

## Hansborough Recreation Center

Individual Landmark

35 West 134th Street



*The Hansborough Recreation Center. Photo: Melanie Nanez*

The Hansborough Recreation Center opened on June 1, 1925, as the 134th Street Bathhouse. The Natatorium, or indoor pool, is a superlative final proto-modernist work by Henry B. Herts, New York's foremost theater specialist in the early 20th century.

From the limestone facade, embellished by a bas-relief of Apollo blazing the city seal across the heavens, to the top-lit, barrel vaulted, double-height tiled pool, with a frieze of signs of the zodiac, to a gallery supported by Guastavino vaulting, the Recreation Center and Natatorium are iconic.

Along with other bath houses built around the same time, the Hansborough Recreation Center was intended to promote public health, hygiene, and recreation. It was decorated with tiles, mosaics, and ceramic panels depicting various sea creatures. In addition to the pool, there were 164 showers and 6 bathtubs on the first floor, and a gymnasium, running track, locker room, and showers on the second. Currently, the Hansborough Recreation Center is operated by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation.