

DAILY NEWS BUILDING, 220 East 42nd Street, Borough of Manhattan. Built 1929-30; architect Raymond Hood.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan, Tax Map Block 1315, Lot 24

On May 8, 1979, the Landmark Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Daily News Building and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 12). The hearing was continued to July 12 (Item No. 3). Both hearings had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. A total of three witnesses spoke in favor of designation at the hearings. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. The Daily News has expressed reservations about certain aspects of the designation. Letters have been received in support of designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The Daily News Building has been a major architectural monument of 42nd Street and New York City since its construction fifty years ago. Commissioned by News founder Captain Joseph Patterson, heir to a publishing dynasty, it is the home and symbol of America's first tabloid and largest newspaper. The News Building's striped exterior, with its tapered stacked massing, is one of the city's major Art Deco presences, and the first fully modernistic free-standing skyscraper of architect Raymond Hood.

Captain Joseph Medill Patterson and the Medill Publishing Family

Captain Joseph Medill Patterson was one of the heirs of the Medill publishing dynasty, which comprised three families--the Medills, the McCormicks, and the Pattersons--and three large daily papers--the Chicago Tribune, the New York Daily News, and the Washington Times-Herald.¹

Patterson's grandfather, Joseph Medill, a publisher of various county newspapers in Ohio, moved to Chicago on Horace Greeley's advice, and in 1855 bought into the eight-year-old Chicago Tribune, a minor daily at the time. He gradually built up the newspaper, which captured the city's imagination when during the last days of the Great Fire he managed to get out a special "Cheer Up!" issue. That phrase became a rallying cry for post-Fire Chicago, and that issue, and the Tribune's lead in reconstruction, helped elect Medill mayor of Chicago on a "Fire-proof" ticket.

One of Medill's daughters married Robert S. McCormick, nephew of the inventor Cyrus McCormick; the other married Robert W. Patterson. Patterson was gradually moved into a position of control at the Tribune during the 1890s, helping to run the paper until he became ill in 1905; Medill died in 1899, Patterson in 1910.

In 1914, following a brief interlude during which outsider James Keely

ran the paper, control of the Tribune passed into the hands of cousins Robert R. McCormick and Joseph Medill Patterson, Medill's grandsons. In ten years they doubled the newspaper's circulation. Among Patterson's innovations were the introduction of comics (including "Moon Mullins" and "Little Orphan Annie") and the first daily directory of movie theater shows. By 1918, the Tribune had become a major force among Chicago newspapers.

While McCormick and Patterson were working their successes on the Tribune, their personal relations were not the best. McCormick acted the part of the scion of Chicago wealth that he was. Patterson on the other hand announced in 1906 that he was a socialist, wrote several socialist-minded books, and a few socialist-minded editorials for the Tribune. Both cousins were Tribune correspondents during the first years of World War I; later both joined the service. McCormick entered as a cavalry major, went to Paris as a member of General Pershing's staff, and retired as Col. McCormick, by which title he remained known at the newspaper. Patterson, though offered a commission, turned it down, and enlisted as a private; he saw service, was gassed and wounded, and retired as Capt. Patterson.

During the War, one night in France, Patterson and McCormick met in a house in the village of Mareuil-en-Dole. Sitting on a dung-heap out back, drinking scotch while the war raged, they discussed their future. Patterson described a meeting he had had shortly before in London with Lord Northcliffe. Northcliffe had found tremendous success with his introduction of the tabloid form of newspaper in his Daily Mirror, founded in 1903. The Mirror had already reached a circulation of 800,000, and Northcliffe was convinced that New York City was ripe for a tabloid of its own. That night in France, the cousins decided that the Tribune would back a tabloid in New York, and that Patterson would run it. On June 26, 1919, the first issue of the Illustrated Daily News, a pictorial morning paper, was on the stands.

America's First Tabloid

Various forms of tabloid newspapers had appeared in New York during the late 19th century, but the Daily News was the first to catch on, and by becoming so successful so quickly it established the genre permanently, becoming the model for similar papers in major cities across the country. As a form, the tabloid was distinguished from standard newspapers by its size, roughly half the norm, and its format, with heavy emphasis on pictures and with much briefer texts than had been usual. The News and its followers also played off the kind of image created by Northcliffe's Mirror of writing for "the common people," which often became synonymous with emphasizing sensation and crime--and also "The Most Beautiful Girls in New York" which the News promised to bring its readers in an advertisement run in the Times.²

The first issue of the paper carried an editorial proclaiming:

The Illustrated Daily News is going to be your newspaper. Its interests will be your interests.... It is not an experiment, for the appeal of news pictures and brief, well-told stories will be as apparent to you as it has been to

millions of readers in European cities.... We will give you every day the best and newest pictures of the things that are happening in the world.... It will be aggressively for America and for the people of New York....³

This issue, which appeared two days before the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, devoted almost the entire front page to a picture of the Prince of Wales, with only a short notice at the bottom of the impending end of World War I.

None of its competitors took the paper seriously at first; they called it "the servant girls' Bible" and expected it to collapse within six months. In its first year, however, the paper moved from 18th to 8th place among the city's English language dailies, and in the second year, with its name shortened to The Daily News, it was second only to the Evening Journal. In December 1925, the paper's circulation passed the one million mark, making the News New York's largest newspaper, and prompting Capt. Patterson to move permanently to New York.⁴

The traditional papers thoroughly loathed the new tabloids, which they condemned as successors to the "yellow journalism" of the prior century. Stories were printed of sensitive children unwittingly coming across stray issues and becoming too ill to eat dinner. The appeal of the new form, however, was undeniable, and Martin Weyrauch, editor of The Graphic, one of New York's most sensationalist tabloids, was not altogether wrong when he wrote in their defense that "Tabloids were just as inevitable as jazz. They are as truly expressive of modern America as World Series baseball, skyscrapers, radio, and movies."⁵

The Move to East 42nd Street

The News operation began in offices rented in the New York Evening Mail Building at 25 City Hall Place (a street which no longer exists), in the area known as "Printinghouse Row" where papers had traditionally clustered to be near the center of city government. Once it seemed to be doing well, the paper moved, in 1921, to 23-25 Park Place, a few blocks away but still on the fringes of the newspaper district. This new headquarters was a converted five-story loft building (still standing) with a cast-iron ground floor and a stone front, aedicular windows, heavy moldings, and an Italianate cornice, all typical of the warehouses of the neighborhood. The spectacular growth of the News over the next several years was too much for the building to absorb, however, and by 1927 the paper was actively looking for a site on which to construct a new building.

