April 12, 1972

Dr. William Murtagh
Keeper of the National Register
of Historic Places
801 19th Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C.  20006

Dear Dr. Murtagh:

As Chairman of the New York State Historic Trust, the officially designated State Preservation Agency, and as the State Liaison Officer, I am forwarding the enclosed nomination to the National Register of Historic Places:

Jefferson Market Courthouse, New York County

The above nomination has been reviewed and approved by the Governor's Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation, in accordance with the criteria outlined in Section 2.2 of the Grants Guide.

The staff of the Trust would welcome the opportunity to discuss this submission with your office.

Sincerely,

Louis C. Jones
Chairman
**Form 10-200**

**United States Department of the Interior**

**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**

**Inventory - Nomination Form**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

### 1. Name

**Common:**

Jefferson Market Courthouse

**And/or Historic:**

OFFICE COPY

### 2. Location

**Street and Number:**

425 Avenue of the Americas

**City or Town:**

New York

**State:**

New York

**Code:**

36

**County:**

New York

**Code:**

041

### 3. Classification

<table>
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<th>Status</th>
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<tr>
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**Present Use (Check One or More as Appropriate):**

- Agricultural
- Government
- Park
- Transportation
- Library

### 4. Owner of Property

**Owner's Name:**

see continuation sheet

**Street and Number:**

**City or Town:**

**State:**

**Code:**

### 5. Location of Legal Description

**Courthouse, Registry of Deeds, Etc.:**

New York County Hall of Records

**Street and Number:**

305 Broadway

**City or Town:**

New York

**State:**

New York

**Code:**

36

### 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

**Title of Survey:**

Greenwich Village Historic District Report

**Date of Survey:**

**Depository for Survey Records:**

New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

**Street and Number:**

305 Broadway

**City or Town:**

New York

**State:**

New York

**Code:**

36

Rep. Edward I. Koch
h. Owner of Property

a. Land:

City of New York
City Hall
New York, New York

b. Building:

New York Public Library
Fifth Avenue & 42nd Street
New York, N.Y.
7. DESCRIPTION

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<tr>
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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance.

The Jefferson Market Courthouse, though irregular in height, has three and a half stories with a side tower. The principal facade on the Avenue of the Americas is seven bays wide, exclusive of the tower. Sited at the convergence of two streets, the building is basically triangular in plan with a tower at the northernmost point.

The masonry bearing walls are brick construction, with finished brick exteriors trimmed with contrasting bands of stone. The pitched roofs, originally slate, are copper clad.

The main entrance portal on the Avenue is gothic-arched, surmounted by a crocketted gable, and a handsome bas-relief seal decorates the apex of the Avenue of the Americas side. The polygonal base of the tower is surmounted by a series of pointed-arch windows. Above this point, the circular shaft of the tower rises to an iron balcony supported on stone brackets at lookout level. Crowning the tower are four clocks which are in turn surmounted by a high pyramidal roof.

Extensive interior changes have transformed the original courthouse into a library. The grand stone staircase leading from the first to the second floor remains a focal point in the new plan. It is crowned by an iron spreader and a domical ceiling. Other important features include handsome wood paneling, and door and window enframements. Stained glass windows may be seen in the corridors and stair tower.
### SIGNIFICANCE

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### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Jefferson Market Courthouse, long relieved of its judiciary duties, has been the home of the Greenwich Village Branch of the New York Public Library for a number of years, as a result of a successful campaign for its preservation on the part of many concerned residents of the area.

At an early period in the history of New York City, lots were set aside for the sites of public buildings, accommodating a market, a municipal court, a jail and a volunteer fire station in a watch-tower from which fires could be spotted. This area had originally been the site of Jefferson Market. During the 1830s a complex of wooden structures was built to house these civil functions, and early in the 1870s it was decided to replace them with masonry buildings which could occupy the entire block.

Frederick Clark Withers (1828-1901), an English architect who worked in partnership with the noted author and landscape architect, Calvert Vaux, was chosen to draw up the plans for the new buildings. Withers' complex, designed in 1875, included the courthouse and its companion, the jail, which is now gone. The Jefferson Market is striking in its use of materials of variegated color and texture. The grey granite basement carries the walls of red pressed brick bonded with fine grained yellow-grey sandstone. With its picturesque asymmetry and tower, the building is a fine example of English-inspired Victorian Gothic architecture. Elaborate stone carving inside and out enriches its appearance, which is further enhanced by stained glass, plasterwork and carved woodwork.

In 1885, when the Victorian Gothic was losing popularity to the Romanesque Revival and the shingle style, as practiced by McKim, Mead and White and Henry Hobson Richardson, a poll of architects voted the Jefferson Market Courthouse one of the finest buildings in the country.

This signal honor, however, was not sufficient to insulate it against the forward-moving stylistic trend and by 1945 it had ceased to be a courthouse and housed a succession of City Agencies in need of temporary quarters.

Now, after a restoration by architect Giorgio Cavaglieri, who has carefully integrated the original elements of the structure with the modern character required for its conversion to library use, the Jefferson Market Courthouse remains a prominent feature in the Village with a new and permanent usefulness.
9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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Approximate acreage of nominated property: Under one acre

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries:

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<th>County</th>
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11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name and Title: Stephen S. Lash, Associate

Organization: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

Date: Feb., 1972

Street and Number: 305 Broadway

City or Town: New York

State: New York

Code: 36

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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

National [X] State [ ] Local [ ]

Name [Signature]

Title: Chairman, New York State Historic Trust

Date: 10-12-72

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

[Signature]

Date

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date