

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, CHATHAM SQUARE BRANCH, 31 East Broadway (aka 31-33 East Broadway), Manhattan. Built 1903. McKim, Mead & White, architects.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 280, Lot 44

On July 31, 2001 the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of The New York Public Library, Chatham Square Branch, and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No.1). The hearing was duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Three people testified in favor of designation, including representatives of The New York Public Library, the Society for the Architecture of the City, and the Historic Districts Council; there were no speakers in opposition.

Summary

Opened on November 2, 1903, the Chatham Square Branch of The New York Public Library is the third Carnegie branch library built in New York City. It is one of twenty in Manhattan and one of sixty-seven in New York City, built when Andrew Carnegie donated \$5.2 million in 1901 to establish a city-wide branch library system. The preeminent and nationally influential architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White designed the Chatham Square Branch. This bold library design was the firm's first of twelve Carnegie libraries; the 1923 Fordham Branch was their last. The library's classically-inspired style, with its characteristic vertical plan, arched entrance offset to one side, carved stone ornament, including Ionic columns at the upper floors, and tall arched first floor and rectangular second and third floor windows providing abundant lighting to a simple interior, is characteristic of the urban Carnegie library type. The library has played a prominent role in the neighborhood for nearly one hundred years.



DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

History of Chatham Square¹

Chatham Square was named after William Pitt, the Earl of Chatham, who tried to prevent the war between England and America when he was in Parliament. In the eighteenth century the area was farmland, although it was just northeast of the City. The Bowery, running north from the square, was a former Indian path leading all the way to Harlem. The Collect Pond, a large fresh water pond that was used as the reservoir for eighteenth-century New York, lay just to the west. New Yorkers ice-skated on the pond and it was used for the first steamboat trials in 1796. The encroaching city caused the pond to become seriously polluted and it was filled in by 1813. By the early nineteenth century Chatham Square was a major junction, transportation hub and retail center, with a post office, theater, and numerous shops.

The library site on East Broadway, then known as Harman Street, was part of the Rutgers farm. In the late eighteenth century Colonel Henry Rutgers laid his farm out in lots and leased them out with building covenants calling for substantial brick buildings. This attracted merchants, professionals, and artisans such as shipwrights and sail makers.

By the mid-1800s Irish immigrants had moved into row houses converted to multiple dwellings. The merchants' houses along East Broadway became densely packed tenant-houses, precursors to tenements. Rear buildings were built in the yards of the houses, increasing the density. The notorious and dangerous Five Points slum was just a few blocks west of the library site, on the filled-in Collect Pond.

Italians settled in the area from the 1870s, when four-to-six-story tenements began to be built. These buildings filled the lots with courtyards to provide at least minimal light and air. Little Italy was established just to the west of the library site, around Mulberry Street. In 1894, when the city completed the demolition of the Five Points tenements a park was created on the Five Points site. At first named Mulberry Bend Park, by 1911 it was renamed after an Italian, Christopher Columbus. Jewish immigrants settled in the Lower East Side by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the Chatham Square area was primarily a Jewish neighborhood at the time the library was built. This period represented the height of immigration to the United States and the Lower East Side was exceptionally overcrowded, with very few parks, schools, libraries, and any other social welfare structures.

Today East Broadway is in the heart of Chinatown.

Large numbers of Chinese moved to the U.S. from the 1840s to work on the railroads and to prospect for gold, but few of the immigrants traveled to New York City in that period. In the 1870s they moved to New York after completion of the railroad and an outbreak of anti-Chinese violence in the West. Chinatown was established around Mott, Pell and Doyers Streets, at the northwest side of Chatham Square, and as early as the 1880s Chinese shops faced the Square. Chinese population growth slowed after 1882 when a series of laws were enacted that restricted immigration. Chinatown grew slowly in that period but developed complex organizations, dominated by the mutual aid societies. The area served Chinese Americans and Chinese immigrants throughout the Metropolitan area. By the 1890s Chinatown was a tourist attraction and it was featured in the 1892 *King's Handbook to New York City*. Chinese immigration expanded slowly after World War II when some of the restrictive laws were lifted and Chinese were granted the right to become citizens. The Chinese population grew rapidly after 1965 with further easing of restrictions on immigration according to race. In 1965 the core of Chinatown covered seven blocks and was bounded on the east by the Bowery. By the late 1970s the Chinatown core expanded in the across Bowery to encompass East Broadway as well as a number of other streets to the east and north. The Chatham Square library today primarily serves a Chinese American and immigrant population.

History of Manhattan Libraries²

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries libraries in New York City were private, institutional, or subscription. The New York Society Library, a subscription library where users paid a membership fee, was established in 1754, and Columbia University opened a library by 1757. Both were destroyed during the Revolutionary War but were rebuilt, and by 1876 Columbia had one of the largest collections in the country. Reading rooms, operated as businesses or by non-profit organizations, made books available to the public, and bookseller Garrett Noel opened the earliest-known reading room in 1763.

Institutions including The New-York Historical Society, the Cooper Union, and Union Theological Seminary opened libraries in the first half of the nineteenth century. New York State legislation enabling City support of libraries was passed in the 1830s, but libraries were privately supported for most of the nineteenth century. The Astor Library, the City's first free public reference library, incorporated

in 1849. The Lenox Library, a private collection of rare and reference books, incorporated in 1870. By 1876 there were about ninety various libraries and collections in New York City.

The earliest branch library system was the private New York Free Circulating Library, established in 1878 to provide education and self-help for the poor. Support came from Andrew Carnegie, J.P. Morgan, Cornelius Vanderbilt and other wealthy New Yorkers, and from public funds beginning in 1887. There were eleven branches by 1901. The smaller Aguilar Free Library Society was started in 1886 to foster the "free circulation of carefully selected literature, in the homes of the people of this City, with distributing branches in localities where the Jewish population was dense."³ The organization, later associated with the Educational Alliance, was named after Grace Aguilar, an English novelist and Sephardic Jew. There were four branches by 1901, including one at 197 East Broadway, a few blocks north of the present Chatham Square Branch.