As the search began, Harry Corash, the paper's manager of research, made a study which showed the center of population of New York to be in Queens, across the East River from Midtown Manhattan.⁶ A Queens location was not convenient for newspaper distribution, but Midtown definitely was. Moreover, several newspapers had already begun moving northward away from City Hall, realizing that with the general northward growth of New York, Midtown was becoming the place to be. It was almost twenty years since the New York Times had moved up to Longacre Square, renamed Times Square in its honor, and even longer since the Herald had started the uptown newspaper migration at Herald Square.

As the historians of the News describe it, 42nd Street east of Lexington Avenue "looked like the street across from the railroad station in any small city; a row of old, assorted, unpretentious structures."⁷ The railroad station, however, was Grand Central Terminal, and East 42nd Street with the surrounding area, referred to then as the "upper East side," was beginning to be redeveloped with first-class office buildings. The New York Times, writing from well-established Times Square on West 42nd Street, referred to its rival's venture as being "among the tall structures which are radically changing the old-time conditions in the Forty-second Street area just east of the Grand Central Station...."⁸ In their official announcement of acquisition of their site, the News described the area:

East 42d Street has been undergoing a marked change. The Tudor City development of the Fred F. French Company has directed attention to the possibilities of the upper east side, and on the site of the old St. Bartholomew's Parish House and Chapel, almost directly opposite the plot just purchased by the News, the Schulte Syndicate is now constructing a new 20-story office building. The Tishman Realty & Construction Company is planning to erect a similar office building at 226-232 East 42d street, which is the 100 feet of 42d street frontage immediately adjoining the News plot on the east. These developments, together with that of the News, which alone will amount to about \$8,000,000 will go a long way toward establishing this block as a high grade business center.⁹

East 42nd Street was an ideal location for the News plant; Patterson was quoted as saying, "If I can be on a crosstown street to Times Square I'll get my tabloids on the sidewalks in the morning ahead of any of my competitors."¹⁰ Real estate there, however, was much too expensive just to erect a printing plant, and so the idea was born to add to it some office space to help pay the costs. Patterson at first wanted just "a bit of office space attached";¹¹ gradually the plan grew to accommodate a printing plant on East 41st Street and a proposed twenty-story tower on East 42nd. The News announced acquisition of a plot with 125 feet on 42nd Street, between Second and Third Avenues, running through to a 275 foot frontage on East 41st Street, and then purchased an additional frontage on Second Avenue. The tower was expected to house the expanding News operations, but also the Chicago Tribune's New York office, and Liberty Weekly, Inc., Pacific & Atlantic Photos, Inc., the Ontario Paper Company, Ltd., the Tonawanda Paper Company, the Chicago Tribune Transportation Company, Ltd., and FranqueLin Lumber & Pulpwood Co., Ltd., all related to the functions of the paper.¹²

More than housing the News's offices and printing plant, however, the new building was intended to be the paper's architectural symbol. A suitable architect was required. The Chicago Tribune, when the time had come to build a tower in 1921, had held an international competition. The News, seeing the results, did not need a competition. Patterson simply hired the architects of his cousin's tower: John Mead Howells and Raymond Hood.

Raymond Hood

Raymond Hood (1881-1934), originally from Pawtucket, Rhode Island, was educated at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Ecole des Beaux Arts. At the age of 41, after a dismally obscure career in New York, he suddenly found himself the winner of the most celebrated architectural competition in the country--for the Chicago Tribune tower--and during his next and last ten years became known as one of New York's most brilliant architects. John Mead Howells (1868-1959), the only son of the novelist William Dean Howells, was a graduate of Harvard and the Ecole des Beaux Arts. He was best known for neo-Gothic skyscraper designs, and was the author of books of architectural history. One of the architects invited to enter the Tribune competition, he was too busy to devise a design, but invited his friend Hood to enter one as his partner. Neither architect had any expectation that the design of Howells and Hood, Associated Architects, would win. Although both the Tribune and News buildings are officially designs of the firm of Howells and Hood, in both cases the design is Hood's alone. Much of Hood's subsequent career was tied to Medill family commissions. Besides the Tribune tower for Col. McCormick and the News tower for Capt. Patterson, Hood also designed Patterson's house in Ossining, New York, and an Art Deco apartment house (1928) at 3 East 84th Street, commissioned by Patterson.

During his career Hood designed several houses, several churches, the above-mentioned apartment house, and, during his underemployed days, Mori's Restaurant; he introduced roof-gardens to New York on a large scale at Rockefeller Center; he produced an extraordinary manifesto for rebuilding Manhattan along the lines of Le Corbusier's Voisin Plan; but his fame rests primarily on his five skyscrapers in Chicago and New York: the Tribune tower (1922), the American Radiator Building (1923-24), the Daily News Building (1929-30), the McGraw-Hill Building (1930-31), and the RCA Building at Rockefeller Center, where he was one of the architects of the designing team until his death.

From his occasional writings and interviews, and from his friends' recollections, it appears that Hood considered himself a business-like architect, with the function of "manufacturing shelter," rather than an artist:

There has been entirely too much talk about the collaboration of architect, painter and sculptor; nowadays, the collaborators are the architects, the engineer, and the plumber. ...Buildings are constructed for certain purposes, and the buildings of today are more practical from the standpoint of the man who is in them than the older buildings. ...We are considering comfort and convenience much more than appearance and effect.¹³

In the interiors of the News Building, and later the McGraw-Hill, Hood's practical approach produced "actually a factory, done at factory prices" which rented as office space.¹⁴ This approach was probably a factor in his generally good working relationships, noted by acquaintances, with such businessmen clients as Col. McCormick at the Tribune, James McGraw at McGraw-Hill, and John Todd at Rockefeller Center.¹⁵ It was certainly attractive to Capt. Patterson.

