

The Salvation Army National and Territorial Headquarters



The Salvation Army National and Territorial Headquarters

LOCATION

Borough of Manhattan
120-130 West 14th Street

LANDMARK TYPE

Individual

SIGNIFICANCE

An Art Deco-style complex designed by Ralph Walker and constructed in 1929 for The Salvation Army as its National and Territorial Headquarters, consisting of an office building and an adjacent auditorium structure with a distinctive recessed entrance portal.



Auditorium,
October 2017 (above)



Complex,
October 2017 (left)

The Salvation Army National and Territorial Headquarters

120-130 West 14th Street, Manhattan

Designation List 499 LP-2565

Built: 1929-35

Architect: Ralph Walker of Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan, Tax Map Block 609, Lot 23, in part, consisting of the land beneath the office building and adjacent auditorium building, as shown on the attached map.

On February 11, 2014, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of The Salvation Army National and Territorial Headquarters (Item No. 3). The hearing was duly advertised according to the provisions of Law. A representative of the Historic District Council spoke in favor of designation, and three representatives of The Salvation Army spoke in opposition. A letter supporting designation from the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation was read into the record. The Commission also received a letter in support of designation from New York State Senator Brad Hoylman.¹

Summary

The Salvation Army National and Territorial Headquarters

A primary focal point of The Salvation Army's activities in the United States, The Salvation Army National and Territorial Headquarters on 14th Street was constructed in 1929-35 to serve as the headquarters for the American operations of The Salvation Army, an international religious and charitable organization started in England in 1865 by William and Catherine Booth. The new headquarters building was opened and dedicated in May, 1930, as the centerpiece of the Army's Golden Jubilee National Congress, in celebration of 50 years of mission work in the United States and the Army's contributions to American society. After 50 years, the organization had 1,735 Corps in the United States, and 4,814 salaried officers or cadets. It ran 124 men's industrial institutions, 35 maternity homes and hospitals, 10 children's homes, 9 women's residences, 12 settlements, 91 employment bureaus and 16 general hospitals and dispensaries where more than 49,000 patients were treated in the previous year. It had won popular acclaim and recognition for its work on the frontlines in France in support of American troops during World War I and for social service work in the United States that had made it "one of the nation's most respected charities."

The Salvation Army began outreach in New York in 1880, expanding rapidly here and in other U.S. cities. In 1895, it erected an auditorium and office building on part of this site, but by the 1920s a larger headquarters to serve a wider variety of purposes was required. The choice of the pre-eminent architect Ralph Walker reflected the desire

of the group for a significant structure, and Walker created a unique and well-thought-out complex of three buildings specifically meeting the needs of this organization. The asymmetrical, sculptural massing of the complex relates to the functions of its component parts. Facing 14th Street is a modern, eleven-story office structure surmounted by a tower at the northeastern corner, adjacent to a smaller building with a distinctive, arched entranceway leading to the group's auditorium. These buildings connect in the rear to a 17-story dormitory, built originally for working women. (The 13th Street building is included in the Greenwich Village Historic District and is not part of this designation.)

Architect Ralph Walker of the firm Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker began his career as a master designer of modern New York skyscrapers with the design for the Barclay-Vesey Building for New York Telephone Company.² Classically trained, Walker believed in creating building designs that were specific to the unique needs of the client and not dependent on a traditional building vocabulary. For The Salvation Army building, Walker eliminated conventional ornament and used the building materials, here brick and cast-stone, to create a dramatic and functional design specifically related to the activities, and the limited budget of The Salvation Army. The entrance to the auditorium, a large public gathering space that is critical to the work of this group, beckons from the street with a generous and deep opening that appears to be edged with curtains, as a proscenium opening on a stage. The office structure, on the other hand, is almost completely functional, with its height emphasized by the layered vertical brick piers that delineate the building's structural bays, and its ornament limited to shallow cast stone reliefs at the top of these vertical expressions and lower floors of the building. At the dedication of the complex The Salvation Army expressed its appreciation for Walker's "strikingly modernistic...chaste and restrained"

buildings with their “workmanlike” details and lack of superfluous ornament that so befit “the ideals of the organization they house.”

These buildings have been used by The Salvation Army for more than 80 years and continue to serve the needs of this important organization.

Building Description

The Salvation Army National and Territorial Headquarters

The Salvation Army National and Territorial Headquarters complex is comprised of a 11-story office structure facing 14th Street with a 1-story tower projecting at northeast corner, and a four-story auditorium building adjacent to the east. Buildings clad in variegated tan brick with cast stone trim.

Office Building

Historic

7 bays wide, with continuous piers and recessed spandrels; 6 entrances along street level including double metal service doors with metal strapping in westernmost bay, 2 openings with double glass and metal doors under glass and metal transoms; easternmost door has original bronze and glass doors, elaborate bronze grille topped by 3-dimensional seal and eagle with glass and metal transom recessed behind; cast stone across façade, rises to middle of 3rd story and middle of 4th story at eastern bay; vertical sign above door of eastern bay with three flagpoles projecting from top; cast stone above top story windows and at tops of piers.

Alterations

Ground story painted; solid doors painted; center entrance altered with plain granite surround and bronze and glass doors under transom; bronze name and address signs affixed to both sides of entrance; fixed, metal box-shaped awning over entrance, illuminated by downlights; video display monitor in light with two audio speakers attached to underside of awning; opening to east of center entrance has fixed metal panel with large glass light topped by air

in-take grille; two Siamese connections; vent recessed in westernmost pier at ground level; vertical metal sign over easternmost entrance; four large downlights attached at second story level; some repointing; tower at northeast corner removed and brick rebuilt one story above main body of building; security cameras, buzzers and fire alarms added; original three-over-three windows replaced in the 1970s with bronze finished aluminum windows with a one-over-one configuration that is typical in Art Deco style buildings; and mechanical louvers installed in various window spandrels and window frames.