The New York Public Library and Andrew Carnegie⁴

The New York Public Library was established in 1895 as a private corporation, which received limited public funds. Formed initially by the merger of the Astor and Lenox Libraries and the Tilden Trust, it was primarily concerned with building a major reference library on the site of the old Croton Reservoir at Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street. The consolidation of New York City in 1898 inspired the growth and unification of the library institutions in the City, including The New York Public Library.

New York was one of the largest cities in the world with a population of three million in 1898 and growing rapidly. It trailed behind other cities in public library support, ranking ninth in per capita spending.⁵ A public branch library system was established in 1901 when the New York Free Circulating Library merged with The New York Public Library. Most of the small independent lending libraries, such as the Aguilar, Webster, Kingsbridge, and Tottenville, joined The New York Public Library, increasing the size of the still inadequate branch network. The promise of a large grant from Andrew Carnegie in 1901 spurred these library mergers. The New York Public Library is still organized into the separate reference and branch systems that were created during this consolidation.

Andrew Carnegie and John Shaw Billings, Director of The New York Public Library, strongly supported the amalgamation of all of the library systems, including the Brooklyn and Queens libraries, which ultimately chose to remain independent. Today, New York City still has three separate library corporations,

The New York Public Library, Brooklyn Public Library, and The Queens Borough Public Library.

In 1901, when the library institutions were large and cohesive enough to suit him, Andrew Carnegie donated \$5.2 million to New York City to build a system of branch libraries in all five boroughs. The grant was divided among the three library systems, with The New York Public Library receiving \$3.36 million, and Brooklyn and Queens allocated \$1.6 million and \$240,000 respectively. The grant bought sixty-seven libraries in all five boroughs, two more than originally envisioned.⁶ In a 1901 letter to John Shaw Billings, Carnegie said that:

Sixty-five libraries at one stroke probably breaks the record, but this is the day of big operations and New York is soon to be the biggest of Cities.⁷

Andrew Carnegie rose from poverty to become one of the wealthiest men in the United States after he sold his steel business to J.P. Morgan in 1901. He began donating to libraries in 1881, but with the grant to New York City he started the vast, worldwide operation which made him unique in the world of philanthropy.

Andrew Carnegie based his donations on a philosophy of giving he developed in the 1870s and 1880s. He believed that the wealthy should live modestly and, while still living, give away their funds for the good of humanity. He considered seven areas worthy of his philanthropy: universities, libraries, medical centers, parks, meeting and concert halls, public baths, and churches. Like other wealthy New Yorkers involved in the social reform movement, he understood the problems facing New York City at the beginning of the twentieth century: the overcrowding from massive immigration, poverty, lack of education, and absence of such facilities as baths, playgrounds and libraries. Andrew Carnegie gave away about 90 per cent of his wealth by the time he died in 1911. More than 2,500 Carnegie libraries were built worldwide and over 1,680 in the United States. The library program ended in 1917 but the Carnegie Corporation and twenty other foundations and funds have carried on his aspirations.⁸

The inventor of cost accounting, Carnegie gave away his money with great efficiency. His grant provided for the construction of the buildings, but New York City had to contribute the cost of the land as well as the books, the upkeep and the operation of the libraries in perpetuity. The acquisition of sites alone cost The New York Public Library over \$1.6 million, just under half the cost of the buildings.

In 1901, The New York Public Library Board

Executive Committee appointed a temporary architects' advisory committee consisting of Charles F. McKim of the firm McKim, Mead & White, John M. Carrère of Carrère & Hastings, and Walter Cook of Babb, Cook & Willard, to advise them on how to proceed with construction. The committee advised that the branches be uniform and recognizable in materials, style, plan, and scale and that different site requirements would provide variety. They recommended forming a committee of two to five architectural firms who would design the buildings in cooperation with each other. Andrew Carnegie objected to the lack of competition in this system but was ultimately convinced that it would be faster and cheaper and would produce a more unified collection. The advisors, McKim, Carrère, and Cook, were fortuitously selected for the permanent committee, and their firms designed most of The New York Public Library Carnegie branches.⁹ The architects consulted with the librarians on planning and design, an innovation recently adopted in library design.

McKim, Mead & White¹⁰

McKim, Mead & White is among the best known and influential of American architecture firms. Charles Follen McKim (1847-1909) and William Rutherford Mead (1846-1928) began working together in 1872 with William Bigelow, forming the partnership McKim, Mead & Bigelow by 1877. Bigelow left the firm in 1879 and Stanford White (1853-1906) replaced him, creating the partnership of McKim, Mead & White. The three men shared early training experience: all had studied in Europe, with McKim attending the Ecole des Beaux Arts, McKim and Mead had formal academic training and had apprenticed with New York architect Russell Sturgis; McKim and White had worked for H.H. Richardson. The three-man partnership ended when Stanford White was murdered by Harry K. Thaw in 1906. Charles McKim, in poor health since a bicycle accident in 1895 and devastated by the loss of his friend as well as the bad publicity, retired in 1907. William Mead stayed on until 1919, but spent most of his time traveling. The talented and experienced junior partners continued the firm's work, with name changes to reflect new partners, until the 1990s. The prolific firm executed nearly 1,000 commissions between 1879 and 1919, the year William Mead retired.

The firm was best known for its classically inspired designs, although the early work was in the more romantic Shingle style. The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago was a turning point for the firm; Charles McKim held a key role in its planning and design. The exposition captured the public's

imagination with its depiction of a brilliant white classical city lit by electric lights. McKim, Mead & White was a leading advocate of the new classical style, which swept the country in the early twentieth century. By the time the Carnegie libraries were built in New York City and in the cities and towns across the country, there was no question that they would be classical in style.