In accordance with this insistence on the practical, Hood in his writings on architecture repeated the arguments of utility and functionalism generally associated with Bauhaus theory: "Beauty is utility, developed in a manner to which the eye is accustomed by habit, in so far as this development does not detract from its usefulness."¹⁶

The same man, however, promoted and developed roof gardens, and large-scale polychromy for buildings, neither of which were within the strict bounds of "utility." Each of his skyscrapers was a remarkable and unique creation, defined by a combination of massing and color, which today must be called Moderne or Art Deco. His name was frequently mentioned together with those of Ralph Walker and Ely Jacques Kahn, leaders of that style in the 1920s, and the three were close professional friends. In only a decade Hood took the skyscraper form from the neo-Gothic fantasy of the Tribune tower--the style he had learned while working for the firm of Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson--to the modernistic massing of the RCA Building. His only skyscraper to approach the International Style was the McGraw-Hill Building.

Hood believed that the development of skyscrapers showed up the sham nature of facade architecture.¹⁷ Each of his own skyscrapers was developed as a free-standing tower expressed through massing and applied color, rather than through the design of each front as an applied facade. In his first building following the Tribune, Hood transformed what might have been a conventional neo-Gothic tower by using setbacks, beveled corners, and an unusual black and gold color scheme, to create an unmistakable and unique kind of skyscraper for the American Radiator Company (1923-24). In the Daily News Building, he abandoned all traces of the Gothic, and the regular massing of the earlier buildings, concentrating instead on irregularly-placed masses of wall articulated with long slender tiers of vertically-oriented windows, and colored it white with reddish-brown stripes using polychrome brick patterns and red window curtains. To the McGraw-Hill Building (1930-31) he gave two separate contours--one a graceful Deco tower and the other an International Style slab--horizontal bands of windows, and a facing of machine-made blue-green terra-cotta blocks. At the RCA Building (1931-33) he returned to the massing of the News Building; its color, like that of all the Rockefeller Center buildings, is the natural gray with light brown overtones of the limestone cladding.

Hood insisted that the massing of these skyscrapers was simply the result of the zoning laws, but the great differences among them suggest instead that they were the creations of a master designer. To achieve his end of designing mass rather than outline, he abandoned the use of architectural drawings (as in his Beaux-Arts style sketches for the Tribune Tower) in favor of a new approach using plasticine models.¹⁸

Hood similarly played down his introduction of polychromy to building, denying any intentions of "symbolic" effects--for instance that the Radiator Building might have been designed to look like a glowing coal, or the Daily News Building like a stack of newspapers. About the News Building he wrote, "The owner was in accord with the architect that giving color to the building was the most simple and direct way to get an effective exterior."¹⁹ Applied

color became for him a replacement for applied ornament, and was an integral part in the design of almost all the buildings following the American Radiator. Besides the skyscrapers, the Beaux-Arts Apartments had alternate courses of red and black brick; the Chicago World's Fair buildings were painted red, blue and yellow; there were pastel colors on Capt. Patterson's house; and gray and vermillion were used for the Rex Cole Bay Ridge Show Room. Hood's own description of the color of the McGraw-Hill Building was almost poetic, betraying the aesthetic intentions hidden behind his insistence on "utility."

By making each of his skyscrapers thoroughly distinct from all other city buildings through massing and coloring, Hood essentially turned each one into an emblem of the commissioning client.²⁰ The black and gold Gothic-modern mass made the Radiator Building instantly recognizable. Going further in this direction at the News Building, Hood turned its lobby into a popular science display. At the McGraw-Hill Building he carried the advertising notion to its logical conclusion by crowning the building with eleven-foot high terra-cotta letters spelling "McGRAW-HILL," making the company's name an integral part of the design.

With the Daily News Building commission Hood entered into the final and most active years of his short professional life. He was one of the eight supervising architects for the Chicago World's Fair; he was one of the architects for Rockefeller Center; and his Daily News and McGraw-Hill buildings rose at opposite ends of 42nd Street. By the time of the completion of the News Building articles about him were appearing everywhere, and one summed up his position in the architectural world as follows:

Leading the New York modernists at this moment are Ralph Walker, Ely Jacques Kahn, and Raymond Hood. ...Raymond Hood possesses the position in architecture that he wants. He is its brilliant bad boy.²¹

The Building

For Raymond Hood, the Daily News Building was an opportunity to design a thoroughly modern, tall, freestanding office building. Although many of the elements he later developed could be discerned in his Tribune tower, they were still very much being formed within the protective cocoon of its eclectic Gothic style. With the Radiator Building Hood had stepped much more boldly in a modernistic direction, but it was with the News Building that he first created a completely non-eclectic modern building.

When discussing the building, Hood consistently credited each and every design decision to practical needs. He opened a short article on the building by declaring:

When I say that in designing The News Building the first and almost dominant consideration was utility, I realize that I am laying myself open to a variety of remarks and reflections from my fellow architects, such as: "It looks it!," "What of it!" and so on. However, that is my story.... In passing, I might remark that I do not feel that The News Building is worse looking than some other buildings, where plans, sections, ex-

teriors and mass have been made to jump through hoops, turn somersaults, roll over, sit up and beg,--all in the attempt to arrive at the goal of architectural composition and beauty.²²

In fact, however, the story of the building's design--as related by Walter Kilham, Hood's assistant and biographer--suggests that Hood was not being completely candid about his architectural concerns and ideas. He certainly did not simply design the most economical high-rise building that could be fit within the existing zoning envelope.