Auditorium

Historic

Large opening reached by broad, short stairway with elaborate bronze gates; leads to broad landing and stairs rising from both sides; display boards attached to each side of main opening; back wall above landing has 3-dimensional seal above bronze lettering; secondary entrance to east of main with double glass and metal doors and transom; facade has cast stone in layered effect, with sections of brick in parapet above and recessed behind entranceway.

Alterations

Spotlights recessed in ceilings above stairways; large light attached at one corner; HVAC equipment mounted on roof and partially visible.

Site History

The Salvation Army National and Territorial Headquarters

14th Street³

Opened between the Bowery and the Hudson River in 1828, 14th Street developed into a mostly residential thoroughfare, lined with fine private homes. In the 1850s and 1860s, as New York's retail shopping, hotel, and theater district moved northward to the area around Union Square, a number of entertainment venues and related commercial enterprises opened on 14th Street. These included the Academy of Music (1853-54, Alexander Saeltzer; demolished) and Steinway Hall (1863-64, John Kellum; 1866; demolished). By the end of the Civil War, many of the residences in the neighborhood were being converted to boarding houses or to commercial uses, and large retail stores, such as Tiffany & Co. (1868; demolished) on the west side of Union Square and Macy's on Sixth Avenue between 13th and 14th (1858, demolished) began to replace earlier buildings.

West 14th Street became increasingly commercial during the last quarter of the 19th century. An elevated railway began service along Sixth Avenue in 1880, and various stores, such as B. Altman Dry Goods Stores, clustered where it intersected with 14th Street. Streetcars also served the area, including a cross-town line that delivered passengers to the Hudson River waterfront and the Upper (Hoboken) Ferry. By the late 19th century, both ends of 14th Street had busy working piers, with light manufacturing and wholesale distributors on the west side and coal, gas and sanitation facilities on the east. Tenements went up nearby to provide inexpensive and easily accessible housing for the

workers in these industries, many of whom were newly-arrived immigrants.

In the early 20th century many of the retail stores, theaters, and professional offices that had been located near the middle of the island on 14th Street began moving to Midtown. Old retail establishments were taken over by lower priced stores or converted to manufacturing use and showrooms and new loft buildings began going up. Real estate values declined in the period around World War I, then started to rise in the 1920s as subway service to the area improved.

History of The Salvation Army⁴

The Salvation Army was started in London in the late 19th century by William Booth and his wife Catherine. William and Catherine were both raised in strict Methodist homes but were searching for a religious experience that would be more meaningful to them. They were inspired by the reformers of their time, such as Rev. John Caughey. They married in 1855 and Catherine helped William develop his religious ideas. William Booth became a street preacher in East London, an extremely poor area of the city and his calling was to help all of the local residents in practical as well as theological matters. In 1865 Booth began preaching in a tent to attract people to his message. He held late-night or all-night services specifically to draw people who had spent the evening in bars and dance halls. He believed in using popular songs and brass bands to catch the attention of the uneducated residents of the area. He gradually established a new method for reaching people who lived exploited lives and keeping them involved, especially those without any religion. He founded the East London Christian Mission in 1867, with paid workers, a headquarters and the use of a theater for Sunday meetings. Booth's philosophy included complete gender equality, total abstinence from alcohol, a public declaration of faith for converts, as well as training converts and giving

them meaningful employment by working to save other people.

The Christian Mission expanded rapidly among numerous poor communities in England and other countries. At first their emissaries went to other European countries such as Switzerland, France and Germany, but before long the movement had corps in Canada, Australia, Iceland, South Africa and India.⁵ Booth established a constitution for the group that was similar to Liberal Methodism except that it also included full participation by women.⁶ The Christian Mission served all people in need of their work. Newspaper articles and reports as early as 1869 noted the presence and conversions of “Negroes,” and “Blacks” at Christian Mission meetings.⁷ By 1878 the Christian Mission had begun to use the metaphor of a volunteer army, a “Salvation Army,” as “soldiers of Christ” to save as many people as possible.⁸ Booth had assumed the title of general superintendent but his followers began calling him the General. Other leaders were given military titles while the individual groups were called corps.

Booth had representatives who began working in the United States in the 1870s. James Jermy, from Booth’s Christian Mission, opened a Mission Station in Cleveland, Ohio in 1872 that was known for attracting local African-Americans to its meetings. Lieutenant Eliza Shirley, who had left England to join her parents in the United States, began leading meetings in Philadelphia in 1879. In 1880 a small group of Salvationists, led by Commissioner George Scott Railton, one of Booth’s closest associates, landed in New York to begin work. The goal of The Salvation Army was to “hallow the city” as a way of establishing the “Kingdom of God.”⁹ They reached out to those with no religion, in their own environments such as city streets and the various commercial establishments they frequented. The group used popular music, colorful pageantry and dramatic testimonies to reach

a wide audience. They brought religion to normally secular experiences, anywhere people gathered, such as theaters, bars, stores, etc. Their first base in New York, called “Fort Salvation,” and located on the corner of Christopher and Bedford streets, was established in 1882.¹⁰ They expanded rapidly in Brooklyn and soon had 28 Corps with 64 officers. After four years in America, they had 100 Corps in various cities and 500 converts.¹¹ A new headquarters was created in lower Manhattan on State Street and a new director came from England, Major Frank Smith.¹²

The Salvation Army attracted tremendous attention through its parades, open-air meetings and loud bands. Public rituals and declarations of faith were an important part of their work, as well as more traditional religious services, held in whatever spaces were available.¹³ In 1887, one of William Booth’s sons, Ballington, and his wife Maud, were sent to America to lead the group’s work. During their tenure, a large headquarters building was erected on West 14th Street, on the site of a former carriage factory. Designed by Gilbert A. Schellenger, in the Romanesque Revival style, the building featured battlements and turrets, that gave it a fortress-like appearance that was considered particularly appropriate to the Army’s mission.¹⁴ A huge ceremony was conducted upon its opening in June, 1895.¹⁵

