

OSBORNE APARTMENTS

205 West 57th Street, Borough of Manhattan.

Built 1883-1885, 1889; architect, James Edward Ware; 1906, architect, Alfred S.G. Taylor.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan, Tax Map Block 1029, Lot 27.

On December 12, 1989, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Osborne Apartments and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 34). The hearing was continued to April 3, 1990 (Item No. 25), and then to July 10, 1990 (Item No. 5). All three hearings had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. A total of seven witnesses at the three hearings spoke in favor of designation. Two witnesses were opposed to designation. The Commission received numerous letters both in support of and in opposition to designation. The Board of Directors of the Osborne Apartments has expressed support for the designation.¹

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Summary

The Osborne Apartments, built in 1883-85 and designed by the talented and prolific architect James E. Ware, was one of the earliest luxury apartment buildings in New York City. Constructed in what by 1890 had become New York's first apartment house district, near Central Park, this architecturally-impressive building is a rare surviving example of the original development in this city of multi-family dwellings for well-to-do residents, an increasingly important building type in the 1880s. The Osborne's design draws elements from the popular Romanesque Revival style, such as the heavy, rusticated stone exterior with deeply set windows, for a sense of solidity; these are combined in a bold and original manner with the refinement, proportions, and strong horizontality of the emerging Renaissance Revival style. The result is one of the most striking apartment buildings in New York City. The round-arched openings, the projecting oriels, and the full-height rustication are unusual in New York architecture of the time. The robust massiveness of the exterior, although lightened by classical details, suggested an imposing strength, while the richly appointed lobby and well-planned apartments helped promote the legitimacy of multi-family living for the city's wealthy and socially-prominent citizens. A twenty-five foot wide extension, designed by Alfred S.G. Taylor and added to the western side of the building in 1906, harmonizes with Ware's original design. In 1919 stores were added at the ground level and the entrance portal was moved back to the main plane of the facade. The location of the Osborne on 57th Street, near Carnegie Hall and other cultural and artistic institutions, has contributed to the popularity of this building as a residence for numerous well-known musicians and artists throughout its long history.

Development of the Apartment House in New York²

With Manhattan's buildable area limited by its natural water boundaries as its population increased, land was at a premium. During New York's earliest period of settlement, living "over the store" was an acceptable residential arrangement. By the nineteenth century, however, those who had a choice moved away from their places of business, generally to new, more northerly neighborhoods. Fewer and fewer people, however, could afford a spacious home at some distance from their work. It is not surprising, therefore, that multiple dwellings for those with lower incomes began to exist in New York early in its development. By the early 1800s, those who could not afford single-family homes lived in boarding houses, hotels, or subdivided rowhouses. Tenements for the poor appeared during the first half of the nineteenth century, as developers discovered they could make more of a return on their money by fitting several families in the same building on a standard lot. By mid-century, more commodious French flats were promoted as multiple dwellings for people whose economic level put them above the working class. It was not until 1869-70, however, with Richard Morris Hunt's Stuyvesant Apartments, which had the cachet of a well-known designer and a facade which exhibited its more lofty intentions, that apartment living began to be seen as acceptable for the middle and upper classes.³ The Stuyvesant marked the broader acceptance of multi-family living so that by the end of the 1870s several hundred apartment houses geared to the middle class had been constructed in New York, with ninety more built in the five years from 1880 until 1885.⁴

In addition to the economic advantages of apartment buildings to both the developer and the tenant, there were certain sociological and technological considerations which had an impact on the growing acceptance of this type of living situation.⁵ During the middle of the nineteenth century certain concepts of propriety were widely acknowledged and greatly valued by many in the middle and upper classes. These included the strong sense of "home" and the idea that home was to be a safe haven from the rest of the world; the importance of privacy for the family unit; and the

idea that an individual's life was to be lived among one's social and economic peers, and should not include a mixing of societal levels. Over time, and with a new set of social realities, these views were gradually adjusted to accommodate multi-family living arrangements, encouraged by new technology which made group living advantageous. Compared to a small home, a large apartment building was more economical and efficient in the provision of steam heat, running water, indoor plumbing and, later, electricity for its inhabitants. Some apartment buildings even centralized household work, providing laundry, cooking and shopping services for their residents. Maintenance of the home was also easier, since apartments had the living area all on one floor. Thus, fewer servants were required, the retention of which, even in the 1880s, was becoming a difficult problem.

