

Landmarks Preservation Commission
March 12, 1985; Designation List 176
LP-1458

No. 254-260 Canal Street, Borough of Manhattan. Built 1856/57;
Cast-iron facades attributed to James Bogardus.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan, Tax Map Block 196 Lot 21.

On September 13, 1983 the Landmarks Preservation commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the No. 254-260 Canal Street Building and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 15). The hearing was continued to November 15, 1983 (Item No. 1). Both hearings had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of the law. A total of three witnesses spoke in support of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. Four letters were received in favor of designation; a letter was received from the owner in opposition to designation. (This item had previously been heard on December 27, 1966 and January 31, 1967.)

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

No. 254-260 Canal Street, at the southwest corner of Canal and Lafayette Streets, is one of the earliest surviving cast-iron buildings in New York City. Built in 1856/57 for George Bruce, a leader of the printing industry, it was one of the first commercial buildings produced during the transformation of the area around Canal Street from a largely industrial district to a center of the retail trade. Its design exemplifies the successful adaptation of the palazzo mode to cast-iron architecture. Sensitively scaled to an extremely large site, it establishes an unusual equilibrium between the facade's horizontal and vertical elements. This, together with the extremely high quality of its ornament, makes this one of the finest and most distinctive cast-iron buildings in New York.

In addition to its aesthetic and historical importance, No. 254-260 Canal Street is also of interest as one of the few surviving works that has been attributed to the pioneer of cast-iron architecture, James Bogardus. If as the evidence strongly suggests this is a Bogardus work, then it would be the largest and most important of his buildings extant in New York City.

The Commercial Transformation of Lower Manhattan and No. 254-260 Canal Street

The unparalleled growth of New York City in the 19th 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 a 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 emerged. The city's commercial districts moved northward into former residential areas, replacing older houses with first-class shops. New well-to-do residential districts developed still further north on the city's outskirts, while older prime commercial areas to the south became warehouse and wholesale districts.²

Following the opening³ in 1846 of the A.T. Stewart Store, the first department store in the country, 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 Broadway area between City Hall Park and Madison Square became the commercial heart of the metropolis. Stewart's store also set architectural precedents for that development: his architects, Joseph Trench and John B. 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.⁴

Leslies Illustrated Newspaper commented on the change in the area in 1857 noting that:

Everyday adds some new glory of the builders' art to the highways of our city. There is scarcely a street below Fourth Street that does not present some evidence of the riches and prosperity of our city in the shape of tall lordly stores of vast business capacity and of exceeding taste and beauty.⁵

In order to accommodate the increased traffic generated by this growth, many downtown streets were extended and widened. The greatest of these improvements according to the New York Daily Times of 1855 was the extension of Canal Street two blocks east from Centre Street to Mulberry Street where it was merged with Walker Street. At this time many of the houses on Walker Street were cut back or replaced with new buildings.⁶ By 1857, both blocks on Canal Street were completely built up, primarily with first-class stores.⁷

The site of 254-260 Canal Street at the corner of Lafayette (then known as Elm) Street was only a block from this newly developing area and only two blocks from Broadway where the most intense commercial growth in the city was taking place. Initially this land had been part of the Jacobus Van Cortlandt Calk Hook farm. In the 18th century Peter Jay purchased a parcel of ground from Van Cortlandt called the "pasture lot" which comprised the land west of Broadway between Canal and Walker Streets. This land was passed by inheritance to his son, John Jay. In 1809, John Jay sold a quarter interest in his holdings near Broadway to Johy Jay Munro.⁸ At that time Canal Street was being laid out along the lines of an old ditch which drained the Collect Pond into the Hudson

River.⁹ In 1812, following the completion of Canal Street, Jay and Munro had their land divided into building lots. Munro was assigned one quarter of the lots. In 1832, he sold the site of the present No. 254-260 Canal Street to George Bruce, a prominent figure in the printing industry who had invested his considerable fortune in real estate, including several properties in the immediate vicinity.¹⁰ Bruce had a saw mill erected on the site which abutted a "mahogany yard" and was only a few doors away from the New York and New Haven Railroad depot.¹¹ When the mill burned in 1855/56¹² Bruce:

foresaw that in time the street would be the centre of business. He deliberated some time whether to erect an ordinary building on the ruins that should immediately pay an interest on cost, or an edifice suitable for the future trade of the street. He decided on the latter course and placed a costly iron structure on the property. Though he did not receive an income for several years commensurate with the outlay, still the soundness of his judgment is clearly proved by its increased value.¹³

