

**SMITH, GRAY & COMPANY BUILDING**, 103 Broadway (aka 96 South 6<sup>th</sup> Street), Brooklyn. Built 1870; attributed to William H. Gaylor, architect; cast-iron front by George R. Jackson & Sons, founders.

Landmark Site: Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 2471, Lot 8.

On January 18, 2005, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Smith, Gray & Co. Building and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 2). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Five people spoke in favor of designation, including representatives of the Metropolitan Chapter of the Victorian Society in America, Municipal Art Society of New York, Historic Districts Council, and New York Landmarks Conservancy. There were no speakers in opposition to designation.

### Summary

The Smith, Gray & Co. Building is an early, significantly intact, 5-story and 25-foot-wide cast-iron-fronted store-and-loft building in Brooklyn. The firm was founded by tailor Edward Smith, who began his business in 1833 in lower Manhattan and pioneered in the profitable manufacture of ready-made clothes for children. In 1864, he transferred his concern to Williamsburg, Brooklyn, in partnership with Allen Gray, his brother-in-law. This was their first new structure, constructed in 1870, at 95 (later 103) Broadway, on Williamsburg's then most important commercial street. The design of the Smith, Gray & Co. Building is attributed to William H. Gaylor, a prominent Brooklyn architect who designed three other cast-iron-fronted structures for Smith between 1873 and 1884. This iron front was fabricated by George R. Jackson & Sons, and the builders were probably Thomas and William Lamb who, according to the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, built all of Smith, Gray's stores. Typical of cast iron designs in the Second Empire style, the building's main facade features tiered upper stories with segmental-arched fenestration framed by Corinthian columns and pilasters. The original cornice was replaced (c. 1895-1913) by a modillioned one with an ornamental frieze. An historic wooden storefront survives. The articulated rear facade is clad in red brick, with molded cast-iron lintels and corbeled sills and a cast-iron storefront. Henry R. Stiles' history of Brooklyn (1884) noted of Smith, Gray & Co. "in their specialty of boys' and children's clothing, this house is the largest, as it was the first, in the United States" and that it was one of the largest manufacturers of any kind in Brooklyn. The company used this facility until the mid-1880s, and it remained in the Smith family until 1895. It was owned until 1920 by Brooklyn sugar refiner Claus Doscher and his daughter, and from 1938 to 1978 by Joseph I. Blanck, chemicals dealer, and his heirs. Today, it remains an important reminder of Williamsburg's commercial emergence after the Civil War and of the nationally-important clothing manufacturer that was one of Brooklyn's preeminent 19<sup>th</sup>-century commercial firms.



## DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

### Williamsburg, Brooklyn<sup>1</sup>

At the close of the Revolutionary War, the area that later became the Brooklyn neighborhood of Williamsburg was mostly open farmland. In 1802, Richard M. Woodhull, a prosperous Manhattan merchant, purchased a 13-acre tract at the foot of present-day North 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, which he named Williamsburgh after its surveyor, Col. Jonathan Williams. Development of a village was spurred by the opening of the Wallabout and Newtown Turnpike, which connected the area with downtown Brooklyn, and by ferry service after 1818 that provided convenient access to Manhattan. Williamsburgh was incorporated in 1827, and the village limits were extended in 1835. The population more than doubled between 1840 and 1845, and Williamsburgh grew even more rapidly into the 1850s as a large number of Germans began settling here. In April 1851, the State Legislature granted Williamsburgh a city charter, at which time it had over 30,000 inhabitants and was the 20<sup>th</sup> largest American city. It remained an independent municipality for only a few years, being consolidated with the City of Brooklyn and Town of Flatbush in 1855. The “h” at the end of the name was dropped at that time, becoming “Williamsburg.” Industries established along the East River waterfront, including docks, shipyards, distilleries, foundries, mills, sugar and petroleum refineries, and glass and pharmaceutical factories, made Williamsburg a significant center of commercial prosperity.

A number of institutions emerged to serve Williamsburg’s burgeoning population and thriving businesses in the 1850s, such as the Williamsburgh Savings Bank (organized in 1851 and located in an 1854 building at Bedford Avenue and South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street), Farmers and Citizens Bank, Williamsburgh City Bank, Williamsburgh City Fire Insurance Co., and Williamsburgh Medical Society (organized in 1852). The post-Civil War business boom brought redevelopment to Broadway, Williamsburg’s most important commercial street and main thoroughfare from the Grand Street and Roosevelt Street ferry terminals, which up until then had been lined mostly with single-family dwellings that had been altered for commercial use. Significant new commercial buildings arose, including the Kings County Savings Bank (1868, King & Wilcox), 113 (later 135) Broadway, a designated New York City Landmark; King’s County Fire Insurance Co. Building (1870; demolished), 87-89 (later 97-101) Broadway; Smith, Gray & Co. Building (1870), 95 (later 103) Broadway; and Williamsburgh Savings Bank (1870-75, George B. Post; Peter B. Wight, interior), 139-149 (later 175) Broadway, a designated New York City Landmark and Interior Landmark.