Several of New York City's important designated landmarks are early examples of the firm's free classical style: the Villard Houses (1882-85), an early Italian Renaissance-inspired design; Judson Memorial Church, Tower and Hall (1888-93; 1895-96); King Model Houses (1891-92); the Brooklyn Museum (1893-1915), and the Former Bowery Savings Bank (1893-95). The firm was socially prominent and designed houses for the wealthy as well as their clubs, including the Century Association (1889-91), the Harvard Club (1893-94), and the University Club (1896-1900), all designated New York City landmarks.¹¹

The firm designed four important library buildings at the turn of the twentieth century. McKim designed the Boston Public Library in 1887-1895, one of the first of the new wave of classical public buildings at the end of the nineteenth century. The firm designed two monumental university libraries in New York City, the Low Memorial Library at Columbia University (McKim, 1897) and the Gould Memorial Library (White, 1900) at the former New York University Uptown Campus. Charles McKim's elegant J. Pierpont Morgan Library (1902-1907) is considered one of his finest designs. The Low, Gould and Morgan libraries are designated New York City landmarks.

Charles McKim was responsible for the design of the firm's twelve Carnegie branch libraries, assisted by William Mitchell Kendall (1865-1951) who entered the firm in 1882 and became a partner in 1906. His Carnegie libraries are the most formal of the collection, faced in stone with lavish use of classical ornament. While keeping to the architects' committee's design guidelines, they have the most variation in the design of their facades. Five McKim Mead & White Carnegie libraries are designated New York City landmarks: Chatham Square, Hamilton Grange, 115th Street, Schomburg, and Tompkins Square.

Design of the New York Public Library, Chatham Square Branch

The New York City Carnegie branch libraries share many design characteristics and are clearly recognizable as Carnegie libraries. They were designed to stand out as separate and distinct

structures, an innovation in 1901 when most of the branch libraries were located in other buildings. They are classical in style, a simplified version of the Beaux-Arts model, similar to most public buildings designed in this period. They are clad in limestone, or in brick with limestone trim. There are two distinct types, the urban and the suburban. The urban branch, vertically oriented and sited on mid-block, was located in densely populated Manhattan and sections of the Bronx. The freestanding suburban branches were built on corner sites in the less densely built-up areas of the Bronx, Brooklyn, Staten Island and Queens. Chatham Square embodies the major characteristics of the urban branches. It is located in mid-block, in a densely built and populated part of the City. The masonry building with a limestone facade is three stories high and three bays wide, with large arched and rectangular windows. This mix of arched and rectangular windows, a Renaissance Revival style trait, is characteristic of McKim, Mead & White branch libraries and is used at the Woodstock, Harlem, 115th, 125th Street and Tompkins Square Branches.

The scale of the windows and oversize Ionic columns contributes to the monumental appearance of the facade. The composition of arched ground floor openings with columns separating rectangular windows on the upper floors resembles the Yorkville Branch (1902, James Brown Lord), the first Carnegie library built, and the Riverside Branch (1905, Carrère & Hastings, demolished). Although McKim, Mead & White followed their own design path, these three libraries illustrate the influence the Carnegie architects had on each other's designs. McKim, Mead & White used upper floor columns for the Schomburg Branch (1905), but added rectangular ground floor openings and a monumental arched window on the upper two stories.

Chatham Square is faced in limestone with rustication at the ground floor. McKim, Mead & White frequently used rusticated limestone for drama and their 115th Street Branch (1908) is extravagantly faced in the material. The 125th Street (1904) and Hamilton Grange (1907) Branches also have opulent rusticated limestone facades. The Tompkins Square Branch (1904), on the other hand, has a restrained, primarily smooth limestone facade that more closely resembles the designs by Carrère & Hastings and Babb, Cook, and Willard. Limestone facing, rusticated or smooth, is a characteristic of Manhattan Carnegies.

The plans of the Carnegie libraries were drawn up in collaboration with the architects' committee and the librarians. The librarians met with the committee at the beginning of the process and commented on the final

plans. The libraries featured side entrances and stairs, a concession to the librarians. While the architects preferred classical center entrances, the side entrances and elevated first floors provided for spacious, light-filled reading rooms. A prominent circulation desk afforded control of the entire reading room by a single librarian. There were accessible stacks, an innovation in the early twentieth century; nineteenth century library book stacks were off limits to everyone except the librarians.

The Chatham Square Branch follows this scheme, with a rectangular layout, rooms filled with natural light, and circulation and reading rooms on the first three floors. When the library opened, there were plaster casts of classical sculpture in the children's first floor reading room, a gift in memory of Miss Emily Binsse, who drowned at sea.¹² The adults' circulating room was on the second floor, the adults' reading room was on the third floor, and an assembly room was located in the basement. The books were placed on freestanding shelves accessible to the public. As was typical, a custodian's apartment was on the fourth floor and a custodian lived in the building until 1969.