George Bruce

George Bruce (1781-1866) the owner of 254-260 Canal Street, was widely regarded as the "father and chief" of typography in America.¹⁴ Born in Edinburgh in 1781, he came to this country at the age of fifteen, settling first in Philadelphia, then moving to New York in 1798. In 1806, he and his brother, David, established one of the first type foundries in the United States. In 1813, they introduced the Stanhope method of stereotyping which produced multiple typographic plates from a single bed of type. Some years later, David Bruce, Jr., working for the family firm., invented the first practical method for casting type by machine. George Bruce subsequently refined his nephew's invention by devising a means of air-cooling the molds. He also invented a system for substituting steam for hand power. This greatly speeded up the production of type. An expert worker who previously could cast no more than 15 characters a minute could now operate two or more machines each producing 100 characters a minute. Bruce's type-casting machine remained in use throughout the 19th century, and together with Richard Hoe's "lightning press" made possible the phenomenal growth of newspaper and book publishing in American during the last half of the century.¹⁵

In addition to his work in typography, George Bruce was extremely active in fostering the growth of science and industry in New York. He was one of the founders of the Mechanics Institute which was established to disseminate knowledge and information through the mechanical classes by offering lectures on scientific subjects.¹⁶ When that organization disbanded, Bruce took an active role in the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, aiding in the establishment of the Apprentices Library. He was also a lifetime member of the American Institute of the City of New York, an organization dedicated to the promotion of American industry and agriculture which sponsored an annual exhibition of improvements in manufacturing, agriculture, and the arts. During the course of the year the Institute frequently held lectures on scientific subjects. Its Annual Report was one of the earliest sources of information on

cast-iron architecture, publishing a series of letters on the subject in February 1848. Bruce, who was very well versed in science and who often spoke at the Institute on Mechanical topics, would undoubtedly have seen these articles. The choice of cast-iron for his new building might well have been motivated by his obvious interest in technological innovation.¹⁷

James Bogardus and the Introduction of Cast-Iron Architecture

The use of cast iron in architecture, although not entirely an American innovation, led to the development of one of the most extraordinary indigenous architectural forms in the history of American architecture.

James Bogardus and Daniel Badger both published claims to having built the first cast-iron buildings in America, Bogardus in a promotional pamphlet of 1856, and Badger in a foundry catalogue of 1865.¹⁸ 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. Bogardus's development and promotion of cast-iron facades, however, and Badger's construction of hundreds of cast-iron storefronts and facades, 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.¹⁹

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 merchantile and mechanical purposes."²⁰ 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 reerected elsewhere with the same perfection as at first.²¹

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 prefabricated iron casting. The introduction of maximum light was of great importance to retail stores. The presumed fireproof qualities of cast-iron buildings was very attractive to merchants in a city like New York were periodically ravaged by fire--even though for most buildings only the facade was cast iron, and the other walls and framing, built of brick and timber, were as flammable as any other building.²²

James Bogardus was born in Catskill, New York in March 1800. Apprenticed at the age of fourteen to a local watchmaker, he trained in the difficult crafts of engraving and die-sinking.²³ Around 1825, he moved to New York where

he pursued a career as an inventor filing patents for a series of clocks, a "ring flyer" for cotton spinning, an "eccentric" sugar-grinding mill, a dry gas meter and a machine for engraving. In 1836, Bogardus went to England, apparently to promote his engraving machine. In 1839, he won a competition sponsored by the British government for improvements to the engraving of postage stamps; with the prize money he embarked on a tour of France and Italy. Returning to New York in 1840, he began manufacturing his sugar-grinding mills on a commercial basis. He opened a factory at 40 Eldridge Street and by 1847 his business had prospered sufficiently to warrant the erection of a new factory at the corner of Centre and Duane Streets. This he intended to be the first building constructed entirely of iron.²⁴