From 1896 to 1904 The Salvation Army in America was headed by Commander Frederick Booth-Tucker, who was greatly assisted in his work by his wife, William and Catherine Booth’s daughter Emma. The Booth-Tuckers devoted much of their time to elaborate evangelical variety shows, which toured the country leading packed houses in prayer and song and presenting images of the Army’s social service programs. These greatly expanded under the Booth-Tuckers, and included out-reach programs to sex-workers and prisoners, hospitals, depots to distribute food to the needy, industrial homes and

shelters to house the homeless, and various employment programs to assist workers left jobless by the Depression of 1893-97. One scheme involved the establishment of a “salvage brigade” operating out of the basement of an Army shelter, where workers recruited from the unemployed living in The Salvation Army residences went door-to-door picking up salvageable trash that was then sorted mended, repaired, or baled, with rags and paper resold to dealers and “clothing and household items offered at minimal prices to the poor.”¹⁶ The Booth-Tuckers were also responsible for introducing the practice of offering huge holiday feasts to the needy funded by street corner kettle collections. Staff Captain Joseph Garabed, who served as an officer of The Salvation Army for over 50 years, claimed the honor of having been the first man to collect funds dressed as Santa.¹⁷

In 1904, the youngest of William Booth’s children, Evangeline, arrived in New York to take charge of the American organization. Evangeline Booth was instrumental in the expansion of the social services of The Salvation Army as well as its fundraising efforts. Under her leadership The Salvation Army opened homeless shelters, employment bureaus, and rescue homes, provided free breakfasts for poor school children, and assisted victims of disasters, such as the San Francisco earthquake. In 1906 the Cherry Street Settlement House was opened, providing Lower East Side residents with a local meeting hall, kindergarten, day nursery, club for working girls, and free laundry facilities. The Army’s publications were expanded to include a new newsletter; the *Social News*, which publicized its social service activities. Convinced that comfortable auditoriums would attract larger crowds to meetings, Evangeline Booth helped the organization purchase more substantial quarters.¹⁸ She also began an ambitious building campaign, constructing some of the largest and best equipped low-cost residential hotels and homes in the country

in the period prior to World War I.

During World War I, The Salvation Army established “huts” (temporary recreational centers) as close as possible to stateside training posts and frontline encampments. The Salvation Army volunteers, including a number of young women popularly known as “Sallies,” served sandwiches, coffee, and baked goods (most famously donuts) to enlisted men, mended soldiers’ clothes, banked paychecks, decorated graves, and wrote letters home to grieving mothers. In the evenings The Salvation Army workers held simple prayer services, but never forced religion on the soldiers they served, and made their facilities available to other faiths and fraternal organizations. Their efforts, widely reported by war correspondents and the subject of theatrical productions and motion pictures, brought The Salvation Army enormous publicity and good will. In 1919 the United States awarded Evangeline Booth a Distinguished Service Medal for her war work.

Booth recognized that the moment had arrived to put The Salvation Army on a sounder financial footing. In 1919 corps officers were freed from the responsibility of funding their individual units in favor of a well-publicized national campaign to meet all the expenses of the evangelical and social branches of the organization. With endorsements from President Woodrow Wilson and General John J. Pershing, prominent businessmen and socialites serving as committee chairs, and advertising professionals and graphic artists lending their services, the fund raising campaign was an enormous success and was repeated the following year. During the 1920s The Salvation Army volunteers began delivering food baskets by automobile, relieving the poor of the need to stand in line for hours. The army expanded its outreach to women and added drug treatment programs to its services. All of these efforts helped the group evolve from “an urban religion to one of the nation’s most respected charities.”¹⁹

As The Salvation Army expanded its activities in America it underwent a number of organizational changes. In 1907 separate Eastern and Western Divisions were created, with the head of the Western Division reporting to Evangeline Booth, who administered the Eastern Division and was the American Commander. In 1920 the divisions were reorganized into three territories – the Central Territory headquartered in Chicago, the Western Territory headquartered in San Francisco, and the Eastern Territory housed in the national headquarters building in New York. In 1926 a further reorganization established a Southern Territory with its headquarters in Atlanta. After 1920, a Commander and staff were appointed to administer the Eastern Territory; a separate Metropolitan Division was established to handle New York City; and Evangeline Booth remained the national Commander with staff to assist her. Understandably, the headquarters building, built in 1895, became too small for The Salvation Army's activities. Between 1913 and 1923, the Army purchased or leased several buildings (primarily former residences on 13th and 14th Street) to house departments that could no longer be accommodated in its headquarters building.²⁰ One building, at 126-130 West 14th Street that housed the Army's Training College and later portions of its publication department,²¹ was destroyed by fire in 1925 and other buildings, notably the headquarters building, required expensive alterations in order to bring them up to date and meet the building code.

Various options were considered to alleviate the pressing need for more space, including saving the earlier 1895 headquarters building and adding to it, or moving to another location.²² Ultimately, the Eastern Territorial Property Board decided that the excellent transportation options offered by 14th Street, which could help the Salvationists reach all areas of New York and New Jersey, made it an ideal location. While the board recognized that retaining

the front of the 1895 building would have considerable sentimental value, it noted that the difference in cost between the proposed alterations and new construction was small and that an entirely new structure would provide more flexibility in planning, especially at the ground-floor level. The decision was finally made to build three separate buildings on The Salvation Army's 13th and 14th Street lots and the board hired the prominent architectural firm of Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker. This had to do with the abilities, size and capacity of this firm, as well as the fact that Stephen Voorhees was the chairman of The Salvation Army Architects' Division of the Home Service Fund Campaign.²³ The architects were directed to create a distinctive and affordable complex of buildings that would serve the specific needs of the organization but also, importantly, that would help promote the mission of The Salvation Army within the city.²⁴ The old headquarters building was celebrated with a final gathering on November 23, 1928 and then demolished to make way for the new structures.²⁵

Ralph Walker and the Firm of Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker

