Landmarks Preservation Commission July 27, 1982, Designation List 157 LP-1225

NO. 361 BROADWAY BUILDING (James White Building), Borough of Manhattan. Built 1881-1882; architect W. Wheeler Smith.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan, Tax Map Block 174, Lot 31.

On November 18, 1980, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the No. 361 Broadway Building (James White Building) and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 11). The hearing was continued to February 10, 1981 (Item No. 4). Both hearings had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. A total of seven witnesses spoke in favor of designation at the hearings. There were three speakers in opposition to designation. A letter has been received in support of designation.

## DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

No. 361 Broadway, built in 1881-1882 for James L. White, was designed by W. Wheeler Smith, a well respected architect active in New York during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. It was one of the last commercial buildings produced during the transformation of lower Broadway, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, from a residential boulevard into the city's commercial center. One of Wheeler's few forays into the field of cast-iron architecture, No. 361 Broadway is also one of the small number of late (post-1880) cast-iron buildings in the city. Its elevations, composed of rows of columns supporting heavy entablatures, are adorned with some of the finest and most inventive cast-iron ornament anywhere in New York or the United States. Based on abstract floral forms, the ornamentation changes from floor to floor, providing No. 361 with two unusually handsome and richly varied facades, which make the building one of the most prominent surviving on lower Broadway.

### The commercial transformation of lower Broadway

The unparalleled growth of New York City in the nineteenth century, which led to its emergence as the largest and richest city in the country, was primarily the result of commerce. Following the end of the War of 1812, which reopened the Atlantic trade routes, and the opening in 1825 of the Erie Canal, which connected New York to the interior, the city grew into the country's major port and trading center. Commercial pressure almost immediately began to push the city beyond the traditional limits of lower Manhattan, and a pattern of rapid development and redevelopment emerged. The city's commercial districts moved northward into former residential areas, replacing older houses with first-class shops. New well-todo residential districts developed still further north on the city's outskirts. Older prime commercial areas to the south became warehouse and wholesale districts.<sup>1</sup> Following the completion in 1846 of the A.T. Stewart store, the first department store in the country,<sup>2</sup> on Broadway between Reade and Chambers Streets, the residential district along Broadway north of City Hall rapidly changed into the city's leading commercial district. Over the next forty years, the area stretching along Broadway, between City Hall Park and Madison Square, became the commercial heart of the metropolis. Stewart's store also set architectural precedents: his architect, John Snook, designed an enormous stone "palazzo," with cast-iron and glass storefronts, in the newly fashionable Italianate style. This was the first of the "commercial palaces" built for New York's "merchant princes," and it set the style and the type for the next several decades of New York's commercial development.

The change in Broadway was noticed as early as 1852:

The entire length of Broadway seems to have been measured for a new suit of marble and freestone--six and seven story buildings going up on its whole length, of most magnificent elegance in style... Indeed public and private buildings are going up in all directions...with Aladin-like splendon and celerity.

By the time of the Civil War, the district's character had irreversibly changed, according to the writer of a retrospective editorial in <u>Harper's</u> Magazine in 1862:

Those who remember the Broadway of twenty years ago can hardly walk the streets now without incessant wonder and surprise. For although the transformation is gradually wrought, it is always going on before the eye. Twenty years ago it was a street of three-story red brick houses. Now it is a highway of stone, and iron, and marble buildings.... Some of the new stores in Broadway are almost as imposing as some of the palaces in Italian cities....

By 1869, the transformation was largely complete in the lower stretches of the street, and it was believed that:

...before the next decade has passed, Broadway is likely to glitter in continuous marble from the Battery to Madison Square, and, ere the century is ended, it promises to be the most splendid street, architecturally, on either side of the Atlantic....<sup>5</sup>

The site of No. 361 Broadway, at the corner of Franklin Street, was in the heart of the first district of Broadway north of City Hall to be commercially redeveloped--the stretch between Chambers and Canal Streets. The land had been acquired in 1804 by Henry White, presumably an ancestor of James L. White, who married into the Van Cortlandt family<sub>6</sub> and took possession of a portion of Jacobus Van Cortlandt's Calk Hook farm. James White inherited the property following the death, in 1873, of his father Eli White, a successful New York businessman who had been in the hat trade.<sup>7</sup> James continued living in New York for a few more years, but by 1881 he had moved to Litchfield, Connecticut. By that year, developing his property with a large commercial building was a logical step, as most of Broadway in the vicinity had long since been rebuilt. White hined W. Wheeler Smith, a nespected New York architect, who designed a cast-iron building. No. 361 Broadway was one of the last commercial palaces to go up in the area, and one of the last, and most important, major examples of cast-iron architecture.

