

Landmarks Preservation Commission
August 23, 1988; Designation List 208
LP-1667

BEAUX-ARTS INSTITUTE OF DESIGN, 304 East 44th Street, Borough of Manhattan.
Built 1928; architect Frederic C. Hirons of the firm Dennison & Hirons.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1336, Lot 47.

On July 12, 1988, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 5). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Sixteen witnesses spoke in favor of designation. Many letters and other expressions of support in favor of designation have been received by the Commission. The Commission has received a letter from the owner expressing opposition to the designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Summary

Founded in 1893 by American architects who had studied at the prestigious Parisian Ecole des Beaux-Arts, the Society of Beaux-Arts Architects had a profound impact on architectural practice in this country by its dedication to fostering the principles established by the Ecole. The Beaux-Arts Institute of Design, chartered in 1916 to accommodate the expanding educational programs of the Society, served as the national headquarters for architectural instruction based on the curriculum of the Ecole and influenced several generations of American architects. By 1927, a new building was required to meet the growing needs of the Institute, and the Board of Trustees sponsored a design competition in keeping with the tradition of the Ecole. The winning design by Frederic C. Hirons of the firm of Dennison & Hirons features a striking composition employing Beaux-Arts principles of symmetry, solidity and monumentality, while displaying a modernized classicism that reflects contemporary currents in Art Deco design. Among the building's outstanding features are its bold block lettering, "Beaux-Arts Institute of Design," surmounting the first story, and exceptional polychrome terra-cotta spandrel plaques, designed by the noted architectural sculptor and model-maker, Rene Chambellan, in collaboration with the architects, and executed by the Atlantic Terra Cotta Company, one of the largest and most important American manufacturers of architectural terra cotta at the time. Depicting the Parthenon, St. Peter's Church, and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, these plaques symbolize the classical heritage and tradition perpetuated by the Institute.

The Founding of the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design

During the second half of the nineteenth century, ambitious American architectural students began to attend the Ecole Nationale et Speciale des Beaux-Arts in Paris, for training in the highly esteemed French tradition of classical, academic architecture. Many Americans who had studied in Paris--such as the first American Ecole student, Richard Morris Hunt--became prominent architects, influential in promoting the Beaux-Arts

doctrine in this country. As a testament to the profound impact of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts on architectural practice in the United States, the Society of Beaux-Arts Architects was founded in New York in 1893 by a group of Americans, all former students of the Ecole. This professional organization sought to cultivate and perpetuate the French ideals of their discipline, and to offer the opportunity to study the principles of design and composition taught in Paris but not yet formally instituted in American architectural schools. In order to further encourage young students to study the Beaux-Arts methodology, the Society initiated the prestigious Paris Prize in 1904, an annual competition open to Americans under twenty-seven years of age; the winner received admission to the Ecole without having to pass the standard entrance exam.¹

In 1916, the Society, while continuing to function as a professional club, founded the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design, under a provisional charter of the Regents of the University of New York, to accommodate the expanding educational program of the organization. The Institute first provided instruction only in architecture; additional courses in mural painting and sculpture were later established, followed by interior decoration in 1921. The Institute charged a nominal registration fee and classes were free. Financial support was maintained by membership dues, contributions, advertising in the Society yearbook, and proceeds from the annual Beaux-Arts Ball, an elaborate and highly publicized costume party which was the peak of the social calendar for the architectural set. In 1933, the Society of Beaux-Arts Architects Yearbook could boast that the Institute served an average of 2,500 students annually.²

What made the Institute unique in American architectural education was its method of study, modeled after that of the Parisian Ecole. Central to the curriculum was the atelier (or studio) system, in which students were guided through the course of their training in the studio of a practicing architect. The basis of the program was a series of graded architectural competitions, treating different design problems, which became more difficult as one advanced. Students gained a certain number of credits at each level. When the total number of credits was achieved, a Certificate of the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design and an associate membership to the Society of Beaux-Arts Architects were awarded. Competitions were juried by practicing architects, and several prizes and awards, in addition to the Paris Prize, were also associated with merit.³

The Institute established a nation-wide standard of excellence in architectural education. Students from many universities and colleges across the country, as well as independent ateliers and architectural clubs, participated in the competitions conducted by the New York school. The architectural schools officially affiliated with the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design were Columbia, Cornell, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Notre Dame, New York University, Ohio State, and the Universities of Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, Illinois, and Southern California, in addition to some fifty others. Premiated drawings were published in the quarterly Bulletin and circulated around the country in travelling exhibitions so that students could compare their work with that of others. The Bulletin also published critiques of competition drawings and accounts of jury deliberations as an additional educational tool.⁴