In 1919, when Ralph Walker joined the architectural firm where he was to make his name, it was known as McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin. This firm had been established in 1910 with the partnership of Andrew McKenzie (1861-1926), Stephen Voorhees (1878-1965), and Paul Gmelin (1859-1937). McKenzie had previously been in partnership with Cyrus L.W. Eidlitz (from 1902 until 1909). Voorhees was a civil engineer trained at Princeton University, who had worked for Eidlitz & McKenzie as an engineer and superintendent of construction. German-born and trained Paul Gmelin had worked previously for McKim, Mead & White, and Babb, Cook & Willard before joining with McKenzie and Voorhees. The firm of McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin did a considerable amount of work for the

New York Telephone Company, an association that began with the designs of two downtown telephone company buildings by their predecessor Cyrus Eidlitz (in 1885-86 and 1890). McKenzie, Voorhees, & Gmelin also designed other telephone company buildings in Albany and Buffalo, the Brooklyn Edison Company Building, and the Brooklyn Municipal Building (1924-27, a designated New York City Landmark and part of the Brooklyn Skyscraper Historic District), as well as a number of private residences.

Ralph Walker (1889-1973) was born in Waterbury, Connecticut. His unconventional architectural training included a two-year apprenticeship with the architectural firm of Hilton & Jackson, in Providence, Rhode Island, starting in 1907. He then enrolled as a special student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. This was followed, in 1911, by a period of study with Francis Swales (1878-1962) in Montreal. In 1913, Walker practiced architecture with James Ritchie in Boston and three years later won the Rotch Traveling Scholarship enabling him to tour Europe. His trip had to be postponed due to World War I, during which time Walker served in France with the Army Corps of Engineers. After he returned, Walker worked briefly in the offices of Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, and York & Sawyer before joining the firm of McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin.

One of Walker's first assignments with this firm was the Barclay-Vesey Building for the New York Telephone Company (1923-26, 140 West Street, a designated New York City Landmark) a project that gained him immediate fame. Just as this building was completed and following the death of McKenzie, Walker became a partner in the firm, and its name was changed to Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker. The success of the Barclay-Vesey Building and subsequent commissions brought Walker recognition as one of the city's preeminent designers of Art Deco skyscrapers. Among Walker's

subsequent commissions were the Western Union Building, at 60 Hudson Street (1928-30, a designated New York City Landmark), an extension and rebuilding of the Long Distance Building of AT&T at 32 Sixth Avenue (1930-32, a designated New York City Landmark), and the building for (originally) the Irving Trust Bank at 1 Wall Street (1929-31, a designated New York City Landmark). Walker also designed buildings for General Foods and IBM, and several pavilions at the 1939 World's Fair.

Active in professional circles, Walker served as president of several architectural organizations, including the state and national organizations of the American Institute of Architects. He was the recipient of numerous architectural awards and citations, and in 1957 the AIA awarded Walker the title of "architect of the century." In 1958 Walker resigned from active participation in the firm, then known as Voorhees, Walker, Smith, Smith & Haines, although he continued to lecture and serve on many professional and civic design committees. The architectural firm has continued under various names and is known today as HLW International.²⁶

The Art Deco Style²⁷

The Art Deco or Modernistic style of architecture was primarily used in this country from the mid-1920s through the 1930s. It has been called an "avant-garde traditionalist"²⁸ approach to creating a contemporary idiom for buildings of the period. As in other self-conscious modern periods, designers and critics of this time expressed the need for a new style that would be deemed appropriate for the period dubbed the "Jazz Age," and all its accompanying technological developments. They believed that the historically-derived motifs applied to most of the new buildings up to this point were unsuitable for the modern era. They were trying to relate architecture to the functionally-derived designs of objects made possible and fostered by the

burgeoning machine technology.²⁹

Much of the architecture that we know as Art Deco was based on accepted, standard forms and construction techniques that were given a modern cast through the use of a characteristic ornament, and a variety of materials, some new and some simply used in a new way. The majority of architects active in this style had received traditional Beaux-Arts training in which the plan and the design of elevations were the first and most important phases in creating a building.

By the 1920s, this design process and the overall shape of New York's tall buildings had changed, in response to the 1916 Building Zone Resolution, which mandated setbacks at various levels to allow light and air to reach the lower stories of buildings in a city that was becoming increasingly dense. In 1922, architect and critic Harvey Wiley Corbett (1873-1954) and architectural renderer Hugh Ferriss (1889-1962) explored the possibilities inherent in the zoning law in a series of drawings that illustrated progressive stages of design based on the law's requirements. Ferriss' dramatic renderings, published in *Pencil Points* (1923) and in *Metropolis of Tomorrow* (1929), significantly influenced many architects of the period. The drawings and the zoning laws from which they were derived directed the architects' attention to the building as a whole rather than to a single facade of the structure, thus altering the entire design process. By visualizing buildings "from every possible angle" the architect was transformed from a designer of facades into a "sculptor in building masses."³⁰

At the same time, the surfaces of these new buildings were treated with little depth, literally as a skin around the framework. This idea came from the work of architects of the Chicago School, which in turn can be traced back to the writings of German architect Gottfried Semper (1803-1879). In an essay Semper included as one of the four basic components of architecture the "enclosure of

textiles, animal skins, wattle or any other filler hung from the frame or placed between the supporting poles."³¹ This led to the idea of wall surfaces being treated like woven fabric, a technique used on several buildings in New York during this period, including the Film Center Building by Ely Jacques Kahn (1928-29, 630 Ninth Avenue, a designated New York City Interior Landmark). Architects sometimes experimented with new materials such as metal alloys, but brick and terra cotta were favorites because of the wide range of color and textural possibilities they presented. Many buildings of the period were conceived as stage sets for daily living and were treated as such, with entrances taking on the form and function of the proscenium, and with walls that were made to appear like curtains. Windows were typically arranged in clearly defined vertical bays, often with textured or ornamental spandrels, between expressed piers. Windows themselves ranged from one-over-one sash to multi-lite configurations.