# The development of architectural style in New York's cast-iron buildings

James Bogardus and Daniel D. Badger both published claims to having built the first cast-iron buildings in America, Bogardus in a promotional pamphlet of 1856, and Badger in the 1865 catalogue of buildings cast by his foundry.<sup>8</sup> In fact, cast iron, mostly imported from England, had been used for decorative and structural purposes from before the turn of the century, and at least one cast-iron front had been constructed as early as 1830.<sup>9</sup> Bogardus's development and promotion of cast-iron facades, however, and Badger's construction and exportation of hundreds of cast-iron fronts, elevated cast iron from the position of an occasional constructional aid to one of prominence in the field of commercial architecture for nearly half a century.<sup>10</sup>

The rise of cast iron as an architectural material, widely used for the facades of commercial buildings from the 1850s to the 1890s, can be attributed to a number of technical and economic factors. Badger claimed for cast iron the virtues of "Strength...Lightness of Structure... Facility of Erection...Economy...Durability...Incombustibility... Renovation (by a coat of paint)" and added that "sufficient strength /can/ be secured without the exclusion of the light--which is often highly desirable both for mercantile and mechanical purposes."<sup>11</sup> Bogardus, who made similar claims, added that:

...a building once erected, it may be taken to pieces with the same facility and despatch, without injuring or destroying any of its parts, and then re-erected elsewhere with the same perfection as at first.<sup>12</sup>

The advantage of economy derived not so much from the cost of iron relative to stone, but from the replacement of costly elaborate stone-carving with inexpensive pre-fabricated iron castings. The advantage of allowing in a maximum of light was of great importance to retail stores. The idea that cast-iron buildings might be fireproof was very attractive to merchants in a city like New York which was periodically ravaged by fire--even though for most buildings only the facade was cast iron, and the rest, built of brick and timber, was as flammable as any other building.

The architectural treatment of cast-iron facades went through several distinct phases before the material fell from favor towards the end of the century. The very earliest iron buildings in New York were designed and built by Bogardus in the late 1840s: the Milhau drugstore, the Laing Stores on Washington Street, and Bogardus's own factory at Centre and Duane Streets. Bogardus was an engineer and inventor, rather than an architect, and the aesthetic of his buildings reflected his profession. His description of what a cast-iron building should look like emphasized the construction of its sills, columns and cornices, built up "continually, for any required number of stories." His conception of its design was simple and primitive: "...the spaces between the columns are filled up with windows, doors and pannels (sic), which may be ornamented to suit any taste,"<sup>13</sup> --a fair description of his first buildings.

Once cast iron was accepted and adopted by the architectural profession, cast-iron design began to reflect the Italianate style prevalent among commercial buildings in the 1850s. A series of cast-iron Italianate "palazzi" were produced, often painted white to imitate marble. Among the finest survivors are the Cary Building (King & Kellum, 1856-1857) at 105-109 Chambers Street, and the Haughwout Store (John Gaynor, 1856) at 488 Broadway. Both were broadly modeled on the English adaptation of Italian Renaissance palaces made popular in England by Sir Charles Barry, and both were intended to resemble masonry buildings--the architects of the Cary Building going so far as to imitate rustication in iron.

