1928) which, however, had remained somewhat of a curiosity.[6] As a result of the enormous amount of required machinery, the building's floors are spaced more widely than was customary, air conditioning units being installed on every third floor to keep duct size at a minimum. It set in motion the tremendous undertaking of air conditioning the entire Rockefeller complex, a process which was completed in 1960.[7]

The form of the Esso Building was also affected by recent changes in the zoning laws which allowed it to occupy 65 percent of the land area above the second floor.[8] The structure has a T-shaped plan with ten-story wings rising along 52nd Street. Its stem continues through the block and fronts on 51st Street where the building respects pre-existing structures with its low-lying entrance and setback tower. The set back has a rooftop terrace and thus continues the Center's tradition of commercial landscaping.

The tower itself goes largely unnoticed in the east-west streetscape of West 51st Street. By contrast, it plays a dominant role along Rockefeller Plaza. Its position at the northern terminus of the private street makes the Esso Building a powerful north-south visual focus. It established a strong vertical axis in the Center, much as the RCA Building did along the Channel Gardens.

Although the building prevented extension of Rockefeller Plaza, its lobby was designed from the start as a northern gateway to the Center. Original schemes called for a shop-lined pedestrian arcade which would lead through the 51st-52nd Street block.[9] Plans were subsequently modified to include a spacious lobby divided by central elevator banks. It was flanked on the east by Esso's Tourist Information Bureau,[10] and by Schrafft's Restaurant on the west. The latter extended through the entire

Main entrance, W. 51st Street.

W. 52nd Street elevation, view west.

block and accommodated 1,283 persons, making it the world's largest restaurant.[11] The uniform glazing of the units on either side of the 51st Street entrance and of the entire 52nd Street facade gives the building a "straight through" appearance and realizes, in effect, the street's proposed extension. This is especially true on 52nd Street where the sprawling glazed wings offer an inviting entrance into the Center. The exit out of the complex (the building's narrower 51st Street facade) is considerably less forceful. Here the straight through impression is had only in the section east of the central doorway. That on the west has been stenciled in black to give the appearance of much smaller shopfronts. The gateway effect is the solitary reminder of the grand scheme to connect Rockefeller Center with the Museum of Modern Art and Cultural Center.

W. 52nd Street entrance.

The siting, technical and integrational features of the Esso Building won for it an award as the best large post-war structure erected in the Fifth Avenue district.[12] It was celebrated for years as a notable example of new skyscraper form.[13] The building housed Esso until 1971 when the still growing company moved into the new Exxon Building in the Center's extension on the west side of Sixth Avenue. It was then leased to the Kinney Company,[14] but taken over by Warner Communications after extensive renovation (no exterior effect).[15] As in the U.S. Rubber Company Building (which became the Simon & Schuster Building in the late 1970s), the change of tenancy from Exxon to Warner marked the change from modern industry to a further extension of Rockefeller Center's communications family.

WARNER COMMUNUICATIONS BUILDING FOOTNOTES

1. Krinsky, p. 102ff.

2. "Rockefeller Center Plans New Buildings After War," NYT, 5/4/44, p.1:2.

3. "Standard Oil Co. to Move Uptown," NYT, 6/27/33, p. 22:1 and "Rockefeller Center," Fortune, 14 (Dec. 1936), 138-144 (141).

4. NB201-45.

5. Carson & Lundin also executed the Manufacturer's Hanover Trust Building at 600 Fifth Avenue. They were earlier responsible for the installation of the permanent skating rink (ALT3444-39), its glass walled restaurants and two of NBC's largest studios as well as the Rockefeller Bros. offices. ("Earl H. Lundin Dead," NYT obit., 3/4/76, p. 34:3.)

6. Jordy, p.49.

7. Carter Horsley,"Two Buildings Get a Major Overhaul at Rockefeller Center," NYT, 4/8/73, Sect. 8, p.1.

8. "Postwar Skyscraper," Architectural Forum, 84 (May 1946) p. 91-93.

9. "...Plans New Buildings After War," p. 1.

10. "Lobby and Touring Center," Architectural Forum, 89 (Aug. 1948) p. 84-89.

11. "Restaurant in Rockefeller Center," Architectural Forum, 90 (Feb. 1949), 109-112.

12. "New Buildings Get Fifth Avenue Awards," NYT, 5/26/50, p. 41:1 and "Civic Group Cites Esso Building for Best Post-war Arcxhitecture," NYT, 4/23/50, Sect. 8, p. 1:5.

13. James S. Hornbeck, "A Review of the New Skyscraper," Architectural Record, 121 (March 1957), 228ff (p. 244).

14. "$80 Million in Rent Set for Lease of Building," NYT, 4/18/71, Sect. 8, p. 1:6.

15. Horsley, p. 1.

WARNER COMMUNICATIONS BUILDING DESCRIPTION

The Warner Communications Building is a 33-story limestone clad skeletal steel structure located on the northern end of Rockefeller Plaza. It extends through the entire block between West 51st and West 52nd Streets. The narrow stem of the building's irregular T-shaped plan fronts on West 51st Street where the setback tower rises sheer from above the planted rooftop of a double-story base. The center of the base is dominated by a concave bronze wall which is pierced by the building's triple doors and two bronze service doors. All of the doors are surmounted by a projecting bronze lintel. On either side of the central bronze panel is double-story glass commercial space (each having four vertical panes and bronze mullions atop a low granite base). The glass in left (western) storefront has been stenciled in black to create the appearance of smaller windows. The entrance to this retail space is located in the second bay from the west. Further west is a double story polished granite wall, pierced at ground level by a service door. The wall terminates in a rectangular planter, above which two window bays of the building's ten-story West 52nd Street wings are visible. The commercial space on the right of the central bronze panel is entered through a modern revolving door located in the second bay from the east. The entire double-story base is crowned by a projecting bronze cornice with a long granite planter above. The setback tower is articulated with limestone piers of uniform width, cast aluminum spandrels and double hung steel sash.