Construction & Subsequent History

The New York Public Library selected the sites for the Carnegie libraries with approval from the City. Because every community wanted a Carnegie library, site selection was the only part of the smooth-running building process where there was any contention. The Carnegie branches were intended to stand out in their communities, to be centrally located and, if possible, to be near schools and other civic structures. John S. Billings stated this position in 1901:

*Every one of these buildings ought to be of one distinctive and uniform type, so that the most ignorant child going through the streets of the City will at once know as Carnegie Library when he or she sees it.*¹³

In Manhattan, The New York Public Library Executive Committee hired New York attorney Alanson T. Briggs to propose the sites and act as agent for the library. After identifying densely populated neighborhoods, he looked for centrally located sites in these neighborhoods. George L. Rives, Secretary of The New York Public Library, described the philosophy behind site selection in 1901:

The Trustees are of the opinion that in establishing branch libraries it is of great importance to establish them, as far as possible, in conspicuous positions on well frequented streets. In some measure the

*same principles should be applied that would govern in the selection of a site for a retail store. The fact that a branch library is constantly before the eyes of the neighboring residents so that all are familiar with its location will undoubtedly tend to increase its usefulness.*¹⁴

Chatham Square was the first of four Carnegie branches built on the Lower East Side below Houston Street, a densely populated immigrant neighborhood. The predecessor of the Chatham Square Branch was a storefront at 22 East Broadway, across the street from the present library. In the four years of its existence, it circulated as many as one thousand volumes a day.¹⁵

The City bought the library site in 1902 from Mr. and Mrs. Herman Gersten for \$63,000. The brick building on the site was torn down. The new building and equipment cost \$83,184, for a total of \$146,184.¹⁶ The brick walls are faced with Bedford, Indiana limestone. The structure is steel and cast-iron.¹⁷ The builder was Michael Reid & Company, which built all but two of the McKim, Mead & White Carnegie branches and worked with the architects on other projects as well.

The Chatham Square Branch library opened on November 2, 1903. It was the second Carnegie branch opened in Manhattan and the third in the city. The opening ceremony was held in the library's assembly room and was attended by residents of the neighborhood. Speakers included Manhattan Borough President Jacob Cantor, Arthur Bostwick, Chairman of the Circulating Department, and Samuel Greenbaum, library trustee. Mr. Bostwick spoke about the reading preferences of the community, stating that there was less fiction and twice as many scientific books than in any other branch library. Mr. Greenbaum spoke about the first public library of 200 years ago. John S. Billings, President of the New York Public Library, attended with library friends Samuel P. Avery, John L. Cadwalader, William W. Appleton, and E. W. Gaillard. Miss H. M. Steinberger, librarian, and ten assistants ran the library when it opened.¹⁸

The Chatham Square Branch has served an immigrant community since its opening. In 1903 the community was primarily Jewish and the library stocked the history, English literature, and philology books then popular with the community. The neighborhood is now part of Chinatown and the library offers a Chinese heritage collection and materials on Chinatown. In 1947, The New York Public Library proposed to demolish the Chatham Square Branch and to build a smaller branch in the Al Smith Houses because the administration believed that the Chatham

Square Branch was too close to the larger Seward Park Branch, causing a duplication of services. The New York City Housing Authority rejected the proposal that same year and the library was saved. The building has continuously operated as a library since opening in 1903 and has been an important community institution, as originally intended.¹⁹

The library has had few alterations. The rail, post and steps in front of the library were removed before 1940.²⁰ By 1958 the library's interior was rehabilitated and the roof skylight was removed. There were more interior alterations in 1971, when a large meeting room was created on the third floor. The wood casement windows were replaced at an unknown date with aluminum fixed and double-hung windows and the wooden door was replicated.²¹

Description

The Chatham Square Library is a three-story, three-bay, fifty-foot wide masonry structure with a rectangular plan. The Renaissance Revival style building is faced in limestone with a rusticated ground floor. Located in the middle of the block on East Broadway, the building stands out from the brick tenements surrounding it. East Broadway between Catherine and Market Streets is a busy commercial and residential street lined with four to six story brick tenements dating primarily from the 1870s to about 1915.

The limestone basement has two rectangular window openings. Both the basement and the first floors are rusticated, but the basement is more deeply rusticated with rounded edges, while the first floor has shallower rustications with crisply defined edges. The first floor rustication follows the line of the three arched openings, two windows and a doorway. The basement is separated from the first floor by a simple limestone band, which also forms the sills for the windows. The two large arched window openings are filled with non-historic sash. The doorway, located on the south side of the façade, contains a pedimented stone door enframing and a transom above, filling in the arch. The molded stone door enframing is visually connected to the opening by stone scrolls on either side of the doorway. The pediment has a frieze with circles at either end. Two historic bronze lanterns flank the doorway. There is a pedimented bronze plaque placed at the left of the first floor façade, with the words "The New York Public Library, Carnegie Gift, Chatham Square Branch."

Stone banding with a Greek fret design separates the first floor from the second and third floors. The five rectangular windows are recessed in a frame of

stone pilasters supporting a denticulated cornice. There is a simple stone spandrel between each of the second and third floor windows. Six oversize Ionic columns divide the windows. Original wrought iron grilles cover the lower half of the third floor windows. The molded stone cornice has a frieze with the letters "NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY" incised in the center and wreaths carved in low relief at either end, over the pilasters. There is a stepped stone parapet above the cornice with an open book inside a shield at the center. A carved stone acanthus tops the parapet center, which is softened by carved stone scrolls on either side.

All of the sash has been replaced with aluminum sash similar to the originals. There are non-historic

aluminum screens on the first, second, and third floor sash. There are non-historic mesh grilles on the basement windows, and non-historic aluminum grilles on the first floor windows. The wood-paneled front door in the western-most bay of the ground floor is non-historic. A non-historic flagpole is attached to the sill of the fourth-from-east second floor window and there are two non-historic spotlights in that same window.