The spread of prefabricated iron fronts imitating masonry buildings quickly aroused criticism in the architectural profession. Architectural journals condemned the practice, and various debates were held on the subject, including one sponsored by the recently founded American Institute of Architects. Some condemned the use of architectural cast iron outright; others conceded that there might be a place for it, but felt that no satisfactory example had yet been produced. Its defenders and detractors all agreed that the use of architectural cast iron demanded the development of an "iron style," and that such a development required more time and talent than had yet been brought to the medium.14

Even as the debates continued, their immediate subject--the iron-fronted Italianate palace--began to show some stylistic adaptation to the properties of cast iron and, incidentally, to the nature of the expanding New York economy. The economy of cast-iron construction lay in prefabrication, and prefabrication demanded repetition of identical elements. Masonry Italianate structures could be designed with a variety of ornamentation, but prefabrication tended to produce buildings such as the Haughwout Store, where a carefully composed motif-a window bay from a Venetian palace--was repeated 120 times across two facades. The nature of New York's commerce at the time required that buildings be expandable--any successful enterprise in post-Civil War New York expected to expand. virtue of cast iron was that additional bays could be added to a facade, One in its original style, by simply casting additional elements. Another was that the amorphous quality of a design based on endless repetition of elements allowed subsequent additions of the same elements; additions could expand the design without altering it.

The repetitiveness and amorphousness of such cast-iron designs were at first condemned by critics of the cast-iron fronts, but soon they were being recognized by proponents as substantial advantages. Henry Van Brunt, defending architectural cast-iron at the A.I.A. debate, made these peculiar qualities his main point: Now the age we are called upon to express is not one of individualities, but of aggregates.... Therefore the architecture, to express our spirit best...is essentially an architecture of strict mechanical obedience.... Now a mechanical architecture is evidently one of strict unities and formal repetitions, as expressive of the mechanical means by which it is produced.... In instinctive obedience to this demand there had gradually crept into our present architecture those strict unities and formal repetitions, which have laid it open to the charge of thoughtlessness.... /When/ nature...urges upon us the use of iron, actually demands from us a mechanical treatment of it with the mould, we may fairly expect that the principle of monotony, usually so repugnant to a stone architecture, may under these more favorable circumstances be elevated to a beauty and an honor.<sup>15</sup>

These principles came to dominate the design of cast-iron fronts. Those of the 1860s continued to use Italianate motifs, but a certain streamlining began to take effect.<sup>16</sup> As ornamentation was reduced, and ever longer castiron fronts were produced, longer and longer rows of identical bays created an effect of indefinite numbers of columns and arches receding into the distance. The southern facade of the former McCreery Store (John Kellum, 1868) at 801 Broadway stretches twenty-nine bays from Broadway down narrow East 11th Street; the bays are divided by piers into three groups of ten, nine, and ten, and the Broadway stroller (for whom the store was intended) sees only an indeterminite row fading away to the west. With many of these buildings, the height of stories was also made to decrease from one to the next; although this served the practical purposes of buildings without elevators, it also made the buildings look taller than they were, and emphasised the repetition of elements from one story to the next.

In the late 1860s and early 1870s, the Italianate manner was supplanted by the recently imported French Second Empire style. For cast-iron buildings, the major implication of the new style was the addition of a mansard roof to a design type essentially not very different from the Italianate. The ornamental details of these buildings did, however, begin to show change, and with the development of "neo-Grec" ornamentation details emerged which were expressive of the sharp and metallic qualities of cast iron and which could not have been easily created in stone. Some of the finest examples of this phase still survive in the lower blocks of Greene Street in the SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District, where buildings crowned with mansard roofs are adorned with bolts and knobs and abstract incised lines. At about the same time, architects like J.B. Snook, John Kellum, and Griffith Thomas, who specialized in cast-iron design, were joined by others, including Richard Morris Hunt, William Appleton Potter, and Frederick Withers, who until then had worked only with more traditional building materials but were now willing to accept an occasional commission for a cast-iron front.<sup>17</sup>

The last major stylistic phase in the design of cast-iron fronts, dating from the 1880s, saw a final detachment of ornamental detail from the Italianate and French Second Empire manners. Although rows of columns carrying architraves continued to be the integral part of these facades, arches disappeared, and ornament became a series of concentrated abstract or floral patterns cast into columns and entablatures. That the variety of these patterns ran contrary to the interests of economy served by prefabrication does not seem to have mattered. Among the best survivors of this group of extraordinarily elegant designs are No. 112 Prince Street (Richard Berger, 1889), in the SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District, No. 22-26 East 14th Street (D. & J. Jardine, 1880), No. 628-630 Broadway (Herman J. Schwarzmann, 1882), and No. 183-195 Broadway (William B. Ditmars, 1882) in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. No. 361 Broadway in Manhattan is one of the finest of this group of buildings.