### Smith, Gray & Co.<sup>2</sup>

The firm of Smith, Gray & Co., Brooklyn’s largest manufacturer of ready-made clothing in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century, was founded by Edward Smith. Born in Norwalk, Connecticut, Smith (1811-1892) worked as a teenager in a New York City grocery until he decided to become a tailor. After apprenticeships in Ridgefield, Connecticut, and New York, he became a tailor, cutter, and fitter in 1833 with his own shop on Chatham Street in lower Manhattan. He later had shops at several other locations downtown.<sup>3</sup> Realizing that the only clothing available for boys at that time was “made to measure,” Smith, with Allen Gray, his brother-in-law who was a skilled patternmaker, became a pioneer in making ready-made clothes for children and boys. Smith eventually devoted his entire line to wholesale distribution, largely in the South. His business was devastated, however, by the Civil War, forcing him to close in 1861. In 1864, he launched a small retail store on 4<sup>th</sup> Street (Bedford Avenue) in Williamsburg, in partnership with Gray. Smith & Gray opened a factory in 1865 on Broadway, then moved the retail store there in 1868. The successful firm constructed a new 5-story, cast-iron-fronted retail building at 95 (later 103) Broadway in 1870. The business grew so rapidly, however, that it outgrew this structure within three years and had to rent adjacent buildings, including half of the King’s County Fire Insurance Co. Building.

Over the next two decades as the firm prospered, Smith acquired property in the neighborhood and elsewhere in Brooklyn, which he developed both for investment and use by the business. In 1871, Smith had purchased a nearby parcel of land and constructed a 4-story, iron-fronted structure known as the Lyceum Building (1873-74, William H. Gaylor) at 403-405 4<sup>th</sup> Street (Bedford Avenue) (aka 123 South 8<sup>th</sup> Street). Initially, it was rented for stores and a second-story public hall (in 1876, it served as quarters of the Union Club). By 1873-75, the firm was Smith, Gray, [Thomas S.] Cooper & Co. An immigrant from Scotland in 1851, Cooper was later said by the *New York Times* to have been a member of the company for 27 years.<sup>4</sup> In 1875-78, it was Smith, Gray, [John S.] McKeon & Co. Edward Smith built another structure, an iron-fronted branch store and public hall (1877-78, Gaylor) at 894-896 Greenpoint Avenue in Greenpoint.<sup>5</sup> Smith, Gray & Co. was formed as a “copartnership” in 1878.<sup>6</sup> Joining the business in 1880 were Edward Smith’s sons, Millard Fillmore Smith (1856-1911), the retail department supervisor, and Warren E. Smith, the traveling and wholesale representative, as well as W.G.H. Randolph, the superintendent of material purchase and stock manufacture. In 1881, the former Lyceum Building was converted into a factory and store for Smith, Gray & Co. A large new 6-story, iron-fronted headquarters, retail

store, and factory building for the firm was constructed in 1884 at 126 (later 138-144) Broadway (aka 389-395 Bedford Avenue) to the design of architect Gaylor, with Thomas and William Lamb, builders, and the William H. Jackson Ironworks.

Henry R. Stiles, in his history of Brooklyn in 1884, noted of Smith, Gray & Co. “in their specialty of boys’ and children’s clothing, this house is the largest, as it was the first, in the United States.”<sup>7</sup> Smith claimed, as well, to be the largest manufacturer of boys’ clothing in the world,<sup>8</sup> though the firm carried a full line of all types of clothing through its retail, wholesale, and custom work departments. Stiles furthermore stated that “their annual production is probably greater than that of any other firm of manufacturers in Brooklyn, except the great sugar refiners and perhaps one or two of the petroleum houses.”<sup>9</sup> According to the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* in 1888, “a number of well known firms in other cities have established and built up a business using Smith, Gray & Co.’s goods exclusively. Such concerns can be found in almost all of the large cities of the Union.”<sup>10</sup>