With the acceptance of French flats, New York's architects and developers elaborated the apartment house idea so that, through the 1870s and early 1880s, true luxury apartment buildings for the upper classes began to be built in New York.⁶ In 1871, David H. Haight remodeled an old mansion on Fifth Avenue and 15th Street, added an elevator, and turned it into the Haight House (demolished). With the provision of elevators allowing for habitable buildings taller than the typical six- or seven-story tenement, a class of tenant could be attracted that would not consider living in a walk-up; such a building thus stood to be more profitable by generating higher rents. In 1876, the first Osborne Apartments (demolished) was completed by the firm of Duggin & Crossman at Fifth Avenue between 52nd and 53rd Streets. The six-story building was promoted as the finest apartment house in the city, with its attention to good planning as well as elegant design. (Aside from the name, this building had no relationship to the current apartment house.) The Bradley Apartments (demolished) on 59th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, built in 1877 and designed by John G. Prague, was considered New York's prototypical luxury apartment house. Edward Clark commissioned architect Henry J. Hardenbergh in 1879 to design a seven-story apartment building, the Van Corlear (demolished), which filled the blockfront from 55th to 56th Streets on Seventh Avenue. Their successful collaboration in this project perhaps led

to their work on the Dakota at 72nd Street and Central Park West (a designated New York City Landmark). Begun in 1880, the Dakota, with its distinctive chateausque design and celebrity residents, is one of New York's best-known apartment buildings. Shortly after construction began on the Dakota, a group of eight buildings, known collectively as the Central Park Apartments or the Navarro Flats (demolished), was begun on 59th Street, between Sixth and Seventh Avenues. Designed by Hubert, Pirsson & Company, these buildings were intended to be the most elegant apartments the city had ever seen. The early years of the 1880s saw a number of large luxury apartment houses begun in New York City, with the present Osborne among the earliest; few of these pioneering buildings survive.

The Apartment House District

Many of the early apartment buildings in New York were constructed in the 1880s in the newly developing area near Central Park. While some smaller apartment houses were constructed downtown, near shopping and theaters, the broad expanse of Central Park made possible the development of larger buildings around the park's perimeter. Wide streets and avenues could accommodate the large structures, which would have overpowered smaller streets and squares, while still allowing ample light and air to all buildings. Thus 57th and 59th Streets, west of the city's most elegant residential neighborhood, were particularly favored locations for this new building type. Fifty-Seventh Street had begun to develop its high-toned character when Cornelius Vanderbilt II erected his enormous mansion on the corner of Fifth Avenue in 1879-82. Other palatial residences followed. By 1885, the neighborhood became known as "the very best in the city,"⁷ a factor which attracted developers seeking wealthy clients for their new apartment houses. The early luxury apartment buildings seemed to invite more construction of the same type and by the end of the decade the area to the south of Central Park, from Fifth Avenue to Broadway, became known as the apartment house district.⁸ In addition to luxury residential buildings, 57th Street already had or would soon have a number of artistically-related buildings such as the Sherwood and Rembrandt Studios (both demolished) which provided living

and working spaces for artists, Carnegie Hall (1889-91, a designated New York City Landmark) and its studios, and the Fine Arts Society Building (1891-92, a designated New York City Landmark).

Building the Osborne

The Osborne Apartments was the conception of Thomas Osborne whose desire was to build the tallest apartment house in the city. Osborne, who had immigrated to this country from Ireland, had a successful stone-cutting business on Manhattan's east side. He had been involved in building for several years before this venture, and even announced further projects as soon as this apartment house was under way.⁹

The property at 57th Street and Seventh Avenue, surrounded by small businesses and stables, was purchased in 1883 from the well-known restaurateur John Taylor for \$210,000.¹⁰ Osborne commissioned James E. Ware to design his luxury building which was promoted as "one of the most substantially built structures of the kind in the city." It was to be completely fireproof, with four Otis elevators for ease of internal movement, staircases of marble and iron, steam heat, electricity, and modern plumbing. The spacious apartments -- some with duplex levels -- were to have interiors fitted with fine woodwork and cabinetry. Plans called for a florist, a doctor, and a chemist to be located in the basement for the convenience of residents, and the ultimate luxury of an all-weather croquet ground on the roof so that those living there could obtain exercise year-round.¹¹ The elaborate entrance and lobby areas, designed to set the tone of the building as soon as one entered, were the work of the Swiss-born and Paris-trained artist J.A. Holzer, with contributions by Augustus Saint-Gaudens and John LaFarge.¹² Holzer created an ornate lobby for the Osborne which included mosaics, marble, gold leaf, leaded glass, a coffered ceiling, and murals.