Report prepared by
Mary B. Dierickx
Consultant

NOTES

1. This section on Chatham Square history is based on the following sources: Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 389-401, 1115-1138; the Federal Writers' Project, *The WPA Guide to New York City* (New York: Pantheon Books, reprint, 1982, originally published 1939) 104-113; Kenneth T. Jackson, Ed., *The Encyclopedia of New York City* (New York: New-York Historical Society, 1995) 215-8, 414-5; Andrew Roth, *Infamous Manhattan* (New York: Citadel Press, Carol Publishing Group, 1996) 87-111; Susan Elizabeth Lyman, *The Story of New York* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1975) 156, 211-213; Elizabeth Blackmar, *Manhattan for Rent, 1785-1850* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1989) 160-183; I.N. Phelps Stokes, *The Iconography of Manhattan, 1498-1909* (New York: Robert H. Dodd, 1918-28) v. 5; NYC Department of City Planning, *Chinatown Street Revitalization*, (New York: NYCDCP, 1976); Arthur Krim, "A Window on the Manhattan Metropolis: The Chatham Square Daguerreotype" in *The Daguerreian Annual* 1996, 227-239.
2. This section on Manhattan libraries is based on Mary B. Dierickx, *The Architecture of Literacy, The Carnegie Libraries of New York City* (New York: Cooper Union and NYC Department of General Services, 1996) 21-24, Jackson, p. 667-670, Landmarks Preservation Commission, Joseph C. Brooks, author, *New York Public Library, Aguilar Branch Designation Report*, (LP-1837) (New York: City of New York, 1996).
3. Harry Miller Lydenberg, *History of the New York Public Library* (New York, 1923) 241.
4. This section on The New York Public Library and Andrew Carnegie is adapted from Dierickx, 19-43 with additional information from Phyllis Dain, *The New York Public Library: A History of its Founding and Early Years* (New York: The New York Public Library, 1973) 209-247; Theodore Wesley Koch, *A Book of Carnegie Libraries* (New York: H.W. Wilson Company, 1917); Landmarks Preservation Commission, *The New York Public Library, Tottenville Branch Designation Report*, prepared by David M. Breiner (LP-1867) (New York: City of New York, 1991), and Landmarks Preservation Commission, *The New York Public Library, Morrisania Branch Designation Report*, prepared by Donald G. Presa (LP-1996) (New York: City of New York, 1998).
5. In 1901, before the Carnegie bequest, New York City spent nine cents per capita on libraries, comparing poorly with Boston, which spent fifty cents per capita and Buffalo, at forty-one cents per capita. Dain, p. 215.
6. The original 1901 agreement called for sixty-five libraries but in 1902 the estimated cost per branch was lowered and the total number was optimistically established as a maximum of seventy-three. Because of

rising costs the number of branches totaled just two more than the original sixty-five. See Dierickx for more details.

7. Andrew Carnegie, *Letter to John Shaw Billings*, Director of The New York Public Library, March 12, 1901, in the "Brooklyn Collection" Brooklyn Public Library.
8. No new grants were given after 1917. Abigail Van Slyck, *Free to All: Carnegie Libraries & American Culture 1890-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995) 217.
9. Carrère & Hastings designed fourteen of the thirty-nine Carnegie branches, McKim, Mead & White designed twelve, and Babb, Cook & Willard designed eight. Their successor firms, Babb, Cook & Welch, Cook, Babb & Welch, and Cook & Welch designed another three. James Brown Lord designed the first Carnegie library, the Yorkville branch, but this was actually planned before the grant was given, and Herts & Tallant were responsible for the major renovation of the Aguilar branch, which they originally designed in 1899.
10. This section on McKim, Mead & White is based on their entry in "Architect's Appendix," Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Upper East Side Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1051) (New York, City of New York, 1981) 1297-1300; Leland Roth, "McKim, Mead & White" in *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects*, Adolf K. Placzek, ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1982) 140-149; Landmarks Preservation Commission, *(Former) James Hampden and Cornelia Van Rensselaer Robb House Designation Report, prepared by Gale Harris* (LP-2026) (New York City: City of New York, 1998); Leland Roth, ed., *McKim, Mead & White 1879-1915* (New York: Arno Press, 1977); Leland Roth, *McKim, Mead & White, Architects* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), and Masette Broderick, "McKim, Mead & White" in *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, 708-709.
11. Villard Houses: 451-57 Madison Avenue; Judson Church: 51-55 Washington Square South; King Model Houses: West 139th Street between 7th and 8th Avenues; Brooklyn Museum: 200 Eastern Parkway; Former Bowery Savings Bank: 130 Bowery; Street; Century Association: 7 West 43rd Street; Harvard Club: 27 West 44th Street; University Club: 1 West 54th.
12. Dierickx, 199; New York Times, 11/3/1903, 14:3.
13. John S. Billings, *Letter to Andrew Carnegie, 11/9/1901*, NYPL Collection, NYPL Archives.
14. NYPL Executive Committee Minutes as quoted in Dain, 237.
15. New York Times, 11/3/1903, 14:3.
16. New York City Department of Finance, *Real Estate Owned by the City of New York*, January 1, 1908.
17. Chatham Square Branch Specifications (NYPL Records, RG6, Box1, Business Office).
18. New York Times, 11/3/1903, 14:3.
19. NYPL Archives, RG6, Central Administrative Offices, Chatham Square 1941-1970 folder, NYC Archives, New York Times, 11/3/1903, 14:3.
20. NYC Archives, Department of Taxes Photograph, Block 280, Lot 44, c. 1940.
21. NYPL Archives, RG6, Central Administrative Offices, Chatham Square 1941-1970 folder, NYC Archives, Department of Buildings Block 480, Lot 44 Folder, Alt1330/56, Alt752/71, Alt219/90, Alt443/90.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

