

**HENRY SELIGMAN RESIDENCE, 30 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street (aka 30-32 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street), Manhattan.**

Built 1899-1901; C.P.H. Gilbert, architect.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1271, Lot 55.

On March 13, 2007, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Henry Seligman Residence and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 4). The hearing was continued until April 10, 2007 (Item No. 2). Both hearings had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Nineteen speakers testified in favor of designation, including New York City Council Member Daniel R. Garodnick, representatives of the Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer, New York State Assemblyman Richard Gottfried, Manhattan Community Board 5, the Historic Districts Council, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, the Metropolitan Chapter of the Victorian Society in America, the West 54–55 Street Block Association and residents of the area. A representative of the owner testified that she was neither for nor against designation. At both hearings, there were no speakers in opposition to designation. In addition, the Commission has received letters from New York State Senator Liz Krueger and 21 members of the West 54–55 Street Block Association in support of designation.

Summary

No. 30 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street, designed by C.P.H. Gilbert for prominent investment banker Henry Seligman and his wife Adelaide, stands as a particularly grand and well-preserved example of the fashionable townhouses that once lined the 50s side streets off Fifth Avenue. Constructed between 1899 and 1901, the residence was one of several townhouses on the block built for bankers at the turn of the twentieth century, and the street became known as “Bankers’ Row.” Gilbert, who also designed Seligman’s summer house in Elberon, New Jersey, had received many commissions from New York’s leading families at that time and was familiar with designing townhouses in a variety of architectural styles. For 30 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street, Gilbert employed the restrained neo-French Renaissance style on a limestone façade spanning two lots that gave the townhouse an imposing presence on a street where narrow rowhouses prevailed. Above the rusticated ground floor are original second-story wood windows and an intricately-carved stone balcony supported by brackets. Adorning the second, third and fourth floors are stone quoins and window surrounds with broken lintels over the central windows on the third and fourth floors. A fourth-story balcony and a large ornate cornice resting on paired consoles further enhance the look of the elegant façade. A mansard roof with elaborate segmental-arched dormers projects over the rooflines of the adjoining buildings.



Seligman was a senior partner in the prestigious investment banking firm of J. & W. Seligman & Company, founded in 1864 by his uncles and his father, Jesse. The Seligmans established themselves as one of the pre-eminent German-Jewish families in the United States and became known as “the American Rothschilds.” Henry Seligman was also influential in financing railroad construction in the American West as well as serving as a director for several major industrial and artistic organizations across the United States. He and his wife resided at 30 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street until their deaths in 1933 and 1934, respectively. Although it remained in use as a single-family residence somewhat longer than other houses on the block, 30 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street was converted into apartments in 1941. At mid-century, the block gradually became known as “Restaurant Row” for the large number of eating establishments that occupied the ground floors of the townhouses; 30 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street was for over twenty years the location of the popular Romeo Salta restaurant.

## DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

### West 56<sup>th</sup> Street, between Fifth and Sixth Avenues<sup>1</sup>

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the area now known as Midtown Manhattan was gradually transformed from open farmland north of the city to a fringe area of shanty towns, stockyards, blacksmiths and similar hazardous manufacturing uses. The landscaping of Central Park begun in 1857, however, combined with the northward growth of New York City on Manhattan Island, helped turn the area into a middle-class residential district, while pushing the shanty towns further northward. During the building boom that followed the Civil War, four-story brick- and brownstone-faced rowhouses were constructed on the side streets of the West 40s and 50s, as larger mansions were erected along Fifth Avenue. Beginning in 1879, the Vanderbilt family built several mansions on Fifth Avenue. They had such an influence on the development of the neighborhood that the ten blocks off Fifth Avenue south of Central Park gradually became known as “Vanderbilt Row,” one of the most prestigious residential districts in late-nineteenth-century New York.

Three blocks south of Central Park, West 56<sup>th</sup> Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues followed the trend of other blocks in the area as it became a fashionable location for many of the city’s most affluent citizens. William Waldorf Astor, Edwin Gould and William Ziegler bought the Fifth Avenue corner lots and built mansions there. While modest brownstones occupied most of the lots on the West 56<sup>th</sup> Street block by 1871, more upscale townhouses began to emerge by the end of the century. In keeping with the taste of the time, many of the facades of the older rowhouses from the 1860s and 1870s had been given new facades or had been replaced altogether with more up-to-date Georgian and neo-Renaissance style houses. In 1899, investment banker Henry Seligman commissioned C.P.H. Gilbert to design his neo-French Renaissance townhouse on two lots at 30-32 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street. Within the first years of the twentieth century, the block quickly became associated with several other prominent bankers who also hired well-known architects to design their fashionable townhouses: the Beaux-Arts style Frederick C. and Birdsall Otis Edey Residence at No. 10 (Warren & Wetmore, 1901-1903), the neo-Georgian style Harry B. Hollins Residence at No. 12-14 (Stanford White of McKim, Meade & White, 1899-1901),<sup>2</sup> the Beaux-Arts style E. Hayward Ferry Residence at No. 26 (H.A. Jacobs, 1907),<sup>3</sup> the Beaux-Arts style Arthur Lehman Residence at No. 31 (John Duncan, 1903-04, demolished) and the Beaux-Arts style Edward Wasserman Residence, owned by Seligman’s brother-in-law, at No. 33 (C.P.H. Gilbert, 1901-02, demolished).