From the outset, Osborne planned to sell this building. As early as October, 1883, an investment company was formed to purchase the structure.¹³ For reasons as yet undiscovered, this sale was not carried out. Osborne still hoped to sell the building, as announced in 1884 before construction was complete.¹⁴ The *Record & Guide* reported the sale of the property in December, 1885¹⁵

although no transaction was recorded in the Register's office until 1887 when the property was conveyed to John H. Taylor, the son of the person from whom Osborne had originally purchased the land and who held his mortgage.¹⁶ The building was completed as planned although the high costs of construction of this luxury building had forced Osborne into bankruptcy. Osborne's original idea, however, of a well-appointed, large apartment house intended to appeal to the wealthy, has proven successful for more than one hundred years.

James E. Ware¹⁷

The architect for the Osborne was James E. Ware, who was responsible for numerous types of projects during the almost fifty years of his architectural career. A native New Yorker, James Edward Ware (1846-1918) was educated at the College of the City of New York and apprenticed in the office of R.G. Hatfield, a noted mid-nineteenth century New York architect. Ware established his own office in 1869 and, beginning in 1879, worked in partnership with his son, Franklin B., and later with his second son, Arthur. Briefly, in the late 1890s, Ware also formed a partnership with Herbert Spencer Styne-Harde. Ware had an extensive practice during which he produced city and country houses, grand hotels, school buildings, churches, apartment buildings, tenements, and warehouses. Although he was trained in the Second Empire style, Ware worked comfortably in a variety of styles, including the Queen Anne, as seen in a group of rowhouses built in 1878-80 for Ira Doying on East 67th Street.¹⁸ Other major works included the Gothic Revival Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church at 917 Madison Avenue (1899-1900, in the Upper East Side Historic District), and the Twelfth Regiment Armory at Columbus Avenue and 61st Street (1886-87, demolished). One of his major concerns was for fireproof warehouses and he designed two such buildings for the Manhattan Warehouse Company, one at Lexington and 42nd Street and another at Seventh Avenue and 52nd Street (both demolished). Ware did work on model tenement design, creating what came to be known as the "dumbbell" plan for which he won a competition sponsored by the magazine, *The Plumber and Sanitary Engineer*, in 1878. Although

later criticized, this plan, which was incorporated into the Tenement House Act of 1879, was a significant advancement in rational planning and in the introduction of more light and air into dark, overcrowded tenement buildings.¹⁹ In 1896, Ware won second prize in a competition for model tenements sponsored by the Improved Housing Council. The designs were based on Ernest Flagg's premise of square buildings with central light courts to provide the best light and ventilation while still covering enough of the lot to provide a fair return to the investors. Shortly thereafter, Ware was commissioned by the City and Suburban Homes Company to rework his competition designs for several buildings of its First Avenue Estate (1898-1915, a designated New York City Landmark).

The Design of the Osborne Apartments

With the development of large apartment houses, architects presented these pioneering buildings in various ways. While some chose to dress these large structures in picturesque designs with turrets and towers (such as the Navarro Flats and the Dakota), in an attempt to create individuality within the context of a large multi-family living arrangement, Ware's conception was somewhat different. The exterior of his building was designed to appear both substantial and refined, an outgrowth of the finely planned interior arrangements. To this end he combined the Romanesque Revival and emerging Renaissance Revival styles in a bold and original manner which not only was unusual for this period in New York City but also resulted in an architecturally-impressive design. The robust Romanesque Revival style had achieved popularity at this time, largely due to the influence of the work of H.H. Richardson and other innovative architects. Characteristic elements of this style which are found on the Osborne include the rough-cut stone finish, the deep-set windows, the grand, round-arched entrance and round-arched window openings. Stanford White had used rock-faced rustication and a large round-arched entrance on the multi-unit Tiffany residence (1882-84, demolished) at Madison Avenue and East 72nd Street.²⁰ Similar elements can be seen on numerous, somewhat later buildings of the Chicago