The idea for a tower was Hood's, not Patterson's, and Hood, afraid that his patron might not like the idea, cautioned his staff accordingly: "Remember, Capt. Patterson is a 'business' man, [and] the stage must be set in a businesslike way. The final scheme must be determined by the figures, the most efficient plan being the one that will net the biggest return on the investment."²³ A series of calculations and half a dozen plasticine models were assembled to demonstrate the different possibilities, from a six-story plant to a fifty-story tower, and to prove that the best return would come from a tower not 20 stories, but 35 to 40 stories tall. Patterson was not taken in by this presentation. "What's all this about a tower? ...All I want is a printing press with a bit of office space attached and here you've got this thing piling up in the air. What's all that for?" Patterson, however, then put his arm around Hood and told him that if he wanted to build his tower he could go ahead and do it.²⁴

Having secured permission to design a tower, Hood turned his attention to making it conform to his architectural theories. The site already commanded frontage on 41st and 42nd Streets, and part of Second Avenue, but was bounded on the west by the City's Commercial High School. The Board of Education had announced its intention of demolishing the school and erecting a Board of Education office building. Hood saw in these plans an unexpected opportunity to create the fully freestanding tower he believed appropriate for a skyscraper. An arrangement was worked out with the Board of Education that both the News and the Board would cede 25 feet of their respective lots to create a 50-foot-wide throughway. Hood justified giving up so much valuable space on the grounds of assuring abundant light and air to both buildings. As it turned out, the Depression ended the Board's plans, although not the News's, and in fact the Commercial High School was only recently torn down; nevertheless, the 25-foot throughway remaining served the same purpose: the News tower is almost fully freestanding.²⁵

The massing and profile of the News tower resulted indirectly from Patterson's rejection, on grounds of economy, of Hood's original proposal. Under the then recently enacted zoning law, the building could rise nine stories from the lot line before a setback was required; once an area only 25 per cent of the site was reached, the tower could stretch to the sky. Hood, however, originally envisioned a tower set back at and rising from the third story, losing the extra office space allowed from the third to the ninth stories, but giving his tower an additional perceived height of six stories, and the dramatic effect of a sheer slab rising from a three-story base. Three stories he felt necessary to provide both a suitable base, and a sufficiently impressive lobby ceiling. Against Patterson's financial objections

Hood argued that the extra space would be too deep to get proper lighting from the windows, and therefore would command less rent, while costing as much to construct as high-rent space; Patterson, however, was adamant.

Hood, thus lost "the great architectural effect of the tower soaring up from the low base,"²⁶ and had to look for some other kind of effect. In line with his preference for models over drawings, he hired Rene Chambellan, one of the best known architectural sculptors in the city, to come to the office and work on the plasticine News model. Various additions and subtractions were made to the block, but essentially the profile of the tower remained "an uncompromising shaft." One day, however, Kilham came into the office and discovered Hood

with a new tool in his hands--a carving knife. "Do you mind," he said, "if I do a little zoning myself?" Whereupon he began slicing pieces of the tower--cutting in steps or setbacks to give a new silhouette. I could hardly believe my eyes. After all that had been said of the value of rental space in the tower, this chiselling was throwing away pure gold.²⁷

When Hood had finished, he and Kilham stepped back to consider the new model:

The building now had a tapering effect: it began to look the way a modern skyscraper should in the new day of setbacks and towers--nothing that could be explained with a slide rule or a diagram.²⁸

Hood's insistence that "the exterior more or less created itself" is apparently not quite accurate.

For his choice of materials Hood could again claim no economic benefit: the Portland limestone he wanted was turned down by Patterson as too expensive, and replaced by white brick.²⁹ It is interesting to discover that two very important aspects of the building's final design, the white brick and the tapered massing (instead of Hood's envisioned tower), resulted from Patterson's economy-mindedness overruling Hood's aesthetic notions--not what Hood would have had his public believe.

Hood, in his article, wrote that "the zoning laws and first class office requirements practically dictated the plan, the mass and the fenestration," and he explained exactly how the windows, the top, and the base of the building were determined by necessities other than design.³⁰ These three elements however are crucial to the design of the building as completed, and his assertions about their inevitability are misleading.

The long columns of windows are perhaps the single most important element defining the News tower: they give it its overwhelming verticality, and its basic color scheme: reddish-brown and black stripes of windows between white stripes of bricks. The arrangement is totally different from that of Hood's almost contemporary McGraw-Hill Building, where he introduced the revolutionary concept of horizontal window bands, earning for that building the distinction of being the first International Style skyscraper in New York. Hood, however, discussed his window design only in terms of utility. The

McGraw-Hill windows had to do with lighting large loft space, he said, and in the News Building the fenestration was planned to allow flexibility in partitioning off space for offices. About the color scheme, Hood wrote only:

The owner was in accord with the architect that giving color to the building was the most simple and direct way to get an effective exterior, and the white and colored brick and the red shades were chosen with the greatest care.³¹

As was pointed out almost immediately, of course, the arrangement of the windows in such an extraordinary fashion was not in any way required by their number and placement--they could just as easily have been formed into horizontal strips.³²

For the building's base, Hood designed an extraordinary three-story limestone entrance with a bas-relief and the inscription, "He made so many of them," and a popular-science display lobby under a black glass hemisphere. According to the News's official history, the lobby was Patterson's idea. Kilham, however, while not actually crediting the idea to Hood, reports that Patterson was originally skeptical: "'Weather charts!' he snorted. 'What the people want are "murder charts."'"³³ In any case, Hood justified this hardly functional extravaganza this way:

There is a small explosion of architectural effect at the entrance and in the lobby, where the owner gave us \$150,000 to spend. His thought about this was, I feel, very intelligent,--that \$150,000 spent in one place, at the entrance, might give a satisfying effect; but that where spread thin over the whole exterior, would amount to almost nothing. The popular scientific exhibit that was developed for the lobby has proved, at least for the man in the street, that the idea of concentrating the effect in one place, was not bad.³⁴

At the building's top, the extraordinary aspect of Hood's design is that there does not seem to be any architectural treatment. Hood explained:

Arriving at the top, i.e., as far as we found it advisable to go by our calculations of the relative proportion of rental space to elevator and general service, I tried the simple expedient of stopping without searching for or causing the owner to pay for an effect. ...I took comfort from a remark that Laloux made occasionally to a student who was at a loss to what sort of ornament to use in a particular place. Laloux's remark was: "Why not try nothing?"³⁵

There is more to this "nothing" than Hood suggests. If this had been a completely functional "stopping," the walls would have stopped at the top floor, and the elevator and other service shafts would have been visible rising from the roof, as in most office buildings of today. What Hood actually did was to continue the walls above the top story sufficiently to conceal the unsightly shafts. Hood, in other words, did not just stop the walls, but rather designed them to have the effect of stopping.

