

Landmarks Preservation Commission
February 16, 1988; Designation List 200
LP-1423

GAINSBOROUGH STUDIOS, 222 Central Park South, Borough of Manhattan. Built 1907-08, architect Charles W. Buckham.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1030, Lot 46.

On April 12, 1983, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Gainsborough Studios and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 5). The hearing was continued to June 14, 1983 (Item No. 1). The hearings had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Two witnesses spoke in favor of designation. One witness spoke in opposition to designation. The Commission has received many letters and other expressions of support in favor of this designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Summary

The Gainsborough Studios is a rare surviving example of artists' cooperative housing, a building type popular in Manhattan for a brief period in the early twentieth century. Built during the heyday of its type, in 1907-08, the Gainsborough provided both living and working spaces. The handsome, distinctive design of the building reflects its unusual purpose. Large, double-height windows provide an abundance of northern light to the artists' studios. Designed, managed and inhabited by artists, the building was given artistic connotations via its name and the proliferation of exterior ornament. The latter includes a bust of the artist Thomas Gainsborough in an ornate setting, multi-colored tile embedded in the brick facade, and an impressive frieze entitled "A Festival Procession of the Arts" by the successful sculptor Isidore Konti. The building was designed by architect Charles Buckham, a promoter of and innovator in apartment design utilizing the duplex plan.

Cooperative Apartments

Cooperatively owned apartment buildings existed in various European cities from the early nineteenth century. Among the earliest examples were those in Edinburgh; by the mid-century others were found in Vienna.¹ New York, however, was much slower to accept the idea of apartment living at all, while cooperative apartments came even later. It was not until late in the nineteenth century that apartments became acceptable for the middle and upper income groups. By this time, the advent of spacious, well-designed apartments, together with the rising cost of land for individual homes in

the city and a shortage of capable domestic help, brought a wealthier clientele to apartment life.²

At the the end of the nineteenth century, housing conditions in New York City were undergoing rapid and drastic change. Residential areas were being taken over by businesses, with housing becoming increasingly expensive and single-family home construction being forced into more distant, northern locations. Thus apartments were, by necessity, becoming a more acceptable living solution for those who wanted to remain in the heart of the city.

Cooperatively-owned apartments became one way of making this new type of living arrangement more attractive to a wealthy clientele. The idea of being able to choose one's neighbors and thus achieve a certain degree of exclusivity was appealing.³ In addition, cooperative ownership inspired better architecture than had generally been seen in New York apartments, since the owners would be living in the buildings and not just investing in them in hopes of a large profit. Cooperative owners turned to well-qualified architects and required that they create large spaces with luxurious details.⁴

The cooperative idea quickly became accepted for middle class housing as well.⁵ Developers, were attracted to the idea because they could realize a quick return on their investment. In 1907 cooperative apartments were declared "a prominent feature of the realty situation in New York."⁶ Two years later The New York Times reported that fifteen to twenty cooperative apartments had been erected in New York during the last few years.⁷

Early New York Co-Operative Ventures

The first cooperative apartment house in New York was the Knickerbocker, located on Fifth Avenue at 28th Street, and built in 1882. The Gramercy Park Apartments at 34 Gramercy Park followed the next year.⁸ The Gramercy Park, developed and promoted by Charles A. Gerlach, was quite successful, returning a large profit for its original investors.⁹ At the same time, Hubert, Pirssen & Company, architects and builders, were developing a similar type of apartment, called the Hubert Home Clubs. One of these, built in 1883, was located at 121 Madison Avenue. In this building each two floors accommodated five duplex apartments.¹⁰ Another Hubert Home Club was the Chelsea Apartments (now the Chelsea Hotel, a New York City Landmark) at 222 West 23rd Street, built in 1883.

The next cooperative venture, the Navarre Apartments of 1883, (also designed by Hubert, Pirssen & Company) located between 58th and 59th Streets, on Seventh Avenue, was a financial disaster. Unlike the usual cooperative organization, the apartment owners did not have sole control of the building, thus creating a difficult and ultimately unworkable arrangement.¹¹ Despite this difference, the failure of the Navarre Apartments effectively put a stop to the further development of cooperative apartments until the twentieth century.