School. The bartizan-like forms at the corners of the Osborne, reminiscent of medieval fortresses, are also found on the slightly later Rookery (Burnham & Root, 1885-86). Ware probably designed the rhythmically-arranged, three-bay oriels in an attempt to introduce more light and air into the apartments. While few examples of this fenestration pattern are found on large buildings in New York from this same period, similar elements were included on many later commercial structures in Chicago, such as the Monadnock Building (Burnham & Root, 1889-91). The emphatic rustication of the Osborne, although usually associated with buildings by Richardson (such as the later Marshall Field Wholesale Store, 1885-87) and his followers, was likely a response to the developer Thomas Osborne and his stone-cutting business. In its massing, however, the Osborne resembles a vertically-extended Italian Renaissance palazzo, reflecting the emerging popularity in New York of the Renaissance Revival style at the time this building was constructed. The regularity of its fenestration and the emphasis on horizontal divisions which break up the huge mass of the building (less obvious now due to the removal of the balustrades) exemplify this stylistic trend. The panels of carved stone in numerous spandrels bear such classical motifs as lions, putti, swags, and garlands. These panels, plus numerous stained-glass transoms, help to lighten the heaviness of the building. The result is one of the most striking apartment buildings in New York City.

When constructed, the building had a frontage of 150 feet on 57th Street and 100 feet on Seventh Avenue. It was built with duplex apartments, creating eleven stories in the front and fourteen stories in the rear, a fact which becomes obvious at the change of window levels in the northernmost bay on the Seventh Avenue facade. The original plan of three apartments per floor had the high-ceilinged living and dining rooms of each unit in the front, with two rear extensions separated by a narrow court. By 1889, an alteration by Ware raised the roof level, making it the same height all across the building and providing extra rooms for servants at the upper stories, while creating fifteen stories at the rear of the building.²¹ Responding to a need for even larger apartments with more bedrooms, a twenty-five foot-wide extension was made to the western side of the building in 1906, designed by Alfred S.G. Taylor.²² Taylor, a

relative of the John Taylor who had taken over the building from Osborne, was also part owner of the premises. Taylor's addition blends with Ware's original conception in a harmonious manner, using rounded, metal-framed bays set in rough-cut stone at each level.

Further alterations in 1919 changed the lower stories.²³ A broad areaway which originally surrounded the building like a moat was filled in. Stores were inserted into the ground-level spaces and the entrance portal on 57th Street was moved back to the main plane of the facade. The loggia, which had been located above the entrance, was removed.

Description

The massive Osborne apartment building is located on the northwest corner of Seventh Avenue and West 57th Street, providing it with two street facades. Eleven stories high (except for the northernmost bay on Seventh Avenue which has lower ceiling heights and thus has fifteen stories), its facade of rough-cut stone is rhythmically pierced by deeply set windows and varied with three-sided oriels. In 1906 two bays were added on 57th Street to the west of the original, symmetrically-designed eight bays. The (painted) Seventh Avenue facade is less elaborate as well as less wide, with eight, mostly single-window bays. Broad cornices, creating strong horizontal divisions, wrap around both sides of the building above the second, sixth, and ninth stories.

57th Street Facade

The large-scale stone entranceway, located near the center of the 57th Street facade, is flush with the main plane of the building, although it originally projected from it. The segmentally-arched opening with an eared enframing topped by a garlanded keystone is encompassed by a full entablature supported by paired pilasters. Within the arch are deeply recessed double wooden doors with a large vertically-divided transom, subdivided by geometrically-patterned leaded glass. Large glass and metal lanterns flank the entrance. The ground story on both facades contains storefronts which have been continuously modernized since they were added in 1919 (one historic storefront, now a shoe repair shop, remains on the Seventh

Avenue side of the building). Above the stores, a plain, slightly projecting bandcourse separates the first from the second story.