Even with the final flowering of its last phase, the use of cast-iron in architecture began to decline. The development of steel framing, the discovery that iron-fronted buildings were not after all completely fireproof, and perhaps the influence of Ruskinian ideas about the use of natural materials--to which a painted cast-iron facade was repugnant--all contributed to the decline of one of the most innovative and unusual American contributions to Western architecture.

## W. Wheeler Smith (c.1838-1908)

William Wheeler Smith's involvement with cast-iron architecture appears to have been brief, limited to the early part of his career which corresponded to the late phase of the development of cast-iron architecture as outlined above. Nevertheless, No. 361 Broadway is one of the finest designs from his hand still surviving.

Smith was an architect active in the last quarter of the 19th century. He designed a number of unusually handsome buildings, and was well thought of in his day, but little information survives about his life or career. The son of a "well-known builder" in the city, he apprenticed himself to a New York architect, presumably in the 1860s.<sup>18</sup> His first known work was a group of dwellings on 49th Street west of Fifth Avenue (1869).<sup>19</sup> The following year he designed the Fourth German Protestant Dutch Church on 40th Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues, and in 1872 the Collegiate Dutch Church, one of New York's handsomest, which stood on Fifth Avenue at 48th Street until it was replaced by one of the Rockefeller Center office buildings. With the exception of the Cook family residence (1884), however, on 78th Street and Fifth Avenue,<sup>20</sup> the remainder of Smith's known work consisted of commercial buildings and hospital structures. He was nevertheless well enough known to have his works listed with those of twenty of the city's most prominent architects in an 1898 guide to the New York building trade.<sup>21</sup>

Smith's commercial work includes No. 38-42 West 14th Street (1878), the former Ludwig Brothers store, which has a neo-Grec style cast-iron front; No. 361 Broadway (1881); W. & J. Sloane's (1882) on Broadway at 19th Street, a masonry office building with a cast-iron storefront; the Manhattan and Merchant's Bank (1885), a Beaux-Arts style masonry office building at 40 Wall Street; the office building of the Metropolitan Realty Company (1894) at William and Rose Streets; and the office buildings at 84 Broadway and 3 and 5 Wall Street (c.1898). Smith owned the last named group of buildings, as well as No. 7 Wall Street where he maintained his office, and they constituted his greatest asset at the time of his death; he was also a director of the Metropolitan Realty Company. Obituaries described his wealth and success as self-made.<sup>22</sup>

Smith's hospital work was almost all for the Roosevelt Hospital, to which he donated his services. The hospital's annual report in 1908 noted that: William Wheeler Smith, an architect, has rendered valuable and much appreciated service in drawing the plans and supervising the work in connection with all the recent improvements, and has, as in the past, cheerfully and without compensation devoted much time and thought to new construction.<sup>23</sup>

These buildings, all on or near West 59th Street and Ninth Avenue, include the Catherine A. Bliss ward, the College of Physicians and Surgeons (1886), the Sloane Maternity Center (1888), the Syms operating theater (1892), and the Roosevelt Hospital's private patients' pavilion (1896/8). Smith's hospital work extended to a commission for the Vanderbilt clinic on 65th Street (1889). Besides working free of charge for Roosevelt, Smith left the bulk of his fortune--\$3,000,000--to St. Luke's Hospital, to finance a "country sanitarium for poor convalescents who must be sent away from St. Luke's before they have fully regained their strength and are not able to go back to their homes and take up the cares of life."<sup>24</sup>

#### The No. 361 Broadway Building

No. 361 Broadway is one of the city's largest cast-iron buildings, six stories high, six bays wide on Broadway, and eighteen bays wide along Franklin Street. As in many other late cast-iron buildings, the facades of No. 361 have no arches, being composed instead only of columns and piers supporting entablatures. The six Broadway bays are defined by a row of columns terminated at each end by square piers; attached to each pier is a quarter-pilaster creating the illusion of continuing the row of columns into the piers--a convention dating back to 15th-century Italy. Each column and pier has a Corinthian capital, supporting an architrave and projecting cornice; each is carried on a pedestal which is connected with neighboring pedestals by a panel. The architrave, cornice, and panel-linked pedestals at each floor combine to form a powerful horizontal line. The cornice above the fifth floor is heavier and projects further than the others; the sixth story above is much shorter, with squat columns and piers, and its cornice is topped by a modillioned parapet with a central square panel supporting a pediment. The pattern of the Broadway front is repeated three times along Franklin Street. The verticals and horizontals of the facades create a strong sense of rectangularity, while the projecting columns and piers, pedestals, and heavy cornices create deep facades with strong effects of light and shadow.