Artists' Housing and Studios

"People have no conception of how difficult it is for one to find a suitable studio in New York," the artist V.V. Sewell was quoted in a 1903 article.¹² Artists could find little space adequate for creating and displaying their works, and even less space that supplied the desirable northern light. The possibility of living and working in the same quarters was rare indeed. In 1857 Richard Morris Hunt designed the first New York building specifically for artists.¹³ The Tenth Street Studios, located at 15 West 10th Street, was privately owned by art collector James B. Johnson. It contained twenty-five studios, some with bedrooms attached. Later in the century, some artists found working space at the few studios which existed: the Bryant Park Studios (80 West 40th Street), the Sherwood, the Rembrandt or the Carnegie Studios, all on 57th Street. These studios were always fully occupied and did not begin to meet the demand for such spaces.

These two factors -- the growing need for artists' working and living space, and the increasing popularity of cooperative apartment ownership first came together in the 67th Street Studio Building at 27 West 67th Street, built in 1901-03, to the designs of architects Sturgis & Simonson. It was designed to meet the specific needs of artists, with double-height studios lit by northern light and attached living quarters. When no speculative builder could be interested in this project, the landscape artist Henry W. Ranger organized a group of artists to make subscriptions to finance the new building. The artists' initial investment provided construction money and entitled each investor to a permanent lease on an apartment, and shares in the corporation which controlled the building. Some of the apartments were retained as rental units, and the income thus produced provided the capital for the building's maintenance.

The venture at 27 West 67th Street proved so successful that as soon as it was completed, Ranger organized another group of artist-investors to build the Atelier Building at 33 West 67th Street, on a similar plan. A third studio building, called the Central Park Studios, followed in 1904-05 at 15 West 67th Street. In 1906, a fourth studio building was built on the same street, the Colonial Studios, at 39 West 67th Street, also containing duplex studio spaces. Thus a secluded and prosperous artists' living and working colony was established on this short block off Central Park.

The success of the 67th Street studio buildings led to the development of other similar arrangements in different parts of the city, designed to appeal to both the artist and the layman. The large spaces produced by the duplex arrangements meant that residents could enjoy living spaces comparable to those in a private house, but at much less expense. The double-height rooms, when not used as artists' studio space (and thus restricted to the north side of the building), could be placed anywhere in the plan, creating interesting spaces which were highly prized for entertaining. Examples of this type, intended for general use included, on the east side, 777 Madison Avenue, 863 Park Avenue, 901 Lexington Avenue, 471 Park Avenue, and the Apthorp and the Belnord (both New York City Landmarks) on upper Broadway.

Other cooperatives had spaces designed specifically for use by artists, with large working areas lit by northern light. Examples of this type were the National Arts Club Studio Building (19 Gramercy Park West, within the

Gramercy Park Historic District), the Rodin Studios (200 West 57th Street), and the building at 131-135 East 66th Street (a New York City Landmark, designed by Charles A. Platt). The Gainsborough Studios were part of this latter group.

The Gainsborough Studios

Probably in response to the success of the studio buildings on 67th Street, and a need for more living and working arrangements of a similar type, a corporation was organized in 1907 to plan and oversee the construction of another artists' studio building, on 59th Street.¹⁴ Thus the Gainsborough Studios were begun and the officers for the corporation included three prominent artists, August Franzen, Elliott Daingerfield, and Colin C. Cooper, and a businessman, Barron G. Collier.