At the second story, the original section of the building has eight bays. At the center are four round-arched windows with flat keystones, each with small-paned metal casement sash which is not original. This section was originally fronted by a columned loggia which was removed when the ground-story entranceway was pushed back to the main plane of the building. To each side of this central section are two paired windows within round-arched frames that have stone mullions forming transoms. These windows, like those above, have one-over-one double-hung sash. Beneath these four windows are decorative, carved stone panels. Paired, square-headed windows form the outside group at this level. They are set in surrounds with stone mullions forming transoms.

The projecting, bracketed cornice which caps the second story originally had a stone balustrade which is no longer extant. The cornice is cut back over the center four bays, where the loggia was originally located.

The four stories above this cornice are symmetrically arranged with three-sided oriel windows at the end bays and the two center bays. The other bays have paired, square-headed windows. At the fifth story, these windows are fronted by narrow, stone balconnettes. All of the windows are deeply set in the wall; those at the third, fourth, and fifth stories have stone mullions separating them from stained-glass transoms, most of which are intact. Beneath the windows of the fourth story, the carved stone spandrels display swags, putti, lions' heads and other classical elements. The sixth story, like the second, is capped by a bracketed cornice which once carried a stone balustrade. At approximately the fifth- and sixth-story levels, a bartizan-like form, of the same rusticated stone, projects from each corner of the building and merges with the sixth-story cornice.

Between this cornice and a similar one above the ninth story, the seventh, eighth and ninth stories are again symmetrical and identical to each other. The outermost bays and the two central bays have three windows each, while the two bays between each group have paired windows. The windows at the seventh and eighth stories have stained-glass transoms. Smooth-cut ashlar stone and paneled spandrels link the bays vertically

within these three stories.

The tenth story has square-headed windows, arranged in pairs which conform to the bays of the stories below. A narrow band course crowns this story. Above, the top story has single, square-headed windows containing a variety of replacement sash types, each with a plain stone enframing and set between narrowly projecting pilasters. The stonework on these top two stories has deteriorated. The flat stone cornice above is crowned by finials, and is undergoing a restoration which will reproduce the original copper cornice.

In 1906 two bays were added to the western side of the building. The horizontal lines of the original portion of the 57th Street facade continue, but the addition is one story shorter and is topped by a stone balustrade. At each story of the easternmost bay of the addition is a single, small window with one-over-one double-hung sash. The western bay has a three-window, metal-clad oriel which rises the height of the building. Broad projections occur at the same levels as the building's original cornices and the addition is crowned by a mansard roof above the ninth story. The top story has a three-window bay which does not project. Two more bartizan-like forms are found on the addition, at the same level as the originals.

Seventh Avenue Facade

The horizontal divisions continue on Seventh Avenue at the same levels as on 57th Street. The two northernmost bays, however, correspond to lower ceiling heights, creating more stories. This facade is eight bays wide, each bay having a single, square-headed window (most with transoms) except the northernmost one which has three windows.

The storefronts continue on the ground story of the Seventh Avenue facade. Above the first cornice, the center bay at the next four stories projects with a three-sided oriel joining two windows. At the third story on the oriel a carved stone panel indicates the date "1885" surrounded by ornamental motifs. The spandrels of the fourth-story windows are marked by carved stone ornament in a manner similar to that on the 57th Street facade, while two balconnettes are found on windows of the fifth story. The northernmost bay contains three windows in an oriel while the next bay to its south has small single windows which

mark the transition between the duplex floor levels. Another bartizan-like form is found at the northern corner of this facade.

Between the next two cornices, all but the northernmost bay of the seventh, eighth and ninth stories have evenly-spaced single windows with smooth stone surrounds. Above the top cornice are two stories whose stonework has been recently repaired. The top story, which originally covered approximately half of the building, was extended over the entire building in an alteration of 1889. The irregularly-spaced windows of this story do not correspond to the bays below them. The simple copper cornice, added in 1989, is a reproduction of the original.

Subsequent History

In 1888, John Taylor's estate was forced to sell the building at auction and it was purchased by another member of his family, William Taylor, and held in the Taylor family until 1961.²⁴ During this time the Taylors modernized the building. Although many of the huge suites were subdivided, many large ones remained and throughout the years the building drew famous and wealthy

tenants. With its location across from Carnegie Hall and amid other artistic institutions, artists, both musical and otherwise, have always favored this address. Among those who have lived there are, from the stage, Shirley Booth, Lynn Redgrave, Tom Poston, and Dana Andrews; musical artists Van Cliburn, Blanche Thebom, Julia Peters, Alice Neilsen, Bobby Short, and Ernest F. Wagner; and composers Bruno Huhn and Leonard Bernstein. Because of its thick walls and solid construction, the building has been a favorite of musicians who can practice without fear of disturbing their neighbors.