Allen Grey retired in 1884, and Warren E. Smith, reportedly at odds with his father and brother, withdrew from the firm in the mid-1880s and began his own business in 1888. A fire in April 1888 damaged goods in the 126 Broadway headquarters building and destroyed the former Lyceum Building. The latter was rebuilt as the iron-fronted Smith Building in 1888 by architect Peter J. Lauritzen, who had lived on the site in a rear extension (the Smith Building is now demolished). Further expansions of Smith, Gray & Co. included a new 8-story building at Fulton Street and Flatbush Avenue (1888, Lauritzen) (this building was destroyed by fire in February 1892 and rebuilt in 1893) and a Manhattan store opened in 1889 at Third Avenue and East 123<sup>rd</sup> Street. Edward Smith retired from the business around 1889; at his death in 1892, his estate was worth an estimated \$2 million. Millard F. Smith, who was by then also part owner of the *Brooklyn Standard Union*, became president of the firm. By 1893, Smith, Gray & Co. expanded again with two more stores at 44 West 14<sup>th</sup> Street in Manhattan, and Atlantic and Vermont Avenues in Brooklyn. The firm was incorporated in 1894, and reorganized in 1909, but a petition in bankruptcy against Smith, Gray & Co. was filed in 1914 by the heirs of Millard Smith and other creditors.

#### Cast-Iron-Fronted Buildings in New York City and the Smith, Gray & Co. Building<sup>11</sup>

Cast iron was used as an architectural material for entire facades of American commercial buildings in the mid-to-late-19<sup>th</sup> century, and was particularly popular in New York City and Brooklyn. Promoted and manufactured by James Bogardus and Daniel D. Badger, cast-iron parts were exported nationally for assembly on the site. Touted virtues of cast iron included its low cost, strength, durability, supposed fireproof nature, ease of assembly and of parts replacement, ability to provide a wide variety of inexpensive ornament, and paintable surfaces. The economy of cast-iron construction lay in the possibilities inherent in prefabrication: identical elements and motifs could be continually repeated and, in fact, could be later reproduced on a building addition, thus extending the original design. After a number of simple “constructive” cast-iron buildings in the late 1840s by Bogardus, the material was employed for commercial (store-and-loft, warehouse, and office) buildings modeled after Venetian *palazzi*, from the mid-1850s through the 1860s. Designed in imitation of masonry and featuring round-arched fenestration, this mode is exemplified by the Cary Building (1856-57, King & Kellum), 105-107 Chambers Street, and the Haughwout Building (1856-57, John P. Gaynor), 488-492 Broadway, Manhattan.<sup>12</sup>

After the Civil War, the French Second Empire style began to influence designs in cast iron. Some buildings, such as the James McCreery & Co. Store (1868-69; altered), 801 Broadway, and No. 287 Broadway (1871-72, John B. Snook),<sup>13</sup> Manhattan, were still Italianate but with mansard roofs. Cast-iron fronts in the Second Empire style, produced into the 1880s, were generally articulated with segmental-arched fenestration framed by columns and pilasters; large areas of glass; and a certain abstraction and paring-down of elements combined with the usage of variations on classically-inspired ornament. Examples are the Arnold Constable Store (1868-76, Griffith Thomas), 881-887 Broadway, and No. 28-30 Greene Street (1872, Isaac F. Duckworth), Manhattan.<sup>14</sup> The arrangement of cast-iron fronts, with their layered stories of arcades and colonnades, in turn influenced the design of contemporary masonry commercial buildings in New York.

A third type of cast-iron front, which emerged after about 1870, fully exploited the possibilities of the material and featured a basic grid of large rectangular fenestration framed by columns/pilasters and vertical members that were highly abstracted and greatly reduced in width. Examples include the Roosevelt Building (1873-74, Richard Morris Hunt), 478-482 Broadway,<sup>15</sup> and No. 34-42 West 14<sup>th</sup> Street (1878, W. Wheeler Smith), Manhattan. In a few instances, major architects produced more exotic works, such as the Moorish style Van Rensselaer Store (1871-72, Hunt; demolished), 474-476 Broadway, and No. 435 Broome Street (1873, William Appleton Potter), Manhattan, with Eastlake decoration.<sup>16</sup> In the 1870s and 80s, popular contemporary styles influenced cast-iron ornamentation. With the knowledge that buildings of cast iron were not in fact fireproof, however, particularly after the Boston and Chicago fires of 1872 and the Manhattan fire in 1879 that destroyed rows of such structures on Worth and Thomas Streets, restrictive revisions were made to the New York City building code in 1885. This

contributed to ending the era of cast-iron fronts in New York and Brooklyn, although they continued to some extent through the 1890s.