The building's West 52nd Street (northern) elevation is longer and more complex in massing than its southern counterpart. It consists of three major parts: a two-and-three story base, long ten-story wings and a setback tower above. Rising from the lot line is a tripartite base. The central double-story mass is deeply recessed under a bronze overhang. It contains a triple pane glass wall flanked on either side by bronze piers and entrances into the lobby. On either side of the central mass are taller glazed wings crowned by a broad polished granite fascia with terminal planters. The left (eastern) wing contains an entrance recessed behind curved marble jambs. The right (western wing) is pierced by two modern commercial space entrances and a broad freight bay at far right. The building sets back and rises above the two-and-three story tripartite base with ten-story limestone and aluminum spandrel wings. The setback tower rises from the wings to its full 33 story height.

From 51st Street only the eastern elevation of the tower is visible, the lower masses of the building being concealed by adjacent structures. On 52nd Street, however, the eastern elevation of both the tower and its ten-story wings are visible. Both masses have the limestone pier-aluminum spandrel aesthetic which characterizes the entire building.

Only the tower of the western elevation is visible from the street. It is articulated in the same fashion as the other facades. It has longer aluminum spandrels above thetop nine northernmost window bays.

* * * * *

Significant features include but are not limited to:

-Polished granite base
-Buff colored shot sawed Indiana limestone cladding

WEST 51ST STREET FACADE

1st-2nd Stories

MAIN ENTRANCE

-Central concave bronze panel pierced by 3 bronze-framed glass revolving doors; the 3 are flanked on either side by a bronze service door
-Projecting bronze lintel over doors

DOUBLE STORY COMMERCIAL SPACE

-Glazing and bronze mullions atop polished granite base
-Bronze-framed revolving doors in bronze jambs flanked by vertical glazed lights (left storefront)
-Broad glazed transoms above entrances

-Projecting second-story bronze cornice with rectangular polished granite planter above
-Planted second-story rooftop

2nd-33rd Stories

-Limestone piers of uniform width (except a wider corners) with flat terminations
-Vertically ridged slate gray cast aluminum spandrels (elongated above 10th, 30th and 31st floors)
-2/1 double hung steel sash (slightly recessed)
-2 wooden flagpoles with bronze globe terminations and anchors, angled out from 5th story

WEST 52ND STREET ELEVATION

1st-2nd Stories

MAIN ENTRANCE (deeply recessed)

-Triple pane glass wall with bronze mullions
-Bronze piers and jambs
-Applied addresses in bronze letters: "22 WEST 52//75 Rockefeller Plaza" on far left and far right piers; "22 West 52 ST" on right center pier

-2 bronze-framed revolving doors flanked on either side by bronze and glass doors and crowned by glazed transom
-Bronze overhang with recessed spot lighting
-Deep bronze jambs, each pierced by two bronze service doors

2 WINGS OF BASE
-Glazed walls with bronze mullions and muntins
-Polished granite fascia with terminal planters
-Left wing: recessed bronze framed revolving door flanked on either side by a vertical glazed light and bronze and glass door; glass transom above; curved veined marble jambs and 2 granite steps to entrance
-Right wing: recessed freight bay at far right

3rd-10th Floors
-Long fixed single pane 3rd floor windows (slightly recessed); projecting lower window sills
-2/1 slightly recessed steel sash on 4-10th floors
-Limestone piers of uniform width (except wider at corners)
-Vertically ridged slate gray cast aluminum spandrels; longer above 13th floor
-2 wooden flagpoles with bronze globe terminations and anchors, angled out at center of facade at 4th story

11th-33rd Floor
-2/1 steel sash slightly recessed
-Limestone piers of uniform width (except wider at corners)
-Vertically ridged slate gray cast aluminum spandrels; longer above top floor

EASTERN AND WESTERN ELEVATIONS

-2/1 steel sash slightly recessed
-Limestone piers of uniform width (except wider at corners)
-Vertically ridged slate gray cast aluminum spandrels; longer above top floor of wings and tower

ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES

BUBA, (MARGARET) JOY FLINSCH (1904 -)

WORK AT ROCKEFELLER CENTER

-John D. Rockefeller, Jr. commemorative plaque, top of stairway to Sunken Plaza

Born in New York, Joy Buba (nee Flinsch) studied sculpture while still a child. She worked with Abastenia St. Leger Eberle in New York, the Staedeles Kunstinstitut in Frankfurt, and the Art Academy in Munich where she studied with Louis Schmidt, Angelo Yank and Theodor Kaerner. In addition to her bronze portrait of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., she executed images of such notables as Norman Thomas, Henry Stimson, Margaret Sanger, Konrad Adenauer and Pope Paul VI. A member of the National Sculpture Society, her work is respresented in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C. and the Palais Schaumberg in Bonn, Germany among others. Mrs. Buba currently resides in South Carolina.

REFERENCES

Art Digest (R.C.)
Biographical data from the National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C..
Gardner, Albert Ten Eyck, American Sculpture: A Catalogue of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Greenwich, CT.: New York Graphic Society, 1965.