In choosing this material Bogardus undoubtedly was aware of advances that had taken place in the use of architectural ironwork both here and abroad. As an inventor he would have been anxious to explore the possibilities of this new technology, especially since he was already making use of cast iron on a daily basis in manufacturing his mills. As a businessman, Bogardus would have been aware of the publicity value of using a novel material. The possibilities for its commercial development became apparent in 1848 when he received a commission from John Milhau to construct a new iron front for a drugstore on Broadway. In the next two years, Bogardus constructed a drygoods store for Edward Laing at Washington and Murray Streets and completed his own factory at Centre and Duane Streets, apparently reusing castings from the Milhau Drugstore for both facades.²⁵

These first designs were relatively primitive, reflecting a greater concern with construction than with aesthetics. Generally credited to Bogardus alone, they conform to his description of a cast-iron facade as a construction of sills, columns, and cornices with windows, doors, and panels filling up the spaces between the columns.²⁶

In the 1850s, however, Bogardus began working on a series of commercial buildings modeled on Venetian palazzi. The first of these was the 1851 printing house of the Baltimore Sun, attributed to the New York architect, Robert G. Hatfield.²⁷ Here, Bogardus's contribution is less easily defined than with the earlier New York buildings. He may have collaborated with Hatfield in the design of the Sun Building or may simply have translated Hatfield's design into cast iron. He probably designed the patterns, arranged to have the castings made, and superintended construction of the iron parts of the building. Unlike his rival Daniel Badger, Bogardus never operated his own foundry but instead sub-contracted work to a number of foundries. Four firms supplied ironwork for the Sun Building including Daniel Badger's Architectural Ironworks which supplied the first floor shopfronts incorporating Badger's patented Rolling Iron Shutters.

Apparently, once a building was completed, Bogardus retained ownership of the wooden patterns for the molds. He seems to have reused the patterns from the Sun Building on a number of occasions: for Harper Brothers Printing House

in New York in 1857, for the Swain Building in Philadelphia in 1857, and for the Ahrenfeldt China Store in New York (n.d.).²⁸ In time, as he received other commissions, Bogardus appears to have accumulated a large stock of patterns. Like his competitors he probably offered clients a variety of options: manufacture of new castings from designs prepared by their architects (Sun Building), replication of existing facades in whole or in part (Harper Brothers), or recombination of stock elements in new designs (63 Nassau Street, incorporating bas-relief portraits of Washington and Franklin from the Sun Building with giant columns, faceted keystones, cable moldings, and foliate spandrel panels from 85 Leonard Street).²⁹ He might also have made new designs from stock elements available to clients who wished to forego the expense of hiring an architect. Whether he would have been responsible for these designs himself or whether he would have hired a designer like George Johnson, who prepared designs for Badger clients, is open to question. However, it seems possible to identify a group of buildings with the same component parts which have as their common denominator an association with James Bogardus rather than with any particular architect.

In addition to his cast-iron facades Bogardus is also known for his work with structural ironwork. Harper Brothers had "a structural system more advanced than that of any business building in the city."³⁰ This incorporated cast-iron columns, girders, and the first wrought-iron joists to be used for structural purposes in the United States. As this framework was capable of supporting the floorloads without the assistance of the walls, Harper Brothers has been regarded as one of the first examples of true cage construction.³¹

The Italinatè Sytle as Adapted to Cast-Iron Architecture

Once cast iron was accepted and adopted by the architectural profession, cast-iron design began to reflect the Italinatè style prevalent among commercial buildings in the 1850s.³³ A series of cast-iron Italinatè palazzi were produced, often painted white to imitate marble. The earliest, and among the finest, survivors are the Cary Building (King & Kellum, 1856-1857) at 105-107 Chambers Street, and the Haughwout Store (John Gaynor, 1856) at 488 Broadway.³⁴ 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.³⁵

Even as the debates continued, their immediate subject--the iron-fronted Italianate palace--began to show some stylistic adaptation in 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 chosen 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. One virtue of cast iron was that additional bays could be added to a facade, 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 here 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.³⁶

Bogardus's works of the 1850's and 1860s include a number of designs, loosely based on Italianate motifs but more heavily influenced by the forces of repetition and prefabrication including Harper Brothers, 75 Murray Street (1857)³⁷

James Bogardus's Role in the Design of No. 254-260 Canal Street

In 1856, when George Bruce decided to erect a cast-iron building at No. 254-260 Canal, the two most prominent figures in the industry were James Bogardus and Daniel Badger. Of the two, Bruce would undoubtedly have known Bogardus. Both