Ornament, usually in low relief and often concentrated primarily on the entrances, often took the form of angular, geometric shapes such as ziggurats and zigzags, or simplified and stylized floral patterns, parts of circles, or faceted crystalline shapes. Many of these ornamental ideas evolved from contemporary influences including the Paris 1925 Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs, as well as the well-publicized designs of the Vienna Secessionists, the Wiener Werkstatte and the German Expressionists.

This new style reached its zenith in popularity between 1928 and 1931 in New York City, and was used most noticeably (but not only) for skyscrapers. By the time of its critical re-assessment in the 1960s and 1970s this "modernistic" style had achieved the popular name of Art Deco after the 1925 Paris Exposition.

The Salvation Army National and Territorial Headquarters

Although Ralph Walker was primarily known for his designs for telephone company buildings and other large commercial skyscrapers, he applied many of the same concepts to this smaller, more functional commission for The Salvation Army. The complex consists of three separate, connected buildings: a 12-story office building adjacent to a four-story auditorium complex, both facing 14th Street. Behind these and facing onto 13th Street is a 17-story dormitory building constructed as a residential hotel for “working girls.” This building sets back in similar fashion to Walker’s other tall buildings of the period and was sponsored by a large gift from John Markle and called the John and Mary Markle Memorial.³² (Because the Markle building is within the Greenwich Village Historic District it is not included in this designation.)

The new headquarters building was opened and dedicated in May, 1930, as part of the Army’s Golden Jubilee National Congress, in celebration of 50 years of mission work in the United States.³³ After 50 years, the organization had 1,735 Corps in the United States, and 4,814 salaried officers or cadets. They ran 124 men’s industrial institutions, 35 maternity homes and hospitals, 10 children’s homes, 9 women’s residences, 12 settlements, 91 employment bureaus and 16 general hospitals and dispensaries where more than 49,000 patients were treated in the previous year. That year also saw 109,296 converts, 12,857,833 copies of publications and jobs found for 126,346 men and women.³⁴ To celebrate, they ran a week-long celebration hosting 35,000 people and including a reenactment of their arrival at Battery Park, parades, pageants, speeches, services and a concert led by John Philip Sousa.³⁵ The new building, although not finished, was available for viewing and was deemed “architecturally beautiful... with simplicity and harmony of proportions, in a style that was called

“nontraditional.”³⁶ Commander Evangeline Booth named the building in memory of her parents, William and Catherine Booth, founders of The Salvation Army, calling it the Centennial Memorial Temple. The design included a large auditorium and a smaller auditorium, together seating approximately 1,800 people, and provided broadcast facilities to further spread the work of the organization. The newspapers reported that the entire complex cost \$2,500,000.³⁷

The mission and the goals of The Salvation Army required an image for this building that was different from Walker’s previous commercial structures. Architectural historian Kathryn Holliday wrote: “When it hired Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker in 1927, the Army was deeply concerned with creating a new symbol of its positive impact on the city while minimizing its costs.”³⁸ The architectural firm contributed to reducing the costs by donating the difference between the eight percent standard architectural fee and the actual costs of the office working on the design back to The Salvation Army.³⁹ With a mandate to find a balance of symbolism and budget, the architects designed a complex of buildings that balanced the theatrical temple building with the more functional office and dormitory buildings in the Art Deco style. The Army’s Opening and Dedication brochure described the complex of buildings as:

Strikingly modernistic in outline,
they present a chaste and restrained
appearance, nothing superfluous,
workmanlike in every detail as
befits the ideals of the organization
they house.⁴⁰

The main office building is less ornate than Walker’s other commercial buildings, with an understated decorative motif and a spare yet sculptural treatment of the masonry. The slight

surface variations created by the variegated brick and cast stone, and the subtle balance achieved in the asymmetrical massing, result in a restrained but dramatic composition. There are no setbacks above the 12 stories but a narrow tower (partially removed) located above the eastern-most bay, adjacent to the auditorium, creates a focal point linking the two structures. Layered brick piers rising uninterrupted between bays, with recessed spandrels of plain brick between inset windows, define the facade rhythm. The brick and cast stone are used in a sculptural way, with no other applied ornament. The cast stone at the lower stories appears to be layered, as drapery that rises near the center of each bay above the doors of the ground story and above the windows of the second story.⁴¹ This gives the effect of a rising curtain and at the same time creates a small pediment shape above each opening. The ground story has two large entrances and four pedestrian entrances in its six bays. The easternmost entrance is the most elaborate and is comprised of bronze and glass doors topped by a bronze grille with a large, three-dimensional logo for The Salvation Army in front of a leaded glass transom. Above the glass, the multiple setbacks of the cast stone provide an almost serrated effect at the edge of the opening.

The four-story auditorium structure located to the east of the office building creates an asymmetrical design that is balanced by the large opening of the portal. This is the public entrance, wide and welcoming to the people the organization wants to attract to its religious services that take place inside. Here the idea of a rising curtain on a stage is especially apparent in the cast stone that surrounds the opening. The opening itself is irregular, suggesting layers of waving curtains stepped up at the center. Inside the opening, the large insignia of The Salvation Army provides a touch of color and brightness on the mostly monotone exterior. Two stairways rise up on either side of the opening and the tops of these stairways

continue the irregular fabric-like design.

On the exterior of the auditorium entrance, the cast stone continues, with more layers of uneven, narrow vertical bands. A parapet rises behind this door surround for another story, and is faced with more vertical bands of cast stone interspersed with areas of brick.