The competition process itself was also formulated on the long-standing precedent of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. On the day of the competition, students were given a specific program of the building's requirements, and en loge, (without consultation and unassisted by notes or books), within a limited amount of time, (often nine consecutive hours), they would complete a fundamental esquisse (sketch) of the proposed elevation. One copy of the esquisse was to be submitted to the Institute, and then students were allowed more time to develop the sketch, making modifications in detail without changing the original conception, before final drawings were sent to the jury for review. It was also customary that the name and school of the student be masked so that the drawings were anonymous to the jurors.⁵

The Competition for the New Beaux-Arts Institute of Design

The first location of the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design was 126 East 75th Street, formerly the private stable of Jacob Schiff, purchased by the Society in 1914 and occupied by the Institute in the following year.⁶ Following World War I, the program of the Institute was greatly enlarged, particularly with the addition of mural painting and sculpture departments, making the old building inadequate. A committee chaired by Raymond Hood was formed to find a more suitable and accessible location, preferably near Grand Central Terminal. The former Institute building was sold for \$167,250, and the new property, encompassing two private dwellings at 304 and 306 East 44th Street, was purchased for \$85,000 in October of 1927.⁶

In keeping with the Beaux-Arts tradition, the Board of Trustees of the Institute decided to organize an esquisse competition for their first custom-designed building; the entire process was to be based on French historical precedent. The entrants, all practicing architects, would be required to compete under the same conditions as students of the Beaux-Arts system. Architects Kenneth Murchison and Whitney Warren chaired the planning committee, and the jury was selected: Professor W. Frank Hitchens of the Carnegie Institute of Technology, Professor E. Raymond Bossange of New York University, Professor Warren P. Laird of the University of Pennsylvania, Professor Everett V. Meeks, Dean of the Yale School of Architecture, Charles Z. Klauder of Philadelphia, and F.R. Walker of Cleveland. Professor William A. Boring of Columbia served as professional advisor to conduct the deliberations.

An announcement of October 13, 1927, went to all members of the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design and the Society of Beaux-Arts Architects, stating that the competition, in the form of an esquisse, would be held on November 17, 1927, at noon. It was to last four hours, and the winner, chosen the same day, would be announced at the annual Harvard Club dinner that evening. The competition was open to all members who were practicing architects. To encourage participation, the entry fee was set at \$25.00, while those who chose not to compete would be required to pay \$35.00.⁷ Funds raised went toward the building campaign.

The program of the competition, (which was for the facade only, given the midblock site), specified the basic design requirements, addressing the budgetary and programmatic needs of the institution: a lot fifty feet wide on the south side of the street; four stories and a penthouse with a cellar or basement; a first story of sixteen feet and a second story of fourteen

feet to be used for exhibition space; third and fourth stories of eleven feet to be used for studios and workrooms; and a fifth-story penthouse, nine or ten feet high and forty to forty-four feet wide with a terrace at the front and a roof garden at the back to be used as living quarters for the building's caretaker/general secretary. The program also called for a main entrance at one side of the facade.⁸

The Beaux-Arts methodology, since its inception in the eighteenth century, was grounded in the notion that the program should outline the fundamental exigencies of the proposal, and that the design should evolve from the functional requirements of the building's type.⁹ The program did not restrict aesthetic interpretation, but rather served as the springboard for its development. The many varied solutions which resulted from the competition program for the Beaux-Arts Institute are a telling demonstration of how architectural individuality could be expressed within the given program format and the Beaux-Arts aesthetic.

The high-spirited competition, concerning a building of much significance to the architectural community, generated great interest. On the roster of seventy-two competitors were some of the most notable architects of the time: Raymond Hood, Arthur Loomis Harmon, William Lamb, Ralph Walker, Chester Aldrich, Philip Goodwin, and Harvey Wiley Corbett. First prize was awarded to Frederic C. Hirons of the firm of Dennison & Hirons, second to Harry Sternfeld, third to William Van Alen, and fourth to A.D. Seymour. Interestingly, the first three winners had all been Paris Prize winners as students.¹⁰