Bruce and Bogardus had been actively involved in the printing industry for most of their lives--Bruce as a typefounder, Bogardus as an inventor of engraving equipment and later as a builder of printing houses (i.e. the Baltimore Sun Building and Harper Brothers). Both men were inventors and both were interested in promoting the arts and sciences. Like Bruce, Bogardus was a life-member of the American Institute of New York. He served on the committee for Arts and Sciences in 1848-50, and designed the engraving machine for which the steel die of the first gold metal of the Institute was cut in 1831.³⁸ Given their common interests and Bogardus's reputation as a builder of cast iron structures, it seems reasonable to assume that Bruce would have selected Bogardus to erect his new cast-iron building.

This indeed appears to have been the case, for in 1858, Bogardus's promotional pamphlet, Cast Iron Buildings: Their Construction and Advantages, listed George Bruce among his clients.³⁹ It is important to note that an earlier edition of the pamphlet, published in 1856, did not include an entry for Bruce and that both the tax records and Perris maps indicate that the Canal Street building was completed in 1857, just after the first edition and just before the second.⁴⁰

Significantly, certain features of No. 254-260 Canal can be related to other Bogardus works. The Sun Building in Baltimore, which also occupied a corner site, had a similar composition and similar decorative details. Its ground floor was treated separately from the upper stories, which were articulated by Corinthian columns and entablatures. Arched windows were superimposed over trabeated windows, columns were projected, spandrels recessed, so that the floors were grouped into two-story units. The second floor columns were set on pedestals and impost blocks were used above the columns at each story to create a series of strong verticals. Recessed panels decorated the spandrels on the second and fourth floors and bracketed keystones were used for the arches. Finally, there was a somewhat unusual corner treatment, probably inspired by 16th-century Venetian models such as Palazzo Corner, in which the columns acted as a frame for the windows but did not extend to the edge of the building.

In a late Bogardus building, the former Opera House on Main Street in Cooperstown, New York (1860),⁴¹ many of the same motifs were repeated: double-story groupings crowned by arches, superimposed orders, pedestals, and impost blocks. There are balustrades under the third floor windows which are apparently identical with those on 254-260 Canal. Margot Gayle, historian of cast-iron architecture, has observed that identical Medusa-head keystones are to be seen on the third floor of the Cooperstown building, the fourth floor of the Canal Street building, and the third and fifth floors of No. 75 Murray Street, a documented Bogardus building of 1857.⁴² Given this apparent repetition of motifs, the overall similarity in design between No. 254-260 Canal Street and Bogardus's Sun Building and Cooperstown Opera House, and the Strong documentary evidence linking Bruce and Bogardus -- especially the client lists that indicate that Bruce became a Bogardus client between 1856

and 1858 just at the time the Canal Street Building was going up, there seems to be good reason to attribute No. 254-260 Canal Street to James Bogardus.

Description

No. 254-260 Canal Street is one of the largest buildings remaining from the initial phase of cast-iron architecture. Built as three first-class stores with party walls and a uniform facade, it is five stories high and has a frontage of 100 feet, ³/₄ inches on Canal Street and 77 feet 8 ¹/₄ inches on Lafayette Street.⁴³ The Canal Street front has been divided into sixteen bays, the Lafayette Street facade into twelve bays. Each story is slightly shorter in height than the one beneath it.

Canal Street facade:

Until recently the ground floor on Canal Street was completely concealed by modern shopfronts. In the last few years most of these have been removed to reveal a cast-iron entablature and fluted Corinthian columns (Reading east to west, columns 7, and 12-16 are still hidden by modern storefronts; the cornice is covered by flashing on bays 1-2 and 14-17). Modern plate glass and metal storefronts have been installed between the columns, except at 258 Canal, where the flower shop (bay 12) has a wooden entrance with double doors and a twelve light transom. Each door has twin lights set over recessed panels. Though the number of panels and windows⁴⁴ differ the treatment is similar to the ground floor of the Laing Store.

The upper four stories have large windows framed by Corinthian columns; these support entablatures which break forward over the orders to create an extremely lively plastic effect. The horizontal proportions of the low, wide facade are balanced by the height and narrowness of the individual bays and by the placement of entablature blocks above the columns to create a series of unbroken verticals.