In 1961, the Taylor family sold the building to a real estate concern, the Linland Corporation. The building's tenants then joined together to form a cooperative and purchased the building for themselves.²⁵ Today it remains a well-maintained, well-loved apartment building.

*Report prepared by Virginia Kurshan,
Research Department*

*Report edited by Elisa Urbanelli,
Research Department Editor*

NOTES

1. The Commission had previously held public hearings on the proposed designation of the Osborne Apartments on December 13, 1966 and January 31, 1967 (LP-0474), May 13, 1980 and July 8, 1980 (LP-1165), and January 8, 1985 and March 12, 1985 (LP-1531).
2. Much of the information in this section is from Elizabeth Collins Cromley, *Alone Together, A History of New York's Early Apartments* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990).
3. For information on the Stuyvesant and other contemporary apartment houses, see Sarah Bradford Landau, "Richard Morris Hunt: Architectural Innovator and Father of a 'Distinctive' American School," *The Architecture of Richard Morris Hunt*, ed. Susan R. Stein (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 61-66.
4. *Real Estate Record & Guide* 35 (Feb. 7, 1885), 127.
5. See esp. Cromley, Chap. 4.
6. Much of the following material is from M. Christine Boyer, *Manhattan Manners, Architecture and Style, 1850-1900* (New York: Rizzoli, 1985), 154-161.
7. *Record & Guide* 35 (Feb. 7, 1885), 132.
8. Boyer, 155-157.

9. Little information has been uncovered regarding Osborne. A short obituary appeared in *Real Estate Record & Guide* 50 (Oct. 15, 1892), 477. While Osborne was involved in several building projects in Manhattan, it does not appear, however, that he had anything to do with the first Osborne Apartments. Osborne developed a seven-story apartment building at 223-225 East 17 Street (in the Stuyvesant Square Historic District), constructed at the same time as the Osborne, in 1883. Additionally, on July 21, 1883, p. 525, the *Record & Guide* announced that Thomas Osborne was about to build three new tenements for his workers near his stone cutting business.
10. New York County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 1731, p. 51, May 2, 1883.
11. *Record & Guide* 33 (Mar. 22, 1884), 289. See also New York City, Department of Buildings, Manhattan, Plans, Permits and Dockets, NB 538-1883.
12. Thieme-Becker, *Künstler-Lexikon* (Leipzig: E.A. Seemann, 1924), 415; M. Fielding, *Dictionary of American Painters, Sculptors and Engravers* (New York: Paul A. Struck, 1945), 174; and Davida Deutsch, "The Osborne, New York City," *Antiques* (July, 1986), 157.
13. *Record & Guide* 32 (Oct. 20, 1883), 809.
14. *Record & Guide* 33 (Mar. 22, 1884), 289.
15. *Record & Guide* 36 (Dec. 19, 1885), 1393.
16. Liber 2056, p.75.
17. Information about Ware was taken from the research files of the Landmarks Preservation Commission and LPC, *City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate Designation Report*, (LP-1692) report prepared by Gale Harris (New York, 1990).
18. These buildings, although severely altered, are located in the Upper East Side Historic District. They were published as "Houses in East 67th Street for I. E. Doying, Esq.," in *American Architect and Building News* 8 (Sept. 18, 1880), pl.247, 138.
19. See Richard Plunz, *A History of Housing in New York City: Dwelling Type and Social Change in the American Metropolis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 24-28.
20. See William C. Shopsin and Mosette Glaser Broderick, *The Villard Houses* (New York: Viking Press, 1980), 44-46.
21. Alt. 1195-1889.
22. Alt. 2104-1906.
23. Alt. 2558-1919.
24. Liber 2119, p. 217.
25. *New York Times*, March 3, 1962.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