Although the esquisse competition was a rigorous and difficult exercise, Hirons had much experience in this traditional academic approach to design. His drawing not only satisfies the requirements of the program and clearly expresses the building's function--a semi-public institution with tall stories suggesting interior spaces for exhibition and studio purposes--it also symbolically evokes the aims of the Institute. Of the winning entry, Murchison wrote that it was "scholarly, well-arrived,"¹¹ and Philip Goodwin remarked that it was "a very simple, very architectural, and very appropriate design."¹² Hirons had also been the subject of a special feature on "Master Draftsmen" published in Pencil Points in July of 1927:

Fortune endowed Frederic Charles Hirons with the inestimable gift of good technique....His knowledge of architectural forms is extensive. With his retentive memory for decorative motifs it is not necessary for him...to buttress himself constantly by referring to books to find out 'just how the darned thing is made.'¹³

With his academic training and expertise, Hirons was a well-qualified candidate to design a building meant to embody the Beaux-Arts spirit.

Dennison & Hirons

A native of King's Heath, near Birmingham, England, Frederic C. Hirons (1882-1942) came at the age of ten to the United States, where his family settled in Boston, Massachusetts. As a teenager interested in drawing, he was introduced to David I. Gregg--a well-known pen-and-ink architectural renderer in the 1890s--with whom he discussed his work. Through Gregg's

influence, Hirons entered the office of the Boston architect Herbert C. Hale in 1898. In 1901, Hirons entered the respected Course of Architecture at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he studied for two years under Professor Despradelle. In 1904, he won the Rotch Traveling Scholarship, enabling him to go to Paris and enter the preparatory atelier of Godfroy-Freyne, and later, the atelier of Victor Laloux. After failing his first entrance exam to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, (a common occurrence), Hirons tried six months later and placed first among the 450 applicants for admission. While visiting New York in 1906, he won the Institute's Paris Prize, which allowed him to continue his studies abroad, where he spent a total of five years.

Hirons returned to New York and formed a partnership with Ethan Allen Dennison in 1909. At this time, he also formed his own atelier, and later spent three years as an instructor at Columbia. He was made Chevalier of the Legion of Honor by the French government in 1926.¹⁴ Hirons also served as president of the Society of Beaux-Arts Architects from 1937 to 1939.

Ethan Allen Dennison (1881-?) was born in Summit, N.J. After studying at Erasmus Hall and Pratt Institute, he worked briefly in New York before spending five years in Europe. He attended the Ecole des Beaux-Arts for three and a half years, having entered second among 150 foreign applicants in 1902. Returning to New York, Dennison opened an office in 1907, and then formed the partnership with Hirons in 1909. He was also Chevalier of the Legion of Honor and awarded the Medal of Honor from the French Diplome Society for founding an endowment in the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design to honor the French architect, Victor Laloux, in whose atelier the two architects possibly met.¹⁵

The firm of Dennison & Hirons was best known for the design of banking institutions--similar in conception to the Institute--which often employed bold, rectilinear compositions that incorporated beautifully executed ornamental details and reflected the current of modernized classicism associated with Art Deco design. In several works, including the Institute, the firm collaborated with the architectural sculptor Rene Chambellan, who executed their characteristic ornament, often a modern stylization of Greek or Near Eastern motifs. The State Bank and Trust Company of New York, (now Manufacturers Hanover), at Eighth Avenue and 43rd Street (1927-28); the Suffolk Title and Guarantee Building, at 90-04 161st Street in Jamaica, Queens (1929); the City National Bank and Trust Company Building in Bridgeport, Connecticut (1929); and the Home Saving Bank in Albany, New York (1929) were also the products of this fruitful collaboration. In New York, the firm designed the whimsical Childs Restaurant in Coney Island. Hirons is also associated with the designs of several courthouses and war memorials.

The Design of the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design

In the first six months of 1928, Hirons's plans and specifications for the Institute were refined by the Board of Trustees, and the design was further developed and slightly modified, without compromising the original sketch. It was decided that the main entrance should be centrally located in the facade, (rather than off to one side as the competition program had dictated), thus creating a bold, symmetrically planned composition and heightening the classical overtones of the design, with its strong piers

and crisp, stylized detail. Although the Institute had originally hoped to clad the building in stone or marble, buff-colored brick with limestone trim and a granite base were used, due to cost restrictions. Three allegorical sculptures--representing the "Beaux-Arts" (Fine Arts) of sculpture, painting, and architecture--were planned to stand on the stone blocks at the second-story windows, after funds for them were raised.¹⁶