The Smith, Gray & Co. Building at 95 (later 103) Broadway, a 5-story, 25-foot-wide, cast-iron-fronted store-and-loft building, was constructed following the purchase of the property by Edward Smith from James M. Waterbury in January 1870. It had been completed prior to February 1871, when the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* reported a burglary there. The iron front was fabricated by George R. Jackson & Sons, iron works, according to Margot Gayle, founder of the Friends of Cast-Iron Architecture, who noted that “in 1974, a G. R. Jackson & Sons foundry label was observed still bolted onto a pilaster beside the entrance of 103 Broadway.”<sup>17</sup> Jackson (1811-1870), born in New York City, apprenticed as a boy with a whitesmith (an ironworker who performs finish work) and advanced through the iron business until he established his own firm on Centre Street in 1839. He soon went into partnership in Cornell & Jackson, which lasted until 1848. Jackson became associated with James J. Burnet, and founded the Excelsior Iron Works. The Excelsior headquarters at 340-352 East 14<sup>th</sup> Street was destroyed by fire in 1869. Before G. R. Jackson’s death in September 1870, two of his sons and nephews of his and Burnet’s became partners in George R. Jackson, Burnet & Co.

The building was probably constructed by builders Thomas and William Lamb, brothers who, according to the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* in 1890, built “all of Smith, Gray & Co.’s stores.”<sup>18</sup> The design of the Smith, Gray & Co. Building is attributed to architect William H. Gaylor, whose office was located a block away at 110 South 8<sup>th</sup> Street and who designed three other cast-iron-fronted structures for Edward Smith between 1873 and 1884. Born in Stamford, Connecticut, Gaylor (1821-1895) apprenticed with carpenter-architect Edwin Bishop before moving to Williamsburgh, where he worked for builders Golder & Folk. He began his own practice as an architect at the age of 21, and in 1863 became a builder in Brooklyn as well. Stiles in 1884 said of Gaylor “the plans for nearly every important building in the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Wards were prepared by him.”<sup>19</sup> He also designed a 5-story, cast-iron-fronted store-and-loft building at 351-357 Canal Street (aka 2-4 Wooster Street) (1871-73), Manhattan,<sup>20</sup> which was constructed by the Lamb brothers. In 1882, Gaylor was appointed Commissioner of the Department of Buildings by Brooklyn Mayor Seth Low. One of his sons, Edward F. Gaylor, also became an architect, working for his father for 14 years prior to establishing his own practice in 1882.

The Smith, Gray & Co. Building, typical of cast iron designs in the Second Empire style, features tiered upper stories with segmental-arched fenestration framed by Corinthian columns and pilasters on the main facade on Broadway. The original cornice had four scroll brackets, end finials, and a large scrolled central decorative element capped by an anthemion; the cornice was replaced (probably c. 1895-1913) by a simpler modillioned one with a running ornamental frieze. There is also an articulated secondary facade on South 6<sup>th</sup> Street, clad in red brick with molded cast-iron lintels and corbeled sills and a cast-iron storefront. The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* in 1888 called the building “the first of its kind on that street, which, beside being worthy of notice for its commercial importance, is still architecturally one of the chief adornments of the Eastern District.”<sup>21</sup> It remains an early and significantly intact cast-iron-fronted building in Brooklyn, as well as an important reminder of Williamsburg’s commercial emergence after the Civil War and of Smith, Gray & Co., a nationally-important clothing manufacturer that was one of Brooklyn’s preeminent commercial firms in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Smith, Gray & Co. used this facility until the mid-1880s, when the firm’s business was conducted in its other structures. The property was transferred from Edward Smith to his son, Warren E. Smith, in March 1889, despite their reported differences.

#### Later History<sup>22</sup>

After Smith, Gray & Co. left No. 95 Broadway, the next major tenant was the Edmiston & Waddell Co., incorporated in 1884 “to manufacture, sell and deal in agricultural implements, machinery and hardware.”<sup>23</sup> This firm also dealt in carriages and used this building as its national headquarters until 1887, when it defaulted on its creditors, owing some \$300,000. At that time, there was also a music store on the ground story. In April 1888, the Brooklyn Common Council passed an ordinance to re-number all of Broadway, so that No. 95 became No. 103 Broadway.<sup>24</sup> The building was then used for offices. Advertisements and newspaper articles indicate that the following firms were located here: George W. Brown & Co., auctioneers (1889-91); [Arthur B.] Gritman & [Thomas P.] Graham, real estate (1892-97); William B. Hurd, lawyer (1893), formerly with Fisher, Hurd & Volz and Hurd & [Charles A.] Grim; the Kings County Building & Loan Association (1893-1901); and John A. Holzapfel, lawyer (1899-1900).

Warren E. Smith sold the property in September 1895 for \$25,500 to Claus Doscher (c. 1829-1910), a prominent Brooklyn sugar refiner and president of the North Side Bank. Born in Germany, Doscher immigrated to New York at the age of 18 and worked as a grocer until he entered the refining business, becoming president of the Brooklyn Sugar Refinery and later establishing the Doscher Sugar Refinery in Long Island City in 1897.