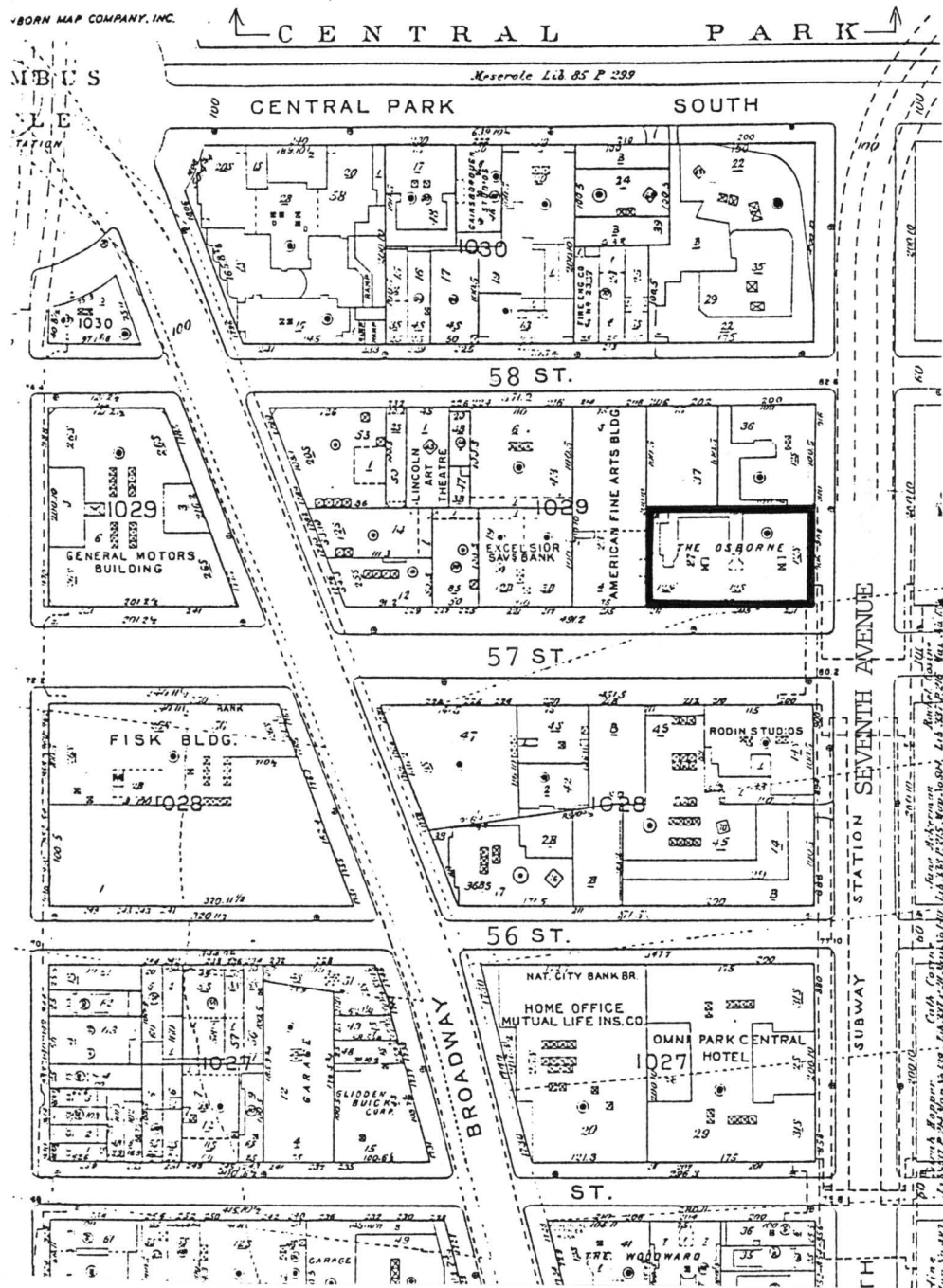
On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Osborne Apartments has a special character, special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Osborne Apartments, designed in 1883 by James E. Ware, is a rare surviving example of the original development in New York of multi-family dwellings for well-to-do residents, an increasingly important building type in the 1880s; that the building's talented and prolific architect James E. Ware, created a design which was highly unusual for its time in New York; that Ware drew design elements from the popular Romanesque Revival style, such as the heavy, rusticated stone exterior with deeply set windows, for a sense of solidity; that these are combined in a bold and original manner with the refinement, proportions, and strong horizontality of the emerging Renaissance Revival style; that the result is one of the most striking apartment buildings in New York City; that, at a time when New York's wealthy and socially-prominent citizens were beginning to seek alternative living arrangements to the single-family house, the Osborne offered an elegantly designed and innovatively planned building equipped with the latest in modern conveniences which helped to promote the legitimacy of multi-family living; that a twenty-five foot wide extension, designed by Alfred S.G. Taylor and added to the western side of the building in 1906, harmonizes with Ware's original design; and that the Osborne Apartments, located on 57th Street near numerous cultural and artistic institutions, has counted famous musicians and performing artists among its many well-known inhabitants, including Van Cliburn, Leonard Bernstein, Shirley Booth, Lynn Redgrave, and Blanche Thebom.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 (formerly Section 534 of Chapter 21) 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 Osborne Apartments, 205 West 57th Street, Borough of Manhattan, and designates Tax Map Block 1029, Lot 27, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bartnett, Edmond. "Osborne, Home of Artists, to Become a Co-Op." *New York Times*, Mar. 3, 1962.
- Boyer, M. Christine. *Manhattan Manners, Architecture and Style, 1850-1900*. New York: Rizzoli, 1985.
- Cromley, Elizabeth Collins. *Alone Together, A History of New York's Early Apartments*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1990.
- Deutsch, Davida Tenenbaum. "The Osborne, New York City." *Antiques* (July, 1986), 151-158.