CHAMBELLAN, RENE PAUL (1893 - 1955)

WORKS AT ROCKEFELLER CENTER

-Six bronze fountainheads, Channel Gardens
-Four sixth-story spandrels, main facade, British Building
-Four sixth-story spandrels, main facade, La Maison Francaise
-Six bronze plaques, main entrance, Radio City Music Hall

Although Chambellan's name suggests that he was a French artist, he was actually a native of West Hoboken, New Jersey. From 1912 to 1914 he attended New York University (where he later taught sculpture), followed by three years in the Beaux Arts Institute of Design and a period at the Ecole Julian in Paris. Upon his return to America Chambellan devoted himself to architectural sculpture, executing bronzes, bas-reliefs and heroic panels. His work with Raymond Hood on the Chicago Tribune Tower and Daily News Building doubtless led to his involvement in Rockefeller Center where he was employed at an hourly wage as an artistic handyman. Unlike the Center's other artists who were commissioned to execute specific works, Chambellan's responsibilities included everything from the preparation of architects' models to lending technical assistance to other artists (such as his work on the casting of "Atlas" and the plaster molds for Lee Lawrie's stone screen at the West 50th St. entrance to the International Building), to the execution of his own works. Among the latter, Chambellan's contributions ranged from his small decorative bronzes for Radio City Music Hall, to the larger Channel Garden fountain heads to the limestone spandrels over the sixth floors of the British Building and La Maison Francaise.

Chambellan had a distinguished career outside Rockefeller Center as well. In New York his works appears in the vestibule of the Chanin Building, in the East Side Airlines Terminal, the New York Life Insurance Building,and in the Russell Sage Foundation (now Gramercy Towers) where he collaborated with architect Grosvenor Atterbury. Elsewhere he worked on the Sterling Library at Yale University and the Pershing Stadium at Vincennes, France. He is likewise represented in the State Office Buildings at Buffalo and Albany and in Princeton, Cornell and Northwestern Universities. In addition to his architectural work, Chambellan was also a medalist, his notable creations being the Iwo Island commemorative medal and that for Cancer Control.

REFERENCES

Art Digest (R.C.)
Artist Index, NYPL
Balfour, passim.
NYT obit, 11/30/1955, p. 33.

FAULKNER, BARRY (1881 - 1966)

WORK AT ROCKEFELLER CENTER

-"Intelligence Awakening Mankind." Mosaic, main entrance, RCA Building West

After a year at Harvard, Faulkner went to Italy with his cousin Abbot Henderson Thayer under whose influence he became a mural painter. Faulkner later studied with George deForest Brush. In 1906-07 he attended the Art Students League in New York after which he became the first artist to hold the Prix de Rome in Painting at the American Academy in Rome (1907). He remained in Italy for three years before executing "Famous Men," his first mural in America (1910). This was followed by other notable commissions, including those at the Washington Irving High School, Cunard Building in New York, and the Eastman Theater in Rochester. From 1925 to 1929 Faulkner executed several mosaics at the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. in Ottawa and at the U.S. Cemetery at Thiacourt, France, followed in 1933 by his expansive mural for the RCA Building West. In subsequent years Faulkner devoted himself largely to mural paintings and executed most notably "The Constitution" and "Declaration of Independence" at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. as well as historical murals for the State Capitols at Salem, Oregon and Concord, New Hampshire. In 1965 Faulkner gave up his New York studio and retired permanently to his hometown of Keene, New Hampshire. He died there two years later at the ripe old age of 85.

REFERENCES

Art Digest.
Faulkner, Barry, Sketches from an Artist's Life, Dublin, NH: William L. Bauhan Publisher, 1973.
Howe, M.A. DeWolfe, Barry Faulkner's "Men of Monadnock," Keene, NH, n.d.
NYT obit., 10/28/66; 31:1.
Who's Who in American Art, 12 (1966) p. 138.

FRIEDLANDER, LEO (1890 - 1966)

WORKS AT ROCKEFELLER CENTER

-"Radio," two limestone reliefs, 50th Street entrance, RCA Building
-"Television," two limestone reliefs, 49th Street entrance, RCA Building

A native New Yorker, Friedlander received his first training at the Art Students League, followed by studies at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris and Brussels. In 1913 he won the Prix de Rome. Although Friedlander executed variously sized sculpture, he is best known for his monumental works. Among the best known are the figures of "Valor" and "Sacrifice" on the Arlington Memorial Bridge, "Memory" for the War Memorial in Richmond, Virginia, the "Covered Wagon" and sculptural groups of Lewis & Clark for the Oregon State Capitol, and the granite figure of Roger Williams in Providence, Rhode Island. Friedlander's reliefs for the RCA Building were relatively small in comparison with these works, each of which measured at least 18 feet and some considerably taller. Friedlander probably received his Rockefeller Center commission through Raymond Hood, with whom he'd worked at the Chicago Century of Progress exhibition. An avid proponent of the figural tradition, Friedlander resisted the avant garde, insisting that art should impart to the viewer "a sense of beauty and not revulsion." This one-time president of the National Sculpture Society died at age 78 in his White Plains, New York home.

REFERENCES

Art Digest (R.C.)
NYT obit, 10/25/66; 45:1.
Who's Who in American Art, 8 (1962), 210.

