APPLICATION FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION
Landmark Preservation Commission
Incorporated Village of Freeport
46 North Ocean Avenue
Freeport, NY 11520

Application No. ______________

Sec. 55 Block 325 Lot 12

NAME: Freeport Landmarks Preservation Commission DATE: May 14, 2014

ADDRESS: 46 North Ocean Avenue TELEPHONE: 516-377-2200

ORGANIZATION (if any):

IDENTIFICATION
1 BUILDING NAMES (S): Freeport Memorial Library and grounds

2. COUNTY: Nassau TOWN/CITY: Freeport VILLAGE: Freeport

3. STREET LOCATION: 144 West Merrick Road, Freeport, NY

4. OWNERSHIP: Public

5. PRESENT OWNER(s)
East Wing (Original 1924 and 1958 addition): Village of Freeport
ADDRESS: 46 North Ocean Avenue, Freeport, NY
West Wing (1985 addition): Freeport School District

NOTE: This application is only for the 1924 building.

6. USE: Public Library  Present: Public Library

7. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC:
   Exterior visible from public road: Yes

DESCRIPTION
8. BUILDING MATERIAL: Indiana limestone

9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: Wood frame and masonry

10. CONDITION: Excellent

11. INTEGRITY: Original site

12 PHOTO:
Library dedication, Memorial Day 1924
Architect, Charles M. Hart's house in on the left
Interior of the Library (Main Reading Room)
Home of Charles M. Hart. Today, the Adult Wing of the Library sits on this property.

Freeport Memorial Library

George B. Bergen estate and home of William Clinton Story. Today it is the site of Elks Plaza.
14. THREATS TO BUILDING: Leaking roof.

15. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS AND PROPERTY:
The original plan of the Library included “park-like grounds,” which are still a prominent feature of the property. Being a war memorial, the library property includes several memorial markers and trees, including:

**Henry Theodore Mohr Memorial Marker:** Mohr was a Freeport Fire Department member and was one of the first Freeporters to die during combat in World War I. The local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is named for him. On September 1, 1919, a tree and marker were dedicated on Brooklyn Avenue to Mohr. At a later unknown date, the marker was moved to the grounds of the Freeport Memorial Library. Every Memorial Day, members of the Freeport Fire Department leave a wreath at the site of this marker.

**War Memorial Plaques:** Two bronze plaques, located on the front of the original Library entrance, were dedicated in 1960. The Freeport Beautification Committee added these plaques and landscaping to the building.

**Gold Star Window:** On July 4, 1961, a stained glass window honoring Freeport mothers whose sons and daughters died in wartime, was dedicated. This window is located at the original entrance to the Library. Nighttime lighting to this window was added in 1962.

**Four Chaplains Memorial:** On February 7, 1965, the American Legion dedicated a plaque honoring four US Navy Chaplains who died on the S.S. Dorchester during World War II.

**Vietnam Memorial:** Dedicated in November 1968, a memorial to “The honor and the glory for all those that served in Viet Nam.” The following year, to enhance this marker, Mrs. Cecil Bostick donated the evergreens, that stand on either side of the marker, in memory of her husband.

**Dr. William F. Gillespie Tree:** In 1985, a tree and small marker were dedicated in memory of Dr. Gillespie, a Library Board member from 1968 to 1984.
Freeport Memorial Monument: In 2000, the American Legion dedicated a memorial inscribed with all the names of Freeport’s war dead from the Civil War to the Vietnam War. This memorial was placed on the grounds of the Library in front of the Gold Star Window.

Laura Marchese (Giglio) Tree: This tree and small marker were dedicated in 2002 by the staff of the Freeport Memorial Library to Laura Marches, a former employee who died on September 11, 2001.

Crape Myrtle Tree: In 2009, the Tancredi family donated this tree to the Library.