Critical Reception

The Salvation Army National and Territorial Headquarters has attracted the attention of writers and historians from the time of its completion to the present. W. Parker Chase in *New York: The Wonder City* called the complex “a group of grand new buildings.”⁴² The *New Yorker* described West 14th Street as “enlivened and improved” by the complex and analyzed the design:

The problem of the architects was to plan an office building attached to a large auditorium. This combination of ordinarily unrelated elements is finely and frankly expressed on the principal elevation on Fourteenth Street. The office building soars upward to an interesting series of setbacks, while beside it the auditorium entrance, with its double staircase leading to the upper levels, forms an unusual and effective feature.⁴³

Cervin Robinson and Rosemarie Haag Bletter include the headquarters buildings in their history of New York City Art Deco buildings, *Skyscraper Style: Art Deco New York*, as an example of Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker’s textile-like treatment of building walls, a significant Art Deco style trait.⁴⁴ Architect and historian Robert A. M. Stern describes the complex’s Dutch and German Expressionist sources, successful combination of the massing of

the low auditorium and tower office buildings and suggests that the theatrical forms of the auditorium were a reflection of the organization's mission:

The willingness of The Salvation Army to adopt the theatrical monumental forms of Modern Naturalism was a reflection perhaps of the missionary zeal with which the organization set out to bring religion to the streets.⁴⁵

Holliday also includes The Salvation Army headquarters building as one of Walker's significant projects analyzing its program and how the firm housed the different components into separate masses:

The collection of towers repeated Walker's solution at Barclay-Vesey, creating a stepped composition, with transitions and edges softened by the use of cast stone and cast metal ornament. The auditorium entrance provides the visual focal point. Cave-like and deeply recessed, the shadowed portal in the otherwise flat, planar surface of the building functioned as a beacon set into the long block between Sixth and Seventh Avenues. The portal's scalloped edges pulled people in from the street and were to be lit up brilliantly at night. As Chester Price's rendering makes clear, the idea was to animate the building, give it a rippling, flowing surface filled with the energy of the city.⁴⁶

Later History of The Salvation Army and The Salvation Army National and Territorial Headquarters

Just as The Salvation Army moved into its new headquarters the country began to realize the full impact of the Great Depression.⁴⁷ In New York City, with 250,000 workers out of jobs, the Army established free employment bureaus for men and women. In October 1930, the Salvationists opened eight free food stations in Brooklyn and Manhattan to distribute unsold food donated by city restaurants. Funded in part by a benefit show at Madison Garden, they also established a lodging house, the Gold Dust Lodge, which opened in December 1931 and within the space of five months provided shelter for 4,587 unemployed men and served 429,318 meals. As the demand for the Army's services increased and the income from its endowment and contributions shrank, its emergency relief funds became depleted; in June 1932, for the first time in its history, the Army was forced to turn away needy applicants.⁴⁸ After serious retrenchment and fund raising, the organization resumed its relief work. Special projects included an employment service for out-of-work white-collar professionals, a hotel and food depot for African-American men in Harlem, and shelters for women and children intended to keep families intact. When the Federal government began its Public Works programs, The Salvation Army supplemented its efforts, serving sandwiches, coffee, and donuts to applicants standing in line, sometimes all night, for CWA and PWA jobs. In 1935 it provided 726,237 free meals and nearly 1,000,000 free beds at its men's shelters.⁴⁹

In 1934, Evangeline Booth was elected the head of the International Salvation Army. In his history of The Salvation Army Herbert Wisbey wrote that, "her public farewell was spectacular, with matching celebrations in various parts of the country."⁵⁰ In New York, 20,000 celebrants

gathered in Madison Square Garden to take part in the festivities honoring Booth, which included tributes from Mayor Fiorello La Guardia and Helen Keller. After Booth returned to England, responsibility for The Salvation Army's national programs and coordination of the work of its four American territories fell to the American National Secretary Edward J. Parker, who became National Commander in 1943. He was succeeded by Eastern Territorial Commander Ernest I. Pugmire, who served as National Commander until 1953.

Commander Parker is credited with having the idea of bringing together the welfare and religious organizations that wanted to serve the needs of servicemen during World War II to create the United Service Organizations for National Defense, Inc., better known as the USO.⁵¹ "The largest interfaith program ever undertaken," the USO began opening clubs near military bases throughout the country then moved overseas with the troops.⁵² While most of The Salvation Army's war efforts were centered on the USO, it also operated its own mobile canteens and Red Shield Clubs, many set up only a few 100 yards from combat zones, where over 110,000,000 meals and snacks were served to members of the armed forces. In the United States 1,598,100 servicemen were provided with sleeping accommodations and showers during leaves and furloughs. Religious and social service support were also offered to the troops, war workers, and their families, with over 30 Salvation Army chaplains serving with the armed forces.

By December 1944 The Salvation Army was offering legal advice and vocational guidance to returning veterans at its headquarters building. Some of the organization's programs had outgrown the headquarters building and had been moved to other sites, including the Family Services Bureau, which was housed across the street at 135 West 14th Street.⁵³ During the post-war years and 1950s, The

Salvation Army's programs were updated to reflect changing needs and ideas – industrial homes were replaced by adult rehabilitation centers, "which provided men and women with shelter, food, clothing, medical care, psychiatric counseling, meaningful work, and vocational training as well as practicing Christian evangelism," rescue homes for unwed mothers gave way to maternity and general hospitals, day-care centers and residences for young women.⁵⁴

In January 1982 the national headquarters of The Salvation Army was relocated to a corporate center in Verona, New Jersey.⁵⁵ By the late 1990s the Army's Eastern Territorial headquarters had also moved from the city to Nyack, New York. In 2016 the office building portion of the complex continues to house the offices of the Greater New York Division of The Salvation Army as well as a social services center that offers alcohol and drug treatment, casework services, detoxification services, and transitional housing. The four-story auditorium building is still used for worship services, meetings, and concerts. Between 2008 and 2013 the facade and exterior stair were repaired, restored, and modernized and the great Centennial Memorial Temple received a complete restoration.

The Salvation Army building commemorated the organization's 50 years of mission work in the United States, its growth in both the number of people implementing its mission and services provided. Ralph Walker's design for the building created a unique and well-thought-out complex that meets and houses the functions of the organization and uses banners and other signage to advertise the many programs offered here. The Salvation Army has continued to grow and use this complex of buildings since its opening, almost 100 years ago.