Reflective of a classically-oriented current in the development of the Art Deco style, the facade of the Beaux-Arts Institute is characteristic of what the architect Robert A.M. Stern refers to as "Modern Classicism."¹⁷ Rooted in the Beaux-Arts principles of design--bilateral symmetry, axial planning, and monumental compositions combining classical forms--Modern Classicism was a reinterpretation of traditional architectural elements that embraced a stylized, modern aesthetic, most often loosely associated with Art Deco. The compositional contrast between plain surface and rich ornamentation found on the Institute's facade is characteristic of Art Deco, but also carries on the classical aesthetic of placing ornament at areas of emphasis in the design, such as the entrance, the spandrels, and the pier capitals. In addition, the bold, block lettering of the Institute's name, spanning the width of the facade and surmounting the first story, is a modern, streamlined design element, yet it relates to the composition as a whole in a way that recalls a classical frieze or cornice.

The Art Deco style was initiated by the 1925 Paris Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes, from which the style derives its name. Many of the pavilions at the Exposition were inherently classical in their planning and materials, although they expressed a new approach to ornament and its contribution to overall design. Among other influences were the Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen's second-place winning submission to the 1922 Chicago Tribune Building competition, with its streamlined treatment of the facade and lack of cornices; and the elegant, rectilinear compositions of the Viennese Secessionists Otto Wagner, Joseph Olbrich, and Josef Hoffmann; and also the geometric forms of the German Expressionists Bruno Taut and Peter Behrens.¹⁸ Many of the architects who designed New York's Art Deco buildings had either studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts or in American architectural schools that taught the Beaux-Arts curriculum.¹⁹ From planning, to the use of rich and varied materials, to the geometrically patterned and often symbolic ornament, many New York buildings labeled as Art Deco, such as the Institute or Rockefeller Center, make apparent an approach which created an intrinsic relationship between tradition and modernity.

The facade of the Institute reveals another fundamental ideal of the academic, classical tradition which is continued by Art Deco, namely, the integration of architecture with the other fine arts, sculpture and painting. Even without the proposed allegorical sculptures, Hirons's intention to represent the Beaux-Arts is carried out by the fine, ornamental details. Figural panels in relief, inspired by the sculpted Greek friezes of antiquity, are placed at the corners of the parapet spanning the fourth story. These depict allegorical scenes with figures holding attributes of the architectural profession: a T-square, a triangle, an ornamental acroterion, and what appears to be a model. Stylized "Ionic" capitals, surmounting the piers which flank the windows,

make another architectonic reference to classicism. Finally, polychrome terra-cotta spandrel plaques set between the second and third stories are rendered with the perspectival effects of painted, Renaissance vistas. These panels depict the Parthenon in Athens, St. Peter's Church in Rome--both monuments of importance to the classically-trained architect--and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, the inspiration for the Institute's program.

The terra-cotta panels, (and possibly the sculpted reliefs), were designed by Rene Chambellan (1893-1955), in collaboration with Dennison & Hiron. A noted architectural sculptor and model-maker, Chambellan was born in West Hoboken, New Jersey. From 1912 to 1914, he attended New York University, where he later taught sculpture, followed by three years at the Beaux-Arts Institute and a period at the Ecole Julian in Paris. Upon returning to America, Chambellan devoted himself to architectural sculpture, bas-reliefs, and heroic panels in a number of materials, including bronze, stone, and terra cotta. He assisted Raymond Hood with the ornament of the Chicago Tribune Building and the Daily News Building (a designated New York City Landmark), and later contributed a number of works at Rockefeller Center (a designated New York City Landmark), including bronze fountainheads in the Channel Gardens, bronze plaques at the main entrance to Radio City Music Hall, and fourth-story allegorical spandrels on the facades of the British Building and La Maison Francaise. He also worked in New York on the Chanin Building, (a designated New York City Landmark), the East Side Airlines Terminal (demolished), and the New York Life Insurance Building; and elsewhere on the Sterling Library at Yale University and the Pershing Memorial Stadium at Vincennes, France.²⁰

The Atlantic Terra Cotta Company, which executed the terra-cotta spandrel plaques on the Institute facade, devoted the entire June, 1928 issue of their publication to the work of Dennison & Hiron, featuring the new Institute building. The article stresses the collaborative efforts made by the architects, Chambellan, and the Atlantic staff to achieve the delicate blending and shading of the finished panels, work which "requires science as well as artistry."²¹ For the firm's consistent use of fine polychrome terra-cotta ornament--a hallmark of many Art Deco buildings--Dennison & Hiron were praised as being "among the first architects in the country to recognize the new School of Design and to appreciate the advantage of polychrome terra cotta for the modeled detail and colors required by the new style."²²