Planned as a cooperative venture, to include studios, offices and apartments, the Gainsborough's address at 222 Central Park South was an ideal location for such a structure. Central Park South (or 59th Street) was a wide boulevard, with Central Park to the north. Thus the studios which overlooked the street could be assured of a continuous supply of northern light, with no fear that tall buildings might block this important amenity. With the completion, in 1907, of the Plaza Hotel on 59th Street, off Fifth Avenue, and other similar, elegant buildings, the area was a prestigious one also. In addition, located just two blocks south, on 57th Street, was New York's artistic center, including the American Fine Arts Society building (a New York City Landmark) and other studio buildings mentioned above, the Osborne Apartments (205 West 57th Street) and Carnegie Hall (a New York City Landmark).

August Franzen, the president of the Gainsborough Corporation, was a portrait painter whose work today is in the collections of the Brooklyn Museum, Yale University and the National Gallery of Art, among others.¹⁵ Born in Sweden in 1863, Franzen studied there and in Paris before coming to the United States in 1890. By February 1891 he had his first exhibition in America, at the Ortgies Gallery on Fifth Avenue.¹⁶ A member of the National Academy of Art, as well as the Century, Players and Lotos Clubs, Franzen became a well-established member of New York's art world. He won numerous prizes and honors for his work including medals at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, at the Paris Exposition in 1900 and another at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo in 1901.

In New York, Franzen lived and worked in a variety of locations. Upon his arrival in the city, he took a studio in the Holbein Building at 146 West 55th Street. By 1894, Franzen had a studio and apartment built atop 1 West 30th Street. In 1900, he moved to a studio in Carnegie Hall. His involvement in the Gainsborough Studios seems to stem, at least in part, from a desire for a more suitable location for his own work space, for he "was one of the first to occupy a studio there."¹⁷

Franzen was deeply involved in the planning of the Gainsborough.¹⁸ It is also possible that Franzen was responsible for the name of this building. He admired Thomas Gainsborough's portraits immensely and, in a magazine interview cited the English artist's work as a model for his own.¹⁹

Elliott Daingerfield, the vice-president of the Gainsborough Corporation, was a painter best known for his poetic, mystical landscapes.²⁰ Born in West Virginia in 1859, Daingerfield came to New York to study art while still young. His first exhibition at the National Academy of Design occurred in 1880. In 1902 he painted the murals of the Lady Chapel of the Church of Mary the Virgin on West 46th Street in New York. Other works of his are represented in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the National Gallery of Art, the Brooklyn Museum, and the Los Angeles Museum. The winner of numerous prizes and awards, Daingerfield was also a member of the many clubs and associations which comprised the New York art world: the National Academy of Design, the Society of American Artists, the New York Water Color Club, and the Lotos Club. From the Gainsborough Studios' opening until his death in 1932, Daingerfield maintained his studio and living quarters there.

Colin Campbell Cooper, who served as the Gainsborough Corporation treasurer, was a painter of landscapes, figures and portraits.²¹ After early training in his native city of Philadelphia, Cooper studied in Paris. His work won prizes at the Atlanta Exposition in 1895, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in 1904, and the Buenos Aires Exposition in 1910, among many others. His work forms part of the collection of the Dallas Art Association, the St. Louis Museum of Fine Arts and the Boston Arts Club. Cooper was also a member of the Lotos and Salmagundi Clubs, the New York Water Color Club and the National Academy of Design.

The fourth officer of the original corporation was Barron Collier, who served as secretary. Unlike the others in this organization, Collier was a businessman, involved in numerous ventures throughout the east coast.²² As head of Barron G. Collier, Inc., he was responsible for placing the first advertising placards in subway cars, and also served as head of numerous hotel, railroad, and real estate development companies in Florida and elsewhere. Collier's public service contribution was also substantial. It may be supposed that Collier supplied the financial expertise for the Gainsborough Studios building, although the precise link which brought him into this endeavor has not yet been uncovered.

The artists of the Gainsborough Corporation had all achieved a certain level of success in their professions and travelled in the same social and professional circles. They were likely to encounter each other in any number of settings throughout New York and even exhibited their works at the same gallery - the MacBeth Gallery at 450 Fifth Avenue.²³ The building they were planning was meant to house artists of the same stature, those who could afford the spaciousness and status of a location on 59th Street.