Statement of Regulatory Intent

The Salvation Army National and Territorial
Headquarters

As the National and Territorial Headquarters of The Salvation Army in the United States, the building represents the significance of the organization in New York City and throughout the United States. Architect Ralph Walker designed the three-part building to meet and express the significant functions of the organization. In 2015 The Salvation Army assisted a total of 27,167,320 people nationwide. As part of its mission, the New York City complex provides meals, supplies, lodging, disaster assistance, summer and day camps for children, and senior citizen care. The building uses banners and other signage to advertise the many programs offered here. The Commission recognizes the purpose-built nature and function of the building as integral to its architectural significance, and that going forward the institution will need to continue to adapt its building to fulfill its mission. The Commission further recognizes that the one-over-one window configuration that has been in place for almost half of the building's history is not inconsistent with the Art Deco style. Therefore, to support the institution's continued use of this building, the Commission will consider these factors when reviewing applications for windows and programmatic work, such as active and passive signs, lighting and security, in the future.

Report researched and written by

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Endnotes

¹ The property was the subject of two previous Public Hearings. It was heard as LP-01294 on 4/13/1982 and as LP-1802 on 7/10/1990 and 9/11/1990.

² The Barclay-Vesey Building design dates from 1921-1926. The designation report for this building cites the dates as 1923-27 but recent research has turned up earlier drawings. Kathryn Holliday, Ralph Walker, *Architect of the Century* (New York: Rizzoli, 2012), 42-61.

³ The information in this section comes from the following: Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), *144 West 14th Street Building Designation Report* (LP-2315) (NY: City of NY, 2008) report prepared by Matthew Postal, LPC, *154 West 14th Street Building Designation Report* (LP-2419) (NY: City of NY) report prepared by Jay Shockley, and Report of the Historic Preservation program, Columbia University Historic Preservation Program.

⁴ Information in this section is compiled from Roger J. Green, *Catherine Booth, A Biography of the Cofounder of The Salvation Army* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996); Robert Sandall, *The History of The Salvation Army, Vol. I 1865-1878* (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, Ltd., 1947); and Diane Winston, *Red Hot and Righteous, the Urban Religion of The Salvation Army* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1999); Herbert A. Wisbey, *Soldiers Without Swords, A History of The Salvation Army in the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1955).

⁵ Salvation Army website: <http://www.salvationarmyusa.org/usn/history-of-the-salvation-army>, accessed 12/9/13.

⁶ Sandall, 179.

⁷ William L. Maye, *Soldiers of Uncommon Valor, The History of Salvationists of African Descent in the United States* (West Nyack, NY: Others Press, 2008), 5.

⁸ Sandall, 229-30.

⁹ Winston, 13.

¹⁰ Winston, 32.

¹¹ The Salvation Army “apparently gave little thought to

external appearance and ethnic origins.” Maye, 5-6.

¹² Winston, 35.

¹³ Winston, 38-39. *States* (West Nyack, NY: Others Press, 2008), 5.

¹³ Sandall, 229-30.

¹³ Winston, 13.

¹³ Winston, 32.

¹³ The Salvation Army “apparently gave little thought to external appearance and ethnic origins.” Maye, 5-6.

¹³ Winston, 35.

¹⁴ See Winston, 36-37; “Salvation Army’s New Headquarters,” *The New York Times*, May 21, 1894, 2.

¹⁵ “Joy in Salvation Army,” *The New York Times*, June 4, 1895, 16.

¹⁶ Winston, 118-119.

¹⁷ “‘Joe the Turk’ Rites by Salvation Army,” *The New York Times*, Oct 14, 1937, 25.

¹⁸ From the moment she arrived in New York, Evangeline Booth moved the Army into more impressive buildings to bolster its image and help attract more wealthy contributors. Winston, 149.

¹⁹ Winston, 192.

²⁰ Salvation Army, brochure for 50th Anniversary of the building on 14th Street. In research files of Landmarks Preservation Commission.

²¹ Brief on the Territorial Headquarters, n.d., from The Salvation Army Archives, provided by Katherine Holliday, 4/7/14, in the files of the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

²² Brief, Salvation Army Archives, 1.

²³ Ibid., 13.

²⁴ The original brief called for part of the large structure to be used for a printing plant for the organization’s many publications. This was never implemented on this site, however.

²⁵ “Salvation Army to Move,” *The New York Times*, Nov. 23, 1928, 35.

²⁶ Previous to this, the firm was called Haines Lundberg Waehler.

²⁷ Much of the information in this section is adapted from: LPC, *Barclay-Vesey Building Designation Report* (LP-1745) (New York: City of New York, 1991), report

prepared by David Breiner; LPC, *The Long Distance Building of the American Telephone & Telegraph Company Designation Report* (LP-1747) (New York: City of New York, 1991), report prepared by David Breiner; LPC, *Western Union Building Designation Report* (LP-1749) (New York: City of New York, 1991), report prepared by Betsy Bradley; Rosemarie Bletter, "The Art Deco Style," in Cervin Robinson and Rosemarie Haag Bletter, *Skyscraper Style, Art Deco New York* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1975), 35; David Gebhard, *The National Trust Guide to Art Deco in America* (NY: Preservation Press, 1996); and the Landmarks Preservation Commission research files.

²⁸ Bletter, 41.

²⁹ Sheldon Cheney, *The New World Architecture* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1930).

³⁰ H.W. Corbett, "Architecture," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, vol. 2 (Chicago, 1929), 275, quoted in LPC, *Barclay Vesey Building*, 4.

³¹ Bletter, 61.

³² "John Markle Gives \$500,000 for Home," *The New York Times*, Feb. 9, 1928, 27.

³³ "The Golden Jubilee National Congress," *The War Cry*, May, 1930; "Salvation Army in Fete," *The New York Times*, Mar. 10, 1930, 20.

³⁴ "Entry Here Marked by Salvation Army," *The New York Times*, Mar. 11, 1930, 20.