In the years following World War I, the mansions of Fifth Avenue and the lavish residences of the adjacent West 50s side streets began to give way to commercial and apartment house development. Seeking a more exclusive location, wealthy families moved farther north to the Upper East Side. Most of the townhouses which survived were altered for commercial use on the ground floors and divided into apartments above; by the 1920s and 1930s, most houses on West 56<sup>th</sup> Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues were occupied by those working in the garment trade. While other families had left the block, the Seligmans remained at their 30 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street residence until their deaths in 1933 and 1934, respectively and, in 1941, the residence was finally converted into apartments. Beginning in the 1950s, the former “Bankers Row” on this West 56<sup>th</sup> Street block emerged as “Restaurant Row,” as many townhouses had their ground floors occupied by upscale eating establishments that characterized the block until the early 1990s.

### Henry Seligman and 30 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street<sup>4</sup>

Born on March 31, 1857 in San Francisco, California, Henry Seligman was the second son of Jesse and Henrietta Seligman. His father settled in the West Coast city in 1850 in order to capitalize on the gold rush that began two years earlier. After the birth of his son, Jesse left for New York to join his brother Joseph in the family clothing firm while Henry remained in San Francisco. In 1864, Jesse, Joseph and their six brothers established an international merchant banking house, J[oseph] & W[illiam] Seligman & Company, with headquarters in New York at 59 Exchange Place; associated banking operations were located in Frankfurt, London, Paris, San Francisco, and New Orleans, each led by at least one of the brothers. According to Stephen Birmingham in his book, *Our Crowd: The Great Jewish Families of New York*, the Seligmans “virtually invented” international banking in the United States. The family quickly established themselves as one of the preeminent German-Jewish families in the United States and became known as “the American Rothschilds.”<sup>5</sup> The firm rose to prominence in the underwriting of railroads, transit systems, public utilities, government securities, and industries, and acted as financial advisors for several foreign governments.<sup>6</sup>

In 1875, Henry Seligman graduated from New York University and returned to San Francisco to work at the Anglo-California Bank. Five years later – when his father became the head of J. & W. Seligman & Company after the death of Joseph in 1880 – Henry came to New York to work for the family firm, where he

would remain for the rest of his fifty-year career. At the same time, the office building at 59 Exchange Place was demolished for the Mills Building, where the firm was located from 1882 to 1907. In 1895, the year after his father died, Henry became a senior partner in the firm, joining his cousins Isaac Newton Seligman (head of the company in 1894) and Jefferson Seligman in that title. A “family liquidation agreement,” implemented in 1897 to divide certain assets held jointly by the eight brothers or their estates, separated the New York firm from the European ones; the surviving brothers purchased over ten percent of the New York business, which in years following this separation made a profit of \$11.5 million. The Seligmans participated in underwriting the formation of the U.S. Steel Corporation in 1901 and General Motors Corporation in 1910, and invested heavily in government bonds during World War I. In 1914, the firm lent support and backing to the construction of the Panama Canal, which helped promote the expansion of global trade.

Henry Seligman married Adelaide Walter, daughter of Isaac Walter, on March 11, 1899 in New York City. In that year, Seligman purchased two lots at 30-32 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues in Manhattan. Two brownstone rowhouses were demolished and Seligman hired the architect C.P.H. Gilbert who designed a neo-French Renaissance style townhouse in the then-fashionable residential area of what is now known as Midtown. On January 7, 1902, Henry and Adelaide entertained guests in their new home with a performance by the Mannes Quartet. The extensive musical program, guests and events were listed in the society section of the *New York Times*, a portion of which reads:

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Seligman gave a large musicale last evening at their superb new house, 30 West Fifty-Sixth Street, which was practically a housewarming, as it was the first large entertainment they have given there. The guests were received in the salon by Mr. and Mrs. Seligman, the latter wearing gray net, embroidered in steel. Her ornaments were diamonds...The music was rendered in the large hall and picture gallery on the second floor...After the artists had finished supper was served at small tables in the large dining room by Delmonico. The house was profusely decorated with vases of American Beauty roses.<sup>7</sup>

After their New York residence was completed, Henry and Adelaide purchased property in Elberon, New Jersey, a popular summer retreat the extended Seligman family had frequented for many years. C.P.H. Gilbert received the commission, and his “improvements” for their summer house, “Shorelands,” included “a large residence, stables, gardener’s cottage, bathhouses, &c.”<sup>8</sup> The couple also had a villa called “Casa Mia” in Palm Beach, Florida.