The Gainsborough Studio Corporation purchased the lot on 59th Street in April 1907 and, after the demolition of an existing building, the studio building was begun November 3, 1907, and completed a year later, on October 31, 1908.²⁴ To design this special type of structure, the members of the corporation chose architect Charles W. Buckham (1869-1951).²⁵ Buckham was educated at the University of Vermont, and later studied architecture at the National Academy of Design and at Columbia University. Further studies were undertaken at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Buckham's early work consisted of residences and public buildings in Vermont, including the Pathological Building in Waterbury and the State Office Building in Montpelier. In 1900, Buckham moved to New York and joined the firm of

Warren & Wetmore. Later he worked for Carrere & Hastings, serving as superintendent of construction of several Carnegie Branch Libraries. Other examples of his work include the Thomas Scott Buckham Memorial Library in Faribault, Minnesota, named for his uncle, and the redesign of the Salmagundi Club in New York.

Buckham was a very appropriate choice for the Gainsborough Studios. His interest in duplex apartments is reflected in magazine articles which he wrote promoting the type.²⁶ While the Gainsborough was his first such project, he later designed another duplex cooperative building at 471 Park Avenue (1909), and two other apartment-hotels on Central Park South, including the Plaza Home Club Apartments (1911). Interested in the structural aspect of this building type, Buckham patented (in 1928) an interlocking floor type of construction. He also developed and patented an inclined ramp as a substitute for stairs in school buildings, and a multi-level garage for parking cars.

The Gainsborough's Design

Buckham's design for the Gainsborough studios incorporated many of the ideas used so successfully in the 67th Street studios, but he also introduced certain changes. Because the only available northern light shone on the 59th Street facade, only those rooms fronting on 59th Street were made double-height and labeled studios, with smaller apartments located to the rear of the building. Thus, each pair of floors contained two duplex and four single apartments.

Another change also resulted from the experiences of the earlier 67th Street studios. Those buildings had faced legal problems because they were too tall for the street they faced. According to the tenement house law, such apartment buildings could be no more than one and one-half times as high as the width of the street. The Gainsborough organization, in order to forestall such problems, had its building classified as a hotel, with communal kitchen and dining room on the ground floor and minimal kitchen facilities in each of the apartments.²⁷

On the exterior, Buckham's design and the use of ornament were not only reflective of the building's interior design, but of the building's purpose as well. A contemporary source called the building's exterior "unique" and "a credit to the ingenuity of the designer."²⁸ The large expanses of glass (included in the design to bring in as much light as possible) indicated the double-height rooms of the artist's studios. The use of the name Gainsborough, the bust and artist's palette over the entranceway, and the frieze with its artistic theme further indicated the artistic leanings of those who lived in the building.

The grouping of colorful, glazed tiles inlaid near the top of the building was a motif Buckham also used on other buildings. Buckham, as well as numerous other contemporary designers, used tiles produced by the Moravian Tile Works of Doylestown, Pennsylvania.²⁹ This decorative trend was noted in a 1907 newspaper article in which the author remarked upon the increased use of glazed terra cotta, tiles and faience in New York buildings of many types, including the Madison Square Church, buildings at the Bronx Zoo, Manhattan subway stations, and a Bronx police station.³⁰ All of these

examples were favorably regarded by the author for the color and texture they added to the streetscape. The Gainsborough, with its profusion of exterior ornament and multi-colored tiles, fits into this group. The author of the article attributed the presence of this colorful, clay-based ornament to the influence of the fifteenth century artist, Luca Della Robbia and his followers, and saw the trend toward this type of decoration to be also on the increase in Europe.

The Frieze

Perhaps the most striking feature of the building's exterior is the frieze which separates the first story from those above it. This bas-relief was designed by the Austrian-born artist Isidore Konti. Konti was active in New York artistic circles, showing his work at the same gallery (the Macbeth) as the other artists involved in planning the Gainsborough. Letters still extant in the Archives of American Art show that Konti was a friend of August Franzen and of Elliot Daingerfield, who are likely to have been responsible for bringing the the sculptor into this project.