³⁵ "Sousa Leads Bands of Salvation Army," *The New York Times*, May 18, 1930, 15.

³⁶ *The War Cry*, May, 1930.

³⁷ "Salvation Army Honors Miss Booth," *New York Times*, May 19, 1930, 23.

³⁸ Kathryn E. Holliday, *Ralph Walker: Architect of the Century* (New York: Rizzoli New York, 2012), 64.

³⁹ Salvation Army, "Territorial Headquarters, New York City" brief, 13.

⁴⁰ Salvation Army, Opening and Dedication brochure for the building on 14th Street. In research files of Landmarks Preservation Commission.

⁴¹ Cast stone is an inexpensive material and able to be molded in an infinite variety of ways to suit the needs of the designer.

⁴² W. Parker Chase, *New York: The Wonder City* (New York: Wonder City Publishing Co., Inc, 1932) 57.

⁴³ T-Square, "The Sky Line: The Army Goes Modern—

Art in Wall Street—Aluminum and Steel," *New Yorker* 6 (July 12, 1930), 67.

⁴⁴ Cervin Robinson, "Buildings and Architects," *Skyscraper Style*, 18.

⁴⁵ Robert A. M Stern, Gregory Gilmartin, Thomas Mellins, *New York 1930: Architecture and Urbanism Between the Two World Wars*, (New York: Rizzoli New York, 1987), 154, 567.

⁴⁶ Holliday, 64.

⁴⁷ This section on The Salvation Army's relief work during the Depression is based on Winston, 227-228, 234-240; Wisbey, 188-191.

⁴⁸ "Tells Urgent Need of Salvation Army," *New York Times*, June 1, 1932, 25.

⁴⁹ "726,730 Free Meals," *New York Times*, Dec. 16, 1935, 2.

⁵⁰ Wisbey, 191.

⁵¹ This section on the Salvation Army's role in World War II is based on Winston, 240-242; Wisbey, 202-206; John J. Cochran, "The Salvation Army in World War II," *Congressional Record Appendix*, 79th Congress, First Session, Oct. 1, 1945, A4117-A4118.

⁵² Winston, 240.

⁵³ There the Army provided assistance for families of servicemen and in 1945 opened its first psychiatric clinic, aimed particularly at servicemen suffering from "war jitters." See "New York War Fund," *New York Times*, Dec. 4, 1944, 25; "Salvation Army Opens New Clinic," *New York Times*, Feb. 11, 1945, 34.

⁵⁴ Jane Allen, "Salvation Army," in Kenneth T. Jackson, ed. *The Encyclopedia of New York City* (2nd edition, New York: Yale University Press, 2010), 1146.

⁵⁵ "U.S. Headquarters of Salvation Army Are Going to Jersey," *New York Times*, Aug. 11, 1981, B3. See also Patricia Read "Salvation Army Verona-Bound," *New York Times*, Sept. 6, 1981, NJ10.

Findings and Designation

The Salvation Army National and Territorial
Headquarters

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that The Salvation Army National and Territorial Headquarters has a special character and a 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, The Salvation Army National and Territorial Headquarters, constructed in 1929-35, was built to serve the expanding needs of The Salvation Army in the United States; that the complex includes a 12-story office building, adjacent to a 4-story auditorium building that included modern broadcast facilities; that the new headquarters building was opened and dedicated in May, 1930 as part of the Army's Golden Jubilee National Congress, in celebration of 50 years of mission work in the United States and that after 50 years, the organization had 1,735 Corps in the United States, 4,814 salaried officers or cadets; that they ran 124 men's industrial institutions, 35 maternity homes and hospitals, 10 children's homes, 9 women's residents, 12 settlements, 91 employment bureaus and 16 general hospitals and dispensaries where more than 49,000 patients were treated in the previous year; that members of The Salvation Army had arrived in New York in 1880 and had greatly expanded the work of the organization in the United States since that time; that this building replaced an earlier headquarters building constructed on part of this site in 1895; that Evangeline Booth, daughter of founders William and Catherine Booth and serving

as the American commander since 1905, desired that The Salvation Army have a more prominent presence in the city and particularly on 14th Street; that this new building was designed by pre-eminent modernist architect Ralph Walker of the firm of Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker, using an Art Deco style; that Walker believed in creating each design to meet the individual needs of his clients: that for this complex the office building was designed without applied ornament and the verticality of the building was emphasized by layering the brick piers along the entire height of the facade while recessing the spandrels; that the brick and cast stone on the auditorium building is arranged in such a way as to imply curtains rising on a stage, as a suggestion of the experience of visitors who would come inside for religious services run by The Salvation Army; that the wide opening leading to the auditorium is extremely welcoming to people walking along 14th Street and helps the asymmetrical balance between the smaller auditorium building and the larger office structure; that both of these buildings are clad in brick, with a small amount of cast-stone ornament near the top and around the entrances, in keeping with other work of this important architect, who is also responsible for (among many others) the Barclay-Vesey Building, and numerous other skyscrapers for the New York Telephone Company and its associated organizations; that this building continues to serve the needs of The Salvation Army in its religious and charitable work.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark The Salvation Army National and Territorial Headquarters, 120-130 West 14th Street, Manhattan, and designates as its Landmark Site Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 609, Lot 23, in part, consisting of the land beneath the office

building and adjacent auditorium building, as shown on the attached map.

Meenakshi Srinivasin, Chair

Adi Shamir-Baron
Frederick Bland
Wellington Chen
Michael Devonshire
Michael Goldblum
John Gustafsson
Jeanne Lutfy
Kim Vauss
Commissioners



Auditorium Entrance

Barrett Reiter (LPC), October 2017



**The Salvation Army
Headquarters, West
14th Street**
Barrett Reiter (LPC),
October 2017



Entrance to the Office Building
Barrett Reiter (LPC), October 2017





Auditorium Entrance

Barrett Reiter (LPC), October 2017