Henry and Adelaide had three children, Gladys, Rhoda and Walter. The lavish townhouse at 30 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street also housed a Scottish butler; an American valet and chauffeur; a Swedish footman, maid and laundress; two Irish cooks; and three English, Swedish and French servants.<sup>9</sup> Henry Seligman was a director of several power companies across the United States: the William Cramp & Sons Ship and Engine Building Company, the Buffalo Gas Company, the Welsbach Commercial Company, the Helena & Livingston Smelting Company, the Syracuse Gas Company, and the Syracuse Electric Light Company. He also served as the secretary for the board of directors of the Edison United Phonograph Company, the secretary and treasurer of the Society of Arts and the vice president of the Philharmonic-Symphony Society. He and his wife were supporters of the Actors Memorial Fund as well as numerous other charities. Adelaide played a leading role in the fight for prohibition reform, helped organize the Mount Sinai Training School for Nurses, was a founder of a musical organization called the St. Cecilia Club, and “was enlisted under the banner of Mrs. Charles H. Sabin in the women’s fight against the Eighteenth Amendment.”<sup>10</sup>

The Seligmans continued to live at their 30 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street residence long after many of the single-family townhouses on the block had been converted into offices and apartments. In 1923, the couple had the areaway walls as well as the service and entrance steps removed.<sup>11</sup> This action most likely is attributed to the fact that the area had become more commercial and the Seligmans wished to privatize the ground floor of their house; the areaway walls and steps in later years might have been popular loitering spots. In his later years, Henry Seligman remained active in business and as a senior partner at J. & W. Seligman & Company. He was worth over five million dollars in 1928. His death from a heart attack at his 30 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street residence on December 23, 1933 came two months before his wife, Adelaide, died from failing health. The *Wall Street Journal* noted that “A banker who did big things, and did them in such a quiet smoothness as avoided personal publicity, was Henry Seligman, over half a century identified with the potencies of Wall Street.”<sup>12</sup> His funeral was held at 30 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street in the second-floor music room.<sup>13</sup>

### The Architect: C.P.H. Gilbert<sup>14</sup>

Although he was the architect of a great many opulent residences for New York's leading families, Charles Pierrepont Henry Gilbert (more commonly known as C.P.H. Gilbert, 1861-1952) remains a relatively unknown figure today. Born in New York City in 1861, he attended Columbia University and the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. In 1883, Gilbert established a brief partnership in New York City with George Kramer Thompson, and in the late 1880s he designed several Romanesque Revival style buildings located within what is now the Park Slope Historic District in Brooklyn.

During the late 1890s, Gilbert began to receive commissions from prominent members of New York society. One such commission resulted in the Isaac D. Fletcher Mansion (1897-99),<sup>15</sup> which still dominates the corner of 79<sup>th</sup> Street and Fifth Avenue. This project brought considerable attention to Gilbert's ability to design imaginative and fanciful compositions, his command of historical detail, and his provision of generous and elegant interiors. His use of limestone and the Francois I style (based on early French Renaissance architecture) were perhaps Gilbert's hallmarks. He adapted the profuse ornamentation of this style on a more modest scale to rowhouse groups on the Upper West Side, as well as to the Philip and Maria Kleeberg Residence (1896-98), a town house at 3 Riverside Drive.<sup>17</sup> Gilbert was equally comfortable, like so many architects of his generation, designing in a variety of other styles according to the tastes of his wealthy clients. With equal success he used a Beaux-Arts idiom in the design of the Joseph Raphael De Lamar Mansion at 233 Madison Avenue (1902-05) and created a refined and subtly detailed neo-Italian Renaissance style mansion for Otto Kahn at 1 East 91<sup>st</sup> Street (now Convent of the Sacred Heart, 1913-18, in association with the English architect J. Armstrong Stenhouse).<sup>18</sup> Many of his clients also commissioned him to build their country houses, such as "Shorelands," the Henry Seligman home in Elberon, New Jersey, and "Pembroke," the De Lamar home on Long Island. In addition to working for wealthy clients, Gilbert often worked with the builder/developer Harvey Murdock in the production of speculatively-built rowhouses. Gilbert's stylistically diversified designs – united by the Beaux Arts approach to composition and planning and a concern for finely worked stone – are well-represented in what are now the Upper East Side and Riverside-West End Historic Districts.