16. SURROUNDINGS OF THE BUILDING: Residential and Commercial

17. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS: This building is not located in a designated historic district; however, the Freeport Post Office, located opposite the library, was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1989. The Post Office, a Colonial Revival-style building, was constructed in 1933 and has two William Gropper murals done for the Treasury Relief Art Program (TRAP) New Deal program. The Four Sided Clock, located several blocks away was designated a landmarked by the Freeport Village Board in 1994. It sits in front of the First National Bank building (a/k/a Meadow Brook Bank) on Sunrise Highway and Guy Lombardo Avenue.

18. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING AND SITE:

The earliest reference to a library in Freeport appears in Daniel Tredwell’s Personal Reminiscences of Men and Things on Long Island. Tredwell refers to a district library located in Raynortown around 1839 with Willet Charlick acting as librarian. The Town of Hempstead board minutes from March 18, 1844, indicates that School District No. 9 had earmarked $18.91 as “Library money.” Unfortunately, there is no other information about this library.
The Freeport Memorial Library as it is known today began in 1884. Professor Loren M. Burdick, principal of the Freeport School, raised money to purchase books by sponsoring amateur entertainment events featuring students and teachers. In school board minutes, Burdick was recognized as the librarian. In an article published in 1914, teacher Caroline G. Atkinson praised Burdick for “laying the groundwork for a public library.”

Since the Grove Street School did not have adequate space for a separate library room, books were kept in the clothes closet of the principal’s office. After a devastating fire, a new school was built in 1894. Eventually the library was given an 18 x 28 room in the school.

In 1895, the New York State Board of Regents granted Freeport a provisional library charter. The following year 759 volumes constituted the library’s book collection and circulation reached 1,174. A permanent charter, signed by Melvil Dewey, was granted on December 21, 1899. Around 1903, the library had almost 2700 books and an annual circulation of 8,600. That same year school Principal E. F. McKinley, sent a letter to Andrew Carnegie requesting a library for the Village. Carnegie agreed to build a $10,000 free public library if the Village agreed to provide a suitable site and to raise $1000 per year for the maintenance and upkeep of the library. There is no evidence that the $1000 annual budget was ever put up for a public vote. In the end, Freeport turned down Carnegie’s offer.

The library remained in the school until 1911 when it was moved to a rented room in the Miller Building on South Grove Street. Members paid ten cents for a card and were permitted to borrow two books, one fiction and one non-fiction. In 1920, the first public drive for funds for a new building was started. Elizabeth Pirodsky, a sixth grade student at the Seaman Avenue School, was the first donor. In August 1920, Theodore Roosevelt Jr., assemblyman for the Second District and the late President’s son, sent the Freeport Memorial Library Association a $20 donation. Assemblyman Roosevelt also issued a statement
commending the choice made for a memorial and encouraged gifts from the American Legion members. One thousand citizens of the Village of Freeport voluntarily contributed $36,500 to the fund drive. John Anderson, owner of the site of the new building at the corner of Merrick Road and Ocean Avenue, was paid $14,775 for the land. Ground was broken for the Library on the northwest corner of Merrick Road and Ocean Avenue on April 30, 1921. The cornerstone was laid on June 25, 1922. On Memorial Day in 1924, the Beaux Arts building, designed by architect Charles M. Hart, was dedicated as the first war memorial library in New York State.

In 1925, the Freeport Library officially changed its name to the Freeport Memorial Library. Three years later, a memorial tablet with the names of Freeporters who died while serving in the military during the Civil War, Spanish American War, and World War I was dedicated. This tablet included the inscription: “In this Memorial / As in the hearts of the people of Freeport / The Memorial of the Men and Women who served in the / Wars of our Country will be enshrined forever.”

The completion of the Freeport Memorial Library building was an appropriate climax to the efforts of the citizens of the village to find a suitable and lasting memorial to the sacrifices made by those who died in the service of their country. A close look at the original building reveals the names of the historic battles of World War I (Cambrai, Somme, Champagne-Marne, Aisne-Marne, Oise-Aisne, Ypres-Lys, St. Mihiel, Meuse-Argonne, Cantigny, and Chateau-Thierry); the Spanish American War (San Juan); and the Civil War (Gettysburg).