Within this framework there are variations at each story. The second floor is trabeated. Its columns rest on paneled pedestals; recessed panels decorate the frieze above the windows. A corona runs along the length of the facade while the architrave is applied only to the projecting sections of the entablature.

The third floor has arched window enframements which are articulated by Tuscan pilasters and a molded archivolt with a bracketed keystone. A full entablature separates this story from the fourth story. Here, the arch motif is repeated but with Medusa-head keystones in place of brackets. One again there is a paneled frieze entablature. The treatment of the fifth story is identical with that of the third save that the crowning Corinthian cornice rests directly on the columns and does not project over the orders. The cornice is decorated with consoles and dentils but has no frieze decoration.

Modifications to the upper stories of the Canal Street facade include the loss of all foliate capital pieces and the loss of consoles from bays 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, and 13 of the entablature. A fire escape has been added to bays

10-15 and the windows have been bricked in for fire doors in bays 11 and 13 on the second story; 10 and 13 on the third story; 10 and 15 on the fourth story; and 10 and 15 on the fifth story. Modern three-over-three windows have been installed in bays 8-16 on all stories. Bays 1-8, on the other hand, seem to have retained their original wooden sash decorated with roll moldings.

Lafayette Street facade:

The Lafayette Street facade is identical in design, except for the number of bays, to the Canal Street front. As on Canal, all the foliate portions of the columns have been removed. The ground story columns are exposed, but the original shopfronts have been replaced, and a section of the ground story entablature has been covered with flashing (reading north-south, bays 1-4). The ground floor entablature is also damaged at its southern end; the end piece has been lost and the frieze is beginning to pull away from the cornice. On the upper stories, all the original window sash appear to be in place, though part of the roll molding in bay 6 of the second story has broken off. Most of the crowning entablature's console brackets have been preserved with losses confined to bays 6, 9, 11, and 12.

One of the most unusual features of No. 254-260 Canal Street is the corner design. Unlike the contemporary Haughwout Store where the corner turns on a column which reads as an element in either facade, here the colonnades stop just short of the edges of the facades leaving the corner exposed. This treatment has certain advantages. The bays can be narrower than in a conventional design allowing the designer to compensate for the unusual breadth of his facades. At the same time it provides a strong framing device for the lengthy arcades.

On the ground floor the corner columns are joined to a pier. This has three 90° angles and a rounded corner that extends between the columns. In elevation the rounded section reads as a plain iron cylinder. It is unclear whether this treatment is original or the result of a later alteration.

CONCLUSION

No. 254-260 Canal is still in commercial use, its ground story devoted to shops, its upper stories used as lofts and offices. It has survived remarkably intact and has been maintained in reasonably good condition by its present owners.

Together with the Haughwout Store and the Cary Building, No. 254-260 Canal is one of the earliest cast-iron fronted buildings in New York. Built as a speculative venture for the inventor George Bruce, it is representative of the development of the "commercial palace" in response to the unparalleled growth of New York City in the 19th century. It is especially significant as a pioneer building in the transformation of the area around Canal Street near Broadway from a primarily industrial district to a center of the retail trade.

Its Venetian-inspired design is an excellent example of the successful adaptation of the Italiniate style, developed in masonry building, to the emerging technology of cast-iron architecture. It is especially notable for the almost geometric interplay of its vertical and horizontal elements. As an early surviving major cast-iron building, as the product of faith in the continuing growth of the pre-Civil War city, and as a reminder of the career of George Bruce, an important industrial innovator, No. 254-260 Canal Street stands as a landmark of the commercial development of mid-19th century New York. Moreover, if as the evidence strongly suggests, this building was produced by James Bogardus, then it is the most important surviving work in New York City associated with this pioneer of cast-iron architecture.