Konti³¹ was born in 1862 in Vienna but passed most of his childhood in Hungary. His artistic training took place at the Imperial Academy in Vienna, under the tutelage of Edmond Von Hellmer. Two years of study in Rome sharpened his talents so that when he returned to Vienna in 1888, Konti received numerous important sculptual commissions. This prosperity was short lived however, and in 1892, Konti left for America where he hoped to find more abundant work in architectural sculpture. For the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Konti modelled many sculptural pieces and worked with several established sculptors who helped him get started in this country. After the fair, Konti lived in New York where, in 1896, he was elected to the National Sculpture Society. Konti's submission of two small pieces to the Society's 1898 exhibition established his reputation as a creator of small ideal figures, while his large-scale work for the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo in 1901 reinforced his standing as a sculptor of strong, monumental figures. For the rest of his long career, Konti continued to produce both types of work. Included in his oeuvre are several memorial statues, as well as fountain and garden figures, such as "The Brook," a nude figure which embodied Konti's ideal of womanhood, the fountains of the Atlantic and the Pacific for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in 1904, and a pair of monumental figures for the court house in Cleveland, Ohio, as well as more intimate works such as his "Genius of Immortality," a quiet study of a seated youth which was shown at the International Exposition of Art and History in Rome in 1911. Today, examples of his art can be seen in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Detroit Institute of Arts, and the National Museum of Art, as well as in Trinity Church and in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York. During his long career, Konti was a member of the National Arts Club, the Architectural League of New York, the Salmagundi Club, a director of the Municipal Arts Society, and an academician of the National Academy of Design.

Konti's "Festival Procession" terra-cotta frieze for the Gainsborough Studios shows people of all ages carrying gifts to the altar of the arts, an appropriate theme for a building for artists. His delicacy of line and graceful forms add much to the distinctiveness of this building.

Description

The Gainsborough Studios is a narrow building, fifty feet wide on 59th Street, and rising eight double-height stories. Its limestone-faced base is enhanced by numerous carved decorative features including the bas-relief at the second story. Above this the facade is divided into two bays by narrow brick piers which rise continuously to the cornice. Between the piers are two series of large window openings subdivided by narrow mullions and decorative panels. A slight distinction is made between the top and mid-section of the building by a shallow arch above the sixth story windows. Above this level the decorated brick piers and carved stone cornice terminate the composition.

At the ground floor level, two areaways flanking the entrance are marked off by low, curving cement fences topped by wooden planters with hedges. A decorative, wrought-iron lantern crowned by a white glass globe is mounted on each of the fences, near the doorway. The westernmost hedge shields a stairway which leads to the basement of the building.

The first floor of the building, faced with ashlar limestone, is three bays wide, with a central entrance flanked by a group of windows to each side. Each set of windows is divided vertically by deep stone mullions into three narrow openings, while the top third of each opening is also set off by a stone muntin. The squared entrance-way is partially enframed by a garland carved in the stone. The doorway is set within a deep reveal which is adorned by panels of carved foliate designs. Enclosing the entrance is an iron door which replaced the original in a very sympathetic manner. A portico supported on two polished granite Ionic columns extends in front of the entrance. The columns support a lintel on which are engraved the words "Gainsborough Studios." A full entablature with dentils and a Greek key divides the facade at this level, separating the ground floor from those above.

Centered above the portico is a paneled plinth, which is further embellished by a carved painter's palette. This, in turn, is surmounted by a bust of Thomas Gainsborough, the eighteenth century painter for whom the building is named. The bust is set within an aedicular shell niche which rises to the third story level. To either side of the plinth, a wide bas-relief extends across the building, interrupted only by a small window, centered in each half of the building. The frieze, carved in a classical style, is entitled "A Festival Procession of the Arts" and portrays youths, maidens, children, and old people bringing gifts to the altar of the arts.³² Both the bust and the frieze were executed by the well-known sculptor, Isidore Konti.