GARRISON, ROBERT (1895 - 1946)

WORKS AT ROCKEFELLER CENTER

-Three limestone panels, main facade, 1270 Avenue of the Americas (originally RKO) Building

Born in Fort Dodge, Iowa, Garrison trained at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art and later with Gutzon Borglum, sculptor of Mount Rushmore. His commission for the three limestone panels above the entrance to the RKO Building (now the 1270 Avenue of the Americas Building) most likely grew out of his work on Riverside Church to which Lee Lawrie also contributed. Representative works of Garrison are located at the Midland Savings Bank & Trust Company in Denver, Colorado a fountain for the Kings County Hospital in Brooklyn and sculpture for the U.S. Military Academy in Washington Hall.

REFERENCES

Art Digest (R.C.)
"Gets Contract for R.K.O. Building," NYT, 8/18/1932, p. 23:1.

JANNIOT, ALFRED (1889 - 1969)

WORKS AT ROCKEFELLER CENTER

-Bronze panel and limestone cartouche, main entrance, La Maison Francaise

Born in Paris, Janniot trained under Emile Antoine Bourdelle before winning the Grand Prix de Rome in 1919. He executed numerous works in France, including decorative reliefs for the Museum of Modern Art in Paris and the Memorial Monument in Nice. He is best known, however, for the enormous stone mural which entirely covers the facade of the Musee des Colonies in Vincennes (erected in 1931 for the Colonial Exposition). Some indication of its tapestry-like effect is found in the densely ornamented bronze plaque which Janniot executed for the entrance of La Maison Francaise. A Chevalier of the Legion of Honor and member of the French Academy of Rome, Janniot also worked on the decorations of the ocean liners "Normandie" and "Ile de France."

REFERENCES

Art Digest (R.C.)

Dictionnaire des Peintres, Sculpteurs, Graveurs, Dessinateurs et Graveurs, (E. Benezit), 1976, Vol. 6, p. 34.

"'Retrospectives' et Groupes Divers,"Le Bulletin de l'Art Ancien et Moderne, Paris, 1924.

"Un Groupement de Sculpteurs," Art et Decoration, 61(1932), 233-40.

JENNEWEIN, CARL PAUL (1890 - 1978)

WORKS AT ROCKEFELLER CENTER

-Bronze panel and limestone cartouche, main entrance, British Building
-"Agriculture" and "Industry," two limestone reliefs, Rockefeller Plaza entrance, One Rockefeller Plaza (formerly Time-Life) Building

Born in Stuttgart, Germany, 17-year old Jennewein came to New York where, beginning in 1908, he studied at the Art Students League. From 1912 until 1914 he spent two years travelling in Europe before returning to New York and executing the lunette over the entrance to St. Paul's Chapel at Columbia University. In 1915 Jennewein won the Prix de Rome and returned once more to Italy. He spent the next five years developing his own brand of classically-inspired art. Upon his return to New York in 1921 Jennewein was deluged with commissions, his conservative decorative style being in great demand. He won the competition for the Darlington Fountain in Washington, D.C., and executed the Barre, Vermont War Memorial, the "Puritan" in Plymouth, Massachusetts and the statue of Governor Endicott in Boston, as well as a dozen other major commissions before 1930 when he undertook the terra cotta pediment for the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The panel which Jennewein designed for the British Empire Building was one of a series of decorative architectural bronzes, including the ornamental grille at the entrance to the Brooklyn Public Library. He also designed the figures of "Industry" and "Agriculture" for the western entrance of One Rockefeller Plaza. As heir to the style of Paul Manship, Jennewein played an increasingly important role in mid-century non-abstract sculpture. One time vice-president of the National Sculpture Society, and recipient of the Avery and other prizes from the New York Architectural League, Jennewein was, before his death at age 88, the acknowledged dean of American academic sculpture.

REFERENCES

Art Digest (R.C.)
C. Paul Jennewein, American Sculptors Series, University of Georgia Press in collaboration with the National Sculpture Society, n.d.
Craven, Wayne, Sculpture in America, New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1968
Parkes, Kineton, "Plastic Form and Color: The Work of Paul Jennewein," Apollo, 17 (1933), 130-34.

LACHAISE, GASTON (1882 - 1935)

WORKS AT ROCKEFELLER CENTER

-Four limestone panels, Sixth Avenue facade,
RCA Building West
-Two limestone panels, Rockefeller Plaza entrance,
International Building

Born in Paris, Lachaise was first trained by his father, a prominent wood-carver and cabinet maker who worked on Eiffel's apartment in the iron tower. In 1895 he began his formal art education at the Ecole Bernard Palissy, followed in 1898 by a year at the Academie Nationale des Beaux Arts. Lachaise soon rebelled against the routine and independently began his "rise from academic pedantry to wildly exciting erotic creations." In 1904-05 he worked for Rene Lalique before emigrating to America in 1906. In Boston and later New York he was employed as a technician in the studio of Henry Hudson Kitson and in 1913 had his sculpture chosen over Kitson's for exhibition at the Armory Show. For the next eight years Lachaise worked for Paul Manship during which time he worked on Manship's portrait of John D. Rockefeller, Sr. Thereafter he was commissioned to execute a sculptural frieze for the lobby of the AT&T Building in New York (1921). By 1927 Lachaise was reaching artistic maturity with the bulbous, often sexually explicit, sculptures inspired by his wife. Never enthusiastically supported by the public, he was endorsed by a number of leading artists and aesthetes. He was frequently in debt and thus probably quite grateful for his two commissions at Rockefeller Center. They are not, however, among the artist's most representative work. Lachaise may well have been distracted by the retrospective exhibition (comprising the largest collection of his works ever assembled) which was to take place at the Museum of Modern Art in 1935. Several months after its opening Lachaise entered the hospital bleeding from a tooth extraction; four days later, at age fifty three, he died of leukemia.