Gilbert's attention to detail and his flexibility in matters of style made him one of New York's most productive architects at the turn of the twentieth century. Although he was one of the more prolific architects working in rowhouse and townhouse design, he received a commission for 1067 Fifth Avenue (1914-17),<sup>19</sup> which was only the second luxury apartment house built on Fifth Avenue. Here he employed the Francois I style that is seen on many of his earlier townhouses. In his later years he retired to his home in Pelham Manor, New York. Gilbert was a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and a member of the Architectural League.

### Design of the Henry Seligman Residence<sup>20</sup>

Henry Seligman acquired two older rowhouses at 30 and 32 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street in October 1899. After demolition of the existing buildings, construction of the new townhouse began in December 1899 and was completed in September 1901. The residence was designed in the restrained neo-French Renaissance style. Changes in taste, fostered in part by the romantic classical styles used at the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, brought the demise of the brownstone rowhouse in favor of the exuberant Beaux Arts and the more modest neo-Renaissance styles. At the time Henry Seligman hired C.P.H. Gilbert to design his residence, many of New York's leading architects had been commissioned by the city's most prominent and affluent citizens to design their mansions and townhouses on Fifth Avenue and on the side streets of the East and West 50s.

The neo-French Renaissance style Henry Seligman Residence is a distinguished example of the fashionable townhouses that once characterized the neighborhood. At forty-one feet in width and five stories (plus basement) in height, the large, elegant façade was an imposing presence on a street where narrower rowhouses prevailed. Perhaps the best indication of its immense size at the time of its construction is found in a 1902 article, "The Contemporary New York Residence," written by Herbert Croly, editor of the *Architectural Record*. Although several photographs of the Henry Seligman Residence appeared in the article, in his discussion Croly indicated that he would ignore "dwellings that are wider than twenty-five or thirty feet, because the men who can afford a dwelling erected on a lot as much as or more than 50 feet wide are after all extremely rare, and their houses should be treated in a class by themselves."<sup>21</sup>

The tripartite division of the façade that includes the rusticated limestone base, the smooth limestone midsection and the setback mansard roof evoke a European Renaissance palazzo with a pronounced French character. Gilbert played with perspective to give the façade the appearance of an even grander scale at street

level; each row of windows becomes smaller in height and width from the second to the fifth stories. He favored limestone (or other light-colored stones) in most of his commissions and at 30 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street that cladding choice stood in striking contrast to the brownstone rowhouses that once lined either side of the residence. Among its notable features are the original wood casement windows with block-modillioned lintels, end quoins, and the second- and fourth-story sculptural balconettes; paired consoles supporting the elaborate cornice that is accented by rows of acanthus leaves, dentils, egg and dart and alternating block modillions and rosettes; and the one-story mansard roof with intricately carved segmental-arched dormers, copper trim with lion heads and capped limestone end chimneys.

The flat façade – which keeps it in context with its rowhouse neighbors – is unusually subtle for Gilbert who tended to enliven his designs with projecting square and curvilinear bays as is evident at the Francois I style Felix and Frieda S. Warburg House (now the Jewish Museum, 1907-08) at 1109 Fifth Avenue, the Beaux Arts style Frederick and Lydia Prentiss Residence (1899-1901) at 1 Riverside Avenue and the French-inspired John and Mary Sutphen House (1901-02) at 311 West 72<sup>nd</sup> Street.<sup>22</sup> An earlier commission for Philip and Maria Kleeberg at their 3 Riverside Drive residence illustrates that Gilbert did not feel constrained by a mid-block lot since he used an angled projecting bay that dominates the façade. Gilbert's design simplicity at 30 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street was perhaps a request from Henry Seligman, who was often described as a quiet and modest man. These houses, similar to the Seligman Residence, also clearly reflect Gilbert's Beaux Arts training: finely-carved limestone accents the mansard roofs while projecting ornament such as window surrounds and balconettes give depth to the facades. The building at 30 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street stands today as one of the grandest on the block, as it retains its turn-of-the-twentieth-century elegance in a neighborhood that is rapidly changing.

In 1923, Seligman decided to remove the areaway walls as well as the entrance steps and service steps. The sidewalk was repaved so that the two former service stairwells were covered. The most noticeable change to the façade occurs at the ground floor where paired wood windows on either side of the main entrance have been replaced with non-historic metal doors. The third- to fifth-story windows were originally one-over-one double-hung sash wood windows and are now metal casement windows with transoms (with the exception of the fifth floor, which now has metal fixed windows).

#### Later History<sup>23</sup>

The later history of the Seligman Residence followed the general pattern found on the block: after single-family occupancy, these houses were converted to apartment buildings or to commercial use. Following the deaths of the Seligmans, the house was briefly occupied by the Beethoven Association before it was bought by politician Joseph L. Buttenweiser in 1935. It appears that Buttenweiser bought the house as an investment and never lived there. In 1939, the house was altered to accommodate a private clubhouse and two years later, in 1941, Arthur D. Kunze bought and converted the building into apartments. Since then, the building has been used as offices, apartments and a combination of both; past tenants have included those working in the garment industry as well as actors, singers and musicians performing in the nearby theatre district.