Smith enlivened this basic scheme with some of the finest and most inventive detail ever cast into an iron-fronted building. Each column is banded slightly below its center, with a slender band containing a series of overlapping circles. The lower portion of each column is cast with decorative forms; while that is not in itself unusual, in this case the cast ornament varies from floor to floor, creating a wealth of design. All the ornamentation is based on abstract floral arrangements. On the ground floor columns it is comprised of a leafy bough with berries which spirals upward to the right between the column's base and band. On the second story the same leafy bough is placed in a banded form and spirals upward in the reverse direction. The third floor columns are plain, the fourth floor columns repeat the design of those on the second floor, the fifth floor columns have a plain spiral pattern going upwards towards the right, and the squat sixth floor columns are simply fluted. Similarly, each pier is paneled and the ornamentation within the panels varies from floor to floor. On the first floor each pier is banded with a slender band containing three rosettes, and a leafy bough with berries rises straight up the panel, appearing to pass behind the band; at the top is a complex form of concentric disks. Each second-floor pier contains two such forms of concentric disks, one at the top and one at the bottom; at the third floor there is one such form in the center of each pier, and leafy ornamentation at the top and bottom. Each pier at the fourth-floor level repeats the design of the ground-floor piers. The design of the fifth-floor piers has a circular form at the bottom, a band resting above it, and a leafy form with a flower stretching up above that. The squat piers at the sixth-floor level are adorned with swags at the top from which are suspended leafy forms. Elaborate floral forms, finally, are intertwined in the crowning panel beneath the pediment at the building's roof line.

# Conclusion

No. 361 Broadway is still in use commercially. Although its upper floors once housed the offices of <u>Scientific American</u>, <sup>25</sup> the building has always been connected with the textile trade which has revolved around nearby Worth Street for almost a century. Its current owners, keeping the building in the use for which it was built, have maintained it in excellent condition. Unlike many older buildings along major thoroughfares, No. 361 is almost completely intact even at the ground-floor level, with the sole exceptions of the southernmost bay on Broadway, altered for a new doorway, and a sign which obscures the architrave at the first-floor level.

W. Wheeler Smith's building is one of the few late cast-iron designs in an area largely built up before the Civil War, one of the most prominent cast-iron buildings south of Canal Street, and one of the last "commercial palaces" erected in lower Manhattan; it is also one of the largest remaining cast-iron structures in the city, one of the relatively few late, stylized designs in that medium, and, in fact, one of the handsomest cast-iron buildings in New York. A graceful and elegant design, No. 361 Broadway survives as a remarkable example of style adapted to material, and of one of the country's most extraordinary indigenous artistic developments: cast-iron architecture.

> Report Prepared by Anthony W. Robins Senior Preservation Specialist

### Footnotes

- 1. A general account of this pattern of development may be found in Charles Lockwood, Manhattan Moves Uptown (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976).
- 2. Harry E. Resseguie, "A.T. Stewart's Marble Palace--The Cradle of the Department Store," in the <u>New-York Historical Society Quarterly</u>, Vol. XLVIII (1964), pp.133-135, including notes 3 and 4. Stewart's imitators and successors included Potter Palmer of Chicago, Palmer's student Marshall Field, and Field's protege Harry Gordon Selfridge, who brought the principles of the department store to London.