Once one of the largest and best-known manufacturers of architectural terra cotta in the world, Atlantic Terra Cotta was the result of a merger of the Perth Amboy Company (the oldest manufacturer on the East Coast, founded 1879), with several smaller companies, including the original Atlantic plant of Staten Island. Terra cotta from Atlantic can be found on a number of designated New York City Landmarks, including the Woolworth Building, Tudor City, and in the stations of the IRT subway system. In the 1930s, the Staten Island plant was shut down, and in 1943, the remaining plants in Perth Amboy were closed. The last major contracts for the company were the roof of the Supreme Court Building in Washington, D.C., and the pediment of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.²³

Description

Occupying a midblock site on the south side of East 44th Street between United Nations Plaza and Second Avenue, the original Beaux-Arts Institute of Design building rises approximately seventy feet, extends to a depth of one hundred feet, and is fifty feet wide. Clad in buff-colored brick laid in Flemish bond, with a shallow, light-colored granite base course and limestone trim, the facade displays a four-story elevation with a fifth-story penthouse.²⁴

The original portion of the facade is symmetrically composed with three vertical bands of windows above a high base containing a centralized entranceway. Flanking the main entrance are two rectangular windows with simple, stone sills covered by simple metal grilles. At the west side of the facade is a doorway, which was originally a service entrance. The recessed, double-height entranceway, containing double wooden doors with glazed panels, is reached by two, shallow granite steps. The entranceway is given prominence by a series of stepped-back piers of bluish-purple brick which flank the door. The piers are topped with polychrome terra-cotta capitals set in the reveals. These have a stylized floral pattern in tones of blue and orange. The door enframement is ornamented with painted iron grilles composed of curved, vertical lines with superimposed circles. A stone inscription in block letters with a roughly-hewn finish reading "Beaux-Arts Institute of Design" surmounts the first story and extends across the width of the facade, setting off the three stories with large metal casement windows above.

The facade of the second, third, and fourth stories is given vertical emphasis by monumental piers separating the three bays of windows. The second-story windows have double stone sills and large, limestone pedestal blocks. Spandrels separating the second- and third-story windows are highlighted by eight-foot wide polychrome terra-cotta plaques in tones of blue, lavender, and yellow. The eastern plaque depicts the Parthenon flanked by columns in the foreground. A band along the bottom contains the word "Athens" offset by a key pattern molding. The central plaque depicts the courtyard of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, and has a band along the bottom containing the word "Paris" and an intertwined key and vine pattern molding. The western plaque depicts St. Peter's Church flanked by columns and has a band along the bottom containing the word "Rome" and a wave pattern molding. The sills of the third floor windows, just above the spandrels, feature terra-cotta egg-and-dart moldings.

Spandrels separating the third- and fourth-story windows are composed of a geometric brickwork pattern of squares and rectangles. Above, the two central piers have stone capitals which are flattened and stylized versions of the Ionic order. At the corners of the parapet flanking the fourth story are limestone figural panels in relief inspired by classical Greek friezes, which depict allegorical scenes relating to architecture. Two protruding brick courses set off a simple cornice which is cut out to accommodate the window openings of the fifth-story penthouse above.

Alterations have been made to the penthouse story. The facade at this level has been brought forward to just behind the main facade and expanded to the width of the main facade. The eastern and central window openings, of a horizontal casement type, continue the width of the bays below. The

original brick has been retained in these two bays. The western side of the penthouse story has no window and new brick was added. This was in conjunction with an eighteen-foot wide 1961 addition at the western edge.²⁵ It rises the full height of the building and is clad in similar buff-colored brick. Three jalousie windows are located above the third story in the addition.

Subsequent History

In the 1940s , the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design was sold to the Reeves Sound Studios, which used the space for offices, recording studios, and film editing and viewing rooms. In 1956, the Trustees of the Society of Beaux-Arts Architects voted to suspend the educational programs of the Institute. In 1956, The National Institute for Architectural Education was founded in its place and continues to sponsor several important architectural competitions and fellowships. The Beaux-Arts system began to wane in popularity in the 1940s after having dominated architectural education in America for more than half a century. Today, the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design serves as a reminder of a classical tradition which deeply influenced generations of American architects.