Camillo Restaurant became the first eating establishment to occupy the building in 1940 and at mid-century, West 56<sup>th</sup> Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues became well known as "Restaurant Row." In 1950, the owner of the Blaire House Restaurant had a new wall built to enclose the areaway in the rear of 30 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street in order to create a new kitchen. In 1971, Romeo Salta moved his famous upscale Italian restaurant under his own name to 30 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street after having been located across the street at No. 39 since 1954. The two-lot width of the Seligman Residence proved to be advantageous for later occupants such as Salta, who required additional space for commercial needs. The popular Italian eating establishment remained at No. 30 until 1994, at which point the block as a whole had lost much of its upscale-dining business. The Seligman Residence now houses offices and showrooms for a company in the fashion industry.

#### Description

**West 56<sup>th</sup> Street Façade** The neo-French Renaissance style Henry Seligman Residence has a symmetrical three-bay front façade that features a tripartite division. It is five stories (plus basement) in height, and forty-one feet in width. The house is built to the lot line. **Base** The base is clad in rusticated limestone. A central doorway with a limestone door surround has a non-historic metal and glass door and a metal transom with the number '30' on it. A sliding metal gate is located in front of the door. A cartouche decorates the door lintel. Directly below the door surrounds are granite steps. Non-historic cast stone steps and a non-historic iron rail are located at the main entrance. Two non-historic metal and glass doors and transoms (originally paired wood windows) flank the main entrance and have non-historic cast stone inset door

surrounds. The balconette over the central door has an intricately-carved balustrade that includes a centrally-located lion head, torches, acanthus leaves and ornamental balusters. They are flanked by limestone panels. The balconette rests on two detailed consoles with carved male heads. An acanthus leaf belt course runs across the smooth entablature that separates the base from the second story. The entablature has panels that run the length of the flanking second-story windows. **Midsection** Floors two, three and four are clad in limestone with textured limestone quoins at both ends. The second floor has original wood windows that were originally either a lighter color or left unpainted, but have been painted black since at least 1939.<sup>24</sup> A decorative muntin separates bowed-arched casement windows from the transom. The window surrounds curve inward, have an egg and dart pattern and have lintels with small consoles and alternating block modillions and rosettes. The third- and fourth-story windows, originally one-over-one double-hung sash wood windows, are non-historic metal casement windows with non-historic metal transoms. All windows have limestone window surrounds. The third-story central window has a small cartouche that divides the lintel and the row of dentils that runs between the consoles (which have carved female heads) on the fourth-story balconette. The balconette is located underneath the fourth-story paired windows and its balustrade is ornamented with acanthus leaves that are bundled together and “wrapped” by a chain of beads. The paired windows have a thick limestone mullion and a small cartouche. A carved lintel course and two carved clam shells are also at the fourth story. A large, intricately-carved cornice divides the midsection from the mansard roof, which is set back. Intricately-carved paired consoles support the cornice on either side of the façade. **Roof** The one-story, asphalt-shingle-covered (originally tile) mansard roof has three limestone broken segmental-arch dormers with non-historic metal fixed windows. A limestone belt course rests between the dormers and the parapet walls. Detailed copper trim (with copper lion heads) is located at the top of the mansard roof and non-decorative copper trim lies above the belt course. The central dormer has paired windows separated by a thick mullion and an entablature ornamented with elaborate consoles and alternating block modillions and rosettes. Scrolls exist at either side of the lower portion of the dormer. The segmental arch includes an intricately-carved cartouche flanked by leaf branches. The two flanking dormers are identical to one another in design and are smaller than the central one. The limestone end chimneys have limestone caps. Flanking limestone parapet walls lie just below the chimneys. Non-historic tar flashing exists between the parapet walls and the asphalt shingle roofing. The water tower is visible on the eastern portion of the roof. **Areaway** The areaway has cement paving and a metal grille that is located at the east end. Two planters flank the main entrance. A metal fire department automatic sprinkler and a metal fire standpipe are attached to the sidewalk between the main entrance and the western-most door.

**East Façade** The east façade party wall is concealed to the cornice level by an adjoining building. Smooth quoins, the parapet wall and the chimney are made of limestone and the inner portion of the wall is made of brick. The large water tower, support frame and elevator bulkhead are visible on the western side.

**West Façade** The west façade party wall is concealed by an adjoining five-story brownstone rowhouse. Smooth quoins and a portion of the limestone wall are visible from the second-story lintels to the roof. The limestone parapet wall and chimney are also visible, as is a portion of the inner brick wall.