Population growth, the increased use of the Library, and an expanding book collection, soon made the original Library building inadequate. Work towards a new addition was begun to meet these needs. On Sunday afternoon, April 19, 1959, a new wing was dedicated.

In 1982, on the 90th anniversary of the Village of Freeport the residents elected to expand their Library once again. By purchasing the building adjacent to it, the
Library was expanded to twice its size (48,359 square feet). The new addition was dedicated on Memorial Day in 1985. This expansion allowed the original reading room to be restored and plaques honoring Freeporters who died in World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War were added. Today, the Freeport Memorial Library is one of the largest public library facilities in Nassau County.
Memorial Tablet
Unveiled in 1928, the Memorial Tablet contains the names of 37 men and 1 woman from Freeport who died while serving their country. This tablet cost $2,500 and was designed by sculptor Albert Weinert and crafted by the John Williams Company, Inc.

Albert Weinert – Born in Leipzig Germany in 1863, Weinert attended the Royal Academy in Leipzig and Ecole des Beaux Arts in Brussels. He came to the United States in 1886 and became a naturalized citizen in 1903. In 1894, Weinert was hired as chief modeler during the construction of the Library of Congress. He oversaw 40 journeyman marble sculptors. His work is visible throughout the Library of Congress’ vestibule in the Main Reading Room, the Visitors’ Gallery, the Great Hall, and Librarian’s Room. Other notable works of Weinert include: the Haymarket Memorial in Chicago; a statue of Lord Baltimore in Baltimore; statue of Governor Stevens T. Mason in Detroit; and the McKinley Monument in Toledo, OH;

John Williams Company, Inc. – Founded in 1875, this foundry produced many important statues, tablets and doors including: the doors for St. Bartholomew’s Church in Manhattan, the Congressional Library doors, the doors for the Boston Public Library; doors for the Library of Congress; and bronze work for the D.A.R. building in Washington, DC.
Beaux Arts Character-Defining Features:

The Beaux Arts style is applied to classical architecture found particularly in France and the United States that derived from the academic teaching of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris, during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The style is characterized by its formal planning and rich decoration. Beaux Arts buildings were designed to make a formal statement. The defining elements of Beaux Arts found in the architecture of the Freeport Memorial Library include:

- Symmetry
- Large windows
- Masonry exterior (limestone)
- Muted exterior color
- Flat roof
- Lavish surface decoration
- Sculptural elements (cartouche)
- Paired columns with cornice
- Bas reliefs
- Roof-top balustrades
- Chimneys hidden by parapets
- Over-scaled archway over entrance (now the Gold Star Mothers' window)
- Facades composed around advancing and receding wall planes
- Floor plan clear, logical, and rational that culminates in a single grand room (now the Memorial Room)
- Main entrance in the center of the main façade
Beaux Arts Elements

- Hidden chimneys
- Over-scaled archways
- Balustrades
- Cartouche and lavish surface decoration
- Bas reliefs
- Paired columns with cornice
- Large windows
- Flat roof
- Advancing and receding wall planes
- Symmetry
- Light-colored stone exterior (limestone)
- Center location for main entrance
- Grand room
SIGNIFICANCE:

19. DATE OF INITIAL CONSTRUCTION:
   - April 30, 1921 (ground broken)
   - June 22, 1922 – cornerstone laying ceremony took place
   - May 13, 1924 (Memorial Day) – Library dedicated