REFERENCES

Art Digest, (R.C.)
Craven, Wayne, Sculpture in America, New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1968.
Gaston Lachaise, 1882 - 1935: Sculpture and Drawings, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, 1963-64 and the Whitney Museum of Art, New York, 1964.
Nordland, Gerald, Gaston Lachaise: The Man and his Work, New York: George Braziller, 1974.
Sims, Patterson, Gaston Lachaise: A Concentration of Works from the Permanent Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art, 50th Anniversary Exhibition, March 5 - April 27, 1980.

LAWRIE, LEE (1877 - 1963)

WORKS AT ROCKEFELLER CENTER

-"Atlas," Bronze statue, Fifth Avenue courtyard, International Building
-"Wisdom," three limestone panels and glass screen, main entrance, RCA Building
Limestone panels above the following entrances:
-"Progress," 14 West 49th Street, One Rockefeller Plaza (formerly Time-Life) Building
-9 West 49th Street, La Maison Francaise
-Channel Gardens, La Maison Francaise
-Channel Gardens, British Building
-10 West 50th Street, British Building
-"St. Francis of Assisi with Birds," 9 West 50th Street, International Building
-Three limestone panels, 19 West 50th Street, International Building
-Limestone Screen, 25 West 50th Street, International Building
-10 West 51st Street, International Building
-20 West 51st Street, International Building

Born in Rixdorf, Germany, Lawrie was brought to America as an infant. He was schooled in Illinois and Maryland before beginning work at age 14 in the studio of Chicago sculptor Richard Henry Park. He worked on sculpture at the Columbian Exposition of 1893 and then moved to New York where he became associated with Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Philip Martiny. In subsequent years Lawrie frequently collaborated with Bertram G. Goodhue, and executed sculpture for his New York City churches of St. Vincent Ferrer and St. Thomas, the West Point Military Academy and the Los Angeles Public Library among others. He also worked on Goodhue's masterpiece, the Nebraska State Capitol, where he came in contact with Professor Hartley Burr Alexander. Lawrie also worked on Rockefeller's Riverside Church before being commissioned to execute fourteen works (more than any other artist) at Rockefeller Center. Two of the most important pieces in the complex are his: "Atlas" and "Wisdom." Likewise responsible for all of the side entrances to the various international buildings, Lawrie followed his ideal to design simple compositions which could be "comprehended at a glance...[without] unnecessary detail...to obscure the idea." Lawrie's other notable works include sculpture on the Harkness Tower at Yale University, the Bok "Singing Tower" in Florida and the Soldier's and Sailor's Bridge in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania to name only a few. Honored by many awards, he taught at Harvard's School of Architecture (1910-12) and Yale's School of Fine Arts (1908-19) from which he received an honorary M.A. in 1931.

REFERENCES

Alexander, Hartley Burr, "The Sculpture of Lee Lawrie," Architectural Forum 56 (May 1931) 587ff.

Art Digest.

Lawrie, Lee, Sculpture, Cleveland, Ohio, 1936.

Morris, Joseph, F., ed., Lee Lawrie, The American Sculptors Series, University of Georgia Press in collaboration with the National Sculpture Society, 1955.

Who's Who in American Art, 8 (1962) 362.

LENTELLI, LEO (1879 - 1961)

WORKS AT ROCKEFELLER CENTER

-Four sixth-story spandrels, Fifth Avenue facade, Palazzo d'Italia
-Four sixth-story spandrels, Fifth Avenue facade, International Building North

Lentelli was born in Bologna and received a thorough apprenticeship in Rome before emigrating to America in 1903. He assisted in the studios of such notable sculptors as Massey Rhind, Henry Hudson Kitson and others before gaining his first large commission at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine where he executed angels for its reredos (no longer extant). By 1915 Lentelli was established. Thirty-three years old, he executed colossal works at the Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco, most notably "The Nations of the East and the West" for McKim, Mead & White's Court of the Universe, at the entrance to the Palace of the Fine Arts and in the Court of Abundance. After the Exposition Lentelli remained in San Francisco where he decorated two branch libraries, the Memorial Museum in Golden Gate Park, and the colossal sculpture on the new Public Library. Profoundly influenced by Rodin, Lentelli moved away from "clean finish" sculpture to more impressionistic handling in which technique is left visible. His spandrels for the Palazzo d'Italia and International Building North, however, do not reveal this quality. Lentelli preferred to sculpt in concrete and it was in this medium that he executed his finest works, most significantly the great caryatids on the Orpheum Theater in St. Louis. He also did bronze doors for the S.W. Strauss & Co. Bank in Chicago and the heroic figures on the facade of the Steinway Building on 57th Street in New York.

REFERENCES

ART DIGEST (R.C.)
Hartman, Sadakichi, "An Expression of Decorative Sculpture - Leo Lentelli," The Architect & Engineer of California, 52 (March, 1918), 59-68.
"Leo Lentelli's Masterpieces in Bronze," Metal Arts, 2 (1929), 99-100.