Report researched and written by  
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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Portions of this section are adapted from LPC, *Harry B. Hollins Residence Designation Report* (LP-1266) (New York: City of New York, 1984), prepared by the Research Department; LPC, *15 West 54<sup>th</sup> Street House Designation Report* (LP-1105) (New York: City of New York, 1981), prepared by the Research Department. Information in this section is based on the following sources: “Furniture Firm Rents Home Near Fifth Avenue,” *New York Times*, 5 September 1940, 41; Robert A.M. Stern, Gregory Gilmartin and John Massengale, *New York 1900* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1983).

<sup>2</sup> The Harry B. Hollins Residence is a designated New York City Landmark.

<sup>3</sup> Henry Seligman bought the rowhouse at 26 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street in July 1907 and commissioned architect H.A. Jacobs to design a new façade for the building. In December 1908, Seligman sold the building to E. Hayward Ferry with the stipulation that, as long as Seligman resided at 30 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street, No. 26 could only be used as a single-family residence.

<sup>4</sup> Portions of this section are adapted from LPC, *J. & W. Seligman & Company Building Designation Report* (LP-1943) (New York: City of New York, 2001), prepared by Jay Shockley. Information in this section is based on the following sources: “Seligman, Henry,” *The National Cyclopaedia* (New York: James T. White & Co., 1910), 290; “News About Railroads,” *New York Times*, 27 May 1890, 2; “Directors of Phonograph Company,” *New York Times*, 13 April 1894, 11; “What is Doing in Society,” *New York Times*, 15 February 1899; “The Seligman Legacy,” [www.seligman.com](http://www.seligman.com) website; “Henry Seligman, Banker, is Dead,” *New York Times*, 23 December 1933, 15; “Henry Seligman Burial Tuesday,” *New York Times*, 24 December 1933, 14; “Henry Seligman Dead,” *Wall Street Journal*, 25 December 1933, 6; “Associates Mourn Henry Seligman,” *New York Times*, 27 December 1933, 19; “H. Seligman Left \$1,203,254 Estate,” *New York Times*, 7 May 1935, 26.

<sup>5</sup> Stephen Birmingham, *Our Crowd: The Great Jewish Families of New York* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967).

<sup>6</sup> For more information on J. & W. Seligman & Company, see LPC, *J. & W. Seligman & Company Building Designation Report*.

<sup>7</sup> “What Is Doing in Society,” *New York Times*, 8 January 1902, 7.

<sup>8</sup> “In the Real Estate Field,” *New York Times*, 21 August 1901, 10.

<sup>9</sup> 1930 United States Census.

<sup>10</sup> “Mrs. Henry Seligman,” *New York Times*, 1 February 1934, 19.

<sup>11</sup> New York City, Dept. of Buildings, Manhattan, Plans, Permits and Dockets (Alt 2273-23).

<sup>12</sup> “By-the-Bye in Wall Street,” *Wall Street Journal*, 27 January 1934, 8.

<sup>13</sup> At the funeral of Henry Seligman, the New York String Quartet performed the slow movement of the Smetana quartet “Aus Meinem Leben,” and at the close performed Handel’s Largo. It was noted that the Quartet often played at Seligman’s Palm Beach villa. Reverend Dr. Stephen S. Wise, rabbi of the Free Synagogue, led the service and said of Henry Seligman “that there was that in his life ‘which moves one to say of him in an ancient tongue that he was ‘integer vitae,’ that he cherished integrity, that he honored honor, and that rectitude and goodness meant most to him...In the world of larger affairs, he was ever held in reverence by those who stood at his side. He had a genius for the winning of friendships because of his never-failing consideration, his changeless kindness to men.” See “Associates Mourn Henry Seligman.” Henry was also the vice president of the Philharmonic-Symphony Society and on December 30, 1933, the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra program included, for Seligman, a tribute performance of the Bach air from the suite in D major at Carnegie Hall. See “Philharmonic Gives Students’ Concert,” *New York Times*, 31 December 1933, 21.

<sup>14</sup> Portions of this section are adapted from LPC, *The Prentiss Residence Designation Report* (LP-1715) (New York: City of New York, 1991), prepared by Margaret M. Pickart. Information in this section is based on the following sources: Christopher Gray, “Streetscapes/ Charles Pierrepont Henry Gilbert: A Designer of Lacy Mansions for the City’s Eminent,” *New York Times*, 9 February 2003, RE7; Charles P.H. Gilbert obit., *New York Times*, 27 October 1952, 27.

<sup>15</sup> The Isaac D. Fletcher Mansion is located within the Metropolitan Museum Historic District.

<sup>17</sup> The Philip and Maria Kleeberg Residence is a designated New York City Landmark.