Doscher also invested in real estate in Brooklyn, which was auctioned after his death, in February 1911. No. 103 Broadway was held by Doscher's daughter, Gesine Engel, until 1920. When a basement explosion caused a fire in the building in 1912, John S. Williams, ship chandler, was a tenant with an address at the rear.

Between 1920 and 1923, the building changed hands several times, being transferred to the Andean Realty Co. (F. Wyskof and I. Wisan, principals), which retained it until 1936, when it was taken over by the Dime Savings Bank of Williamsburgh. Joseph I. Blanck, chemicals dealer, acquired the property in 1938 and he and his heirs used and retained it until 1978. Richard P. Netzbund, who resided here, purchased the building, and sold it to Samuel M. and Mary O. Stone in 1983. A recent tenant was Charles Rittmann's onezerothree, manufacturer of original furniture and systems.

### Description

The Smith, Gray & Co. Building is a 5-story, 25-foot-wide, store-and-loft building with a cast-iron-fronted main facade and a brick-clad rear facade.

**Broadway Facade Ground Story** The storefront is framed by original cast-iron pilasters with decorative foliate capitals that support an original cast-iron modillioned entablature. Next to the western pilaster is an original 1/4-round cast-iron column. Set within the cast-iron framing is an historic upstairs entrance to the west, and an historic wooden storefront. The inset upstairs entrance has narrow wooden paneled double doors and a transom. The storefront has two squared projecting show windows (with multiple panes) that are framed by slender wooden colonettes and flank a store entrance and support a molded and fluted entablature. Two recent light fixtures have been attached to the entablature. Below the show windows are inset wire mesh bulkheads. The inset store entrance has historic wood-and-glass double doors, a metal threshold, side bulkhead panels, and segmental transoms over the doors and the sides of the show windows. A louver is currently set in the transom over the doorway. Older security gates and grilles have been placed across the front. The vault area/areaway in front of the building, edged in bluestone, is currently covered with metal plates. **Upper Stories** The 2<sup>nd</sup> through the 5<sup>th</sup> stories have molded segmental-arched fenestration, with keystones, framed by Corinthian columns and outer pilasters with decorative foliate capitals. Some of the column capitals and many of the pilaster capitals are missing or partly missing. The original windows were 2-over-2 double-hung wooden sash with arched upper sash. A variety of configurations currently exist, including original, 6-over-6, and 6-over-2. The original cornice had four scroll brackets, end finials, and a large scrolled central decorative element capped by an anthemion; the cornice was replaced (probably c. 1895-1913) by a simpler modillioned one with a running ornamental frieze (part of the center is missing).

**Rear (South 6<sup>th</sup> Street) Facade** Clad in red brick, the facade has molded cast-iron lintels, corbeled cast-iron sills (some are missing), and a 4-bay cast-iron storefront. Non-historic alterations of the storefront include infill, a rolldown gate, iron grilles, and metal double doors. The windows have 4-over-4 double-hung wooden sash (the windows of the easternmost bay have been altered). The facade is capped by a molded cornice. A fire escape is placed across the eastern half of the facade. A bulkhead structure is located at the northwest corner of the roof.