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Report edited by Jay Shockley,
Deputy Director of Research, and
Nancy Goeschel, Research Department

NOTES

1. "The History and Aims of the Society of Beaux-Arts Architects," American Architect 95 (Mar. 24, 1909), 101-02.
2. Henry R. Sedgwick, "The Beaux-Arts Institute of Design," Society of Beaux-Arts Architects Yearbook (New York, 1933), 19.
3. Ibid., 19.
4. Society of Beaux-Arts Architects Yearbook, n.p.
5. Sedgwick, 21.
6. Minutes of the Board of Trustees, Society of Beaux-Arts Architects, June 23, 1927 and Oct. 13, 1927, archives, National Institute for Architectural Education, New York. Research provided by Carol Willis.
7. Francis S. Swales, "The Competition Extraordinary," Pencil Points 9 (Jan., 1928), 37, and letter from Raymond Hood to Harry Sedgwick, Oct. 7, 1927, archives, National Institute for Architectural Education, New York.
8. Bulletin of the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design 4 (Dec., 1927), 1; Swales, 44.
9. For a survey of the principles of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts curriculum, see The Beaux-Arts and Nineteenth Century French Architecture Robin Middleton, ed., (Cambridge, Mass., 1982).
10. Swales, 41, (this article also includes illustrations of several of the more notable competition sketches), and Kenneth M. Murchison, "Mr. Murchison of New York Says--," The Architect 9 (Jan., 1928), 503.
11. Murchison, 504.
12. Philip L. Goodwin, "The New Building of the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design," Architectural Record, 63, no. 6 (June, 1928), 497.
13. Rayne Adams, "Master Draftsmen, XXI: Frederic C. Hiron," Pencil Points 8, no. 7 (July, 1927), 397, 409.
14. Ibid., 397, 401, 409; "Dennison & Hiron, Architects," Atlantic Terra Cotta 9, no. 9 (June, 1928), n.p.
15. "Dennison & Hiron, Architects," n.p.
16. Goodwin, 497-98. This article also illustrates a model, a rendering, plans, and a working drawing of facade details. These sculptures were never executed.
17. Robert A.M. Stern, et al., New York 1930 (New York, 1987), 21-23.
18. Cervin Robinson and Rosemarie Haag Bletter, Skyscraper Style (New York, 1975), 35-64.

19. This point is made by Andrew S. Dolkart, Testimony given before the LPC at a public hearing, July 12, 1988, Item No. 5, (LP-1667), and is evidenced by the list of participants in the Institute competition.
20. LPC, Rockefeller Center Designation Report, report prepared by Janet Adams, (New York, 1985), 253. See also, Rayne Adams, "Thoughts on Modern, and Other, Ornament," Pencil Points 10, no. 1 (Jan., 1929), 3-16, for illustrations of some of Chambellan's work.
21. "Dennison & Hirons," n.p.
22. Ibid.
23. Hildegard J. Stafford, "The Terra Cotta Industry and the Atlantic Terra Cotta Company," The Staten Island Historian 31, no. 18 (Apr.-June, 1974), 153-63.
24. An interior alteration in 1952 sealed off the open mezzanine level between the first and second stories, creating an additional floor. This had no effect on the exterior. See NYC, Dept. of Buildings, Manhattan. Plans, Permits and Dockets, Block 1336, Lot 47. ALT 1420-52.
25. Ibid., ALT 1711-60.

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 Beaux-Arts Institute of Design has a special character, special historical and aesthetic interest and value as a part of the development, heritage and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design building resulted from an design competition sponsored by the Society of Beaux-Arts Architects, a professional organization founded in 1893 that had a profound impact on American architectural practice; that this Society was established by American architects who had studied at the Parisian Ecole des Beaux-Arts, the single most influential school of architecture for American architects of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries; that the building served as the national headquarters for architectural instruction based on the principles of the Ecole, deeply influencing several generations of American architects; that the terra-cotta spandrel plaques on the facade, depicting the Parthenon, St. Peter's Church, and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, symbolize the classical heritage and tradition perpetuated by the Institute; that Frederic C. Hiron, of the firm of Dennison & Hiron, who was awarded First Prize in the competition, created a striking composition employing Beaux-Arts principles while displaying a modernized classicism that reflects contemporary currents in Art Deco design; that, constructed in 1928 with modifications from Hiron's competition scheme, the building retains the original character and integrity of the winning esquisse; that the facade, of buff-colored brick with limestone trim and a granite base, features beautifully executed ornamental details, such as bold block lettering, figural panels in relief, stylized stone pier capitals, and the exceptional polychrome terra-cotta spandrel plaques; that these plaques were designed by the noted architectural sculptor and model-maker, Rene Chambellan, in collaboration with the architects, and executed by one of the largest and most important American manufacturers of architectural terra cotta, the Atlantic Terra Cotta Company.