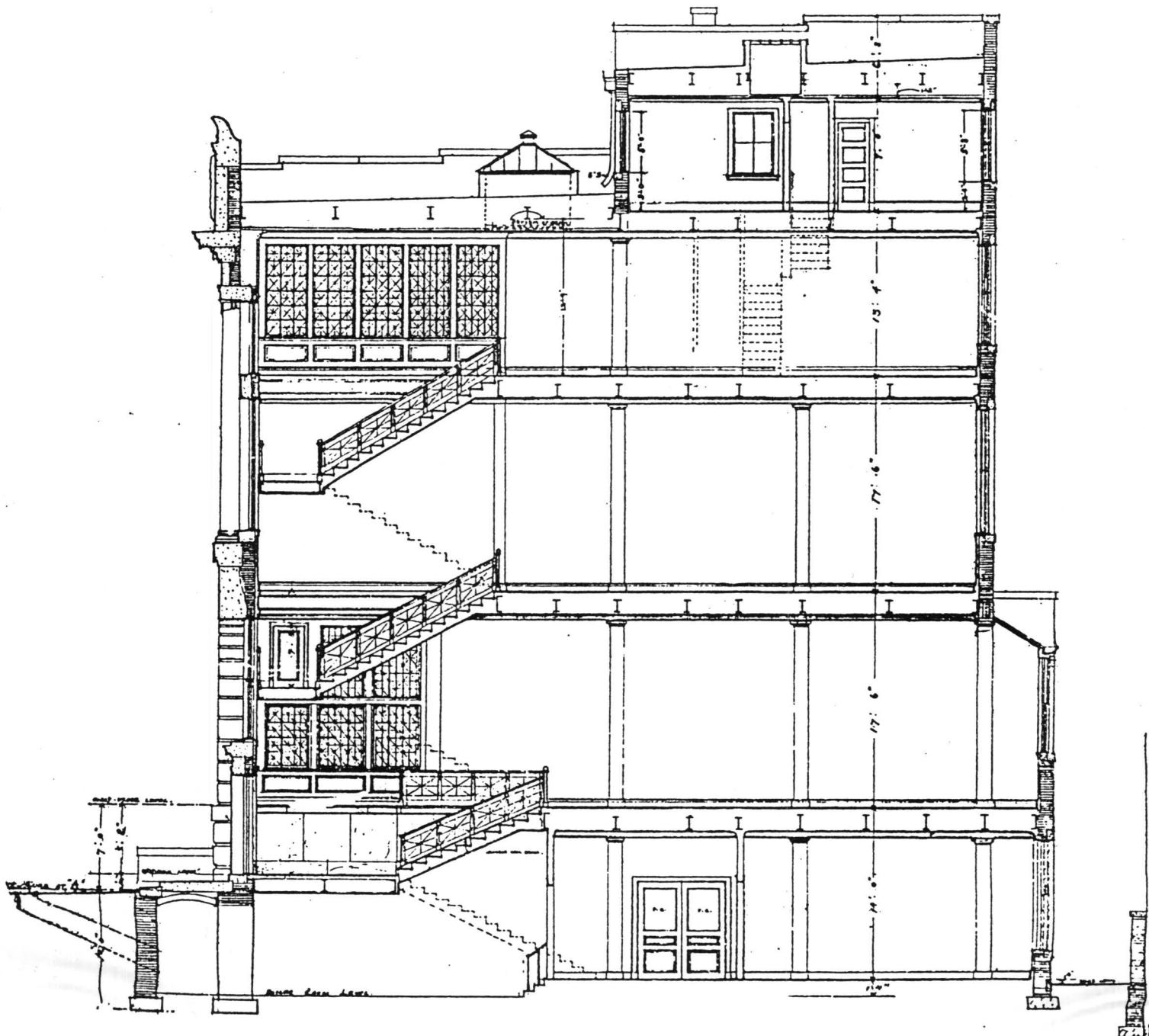
On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that The New York Public Library, Chatham Square Branch, has a special character, historical and aesthetic interest, and value as part of the development,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

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, The New York Public Library, Chatham Square Branch, built in 1903 was the second branch library built in Manhattan and the third branch library in New York City to be built with funds provided by the \$5.2 million gift from Andrew Carnegie to New York City for the purpose of establishing a city-wide branch library system; that it was designed by the nationally famous and influential architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White, which designed twelve Carnegie branch libraries as well as many of the major public and private buildings in New York City; that the classically-inspired style that was the hallmark of the firm's library designs as well as a major characteristic of New York City's Carnegie libraries and other public buildings of the period is articulated through symmetrical composition, rusticated limestone facade with classical cornice, Ionic columns, arched and rectangular door and window openings, and other features; that it is characteristically sited in mid-block set back from the property line; that the Chatham Square Branch has been culturally, visually, and historically an important component of its community for over ninety years which was the original intent for the Carnegie branches; and that the exterior of the building has retained its significant architectural characteristics.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 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 New York Public Library, Chatham Square Branch, 33 East Broadway, Manhattan, and designates Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 280, Lot 44, as its Landmark Site.



New York Public Library, Chatham Square Branch
31 East Broadway
Photo: Carl Forster



SECTION
 CHATHAM SQUARE BRANCH
 NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY



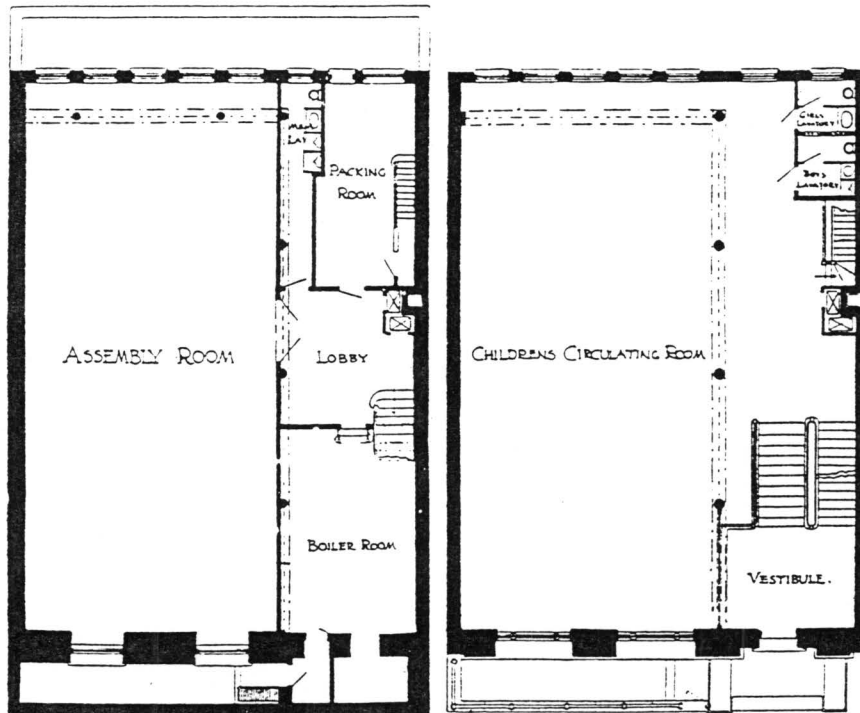
SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