**East Wall** The unarticulated brick east wall is visible above the adjacent property.

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## NOTES

1. This section is adapted from: LPC, *Williamsburgh Savings Bank Interior Designation Report* (LP-1910) (N.Y.: City of New York, 1996), 1, prepared by Gale Harris.
2. Henry R. Stiles, *The Civil, Political, Professional and Ecclesiastical History and Commercial and Industrial Record of the County of Kings and the City of Brooklyn, N. Y. from 1683 to 1884* (N.Y.: W.W. Munsell & Co., 1884), 788-790, 1388; *Brooklyn City Directories* (1873-98); Eugene L. Armbruster, *Brooklyn's Eastern District* (N.Y.: author, 1942), 94, 298; Friends of Cast-Iron Architecture, "A History of Williamsburg, Brooklyn and Its Cast Iron Buildings" (Jan. 1976); LPC, *Greenpoint Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1248) (N.Y.: City of New York, 1982); "Adroit Burglars," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle (BDE)*, Feb. 3, 1871, 4; "Real Estate Transactions," *New York Times (NYT)*, Feb. 19, 1871, 6; "City Improvements," *BDE*, May 30, 1873, 4; "Ex-Captain Thomas S. Cooper... Sought to be Enjoined," *BDE*, July 11, 1877, 4; "Decisions by Judge McCue," *BDE*, July 16, 1877, 4; "Building Intelligence," *The Manufacturer & Builder* (Dec. 1883), 284; "The Pioneer Theater... Passes Out of Existence," *BDE*, Apr. 13, 1884, 8; "Fatal Accident in an Eastern District Building," *BDE*, May 3, 1884, 6; "Interesting Occurrences in Brooklyn and Vicinity Told in Brief," *BDE*, July 1, 1884, 4; "Warren E. Smith's Enterprise," *BDE*, Mar. 11, 1888, 1; "Flames in Williamsburg," *NYT*, Apr. 30, 1888, 5; "Heavy Losses," *BDE*, Apr. 30, 1888, 1; "Our Continuous Growth," *BDE*, July 8, 1888, 7; "Lamentably Deficient," *BDE*, Sept. 23, 1888, 6; "A Fine Edifice," *BDE*, Oct. 24, 1888, 2; "Smith, Gray & Co.'s Opening," *BDE*, Nov. 1, 1888, 1; "Smith & Gray's New Venture," *BDE*, Nov. 1, 1889, 5; "Tons of Brick," *BDE*, Jan. 9, 1890, 6; "The Work of the Wind," *NYT*, Jan. 10, 1890, 8; "The Union League Club," *BDE*, Apr. 6, 1890, 9; Edward Smith obit., *BDE*, Feb. 16, 1892, 4, and *NYT*, Feb. 17, 1892, 5; "A Big Fire in Brooklyn," *NYT*, Feb. 29, 1892, 1; "Brooklyn's Big Fire," *NYT*, Mar. 1, 1892, 10; "A Tinder Box," *BDE*, Mar. 1, 1892, 6; "It Was a Big Tinderbox," *NYT*, Mar. 2, 1892, 5; "A Very Extensive Establishment," *BDE*, Dec. 12, 1893, 2; "Golden Wedding Anniversary" [T.S. Cooper], *NYT*, June 8, 1901, 9; M.F. Smith obit., *NYT*, Nov. 22, 1911, 13; "Slow Assets Stop Smith, Gray & Co.," *NYT*, Jan. 22, 1914, 12.
3. Fulton Street (1836), William Street (c. 1843), Barclay Street (c. 1847), Warren Street (c. 1852), and Broadway near Leonard Street (c. 1854).
4. June 8, 1901.
5. This building is located within the Greenpoint Historic District.
6. *NYT*, Jan. 22, 1914.
7. Stiles, 788.
8. *Ibid*, 789.
9. *Ibid*.
10. Oct. 24, 1888.
11. LPC, *No. 361 Broadway Building Designation Report* (LP-1225)(N.Y.: City of New York, 1982), prepared by Anthony W. Robins, and *SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District Designation Report* (LP-0768) (N.Y.: City of New York, 1973); Margot Gayle and Edmund V. Gillon, Jr., *Cast-Iron Architecture in New York* (N.Y.: Dover Publs., Inc., 1974); Robert A.M. Stern, Thomas Mellins, and David Fishman, *New York 1880* (N.Y.: Monacelli Pr., 1999); Kings County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances; Dennis S. Francis, *Architects in Practice, New York City 1840-1900* (N.Y.: Comm. for the Pres. of Archl. Recs., 1979), 89; "The Excelsior Iron Works Destroyed," *NYT*, Dec. 13, 1869, 8; G.R. Jackson obit., *NYT*, Sept. 25, 1870, 5; W.H. Gaylor obit., *NYT*, Jan. 9, 1895, 3. Photographs of 103 Broadway appear in Moses King, *King's Views of Brooklyn* (1905), 16, reprinted by Arno Pr., 1980; NYC Dept. of Taxes (c. 1939); and Brooklyn Historical Society (1975).
12. The Cary and Haughwout Buildings are designated New York City Landmarks, and are also included, respectively, within the Tribeca South and SoHo-Cast Iron Historic Districts.
13. This building is a designated New York City Landmark.