As completed, the News Building is a 36-story tower on East 42nd Street, attached to the nine-story printing plant on East 41st. The northern facade has only one major setback, two bays deep, at the ninth floor level. The setback is not pulled in from the sides, so that when seen head-on the building has the appearance of a slab until the very top, where at the 33rd floor the outer two bays on either end are inset one bay.

The western facade, fronting on the 25-foot alley, is not as visible as it would have been with the originally-planned 50-foot wide alley. Its setbacks are more complicated than those of the north front. The two-bay setback at the ninth floor level on its north edge is matched by a ten-bay setback on its south edge, which also is pulled in two bays from the western facade. The eleventh and twelfth bays from the south rise to the fifteenth floor before being pulled back two bays. The ten southernmost bays on this side have smaller floor heights, and rise in a different pattern from those on the north. The total effect on the western front is a series of zig-zag setbacks and varied massing.

The southern front has one-bay deep setbacks at the seventh and thirteenth floors, and a two-bay deep setback at the 27th floor and at the top where the building's exterior walls rise to hide the service shafts. The outer two bays on either side terminate at the tenth floor. The view from the southwest corner shows a very complicated set of stacked masses.

The eastern front, now partially obscured by a 1959 addition, shows the setbacks of the northern and southern fronts; its seven northerly bays project forward from the main wall plane until the 33rd floor level.

The entire exterior is composed of tall slender bands of white brick alternating with window bays in which the windows are separated by patterned panels of reddish-brown and black brick; the windows originally had red-striped shades. At the lower floors the brick panels show geometric patterns, but these are gradually simplified higher up until in the upper windows they have become simple horizontal stripes. Wherever the building is set back, these panels have miniature setbacks within them.

The main entrance--on the north front--is through a three-story high, five-bay-wide polished granite block, with a large inscription at the top reading "THE-NEWS," a smaller inscription below reading "HE MADE SO MANY OF THEM," a bas-relief of the people of New York, and a background of skyscrapers culminating in an image of the Daily News Building from above which emanate the rays of the sun. To either side of the polished granite block is a glass pylon capped in bronze, and held to the block by bronze straps. A large bronze floral frieze is set above the doorway. The entrances at either side of the center, which originally led to stores, have smaller but similar bronze floral friezes. The brick patterns immediately above them show a more complicated version of the brick patterns in the window bays; they are overlapped by the terminations of the vertical bays of white brick.

The same decorative treatment of alternating white brick bands and window bays, patterned brick, and bronze friezes, is carried around on the other fronts. In addition, the western front has a large polished granite slab with the inscription:

HOME OF THE NEWS

"THIS NEWSPAPER ALWAYS WILL
BE FEARLESS AND INDEPENDENT.
IT WILL HAVE NO ENTANGLING
ALLIANCE WITH ANY CLASS
WHATEVER -- FOR CLASS FEELING
IS ALWAYS ANTAGONISTIC TO THE
INTEREST OF THE WHOLE PEOPLE."

JOSEPH MEDILL PATTERSON -- FOUNDER
JUNE 26, 1919

The ground floor on the south front has five loading bays in the tower portion of the building.

The printing plant portion, in its original configuration, was nine stories high on East 41st Street and on Second Avenue, with no setbacks; a 1959 addition rises several stories above it and is set back from the building line in accordance with zoning laws. The decorative treatment of the printing plant is similar to that of the tower, but its narrow bays are set in groups of three defined by wider white brick piers. There are six loading bays on the East 41st Street front. The floral bronze frieze of the north front is repeated, again at the first-floor level, along the Second Avenue front of the printing plant; it has been painted, unlike those on the north front.

Not included in the designation is the 1959 addition by Harrison & Abramowitz, one of the more sensitive recent additions to an old New York building. Designed to complement Hood's tower, the addition is composed of vertical bands of white brick alternating with bays of windows and black and red brick panels, similar to Hood's elements; the white bands, however, project out from the building and are sheathed in aluminum, in effect taking Hood's conception several steps towards the more recent evolution of the International Style. The addition fills in the space at the southwest corner of Second Avenue and 42nd Street which had been bounded by the tower and printing plant, so that the News complex now fills the entire block between Second Avenue and the 25-foot alley, from East 41st to East 42nd Streets. The addition includes the portion added above the printing plant described above.

Significance and Critical Response

The Daily News Building has remained an enduring symbol of the newspaper, and one of which the paper has been consistently proud. Looking back in 1969, the News's historians felt that

The building did a lot for the paper. It was substantial evidence of its success and prosperity, /and/ commanded the respect and admiration of the business community.³⁶

From the first, however, writers for the News tended to downplay the building's exterior, preferring instead to concentrate on

The News building's 42d St. lobby with its geographical, astronomical and meteorological exhibit, which scientists hail as the most elaborate installation of its kind in the world....³⁷

James H. Scarr, the meteorologist from the U.S. Weather Bureau in New York who designed the display, was quoted as saying, at the official opening of the building:

It is probably the most unique and most elaborate collection of geographical, astronomical and meteorological data gathered in one place anywhere in the world.³⁸

The paper was happy to call the building "one of the triumphs of Raymond Hood, noted architect,"³⁹ but may never really have understood the building's exterior, and continued to rave mostly about the lobby. On one of the rare occasions when the paper published material about the exterior it was to answer a criticism lamenting modern buildings in general. The complaint

about the News building is that it is only a glorified factory building. Right. It was designed first of all for the efficient production of newspapers. It fills that bill admirably. ...Inside efficiency and beauty are two things these rapid-fire critics of architecture always forget to weigh, and they are the most important factors in a building's success. And we believe The News building is beautiful outside, because it is so finely fitted to its uses, without a loose end or a sliver of cake filling.⁴⁰

The last line could have been written by Raymond Hood.