NO. 2131 - DEVELOPMENT

MCKIM, MEAD AND WHITE ARCHTS.
 110 N. 5TH ST. N.Y.C.

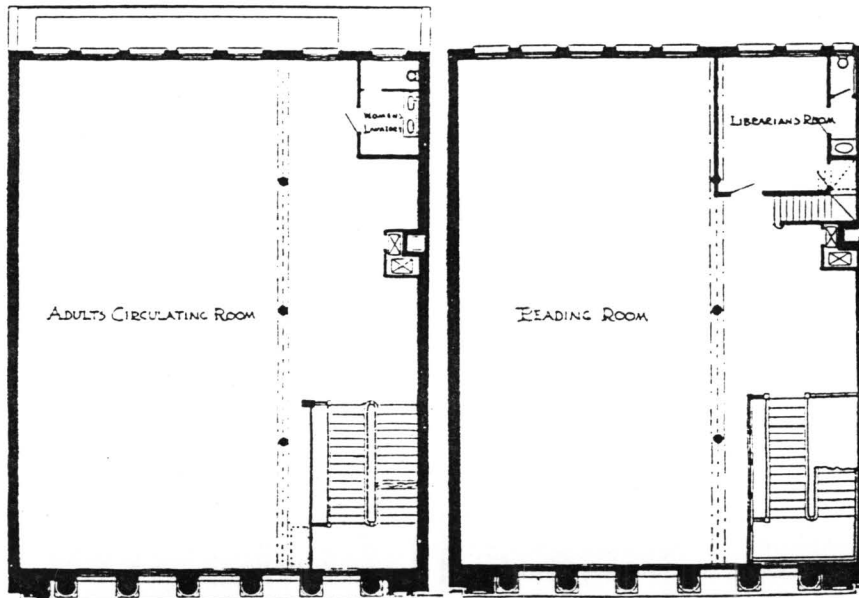
DESIGNED BY - S
 DATE - JULY 30 - 02
 MADE BY - A

New York Public Library, Chatham Square Branch
 Section
 McKim, Mead & White Architects, July 30, 1902



BASEMENT PLAN

FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

THIRD FLOOR

MCKIM, MEAD & WHITE, ARCHITECTS, N. Y.
CHATHAM SQUARE BRANCH

New York Public Library, Chatham Square Branch
Floor Plans
From: *A Monograph of the Works of McKim, Mead & White*