14. 881-887 Broadway is located within the Ladies' Mile Historic District and 28-30 Greene Street is located within the SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District.
15. This building is located within the SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District.
16. This building is located within the SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District.
17. Margot Gayle, "Cast Iron Architecture in Brooklyn," *The Journal of Long Island History* (Fall 1976), 11.
18. Jan. 9, 1890.
19. Stiles, 581.
20. This building is included within the SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District.
21. Oct. 24, 1888.
22. Kings County; "Nothing Left for Creditors Who Met This Morning," *BDE*, Mar. 28, 1887, 6; "Heavy Losses and Nothing to Show for Them," *BDE*, Mar. 29, 1887, 6; "Disconsolate Creditors," *NYT*, Mar. 29, 1887, 8; "Dry Picking for Creditors," *NYT*, Mar. 31, 1887, 8; "Edmiston & Waddell's Ventures," *NYT*, Apr. 3, 1887, 2; Geo. W. Brown & Co., advertisements, *BDE*, May 28, 1889, 3, Nov. 15, 1890, 3, and Dec. 5, 1891, 3; Gritman & Graham, advertisements, *BDE*, Apr. 16, 1892, 3, Apr. 22, 1894, 19, and May 26, 1895, 18, and "Real Estate Market," Feb. 4, 1897, 12; "The Building and Loan Association," *BDE*, Jan. 11, 1893, 8; "Medals for Heroic Acts," *BDE*, Feb. 17, 1893, 2; Wm. B. Hurd, advertisement, *BDE*, Dec. 11, 1893, 2; "Real Estate Market," *BDE*, Sept. 20, 1895, 11; "Brooklyn Realty Matters," *NYT*, Sept. 21, 1895, 15; "New Sugar Interests in View," *BDE*, Mar. 26, 1897, 2; "Doscher's Big Sugar Plant," *BDE*, July 9, 1897, 1; John A. Holzapfel, notice, *BDE*, Nov. 2, 1899, 15, and Oct. 6, 1900, 19; "To Wind Up Its Affairs," *NYT*, Jan. 31, 1901, 2; Doscher obit., *Brooklyn Standard Union*, July 7, 1910; "Doscher Estate at Auction," *NYT*, Jan. 29, 1911, X10; "The Real Estate Field," *NYT*, Feb. 17, 1911, 15; "Fight Over Doscher Estate," *NYT*, Sept. 22, 1911, 15; "Chaplain Saves Man at Incendiary Blaze," *NYT*, Dec. 17, 1912, 5; "New Incorporations," *NYT*, July 19, 1923, 22; [www.firststop.org](http://www.firststop.org) website; NYC Dept. of Taxes.
23. "New Brooklyn Corporations," *BDE*, Oct. 2, 1884, 4.
24. "Ordinance Renumbering Streets," *BDE*, May 3, 1888, 2.

## 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 Smith, Gray & Co. Building has a special character and a 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 Smith, Gray & Co. Building was constructed in 1870 on Broadway, then Williamsburg's most important commercial street, for Edward Smith, who had begun a tailoring business in 1833 in lower Manhattan that pioneered in the profitable manufacture of ready-made clothes for children, which he transferred in 1864 to Brooklyn in partnership with his brother-in-law Allen Gray; that the design of this 5-story, 25-foot-wide, cast-iron-fronted store-and-loft building is attributed to William H. Gaylor, a prominent Brooklyn architect who designed three other cast-iron-fronted structures for Smith between 1873 and 1884, that the iron front was fabricated by George R. Jackson & Sons, and that the builders were probably Thomas and William Lamb who, according to the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, built all of Smith, Gray's stores; that, typical of cast iron designs in the Second Empire style, the building's main facade features tiered upper stories with segmental-arched fenestration framed by Corinthian columns and pilasters, and that other historic elements include a wooden storefront, a modillioned cornice with an ornamental frieze that replaced the original one (c. 1895-1913), and the articulated red-brick-clad rear facade with molded cast-iron lintels and corbeled sills and a cast-iron storefront; that Henry R. Stiles' history of Brooklyn (1884) noted of Smith, Gray & Co. "in their specialty of boys' and children's clothing, this house is the largest, as it was the first, in the United States" and that it was one of the largest manufacturers of any kind in Brooklyn; that Smith, Gray & Co. used this facility until the mid-1880s, it remained in the Smith family until 1895, was then owned until 1920 by Brooklyn sugar refiner Claus Doscher and his daughter, and from 1938 to 1978 was owned and used by Joseph I. Blanck, chemicals dealer, and his heirs; and that today it remains an early, significantly intact cast-iron-fronted Brooklyn building, as well as an important reminder of Williamsburg's commercial emergence after the Civil War and of Smith, Gray & Co., a nationally-important clothing manufacturer that was one of Brooklyn's preeminent commercial firms in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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 Smith, Gray & Co. Building, 103 Broadway (aka 96 South 6<sup>th</sup> Street), Brooklyn, and designates Brooklyn Tax Map Block 2471, Lot 8, as its Landmark Site.

Robert B. Tierney, Chair

Stephen Byrns, Joan Gerner, Roberta Brandes Gratz, Christopher Moore, Richard Olcott, Jan Pokorny, Elizabeth Ryan, Vicki Match Suna, Commissioners





Smith, Gray & Co. Building, 103 Broadway, Brooklyn  
Photo by: Jenny Staley, LPC



Smith, Gray & Co. Building (right), with the Kings County Fire Insurance Co. Building (left)  
Source: Moses King, *King's Views of Brooklyn* (1905)



Smith, Gray & Co. Building  
Source: Moses King, *King's Views of Brooklyn* (1905),  
with computer-assisted perspective





Smith, Gray & Co. Building  
Photo by: Andrew S. Dolkart, LPC (1970s)



Smith, Gray & Co. Building  
Photo by: LPC (1988)