Above the level of the bas-relief, the facade is divided into two bays by three narrow brick piers which rise continuously to the top of the building. A narrow frieze in a Greek key motif forms a small base for the two outer piers while the Gainsborough bust and its surround are located at the bottom of the middle, slightly wider pier. Between the piers at this level are two large windows, recently changed to a single expanse of glass in each.

From this level to the top of the building, large window openings are arranged in broad vertical columns between the piers. A narrow stone reveal runs continuously along each side of the windows from the second through the sixth story, joining together in a shallow arch above the sixth floor windows. Above the sixth floor, stone reveals continue until the cornice level. Each double-height story is composed of a variety of window shapes. Centrally located in the lower half of each window space, is a vertical panel which is filled with stone quatrefoils set in circles. A shallow pediment carried on narrow brackets surmounts each of these panels. Plain, single pane windows have recently been installed to each side of these panels and each is topped by a narrow cornice which separates the two sections of the window. The entire window opening above this is subdivided into narrow vertical lights by metal mullions. A narrow, metal spandrel, subdivided into three sections, fills the lowest part of each floor level, serving as a clear visual break between the floors.

The top section of the building starts above the sixth story. Here the piers are enhanced by a variety of multi-colored tiles set in geometric patterns, including diamonds and rectangles, within the brick. The tiles are in shades of red, yellow, green and grey with the more elaborate designs occurring in the central pier. Between the piers, the window arrangement is similar to that on the floors below, with the following differences. The central decorative panels are not topped by pediments, and the seventh floor has narrow balconies fronting full length windows to either side of these central panels.

Above the eighth floor, the building is finished by a corbel table inset with a series of shells. Three decorative acroteria are placed above the three piers and serve as a finishing element to the facade composition.

Conclusion

The Gainsborough Studios is an unusual building, well-adapted and suitably decorated for its specific purpose -- cooperatively-owned working and living spaces for artists. Designed by architect Charles W. Buckham, who had a special interest in duplex apartments, the Gainsborough has been a desirable address and an attractive neighbor on Central Park South since its opening in 1908. Its elaborate decorative scheme, with the bust of Gainsborough, the distinctive bas-relief and colorful tiles, distinguishes this building as a fine example of its type.

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Notes

1. Allan L. Benson, "The Spread of the 'Own-Your-Own-Apartment' Idea," New York Times, July 25, 1909, sec. 5, p.9.
2. Elisha Harris Janes, "The Development of Duplex Apartments.-I. The Early Type," The Brickbuilder, 21 (June, 1912), 159.
3. Elisha Harris Janes, "The Development of Duplex Apartments.-III. Residential Type," The Brickbuilder, 21 (August, 1912), 203.
4. "Apartment Houses," The American Architect, 100 (November 29, 1911), 229-230.
5. "Co-operative Building Seeking Wider Field," The New York Times, February 10, 1907, sect. 5, p. 16.
6. The Real Estate Record & Guide, (September 28, 1907), p. 474.
7. Payson McL. Merrill, "Recent Developments of Cooperative Apartments," The New York Times, April 25, 1909, sect. 7, p. 2.
8. "Financing the Cooperative Idea," The New York Times, May 26, 1907, sect. 4, p. 5.
9. "Co-operative Houses," The Real Estate Record and Guide, September 28, 1907, p. 474.
10. Andrew Alpern, Apartments for the Affluent (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1975), p. 14.
11. Benson, p. 9.
12. "The New Artists' Studio Building," Harper's Weekly, 47 (April 11, 1903), 597.
13. Andrew Dolkart, "West 67th Street Artists' Colony Historic District," National Register of Historic Places -- Nomination Form, submitted February, 1985, item 8, p.1.
14. "Estimates Receivable," The Real Estate Record and Guide, (May 25, 1907), p.1019.
15. Mantle Fielding's Dictionary of American Painters, Sculptors, and Engravers (Poughkeepsie, N.Y.: Apollo Books, 1983), pp.3170-3180.
16. Interview with August Franzen, dated March 1927, in the collection of the Archives of American Art, New York City.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.