MANSHIP, PAUL (1885 - 1966)

WORKS AT ROCKEFELLER CENTER

-"Prometheus," bronze and gold leaf statue, Sunken Plaza
-"Youth" and "Maiden," bronze and gold leaf statues, Sunken Plaza

Born in St. Paul, Minnesota, Manship studied at the local Institute of Art before moving East in 1905. He became an assistant of Solon Borglum, and in the following year attended the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts under Charles Grafly. He next worked with Isidore Konti at whose suggestion Manship applied for, and won, the coveted Prix de Rome in 1909. It was at the American Academy in Rome that Manship was first exposed to the classical art that would so influence his work. Upon his return to the U.S. in 1912 Manship was seen as America's newest prodigy, acclaimed by Royal Cortissoz for his "almost unbelievable facility and aplomb." And while his work showed something of avant-garde abstraction, Manship was quickly recognized as the leader of a new generation of academic sculptors. In 1917 he was commissioned to do a portrait of John D. Rockefeller, Sr. (executed with Manship's assistant, Gaston Lachaise). Manship was appointed professor of sculpture at the American Academy in 1922 and two years later, given the Saltus Award by the American Numismatic Society. These were just two of the honors heaped upon Manship during his lengthy career. Among his most notable works are the four bronze reliefs for the AT&T Building, located at 195 Broadway in New York, the Rainey Memorial Gates at the Bronx Zoo (a designated New York City Landmark) and the Woodrow Wilson Memorial at the League of Nations in Geneva. To this list must be added "Prometheus" which, if less accomplished than Manship's other works, is infinitely better known.

REFERENCES

Art Digest (R.C.)
Craven, Wayne, Sculpture in America, New York, 1968.
Murtha, Edwin, The Sculpture of Paul Manship, New York: MacMillan Co., 1957.

MANZU, GIACOMO (1908 -)

WORK AT ROCKEFELLER CENTER

-Bronze panel, main entrance, Palazzo d'Italia

Manzu's childhood was spent in Bergamo, Italy with his eight siblings, his mother and shoemaker father. He apprenticed as a woodcarver when he was 11, and then trained in a decorative stucco and gilding workshop. While in military service Manzu attended night classes at the Accademia Cicognini after which he began his independent career. He initially experimented with a great variety of media, but turned almost exclusively to bronze after discovering Rodin during a trip to Paris in 1926. Manzu matured as an artist in the next decade, teaching at the Accademia Brera in Milan and winning the Grand Prix at the Venice Biennale in 1942. Ten years later he was commissioned to execute new bronze doors for St. Peter's in Rome, followed in 1957 by others for Salzburg Cathedral. Manzu was largely devoted to religious subjects and artistic protests against violence and destruction. His commission at Rockefeller Center was significant. In 1965 his bronze panels were installed on the Palazzo d'Italia as replacements for Piccirilli's earlier Fascistic works. In subsequent years Manzu taught in Salzburg and had a number of one man shows around the world. These included an exhibition at the Paul Rosenberg Gallery in New York in 1965 and others in Moscow and Leningrad, coinciding with his award of the International Lenin Peace Prize. He also executed two fountains for buildings designed by Minoru Yamasaki in Detroit. Manzu worked in a simple, sometimes ascetic style. He was considered by David Rockefeller to be "one of the great sculptors of our time."

REFERENCES

Loth, David, The City Within the City, New York: William Morrow & Co., 1966.

Pepper, Curtis Bill, An Artist and the Pope, New York: Madison Square Press, 1968.

Rewald, John, Giacomo Manzu, Greenwich, CT.: New York Graphics Society, 1967.

Rosenberg, Paul, Exhibition of Recent Work by Giacomo Manzu, New York, 1968.

MEIERE, (MARY) HILDRETH (1893 - 1961)

WORKS AT ROCKEFELLER CENTER

-"Dance," "Drama," and "Song," three metal and enamel plaques, West 50th Street facade, Radio City Music Hall

Hildreth Meiere was one of the most versatile artists to work at Rockefeller Center. She trained in Florence, at the Art Students League in New York and at the Beaux Arts Institute of Design, and at the California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco. A skilled muralist, mosaicist, ceramicist, decorative sculptor and cartographer, she executed more than a hundred commissions around the country. Her first and greatest job was at Bertram Goodhue's Nebraska State Capitol where she completed eight different commissions for floor and ceiling decorations. There she came into contact with Lee Lawrie and Professor Hartley Burr Alexander. Other major jobs included in New York the mosaics and stained glass for St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, mosaics for Temple Emanu-El, murals for the lobby of the Irving Trust Company at 1 Wall Street, the Lady Chapel altar at St. Patrick's Cathedral and her three ornamental plaques on the exterior of Radio City Music Hall. In Washington, D.C. she executed paintings for the dome of the National Academy of Sciences and crypt mosaics for the National Cathedral and did painted decorations for the S.S. President Monroe and S.S. America. In 1928 Meiere joined only one other woman as the recipient of the Architectural League's Gold Medal (for her work on St. Bartholomew's). She was subsequently awarded an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart (1953) and the Fine Arts Medal of the AIA (1956). Life member of the Art Students League, Mural Painters Society and Architectural Guild of America, and president of the Liturgical Arts Society, Meiere died at age 68 in New York.

REFERENCES

Alexander, Hartley Burr, "Hildreth Meiere's Work for Nebraska," Architecture, 63 (June 1931), 321-28.

Architectural and Decorative Features of St. Bartholomew's Church in the City of New York, New York, 1956.

Art Digest (R.C.)

Lay, Charles Downing, "Hildreth Meiere," Arts, 14 (1928) 106-109.

Liturgical Arts obit., 29 (May, 1961) p. 61.

NYT obit., 5/3/1961; 37:1.