Smith, Gray & Co. Building  
Photos by: Jenny Staley, LPC





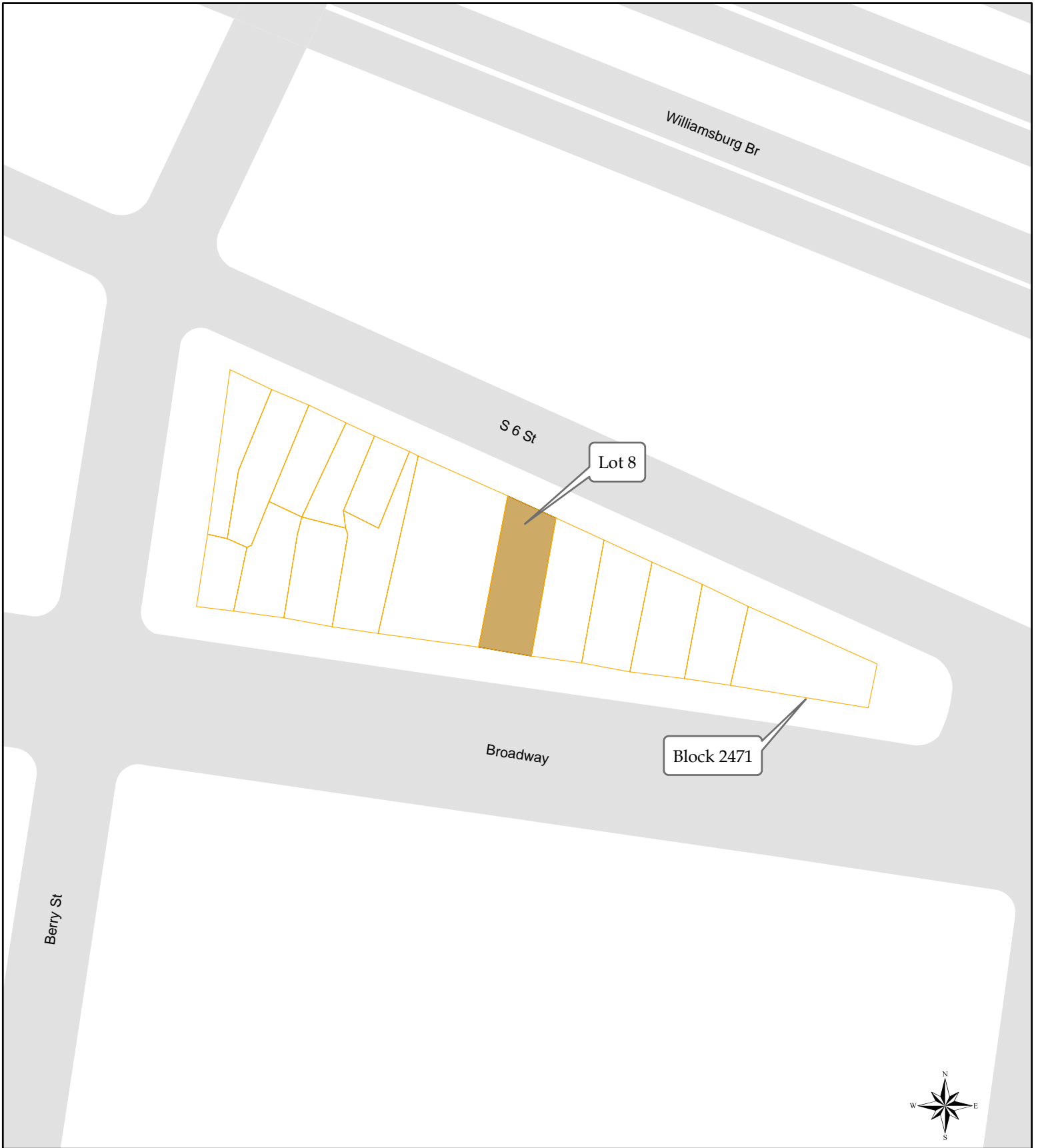
Smith, Gray & Co. Building, historic wooden storefront  
Photo by: Jenny Staley, LPC





Smith, Gray & Co. Building, 96 South 6<sup>th</sup> Street (rear) facade  
Photo by: Jenny Staley, LPC





Smith, Gray & Company Building, 103 Broadway (aka 96 South 6th Street), Brooklyn  
Landmark Site: Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map, Block 2471, Lot 8  
Graphic Source: New York City Department of City Planning, MapPLUTO, Edition 03C, December 2003



Smith, Gray & Co. Building, 103 Broadway (aka 96 South 6th Street)  
Source: Sanborn, Building and Property Atlas of Brooklyn (2003), vol. 3, pl. 11