Critics of the time were somewhat divided in their opinions of the building. Most were impressed by it. Some accepted Hood's explanations of its utilitarian nature without question, but others did not.

Frank Scarlett, a visiting English architect, commenting on a rendering published in 1929 as part of an Architectural League exhibition, saw the News Building, "with its strong, unrelieved vertical lines and graceful outline," as typical of the departure from the eclecticism of the recent past.⁴¹

In a profile of Hood which appeared in the New Yorker in 1931, the author wrote:

There are many tall buildings, for instance, in Forty-second Street from the East River to Third Avenue, yet the only one which stands out as really important is /Hood's/ daringly successful Daily News, actually a factory, done at factory price, a white-and-black brick structure with a great slab of carved granite set in front, a distinctly untraditional building.⁴²

Many of the obituaries on Hood which appeared in 1934 and 1935 also accepted Hood as a "utilitarian" architect, and the News as a functionalist

building. The Times wrote:

He emerged as practically a complete functionalist with his design for the Daily News Building /and/ established himself with this design as the country's most eminent verticalist.⁴³

Harvey Wiley Corbett, a prominent modernist architect of the same period, wrote in an obituary in the Architectural Forum:

The News Building in New York, in its stark simplicity and restrained ornamentation, indicated a right-about-face in the approach to the architectural problem /from the former eclectic approach/.⁴⁴

A retrospective on Hood early the next year in the Forum called the News "his great building," and "his memorial," with which he made "every architect in the U.S. sit up and take wide-eyed notice." The lobby was praised for being "romantic and dramatic," but the exterior for its utilitarian approach.⁴⁵

Other critics, however, did not accept Hood's declarations of utility, and they were often most disturbed by the very treatment of the roof which the architect considered so steeped in functionalism. The roof was in general greatly discussed and admired. Walter Kilham reports that he once walked in on Frank Lloyd Wright, not generally known for sympathy towards the creations of fellow architects, apparently trying to take credit for Hood's solution. According to Wright, Hood had called him up asking for advice on how to finish the building.

"So," Wright reminisced, "I went over to have a look. There was this plasticine model of the building with a top on it, just like the Chicago Tribune Building. So I just said, 'Ray, cut the top off. Just cut it off.'"⁴⁶

When confronted by Kilham, Wright backed down.

Philip Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock, who first focused critical attention in New York on modernism in architecture in their "International Style" show at the museum of Modern Art in 1932, generally approved of Raymond Hood, and in fact the only New York skyscraper included in their show was Hood's McGraw-Hill Building. Their catalogue mentions the News Building, and even calls it "the most effective skyscraper in New York,"⁴⁷ but they could not accept the building as thoroughly functional in design:

This effectiveness is obtained at a price. The setbacks, each the width of a bay, are brilliantly handled in a way that does not produce a heavy pyramidal mass. But the crisp square termination which masks the water tank and the elevator machinery is a deception. These elements might well have been frankly expressed. This skyscraper is far simpler and better composed than any other, yet fundamentally it is as much an example of applied architecture as /Hood's early Gothic/ Tribune Tower.⁴⁸

In short, as regards the "simple expedient of stopping" in particular, and "the exterior creat/ing/ itself" in general, they called Hood's functionalist bluff.

An obituary of Hood in the Herald Tribune also picked up on the sham functionalism of the building's top:

/The News's/ stern functionalism, from which he departed only to disguise the water tank and elevator housing on the roof, startled everyone....⁴⁹

The News Building as completed was an extraordinary creation, and clearly more than a translation into brick of economics and zoning laws. The tapered massing of the building, its great stripes, its abrupt cut-off at the top, its three-story stone base with bas-relief and inscription, and, inside, its popular science display lobby, all combined to form an instantly recognizable structure unique to New York City. The first publication of the design, a rendering by Hugh Ferriss,⁵⁰ showed the building at night, under a full moon, and illuminated by spotlights; the drawing seemed particularly to accentuate the slab-like aspect of the building, its vertical stripes, and the way it towered over the adjoining structures. Johnson and Hitchcock seem right in their assessment of the News as not strictly functional: the building is too suggestive of other things.

Hood continued to denounce "architectural beauty," "composition," and all such terms. The one term he did use, however, is suggestive of what he might have had in mind: "effect." With the News Hood was indeed creating through his building an effect, an emblem for his client, an architectural logo. The News Building had not quite reached the stage of the McGraw-Hill Building, with the company's name inscribed at its top in what Hood seems to have thought an architectural version of the electric signs then current on New York's skyscrapers.⁵¹ Nevertheless, it came close with the lobby display--popular science for the "people," the News readership--and its bas-relief of the people of New York with its inscription, which refers to one of two versions of a quotation ascribed to Lincoln: either, "God must love common people--he made so many of them," or, "God must love common-looking people--he made so many of them."⁵² Patterson considered the common people to be his audience. Thus Hood's building for Captain Patterson's tabloid--the "common man's" paper, the pioneer of "jazz journalism"--symbolized very much the "jazz" and success of the News. If tabloids and skyscrapers were indeed, like jazz and baseball, symbols of modern America, Hood fused the two in his creation.

One of the very first articles to appraise the building, discounting Hood's disclaimers, got to what may be the heart of the matter very quickly.