Second and Third Floors Detail

New York Public Library, Chatham Square Branch

First Floor Detail



Photos: Carl Forster



Main Entrance



Lantern Detail Near Main Entrance

New York Public Library, Chatham Square Branch

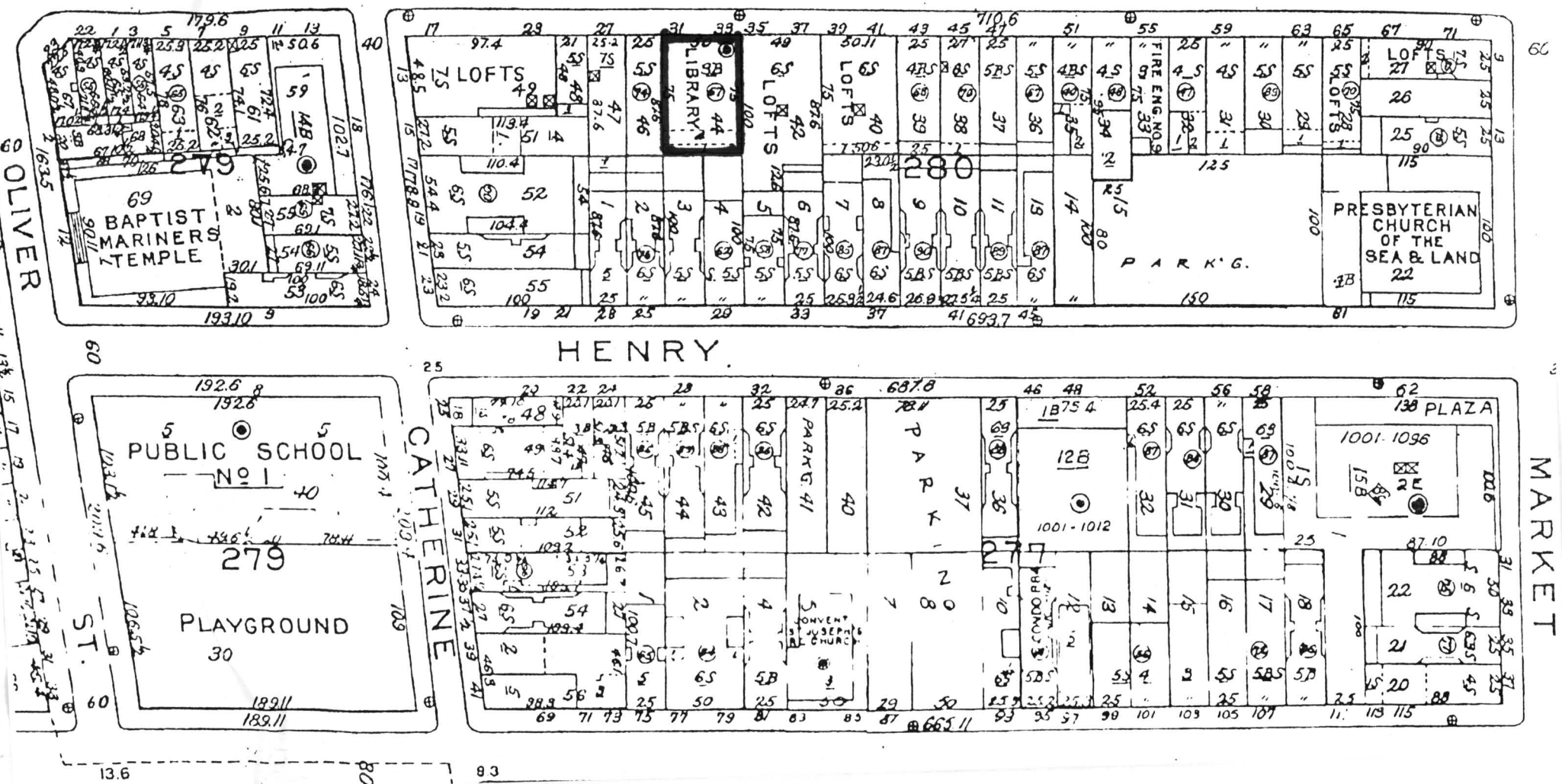
Photos: Carl Forster



New York Public Library, Chatham Square Branch
Attic Tablet Detail
Photo: Carl Forster

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EAST BROADWAY



New York Public Library, Chatham Square Branch
 31 East Broadway
 Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 280, Lot 44
 Source: Sanborn Manhattan Landbook, 2000, pl 7

BOW

DIVISION

ST.

ST.

ST.

EAST

BROADWAY

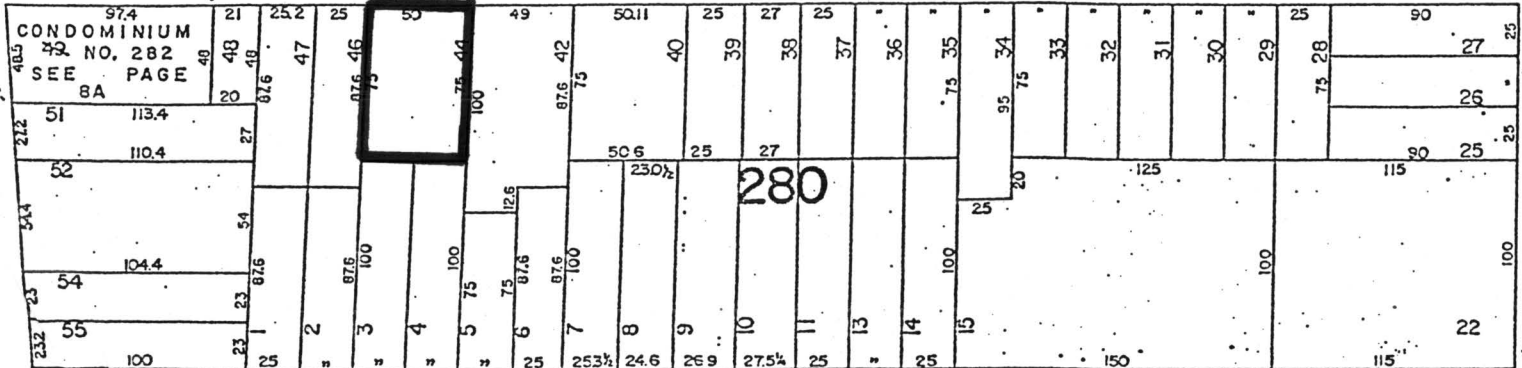
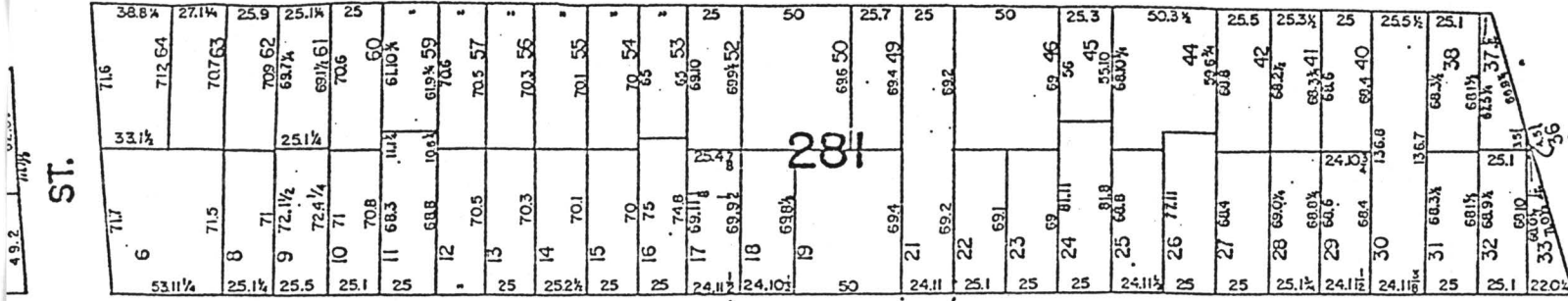
SEE P1



MARKET

HENRY

ST.



New York Public Library, Chatham Square Branch
 31 East Broadway, Manhattan
 Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 280, Lot 44
 Source: New York City Dept. of Finance, City Surveyor, Tax Map