Report prepared by
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FOOTNOTES

1. Margot Gayle, Cast Iron Architecture in New York (New York: Dover Publications, 1974), p. 32.
2. This material on the commercial development of lower Manhattan is drawn from New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, Cary Building Designation Report (LP-1224), prepared by Anthony W. Robins (Aug. 24, 1982), pp. 1-2. See also Charles Lockwood, Manhattan Moves Uptown (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).
3. Harry E. Resseguie, "A.T. Stewart's Marble Palaces -- The Cradle of the Department Store," New York Historical Society Quarterly, 43 (1964), 33-35.
4. Mary Ann Smith, "John Butler Snook and the Design for the A. T. Stewart Store," New York Historical Society Quarterly, 58 (1974), 18-33; Winston Weisman, "Commercial Palaces of New York: 1845-1875," Art Bulletin, 36 (1954), 285-291.
5. "Mercantile Palaces of New York," Leslies' Illustrated Newspaper, June 20, 1857.
6. "Public and Private Improvements," New York Daily Times, Aug. 11, 1855.
7. William Perris, Maps of the City of New York (New York, 1857), vol. 1, maps 14, 15.
8. New York County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds, Liber 100, page 240.
9. I.N. Phelps Stokes, The Iconography of Manhattan Island, 1498-1909 (New York: Robert H. Dodd, 1915-28) vol. 1, 396-397; vol. 3, 559-561.
10. For an abstract of title, see Liber Deeds Liber 100, page 240; for Bruce's acquisition of the property, see Liber 290, pages 278-281; for its disposition after his death and an accounting of his other holdings, see Liber 1210, pages 492-510.
11. William Perris, Maps of the City of New York Surveyed under Directions of Insurance Companies of Said City (New York, 1853), vol. 3, map 29.
12. The mill must have burned sometime between September 15, 1855, when Bruce leased the property to John Lyman and James Gilchrist and March 24, 1856, when it was recorded as "burnt-out" in the tax records. Liber Deeds, Liber 689, page 616; Sixth Ward tax assessment records, 1856. I am indebted to Margot Gayle for the last reference.
13. Charles C. Savage, "George Bruce, a Sketch of His Life in Connection with Printing," (typescript of an address read before the New York Historical Society, Oct. 2, 1866), Biography Box, Mss. Coll., New York Public Library, p. 22.

14. Ibid., Prefatory Note.
15. The sources for Bruce's biography are Savage's address cited above; his obituary in the New York Tribune, June 10, 1866; and entries under his name in the National Cyclopedia of American Biography, Vol. 11; p. 274, and Dictionary of American Biography. For his contribution of the printing industry, see Ray Nash "Ornamental Types in America," in Nineteenth Century Ornamental Typefaces by Nicolette Gray (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 115-119; American Dictionary of Printing and Bookmaking (1894; reprint ed., Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1967), s.v. Bruce, George; Stereotyping; Typecasting.
16. Stokes, Iconography, vol. 6, s.v. 1833 Apr. 24.
17. Savage, pp. 29-30; American Institute of the City of New York, Annual Report, 6 (1847-48); 216-227; idem., List of Life and Other Members Who Have Paid Their Dues Up to May 1, 1855 (New York, 1855), p. 2.
18. Bogardus in Cast Iron Buildings: Their Construction and Advantages by James Bogardus, C.E. (New York, 1856), with a preface by Bogardus naming John W. Thomas Author; and Badger in Illustrations of Iron Architecture Made by the Architectural Iron Works of the City of New York (New York, 1865). Both are reprinted in Walter Knight Sturges, Origins of Cast Iron Architecture (New York: Da Capo Press, 1970).
19. Cary Building, p. 9.
20. Badger, pp. 5-6.
21. Bogardus, p. 7.
22. Cary Building, p. 9
23. The following material on Bogardus's career is based on Turpin Bannister, "Bogardus Revisited," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, 15 (Dec 1956); 12; "James Bogardus," Scientific American, May 2, 1874, p. 76.
24. Because Bogardus's factory was taken down when Duane Street was widened in 1859, it is difficult to determine whether the building has a conventional structural system or was, as Bogardus claimed, "the first complete cast-iron building in America or in the World." On the basis of a series of patents Bogardus filed in 1850 for the construction of the frame, roof, and floors of iron buildings, Turpin Bannister has suggested that Bogardus probably did plan to make the factory a wholly iron building. However, he questions whether these plans were realized, since a contemporary newspaper account of the dismantling states that "the building was taken down piece by piece even to the ornament and timbers." John Waite, on the other hand, has observed that the engaged cast-iron columns at the Laing Stores contained substantial wooden members which acted only as spacers. Waite thinks it quite possible