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<sup>18</sup> The Joseph Raphael De Lamar Mansion and 1 East 91<sup>st</sup> Street are designated New York City Landmarks.

<sup>19</sup> 1067 Fifth Avenue is located within the Carnegie Hill Historic District.

<sup>20</sup> New York City, Dept. of Buildings, Manhattan, Plans, Permits and Dockets (NB 1631-99). New York County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances. Henry Seligman acquired the rowhouse at 30 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street from Sarah E. Knapp and the rowhouse at 32 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street from Maud B. Banks. See Manhattan property conveyances, liber 62, page 378 and liber 63, page 342 (recorded Oct. 17, 1899).

<sup>21</sup> Herbert Croly, "The Contemporary New York Residence," *Architectural Record* (Vol. 12, December 1902), 708-722. The article features black and white photographs of several rooms in the Henry Seligman Residence: the drawing room, dining room, library and smoking room. These photographs reveal the ornament and furnishings of the original interior shortly after the Seligmans moved in. When the single-family residence was converted to apartments in 1941, new kitchens, bathrooms and rooms were created and a new elevator shaft was added at the second and third floors under the existing shaft to the roof. In 1946, the front portion of the first floor was raised flush with the center portion, new stairs were installed as were "a new kitchen, toilet rooms, partitions, etc." See New York City, Dept. of Buildings, Manhattan, Plans, Permits and Dockets (Alt 2093-41 and Alt 1614-46).

<sup>22</sup> The Felix and Frieda S. Warburg House, Frederick and Lydia Prentiss Residence and John and Mary Sutphen House are designated New York City Landmarks.

<sup>23</sup> Christopher Gray, "The Buyer Hopes to Reverse 'Eat Street's' Decline," *New York Times*, 28 August 1994, 408; New York City, Dept. of Buildings, Manhattan, Plans, Permits and Dockets (Alt 2260-50); "30 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street," *Manhattan Address Directories* (1930-1993); "Display Ad 366," *New York Times*, 10 December 1950, X12. "Round and About: A few thousand old cronies are happy to know that Nicky Blair is coming back to the Manhattan scene; the 'Colonel' will open his new restaurant, 'Blair House,' right after the First..."

<sup>24</sup> This conclusion is based on an historic black and white photograph appearing in the December 1902 issue of *Architectural Record* and the circa 1939 Department of Taxes black and white photograph.



## 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 Henry Seligman Residence 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, 30 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street, designed by C.P.H. Gilbert for prominent investment banker Henry Seligman and his wife Adelaide, stands as a particularly grand and well-preserved example of the fashionable townhouses that once lined the 50s side streets off Fifth Avenue; that, constructed between 1899 and 1901, the residence was one of several townhouses on the block built for bankers at the turn of the twentieth century, and the street became known as “Bankers’ Row”; that Gilbert, who also designed Seligman’s summer house in Elberon, New Jersey, had received many commissions from New York’s leading families at that time and was familiar with designing townhouses in a variety of architectural styles and that for 30 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street, Gilbert employed the restrained neo-French Renaissance style on a limestone façade spanning two lots that gave the townhouse an imposing presence on a street where narrower buildings prevailed; that the elegant façade features a rusticated ground floor, original second-story wood windows, an intricately-carved stone balcony supported by brackets, stone quoins and window surrounds with broken lintels over the central windows on the third and fourth floors, a fourth-story balcony, a large ornate cornice resting on paired consoles and a mansard roof with elaborate segmental-arched dormers that projects over the rooflines of the adjoining buildings; that Seligman was a senior partner in the prestigious investment banking firm of J. & W. Seligman & Company, founded in 1864 by his uncles and his father, Jesse and that the Seligman family established themselves as one of the pre-eminent German-Jewish families in the United States and became known as “the American Rothschilds”; that Henry Seligman was also influential in financing railroad construction in the American West as well as serving as a director for several major industrial and artistic organizations across the United States; that Henry Seligman and his wife resided at 30 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street until their deaths in 1933 and 1934, respectively; that, although the house had remained in use as a single-family residence somewhat longer than other townhouses on the West 56<sup>th</sup> Street block, it was converted into apartments in 1941; and that, at mid-century, the block gradually became known as “Restaurant Row” for the large number of eating establishments that occupied the ground floors of the townhouses and that 30 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street was for over twenty years the location of the popular Romeo Salta restaurant.

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 Henry Seligman Residence, 30 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street, Manhattan, and designates Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1271, Lot 55 as its Landmark Site.