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 Beaux-Arts Institute of Design, 304 East 44th Street, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 1336, Lot 47, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.

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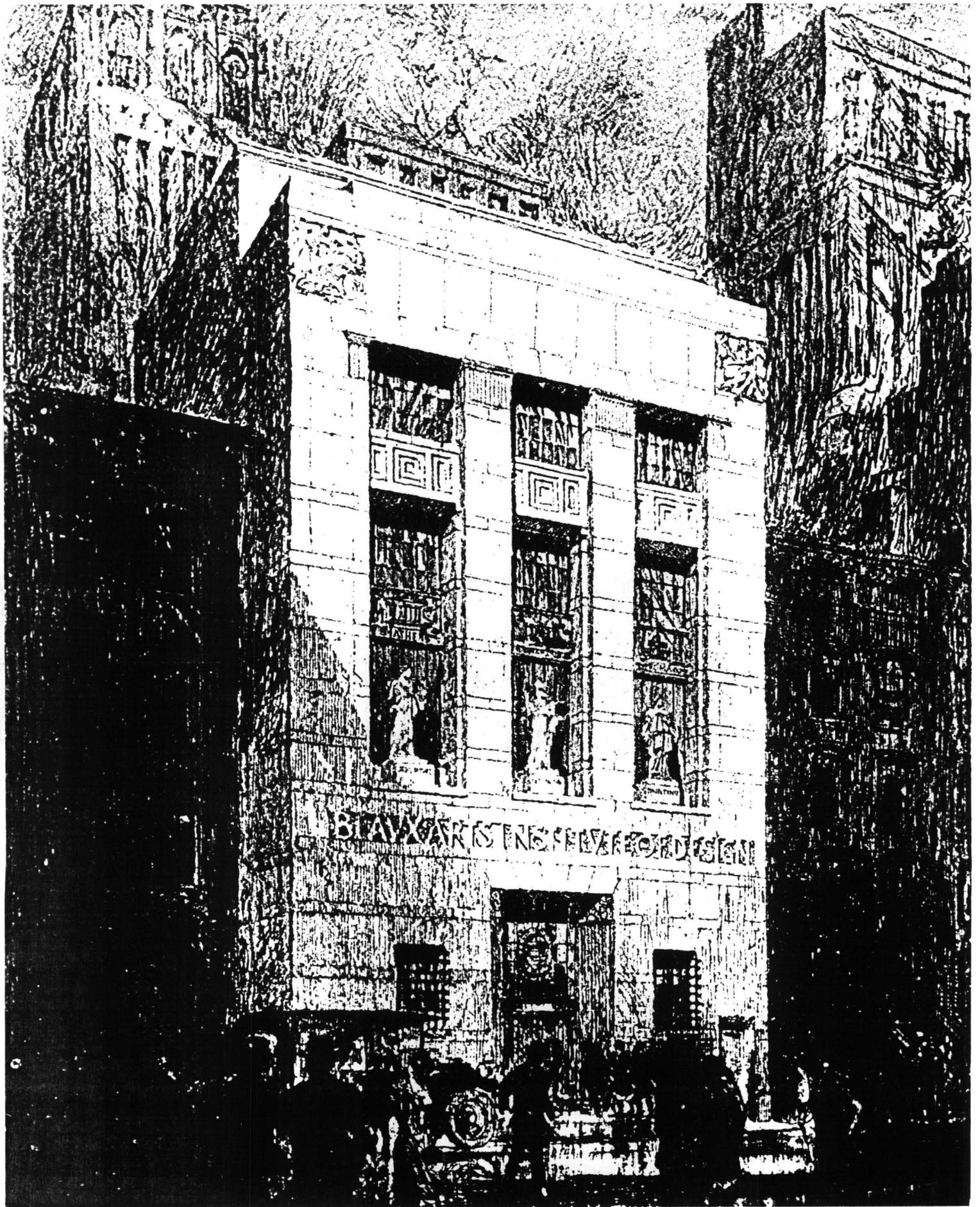
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Fred C. Hiron, New York. *Architect*