- 3. <u>Gleason's Pictorial</u>, III: 371 (November 1, 1852), cited in I.N.P. Stokes, <u>The Iconography of Manhattan Island</u>, 1498-1909 (New York, 1915-1929), Vol. IV, under heading "1852 Nov 13."
- 4. From "Editors Easy Chair," by George William Curtis, in <u>Harper's Maga-</u> zine, Febrary 1862, p.409; cited in Stokes, Vol. IV, "1862 Feb."
- 5. Junius Henri Browne, <u>The Great Metropolis: A Mirror of New-York</u> (Hartford, 1869), pp. 339-345.
- 6. Manhattan Register's Office, Liber 72 Page 318.
- 7. New York Times obituary, December 5, 1873, p.8:6, "Eli White."
- 8. <u>Cast-Iron Buildings: Their Construction and Advantages by James Bogardus</u> <u>C.E.</u> (New York, 1856), with a preface by Bogardus naming John W. Thomson as author. <u>Illustrations of Iron Architecture Made by the Architectural</u> <u>Iron Works of the City of New York</u> (New York, 1865). Both are reprinted in Walter Knight Sturges, <u>Origins of Cast Iron Architecture</u> (New York: Da Capo Press, 1970).
- 9. A bank designed by John Haviland in 1832 in Pottsville, Pennsylvania. Margot Gayle, <u>Cast-Iron Architecture in New York</u> (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1974).
- 10. For a general overview of cast-iron architecture see Gayle, <u>Ibid</u>. The following account of the stylistic development of cast-iron facades is based largely on Anthony W. Robins, <u>The Venetian Palace Type in New</u> <u>York Commercial Cast-Iron Architecture</u>, <u>1846-1875</u>, unpublished Masters Thesis (London: Courtauld Institute, University of London, May 1976).
- 11. Badger catalog, pp. 5-6.
- 12. Bogardus, p.7.
- 13. Bogardus, p.6.
- 14. An early exchange between a correspondent and an editor may be found in <u>The Crayon</u>, Vol. III, No. 3 (March 1856), p.84. The A.I.A. debate, held on December 7, 1858, was between Henry Van Brunt, speaking in favor, and Leopold Eidlitz, opposed; the papers were published in the January 1859 issue of <u>The Crayon</u>, Vol. VI, pp.15-24, and prompted a series of editorial pro and con statements in other journals. See <u>The Architects' and Mechanics' Journal</u>, Nov. 1859, pp. 28-29; Dec. 3, 1859 (the <u>Journal</u> had just become a weekly), pp.51-52; Dec. 24, 1859, p.77; and Dec. 31, 1859, p.83.
- 15. The Crayon, Vol. III, No. 3 (March 1856), p.17.
- 16. See for instance the many designs for cast-iron fronts in the SoHo Cast-Iron Historic District by Griffith Thomas, who generally used a stripped-down version of the Italianate style with sparse ornamentation and depressed arches.
- Richard Morris Hunt: Roosevelt Building (1874), 478-482 Broadway; William Appleton Potter: 435 Broome Street (1873); Frederick Clarke Withers: 448 Broome Street (1875).

- 18. Obituary, <u>New York Evening Post</u>, April 6, 1908, p.8:2; "Gave Up \$3,000,000 For The Poor And III," <u>New York Times</u>, April 17, 1908, p.1:1.
- 19. Listed in <u>A History of Real Estate</u>, <u>Building and Architecture in New</u> <u>York City During the Last Quarter of a Century</u> (New York: Record and Guide, 1898; reprinted New York: Arno Press, 1967), p.616.
- 20. None of these buildings survive. For the history of the Cook residence site, see <u>Metropolitan Museum Historic District Designation</u> Report (New York: City of New York, 1977), p.11.
- 21. A History of Real Estate..., op. cit.
- 22. See Note 18. Of the commercial buildings, besides No. 361 Broadway, only No. 38-42 West 14th Street and W. & J. Sloane's are still extant. Some of the hospital buildings still survive.
- 23. The Roosevelt Hospital, New York, Thirty-sixth Annual Report (New York, 1907).
- 24. "Gave Up \$3,000,000 For The Poor And Ill," op.cit.

25. Gayle, p.130.

## 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 361 Broadway Building (James White 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 361 Broadway Building (James White Building) is an important survivor of the mid-19th century commercial development of New York; that it is a rare extant work of W. Wheeler Smith, a prominent late-19th century New York architect; that it is among the last commercial "palazzi" built in New York and one of the last and largest cast-iron buildings constructed in the city; that its unusual abstract floral ornament is almost entirely intact; and that it is one of the handsomest-representatives in New York of cast-iron architecture, an extraordinary and uniquely American architectural development.

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 361 Broadway Building (James White Building), Borough of Manhattan, and designates Tax Map Block 174, Lot 31, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.

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