Watson, Ernest S., "Hildreth Meiere," American Artist (Sept. 1941), 5-8.

NOGUCHI, ISAMU (1904 -)

WORK AT ROCKEFELLER CENTER

-Stainless Steel Panel, main entrance,
Associated Press Building

Noguchi was born in Los Angeles, son of the Japanese poet Yone Noguchi and his Irish wife. He was taken to Japan but sent to the Interlaken School in Indiana when he was 14. He apprenticed with Guzton Borglum but when the master told him that he would never be a sculptor, Noguchi enrolled in a medical program at Columbia University. After two years (1923-24) he switched into the Leonardo da Vinci School in Greenwich Village (founded by Attilio Piccirilli, sculptor of the main entrance at the International Building North). Noguchi was profoundly influenced in 1926 by his discovery of Brancusi, with whom he studied while in Paris on a Guggenheim Fellowship in the following year. Ultimately Noguchi rejected Brancusi's lonely asceticism and returned to New York in 1929 where he executed bronze and marble portraits of such notables as George Gershwin, Buckminster Fuller, Jose Clemente Orozco, and Martha Graham (for whom Nogushi later designed stage sets). He was the anomaly among American avant-garde artists in that he eschewed abstract expressionism for a more polished and refined aesthetic, one which is dramatically apparent in his stainless steel panel for the Associated Press Building. In 1946 Noguchi was honored by inclusionin an exhibit of "Fourteen Americans" at the Museum of Modern Art.

In addition to his sculpture, Noguchi has made significant contributions to furniture, stage, lighting and garden design. Among the latter his most notable works are the gardens at the UNESCO Building in Paris, the marble garden at Yale's Beineke Library, that for the Chase Manhattan Bank Plaza in New York, and the Billy Rose Sculpture Garden for the Israeli Museum. Since the 1960s Noguchi has kept his studio in Long Island City, NY.

REFERENCES

Art Digest (R.C.)
Gordon, John, Isamu Noguchi, exhib. cat., Whitney Museum of Art, New York: Publishers Prinint-Admiral Press, 1968.
Grove, Nancy and Diane Botnick, The Sculpture of Isamu Noguchi: 1924-1979, A Catalogue, Garland Publishers, New York, 1980.
Noguchi, Isamu, A Sculptor's World, New York: Harper & Row, 1968.

PICCIRILLI, ATTILIO (1868 - 1945)

WORKS AT ROCKEFELLER CENTER

-Glass Panel, main entrance, International Building North
-"The Joy of Life," bas-relief, 15 West 48th Street entrance, One Rockefeller Plaza Building

Born in Massa Carrara, Italy (home of the famous Cararra marble), Attilio followed a long line of Piccirilli sculptors. He came to America as a boy with his father and five brothers but left to study at the Accademia San Luca in Rome. He returned to the U.S. where he joined the well known sculpture firm of the Piccirilli Bros., located in the Bronx. In 1901 Attilio was selected from among 50 competitors to design the Maine Monument at the Columbus Circle entrance to Central Park. Among his other notable commissions are the World War I monument at Albany, and the bust of Thomas Jefferson at the Richmond, Virginia State Capitol. For Rockefeller he executed the bronze doors at Riverside Church as well as a bas-relief and two glass panels (only one extant) for Rockefeller Center. The latter are among Piccirilli's most technically innovative works. Widely honored for his artistic achievements, he is represented in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Morgan Library collections among others. As an ardent supporter of art education, Piccirilli was president of the Italian Art Association and founder of the Leonardo da Vinci School of Art in Greenwich Village of which he was president for many years before his death at age 77.

REFERENCES

"And Now They Are Four," Art Digest, 20 (Oct. 15, 1945), 19.
Art Digest (R.C.).
Lombardo, Jose V., Attilio Piccirilli, Life of an American Sculptor, New York: Pitman Publishing Corp., 1944.
National Arts Club Bulletin (Nov. 1932), p. 44.
NYT, obit., 10/9/1945, p. 21:1.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this complex, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that Rockefeller Center has a special character, special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, Rockefeller Center ranks among the grandest architectural projects ever undertaken in the United States; that, unprecedented in scope and inspired in its planning, it created a new symbolic and physical center for New York; that, built during the Great Depression, it was a privately financed development on a scale usually reserved for public works; that the developers of Rockefeller Center consciously strove for high quality and achieved a harmonious integration of art and architecture, planning and plantings, that has become the model against which all subsequent efforts at city shaping have been judged; that, reflecting both the nature of industry developing in the interwar period and John D. Rockefeller, Jr.'s personal beliefs, the Center came to embody two distinct sets of themes and tenants--on Fifth Avenue, the national buildings for the British, French, and other foreign countries reflected Rockefeller's commitment to international understanding, while on the west the headquarters for such media-related corporations as RCA, Time-Life, RKO, and AP reflected the emergence of high-technology 20th-century industries; that both the planning and the architecture of Rockefeller Center were the product of an unusual collaboration of two of the most prominent modernist firms of the day—Hood, Godley & Fouilhoux, and Corbett, Harrison & MacMurray--with Reinhard & Hofmeister, specialists in office layout, who collectively assumed the name of the Associated Architects; that the hand of Raymond Hood is clearly evident in the futuristic conceptions of rooftop gardens and the romantic tapered massing of the RCA Building, the last skyscraper for both the architect and the era; that at the same time, even as the Center provided a setting for this last of the great tiered towers, it included the construction of some of the earliest new slab-style office buildings, anticipating the city's post-World War II development; that although disparate in nature, all these buildings were united in the uniform treatment of vertical window bays, buff-colored Indiana limestone cladding, and modernistic detailing; that Rockefeller Center transformed a group of blocks between Fifth and Sixth Avenues into a single large complex which was integrated into the surrounding streets and included an additional private street and central plaza; that the Center was

remarkably progressive for its pedestrian and vehicular traffic systems and unprecedented for its amenities for human enjoyment in a commercial development, providing uncommonly wide sidewalks and roughly two acres of open space in the thick of midtown congestion; that although the buildings within the Center were designed in accordance with the needs of a variety of tenants, and therefore were not symmetrically placed, they were carefully organized along a series of axes that joined them into a coherent, scenographic whole; that the Center is thus a separate entity but at the same time an integral part of midtown Manhattan; that its creation helped redefine the physical identity of midtown by giving it a focus that it had not previously had; that the entire complex is enhanced and united by a comprehensive artistic program; that, speaking to the Center's general themes of "human progress" and "international understanding," a group of many of the most prominent artists of the day produced a striking series of murals, reliefs, mosaics, glass, and statuary that enlivened the buff limestone building facades and joined all the buildings into one comprehensive statement; that from the sculpture of "Wisdom" over the RCA Building portal to the statues of "Atlas" and "Prometheus," the art at Rockefeller Center provides a survey of the state of the arts in 1930s America, with a roster of names including Lee Lawrie, Paul Manship, Gaston Lachaise, Isamu Noguchi, Hildreth Meiere, and Rene Chambellan, among many others; that Rockefeller Center, now 50 years old, is recognized by common consensus as the heart of New York; that as a great unifying presence in the chaotic core of midtown Manhattan, it provides dramatic views, great architecture, visionary planning, and much art, combining to form an active oasis for the metropolis; and that, internationally renowned and locally beloved, Rockefeller Center has become so inextricably intertwined with the very concept of New York that it is now impossible to imagine the city without it.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 21, Section 534, of the Charter of the City of New York, and Chapter 8-A of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark Rockefeller Center, including:

Warner Communications Building (formerly Esso Building), 75 Rockefeller Plaza; 1270 Avenue of the Americas Building (originally RKO Building, later the Americas Building, then the American Metal Climax Building, then the AMAX Building), 1270 Avenue of the Americas; Radio City Music Hall, 1260 Avenue of the Americas; Associated Press Building, 50 Rockefeller Plaza; International Building including the statue of Atlas in the courtyard, 630 Fifth Avenue; RCA Building, 30 Rockefeller Plaza; RCA Building West, 1250 Avenue of the Americas; the sunken plaza with skating rink and the statue of Prometheus; British Building (formerly the British Empire Building), 620 Fifth Avenue; promenade and channel gardens;

Maison Francaise, 610 Fifth Avenue; Simon & Schuster Building (formerly the U.S. Rubber Company Building) and its addition, 1230 Avenue of the Americas; 10 Rockefeller Plaza Building (formerly Eastern Airlines Building), 10 Rockefeller Plaza; 1 Rockefeller Plaza Building (formerly the Time & Life Building), 1 Rockefeller Plaza; Borough of Manhattan, and designates Tax Map Block 1267, Lot 22, Block 1266, Lot 1, Block 1265, Lot 1, and Block 1264, Lot 5, Borough of Manhattan as its Landmark Site.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Art Digest. New York: Rockefeller Center, May, 1982.

Balfour, Alan. Rockefeller Center: Architecture as Theater. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1978.

Bleeker, Samuel E. The Politics of Architecture. New York: The Rutledge Press, 1981.

Chamberlain, Samuel, ed. Rockefeller Center: A Photographic Narrative. New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1961.

Fitch, James Marston. Grand Central Terminal and Rockefeller Center. Albany, N.Y.: New York State Parks and Recreation Division for Historic Preservation, 1974.

Fosdick, Raymond B. John D. Rockefeller Jr.: A Portrait. New York: Harper & Row, 1966.

"Guide to Rockefeller Center." Rockefeller Center Weekly, 2 (May 1934).

Jordy, William H. American Buildings and Their Architects. vol. 4. New York: Anchor Books, 1976.

Karp, Walter, and Brendan Gill. The Center: A History and Guide to Rockefeller Center. New York: American Heritage Publishing Co., Inc., 1982.

Kilham, Walter. Raymond Hood: Architect of Ideas. New York: Architectural Books, 1974.

Krinsky, Carol Herselle. Rockefeller Center. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Loth, David. The City Within a City: The Romance of Rockefeller Center. New York: William Morrow & Co., 1966.

Lyons, Eugene. David Sarnoff. New York: Harper & Row, 1966.

Weisman, Winston. "The Architectural Significance of Rockefeller Center." Ph.D. dissertation. Ohio State University, 1942.

----------. "The First Landscaped Skyscraper." Journal of of the Society of Architectural Historians, 18 (March 1959), 54-59.

----------. "Towards a New Environment: The Way of Price Mechanism: The Rockefeller Center." Architectural Review, 108 (December 1950), 399-405.

----------. "Slab Buildings." Architectural Review, 111 (February 1952), 119-123.

----------. "Who Designed Rockefeller Center?" Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, 10 (March 1951), 11-17.

* * * *

For references to specific buildings, see notes in appropriate entries.

For additional bibliographic references, see Balfour, p. 243, and Krinsky, pp. 214-217.