- Duggan, Dennis. "Tenants of the Osborne Rescue 77-Year-Old Apartment House." *New York Times*, July 8 1962, p.1.
- Fielding, M. *Dictionary of American Painters, Sculptors and Engravers*. New York: Paul A. Struck, 1945.
- "The Highest Building In New York." *New York Times*, May 15, 1883, p.8.
- "Houses in East 67th Street." *American Architect and Building News* 8 (Sept. 18, 1880), pl. 247, 138.
- King, Moses. *King's Handbook of New York City*. Boston: Moses King, 1893.
- Landmarks Preservation Commission. *City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate Designation Report* (LP-1692). Report prepared by Gale Harris. New York: City of New York, 1990.
- "Mr. Osborne's Proposed Building." *New York Times*, May 17, 1883, p.8.
- New York City. Department of Buildings, Manhattan. Plans, Permits and Dockets. [Block 1029, Lot 27].
- New York County, Office of the Register. Liber Deeds and Conveyances.
- Plunz, Richard. *A History of Housing in New York City: Dwelling Type and Social Change in the American Metropolis*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.
- Real Estate Record & Guide* 32 (July 21, 1883), 525; 32 (Oct. 20, 1883), 809; "Prominent Buildings Under Way," 33 (Mar. 22, 1884), 289; "How the Great Apartment Houses Have Paid," 35 (Feb. 7, 1885), 127-128; "Real Estate Department," 35 (Feb. 7, 1885) 132; "Gossip of the Week," 36 (Dec. 19, 1885), 1393; "Thomas Osborne" [obituary], 50 (Oct. 15, 1892), 477.
- Reif, Rita. "'Save the Osborne' Is Music in Tenants' Ears at Luxury Apartment House." *New York Times*, Feb. 18, 1961, p.13.
- "Selling The Osborne Flats." *New York Times*, March 7, 1888, p.8.
- Shopsin, William C., and Mosette Glaser Broderick. *The Villard Houses: Life Story of a Landmark*. New York: Viking Press, 1980.
- Thieme-Becker. *Künstler-Lexikon*. Leipzig: E.A. Seemann, 1924.



Osborne Apartments, 205 West 57th Street, Manhattan, Landmark Site.
 Graphic Source: Sanborn Manhattan Land Book, 1988-89.



Osborne Apartments, c.1885.
Photo Credit: Collections of the New York Historical Society.



Osborne Apartments, 205 West 57th Street, Manhattan.
Photo Credit: Carl Forster.



Osborne Apartments, Seventh Avenue elevation.
Photo Credit: Carl Forster.



Osborne Apartments, detail of oriel, West 57th Street.
Photo Credit: Carl Forster.



Osborne Apartments,
detail of bartizan, corner of 57th Street and Seventh Avenue.
Photo Credit: Carl Forster.



Osborne Apartments, detail of date plaque.
Photo Credit: Carl Forster.