Accepted Design, (Three Hour Competition) New Building, Beaux Arts Institute of Design, 201 East 14th Street, New York



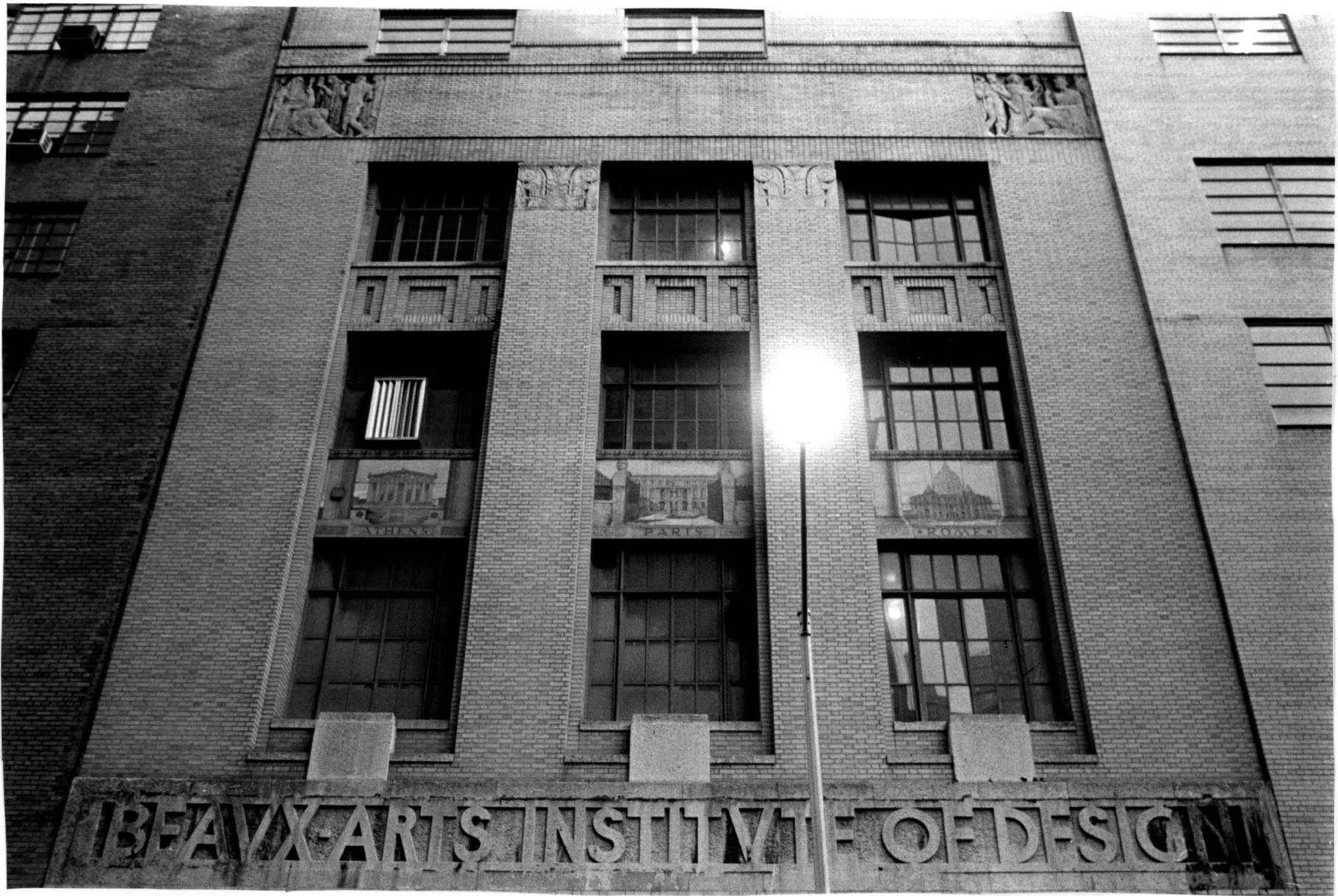
Beaux-Arts Institute of Design
rendering

Credit: Architectural Record,
June, 1928
Submitted by: Carol Willis



Beaux-Arts Institute of Design
304 East 44th Street

Architects: Dennison & Hiron
Photo credit: Cervin Robinson



Beaux-Arts Institute of Design
Facade, second, third and fourth stories

Photo credit: LPC



Beaux-Arts Institute of Design
Detail, figural panel

Photo credit: Cervin Robinson