ARCHITECT AND BUILDER: Charles M. Hart

20. HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:
Charles M. Hart (1887-1968) was a noted architect. He received his degree in architecture from Pratt in 1906. Hart built many important municipal buildings and private residents. Some of his buildings include:
   - Columbus Avenue School in Freeport (1914)
   - Colgate Inn in Hamilton, NY (1925)
   - Hillwood (Marjorie Merriweather Post House, now part of the C.W. Post campus) (1927)
   - Middlebury Inn* in Middlebury, VT
   - South Nassau Communities Hospital (1928)
   - Colonial Homes for the Dearborn Inn Complex, built for Henry Ford in Dearborn, MI (1937) (National Register of Historic Places, 1982)
   - Norwich Inn* in Norwich, CT (1930)
   - Veterans Hospital in the Bronx (alterations) (1959)
   - Williamsburg Savings Bank in Brooklyn (1961)
   - Suffolk Office Building in Bayshore (1960)
   - Rutgers Houses in Manhattan (1961)
   - Timber Point Golf Club in Great River
   - Nittany Lion Inn*, State College, PA
   - Gansevoort Inn in Rome, NY (1929)
   - Nathan Hale Inn, in New Haven, CT
   - Pelham Memorial High School, in Pelham, NY
- Prospect Hill School, Pelham, NY
- Chandler Building, in NYC
- Residence of Edward F. Hutton, Esq. in Wheatley Hills, NY
- Residence of E. S. H. Pendergast, Esq. in Short Hills, NJ
- Residence of William W. Peake, Esq. in Rye, NY
- Residence of Mrs. Charles Porter Wilson, in Mill Neck, NY
- Residence of Julius A. Migel, Esq. in Pelham Manor, NY
- Residence of Clayton Du Bosque, Esq. in Glen Cove, NY
- Residence of John T. Snyder, Esq. in Pelham Manor, NY
- Residence of Otto Young, Esq. in Great Neck, NY
- Residence of Richard Remsen, Esq. Garden City, NY
- Residence of Alfred E. Mudge, Esq., Northport, NY
- Residence of R. Clifford Black, Esq., “Broadmoor” Colorado Springs, CO.

*Designated a Historic Hotel of America (part of National Trust for Historic Preservation)*

Charles Hart lived at 160 West Merrick Road on what is now the adult wing of the Freeport Memorial Library. He married Adiene Bergen, the granddaughter of George W. Bergen, a wealthy businessman from Brooklyn who owned a great deal of real estate in Freeport. Hart’s younger brother, Eprich Stanly Hart, went to Freeport High School. On June 5, 1918, E. Stanly Hart died in a plane crash while serving as a pilot with the Royal Air Force. Charles M. Hart’s nephew, who lived on the Bergen estate (now the site of Elks Plaza), died the same year during pilot training for World War I. His nephew was William Clinton Story, the namesake for the Freeport American Legion. Charles M. Hart designed the Freeport Memorial Library without charge. In 1924, the Library was dedicated to all Freeporters who died during wartime including his bother and nephew.
New York State War Memorial Libraries

There are approximately 87 memorial library buildings in New York State. The vast majority of these libraries are memorials to a person or a family. A few notable war memorial libraries include:

1892 Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Building in Huntington, NY
At the end of the Civil War, the citizens of Huntington wanted to create a memorial to the 39 men who died during the Civil War. In 1886, the town created the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Association. Dedicated in 1892, the Huntington Library Association leased this building. After the library relocated to a larger space in 1958, the building eventually became the Huntington Historical Society. In 1985, the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Building was added to the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Old Town Historic District.

World War Memorial Library in Corning, NY
Built in 1897 for the Corning City Club, the 2 ½-story Colonial/Classical Revival style building became the home to the local public library in 1926. The World War Memorial Library was dedicated to the citizens of Corning who lost their lives in World War I. In 1995, it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Library Building, Geneva, NY
Formed in 1905 through the efforts of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Geneva Free Library dedicated their new location as the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Library Building in 1930.
21. SOURCES:


Freeport Library Association Correspondences (binders 1 and 2) [circa 1920].


*Freeport Memorial Library Dedication Brochure*. 1924.


Metz, Clinton E. *Freeport as It Was.* Freeport, NY: Clinton Metz, 1976.

“Tablet Will Be Dedicated Memorial Day.” *Nassau Daily Star.* {Wednesday} c1928.