- that the same type of spacers were used at the factory and were the timbers mentioned in the newspaper report. See Bogardus, p. 3; Bannister, pp. 18-19; and John Waite, Iron Architecture in New York City: Two Studies in Industrial Archaeology (New York: New York State Historic Trust, 1972), pp. 15-17.
25. Bannister, pp. 12-15; Gayle, pp. x-xiii.
 26. Bogardus, p. 6.
 27. For the Sun Building, see Bannister, p. 16; David G. Wright, Baltimore City Cast Iron (New York: Friends of Cast Iron Architecture, 1978), pp. 1-6.
 28. Gayle, p. xiii; Bannister, pp. 16-17; Antoinette Lee, "James Bogardus in Philadelphia," Nineteenth Century, 2 (Spring 1976) 33-36.
 29. For an overview of foundry practice and for the Nassau and Leonard Street buildings in particular, see Gayle, pp. xiii, 2-4, 21-23. For an illustration of the Sun Building's medallions of Washington and Franklin, see Wright, Baltimore Cast Iron, p. 5.
 30. Weisman, p. 293.
 31. Ibid; Carl W. Condit, American Building Art: The Nineteenth Century (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 36.
 32. Condit, pp. 36-38.
 33. The following account of the stylistic evolution of cast-iron design is based on Anthony W. Robins, "The Venetian Palace Type in New York Commercial Cast-Iron Architecture 1846-1875," (Masters Thesis, Courtauld Institute, University of London, 1976).
 34. Both the Cary Building and the Haughwout Store are designated New York City Landmarks.
 35. An early exchange between a correspondent and an editor may be found in The Crayon, 3, (Mar. 1856), 84. The AIA debate, held on Dec. 7, 1858 was between Henry Van Brunt, speaking in favor, and Leopold Eidlitz, opposed; the papers were published in the January 1859 issue of The Crayon, 6, 15-24, and prompted a series of editorial pro and con statements in others journals. See The Architect's and Mechanic's Journal, Nov. 1859, pp 51-52; Dec. 24, 1859, p. 77; Dec 31, 1859, p. 83.
 36. The Crayon, 3 (Mar. 1856), 17.
 37. A designated New York City Landmark.
 38. American Institute, Life Members, pp. 2, 4; idem., Annual Report, 7 (1848/49), 3; 8 (1849/50), 3; Scientific American, p. 76. It is

interesting to note that John Milhau, Bogardus's first client, was also a life member of the institute.

39. Bogardus, p. 16.
40. Ibid. p. 16; Perris Maps (1857), vol. 1, map 15. The 1857 assessment book for the Sixth Ward is missing; however, the new building appears at an increased valuation in the tax records of 1858.
41. I am indebted to Margot Gayle and the Friends of Cast Iron for bringing this building to the attention of the Landmarks Preservation Commission and for making a photograph available to me. Margot Gayle to Anthony W. Robins, Oct. 17, 1984 (available in the No. 254-260 Canal Street file at the Landmarks Preservation Commission).
42. No. 75 Murray Street is a designated New York City Landmark.
43. New York City Department of Buildings, Borough of Manhattan, Block and Lot Folder, Block 196, Lot 21, Municipal Archives; Surrogates Court House, New York.
44. Illustrated in Gayle, p. 11.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

On the basis of careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that No. 254-260 Canal Street has 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, No. 254-260 Canal Street, erected in 1856/57 is one of the earliest surviving cast-iron fronted buildings in New York; that it is an excellent early example of the successful adaptation of the Italianate style to cast-iron architecture; that it is representative of the development of the "commercial palace" type in response to the unparalleled commercial growth of New York City in the early 19th century; that it is especially significant for the area around Canal Street as a pioneer building in the transformation of that district from a primarily industrial area to a center of the retail trade; that it was built for George Bruce, a major figure in the development of the printing industry in the 19th century; and that the building's cast-iron facades appear to have been provided by James Bogardus, an innovator in cast-iron technology who is acknowledged to have had a profound and extensive effect on American building.

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 No. 254-260 Canal Street Building, Borough of Manhattan, and designates Tax Map Block 196, Lot 21, Borough of Manhattan as its Landmark Site.

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No. 254-260 Canal Street
Manhattan

Attributed to James Bogardus
Built: 1856/57

Photo credit: Beckett Logan for the
Friends of Cast Iron Architecture





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