/The News Building/ presents itself as almost nothing but a series of stripes, nothing but surface pattern. Probably no building in America looks more like a huge backdrop, a sheet of awning, an enormous curtain, or a dazzling banner against the sky. ...Even the window shades with their lighter hue of red are a part of this textile weave, and at night the lights shine through them merrily, as if the building were a sort of gigantic paper illumination on

parade. ...The great outward simplicity of the News seems to have carried us right to the edge between two future lines of development--the one of architecture, the other of what is perhaps... another art. This art too has renounced scale and excessive study; it too thrives under congested conditions and so is calculated to make its impact at once, before you turn the page. To the profound meditations of the reader I submit the subject of architecture as an advertising art.⁵³

This notion was elaborated the following year by Arthur T. North in a monograph on Hood:

The incorporation of publicity or advertising features in a building is frequently an item for consideration.... The lobby of the Daily News building with its geographical and meteorological exhibits is frankly an appeal to the interest of its readers and the public, justified by the continued interest displayed.... This feature, when possessing intrinsic merit, is consonant with and is a legitimate attribute of good architecture. It stimulates public interest and admiration, is accepted as a genuine contribution to architecture, enhances the value of the property and is profitable to the owner in the same manner as are other forms of legitimate advertising.⁵⁴

That such an approach to architecture should have been taken by Hood for a mass media client may not be coincidental. Of Hood's five skyscrapers, in fact, four were for such clients: The Chicago Tribune, the Daily News, the McGraw-Hill publishing company, and RCA at Rockefeller Center, and the last three, all conceived within the last four years of Hood's life, are by far the most emblematic. Hood, who learned to talk "business" with the businessman clients who rescued him from obscurity, may have learned to design "logos" for them as well. Be that as it may, the Daily News Building is now, as it has been from the beginning, an inseparable part of the paper and its popular image.

Following the end of World War II, the News Building was again reappraised, each time in line with current architectural or historical thought. In the 1950s and '60s, following the International Style theory of functional architecture, the building's functional aspects were highlighted. A 1952 guide to New York's architecture called the News:

An important forward step in the search for suitable form for the tall office building by architects who only a short time previously were designing skyscrapers of Woolworth Gothic. The massing and silhouette are asymmetrical, almost picturesque.⁵⁵

To John Burchard and Albert Bush-Brown in 1960, the News Building was most interesting as a freestanding tower.⁵⁶ The News itself, in a history of the paper written to commemorate its 50th anniversary, described the building in International Style terms:

The News building, with its clean lines, the stark shaft of white brick, bare of any ornamentation, was striking and beautiful in contrast to many of the moderne structures that went up in the next decade.⁵⁷

All these descriptions ignored the massing, the color, the "textile weave" of the building, and the conspicuous pylon lights marking its entrance, so clearly influenced by Art Deco notions. Similarly, the McGraw-Hill Building, a mix of International Style and Art Deco elements, was discussed strictly in terms of the former during the last several decades. With Art Deco and Moderne architecture being reappraised in recent years, however, both buildings have been claimed for these styles. According to Cervin Robinson and Rosemarie Haag Bletter:

By designing the News Building of 1929-30 in a form approaching that of a slab, Hood escaped the skyscraper formula of a prism with setbacks and a tower above. No sharp distinction was made between tower and base. Critics have considered this and Hood's McGraw-Hill Building as International Style. But the News at its base is enriched with decorative bronze. In its lobby a globe revolves below a faceted ceiling of black glass. The intention was in no way International Style.⁵⁸

The most recent evaluation of the News Building in the context of the development of American architecture avoids trying to place it in one camp or the other. William Jordy writes:

Around 1930, the broadside view of the Daily News Building was perhaps the favorite image of the skyscraper among progress-oriented architects. Among other things in its favor, it was not then, as now, screened by mediocre metal-and-glass neighbors, but rose in splendid isolation a few blocks east of Grand Central on 42nd Street from a ruck of low buildings--as though a shining new world had popped from the crust of the old. ...In effect, the alternate stripes, cream and tan, make a patterned slip cover for the skeletal innards. Yet Hood's effect is spectacularly achieved, with unprecedented audacity and lightness of effect, in a setback massing which (to repeat, especially in the side view) has few peers.⁵⁹

Jordy finally grouped the News, the McGraw-Hill, and the Rockefeller Center buildings, Hood's three final masterpieces, as "the most prominent modern and near-modern American skyscrapers of the period."⁶⁰

Hood's building, in the end, should probably be understood as the creation of an "effect" of utilitarian design, and the design of an emblem, an "advertisement" for the Daily News. Like the contemporary McGraw-Hill Building, which has both an International Style and an Art Deco facade, the News looks from some angles like a slab, but from others (as Jordy says, "espec-

ially in the side view") like a romantically tapered and stacked mass of colored stripes. Defying, like most of Hood's buildings, categories of style, the building remains unique to the city. The Daily News Building is recognized today as one of New York's finest skyscrapers. As the home of the Daily News, it is also the architectural symbol of the first tabloid and the largest daily newspaper in America.

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FOOTNOTES

1. This brief account of the Medill family is condensed from John William Tebbel, An American Dynasty: The Story of the McCormicks, Medills and Pattersons (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1947).
2. A history of the tabloid form can be found in Simon Michael Bessie, Jazz Journalism; the story of the tabloid newspapers (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1938).
3. Jazz Journalism, pp. 83-84.
4. An American Dynasty..., p. 255.
5. Jazz Journalism..., pp. 20-21.
6. Leo E. McGivena and others, The News: The First Fifty Years of New York's Picture Newspaper (New York: News Syndicate Co. Inc., 1969), p. 178.
7. Ibid.
8. New York Times, October 13, 1929, p.? (from the Daily News's library clipping file).
9. The plans were announced by Roy C. Hollis, the general Manager of the News, in "NY News plans to build....," Daily News, February 4, 1928, p. 6.
10. Walter H. Kilham, Jr., Raymond Hood, Architect (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., 1973), p. 19.
11. Ibid.
12. Hollis, "NY News plans to build...."