19. Article on Franzen in publication, Bar Harbour Life, n.d., in the collection of the Archives of American Art, New York City.
20. Information on the life of Elliott Daingerfield was compiled from : Peter Hastings Falk, ed., Who was Who in American Art (Madison, Conn.: Sound View Press, 1985), p.132; "E. Daingerfield, Artist, Dead at 73," The New York Times, October 23, 1932, p. 37; and an interview with Daingerfield which is in the collection of the Archives of American Art, New York City.
21. Information on the life of Colin C. Cooper was compiled from: Falk, p.129; and an interview with Cooper in the Archives of American Art.
22. "Barron Collier Dies Suddenly, 65," The New York Times March 14, 1939, p. 21.
23. Records in Archives of American Art.
24. New York County. Office of the Registrar. Liber Deeds and Mortgages. New York City, Manhattan, New Building Permit.
25. "Charles Buckham, Architect, 82, Dies," The New York Times, March 12, 1951, p. 25.
26. C. W. Buckham, "Duplex Co-operative Apartment Houses," The American Architect, 96 (December 22, 1909), 266-269.
27. Elisha Harris Janes, "The Development of Duplex Apartments. -II. Studio Type," The Brickbuilder, 21 (July, 1912), pp.185-186.
28. "Apartment Houses of Duplex and Studio Plan in New York City," Architects' and Builders' Magazine, 41 (March, 1909), 232.
29. Guide to the Microfilm of the Papers of Henry C. Mercer and The Records of the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works (Doylestown, Pa.: The Bucks County Historical Society, 1985), p.14.
30. "Color Spreads Glories on City's Architecture," The New York Times, January 27, 1907, sect. 3, p.3.
31. Information on Konti's life was compiled from : "Obituary," The New York Times, January 12, 1938, p. 21; The Sculpture of Isidore Konti, 1862-1938, Catalogue of the exhibition held at the Hudson River Museum, January 26-March 30, 1975 (Yonkers, N.Y.: Hudson River Museum, 1974); and "Isidore Konti: A Hungarian Sculptor in America," International Studio, 45 (January 1912), 197-203.
32. The Sculpture of Isidore Konti, 1862-1938.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architectural and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that The Gainsborough Studios 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 Gainsborough Studios building is a particularly fine example of artists' cooperative housing, planned and organized by artists in response to a shortage of suitable living and working space; that this type of building became popular in New York during the early years of the twentieth century; that this building, constructed in 1907-08, was one of the first duplex apartments designed by architect Charles W. Buckham, who later developed a personal reputation for buildings with a duplex plan; that this is a distinctively designed building with an exterior which reflects the unusual use of the interior space, and with ornament appropriate to the purpose of the building; that notable among the exterior ornament is a design of multi-colored tiles embedded in the brick of the upper stories, a bust of the artist Thomas Gainsborough and an especially handsome frieze by the well-known and successful sculptor Isidore Konti; and that the building reflects an important cultural and architectural phase in New York City's history.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 21, Section 534, of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Gainsborough Studios, 222 Central Park South, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 1030, Lot 46, Borough of Manhattan as its Landmark Site.

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GAINSBOROUGH STUDIOS
222 Central Park South
Borough of Manhattan
Building under restoration

Photo by:
C. Forster,
April, 1987



GAINSBOROUGH STUDIOS
222 Central Park South
Borough of Manhattan

Window detail

Photo by:
C. Forster,
April, 1987



Built:
1907-08

GAINSBOROUGH STUDIOS
222 Central Park South
Borough of Manhattan
Entrance Detail

Photo by:
Sachner, 1978



GAINSBOROUGH STUDIOS
222 Central Park South
Borough of Manhattan

Architect:
Charles Buckham
Built:
1907-08

Photo by:
P. Sachner,
May, 1978