Robert B. Tierney, Chair  
Pablo E. Vengoechea, Vice-Chair  
Stephen F. Byrns, Diana Chapin, Joan Gerner, Christopher Moore,  
Elizabeth Ryan, Roberta Washington, Commissioners



**Henry Seligman Residence**

30 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street, aka 30-32 West 56<sup>th</sup> Street, Manhattan (north façade)

Photo: Carl Forster



**Henry Seligman Residence**  
Exposed east façade party wall  
Photo: Amanda Davis



**Henry Seligman Residence**  
Main (north) façade and exposed west façade party wall  
Photo: Carl Forster



**Henry Seligman Residence**  
Fourth floor and roof  
Photo: Carl Forster



**Henry Seligman Residence**  
Ground floor  
Photos: Carl Forster



**Henry Seligman Residence**

Entrance doors

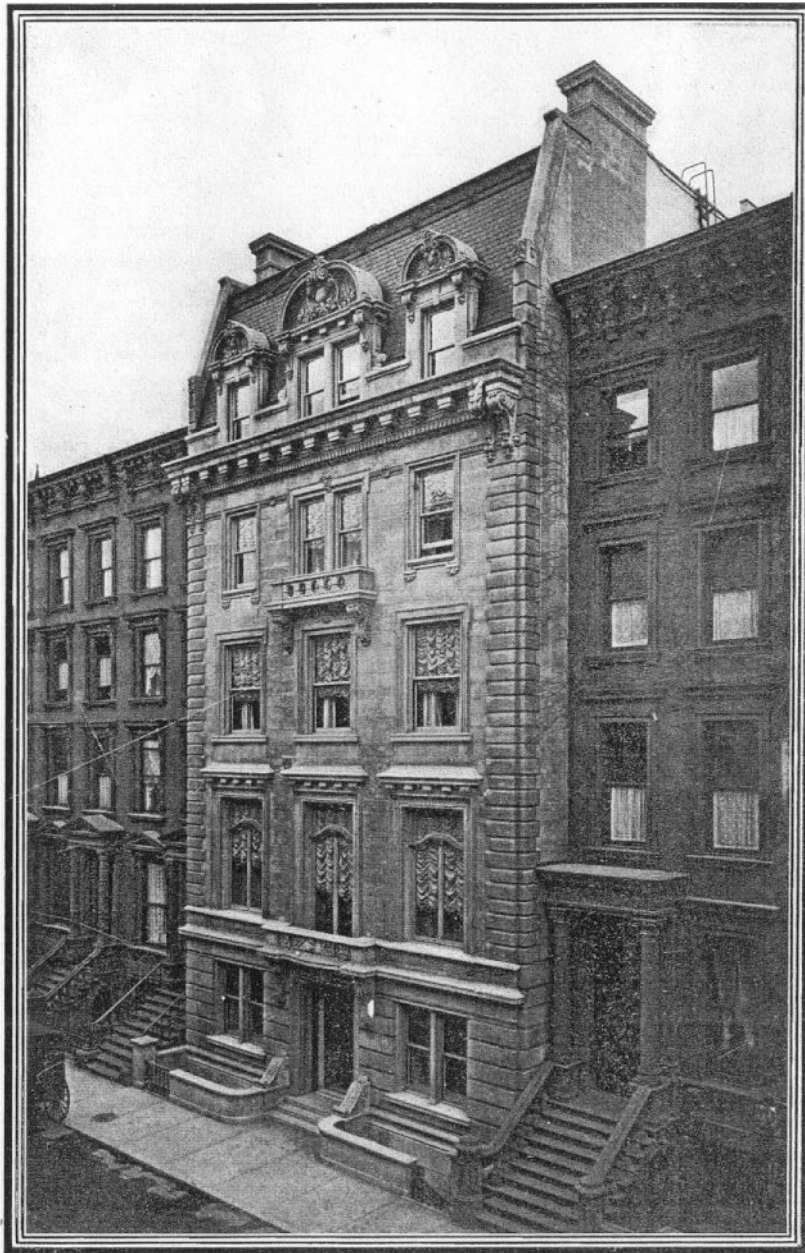
Photo: Amanda Davis



**Henry Seligman Residence**  
Second floor balcony  
Photo: Carl Forster



**Henry Seligman Residence**  
Fourth floor balcony  
Photo: Carl Forster



**RESIDENCE OF HENRY SELIGMAN.**

**Nos. 30-32 West 56th Street, New York City.**

**C. P. H. Gilbert, Architect.**

**Henry Seligman Residence**

Source: Architectural Record (December 1902)



**Henry Seligman Residence**  
Photo Credit: NYC Dept. of Taxes (c. 1939)





**HENRY SELIGMAN RESIDENCE (LP-2227),  
 30 West 56th Street (aka 30-32 West 56th Street).  
 Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1271, Lot 55.**

**Designated: July 24, 2007**

Graphic Source: New York City Department of City Planning, MapPLUTO, Edition 06C, 2006.  
 Author: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, JM.