13. S.J. Woolf, "An Architect Hails the Rule of Reason--Design that is grounded in material and function will make buildings more beautiful, says Raymond Hood," New York Times Magazine, November 1st, 1931.
14. Allene Talmey, "Man Against the Sky," The New Yorker, April 11, 1931, p. 26.
15. Letter from Donald M. Douglas, March 3, 1970, to Walter Kilham, in Kilham papers at Avery Library, archive.
16. Raymond Hood, "What is Beauty in Architecture?" Liberty, December 7, 1929, p. 66.
17. Raymond Hood, "Hanging Gardens of New York...", New York Times Magazine, August 23, 1931, p. 2.
18. Rayne Adams, "Raymond Hood," Architecture, 63 (March 1931), 129-136.
19. Raymond Hood, "The News Building," Architectural Forum, 53 (November 1930), 531-2.
20. J.B. Griswold, "Nine Years Ago Raymond M. Hood Was Behind in his Rent.... Today--He holds the spotlight as a master showman of steel and stone," American Magazine, October 1931, p. 145.
21. Talmey, p. 26.
22. Hood, "The News Building," p. 531.
23. Kilham, p. 19.
24. Ibid.
25. McGivena, p. 180.
26. Kilham, p. 22.
27. Ibid., p. 27.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., pp. 22, 24.
30. Hood, "The News Building," p. 531.
31. Ibid., p. 532.
32. Douglas Haskell, "The Stripes of the News," The Nation, December 24, 1930, p. 713.

33. Kilham, p. 25.
34. Hood, "The News Building," p. 532.
35. Ibid.
36. McGivena, p. 185.
37. Daily News, July 23, 1930, p.? (From the Daily News's library clipping file).
38. Ibid.
39. Daily News, January 30, 1952, p.? (from the Daily News's library clipping file).
40. Daily News, undated clipping (from the Daily News's library clipping file).
41. Frank Scarlett, "An English Architect's impression of American architecture and allied arts," American Architect, 135 (May 5, 1929), p. 563.
42. Talmey, p. 26.
43. New York Times, August 15, 1934.
44. Harvey Wiley Corbett, "Raymond Mathewson Hood, 1881-1934," Architectural Forum, 61 (September, 1934), p. 28.
45. Architectural Forum, 62 (February, 1935), p. 131.
46. Kilham papers, Avery Library, Columbia University.
47. Modern Architecture International Exhibition (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1932), p. 130.
48. Ibid.
49. Tribune, August 13, 1934, p.? (unpaged clipping in the Kilham papers).
50. In the Architectural League exposition of May 1929.
51. Raymond Hood, "Comfort, Daylight & Air Architect's Aim--Raymond Hood Tells How He designed New Building," McGraw-Hill News, 5 (August 1931), p. 4.
52. Daily News, April 5, 1930, p.? (Daily News library clipping file).
53. Haskell.

54. Arthur Tappan North, Contemporary American Architects: Raymond M. Hood (New York: Whittlesey House, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1931), p. 11.
55. Huson Jackson, A Guide to New York Architecture, 1650-1952 (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corp., 1952), p. 18.
56. John Burchard, Albert Bush-Brown, The Architecture of America: A Social and Cultural History (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1961), p. 358.
57. McGivena, p. 185.
58. Cervin Robinson and Rosemarie Haag Bletter, Skyscraper Style: Art Deco New York (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 26.
59. William H. Jordy, American Buildings and Their Architects: The Impact of European Modernism in the Mid-Twentieth Century (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1976), p. 64.
60. Ibid., p. 144.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

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 Daily News Building 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, the Daily News Building is one of New York City's outstanding Art Deco monuments; that it is the first fully modernistic freestanding skyscraper of architect Raymond Hood, one of the nation's most prominent designers of skyscrapers between the two World Wars, who had first achieved fame with the Chicago Tribune tower commissioned by the same family; that among its outstanding features are its tapered stacked massing, its vertical stripes, its abrupt cut-off at the top, and its three-story stone base with bas-relief and inscription; that it has been critically recognized as one of the great early modern skyscrapers in New York and as a powerful architectural symbol; and that it has considerable historical significance as the home of America's first tabloid and largest newspaper.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 21 (formerly Chapter 63) 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 the Daily News Building, 220 East 42nd Street, Borough of Manhattan, and designates Tax Map Block 1315, Lot 24, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.

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Addendum to the Daily News Building Designation Report

Adopted by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on January 12, 1982

One of the most significant qualities of the Daily News Building is its dual function as office space and printing plant for the nation's largest daily newspaper. Raymond Hood designed the complex as an office tower on East 42nd Street and a low-rise plant, attached to it, on East 41st Street at Second Avenue, in response to the specific and largely unprecedented requirements set by Captain Patterson. More than fifty years later, the Daily News Building continues to function as originally planned.

In order to remain in the building, while responding to technological advances in the industry, the Daily News management has, at various times over the past five decades, made alterations in the building to accommodate up-to-date publishing technology; an effort has been made to carry out such alterations in a manner sympathetic to the building's original design. In 1955, for example, parts of the exterior wall along the East 41st Street elevation of the printing plant were temporarily removed to allow the installation of new equipment; the wall, including the original sash and brickwork, was then carefully replaced following the completion of the work.¹ This temporary removal of portions of the wall was repeated in 1958, 1964, 1973, and 1975, and has enabled the Daily News to maintain its unique combination of office and press space in its headquarters building, while respecting the building's original design. It is anticipated that similar work may be undertaken in the future.

¹ New York City Buildings Department, Alteration No. 435-1954, describes the temporary placement of a "monorail" at the third floor level of the building for use in the installation of new presses. The work was carried out by Lockwood Greene Engineers, Inc. Their plans -- Job No. 54009, Drawing No. C-3, dated January 9, 1956 -- specify: "Steel sash and frames and stone window sill are to be removed intact and in shape to be re-installed when temporary monorail is removed. After removal they are to be turned over to owner."