Landmarks Preservation Commission
April 24, 1990; Designation List 224
LP-1692

CITY AND SUBURBAN HOMES COMPANY, FIRST AVENUE ESTATE, 1168-1190 First Avenue a/k/a 401 East 64th Street, 1194-1200 First Avenue a/k/a 402 East 65th Street, 403-409 East 64th Street, 411 East 64th Street, 417 East 64th Street, 419 East 64th Street, 421 East 64th Street, 423 East 64th Street, 429 East 64th Street, 404-408 East 65th Street, 410 East 65th Street, 412 East 65th Street, 414 East 65th Street, 416 East 65th Street, and 430 East 65th Street, Borough of Manhattan. Built 1898-1915; architects, James E. Ware, James E. Ware & Son(s), and Philip H. Ohm.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1459, Lots 1, 10, 22, and 30.

On October 6, 1988, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 2). The hearing was continued to February 7, 1989 and again to March 14, 1989. The hearings had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. A total of twenty-four witnesses spoke in favor of the designation including a paid representative of the Concerned Citizens of East 64th-65th Streets, First-York Avenues. Two speakers appearing on behalf of the owner testified against the designation. The commission has received many letters and other expressions of support in favor of this designation. Three letters were received in opposition to the designation as well as letters and other submissions from the owner and its representatives.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Summary

Built between 1898 and 1915, City and Suburban Homes Company's First Avenue Estate is the oldest extant project of the most successful of the privately financed, limited-dividend companies which attempted to address the housing problems of the nation's working poor at the turn of the century. The company's investors, led by such prominent New Yorkers as Mrs. Alfred Corning Clark (later Mrs. Henry Codman Potter), Caroline and Olivia Stokes, Cornelius Vanderbilt, Darius Ogden Mills, Isaac Seligman, and R. Fulton Cutting, and Bayard Cutting, voluntarily agreed to limit their profits in order to provide wage earners with comfortable, safe, hygienic, well-maintained housing at market rates. By paying a dividend, the company attempted to establish what its president E.R.L. Gould described as a "middle ground between pure philanthropy and pure business" and encourage others to invest in housing of an equally high caliber. City and Suburban's

success in building model tenements encouraged others to enter the field, notably the industrialist Henry Phipps who established the Phipps Houses in 1905. In the 1930s when the federal government seriously began to develop a national housing policy, City and Suburban's large-scale development projects, management techniques, and financial structure were studied and used as guidance for the development of new programs.

From its inception City and Suburban Homes has been linked to the light-court tenement. This building type was first proposed by the architect Ernest Flagg in Scribner's Magazine in 1894 as an economically viable alternative to the dark, unventilated dumbbell tenements of the period. In 1896, in preparation for the formation of City and Suburban, the Improved Housing Council, an offshoot of the prestigious Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, held a competition to solicit model designs for light-court tenements. The winners of that competition were commissioned to design City and Suburban's first three projects. The second prize winner, the distinguished New York architect James E. Ware, was asked to rework his plans for the buildings at 1168-1190 and 1194-1200 First Avenue. His initial project is reflected in the use of paired light-court units joined at the rear of an open entry court and in the location of the wide driveways or "courtways," as Ware called them. Ware, who was highly regarded for his luxury apartment buildings, won critical acclaim for the First Avenue buildings and was subsequently commissioned by City and Suburban to design eleven more buildings on the block. These included buildings of varying width in which he experimented with the placement of courts, stairs, halls, and apartment configurations in order to maximize light and air and to offer greater amenities. Among these are 403-409 East 64th Street and 404-408 East 65th Street, a pair of square light-court buildings with Beaux-Arts details; 411, 417, 419, 421, and 423 East 64th Street five units paired back-to-back on 60-foot wide lots to create alternating center courtyards and open side courts; and 410, 412, 414, and 416 East 65th Street, a group of four units on 75-foot wide lots constructed with center and side courts that offer a masterful reinterpretation of an earlier project by Ernest Flagg. Within the framework of a limited budget the buildings in the complex were designed in contemporary architectural styles and feature such details as cartouches, heavy garlands, raised three-dimensional brickwork, elaborately carved stone doorways, massive brakcets, and decorative ironwork. In 1914, City and Suburban's architectural department, headed by Philip H. Ohm, completed the block with two light-court buildings at 429 East 64th Street and 430 East 65th Street which have courtyard entrances and feature decorative details inspired by earlier Ware buildings on the block. In addition to their similarities in plan, these buildings are related to the others on the block in size, scale, use of materials, and decorative detailing, thus giving the block a strong sense of visual homogeneity.

In its projects City and Suburban emphasized large-scale development likening itself to a chain store, able to offer quality goods at bargain prices because of large-scale organization. When it was completed in 1915 the First Avenue Estate comprised 1059 apartments and was second in size only to City and Suburban's Avenue A Estate. By contrast, the next largest model tenement project in the city was Ernest Flagg's New York Fireproof

Tenements on West 42nd Street with 610 apartments. While there were other projects that covered large portions of city blocks, notably Alfred T. White's Riverside Buildings (1890) in Brooklyn, nothing approached City and Suburban's large-scale high-density developments. The First Avenue Estate is one of only two full city block developments of light-court tenements in the country. Thus, the First Avenue project can be seen as an important achievement in the social housing movement, bracketed in time between White's English-inspired low-density developments and such post-World War I projects as the Coops and Amalgamated Houses.

Low-cost Housing in New York, the Progressive Movement, and the Formation of City and Suburban Homes Company

By the middle of the nineteenth century, New York had developed from a small city to a world metropolis.[1] Restricted by geography and by the lack affordable public transit, its burgeoning worker population crowded into a few wards in Lower Manhattan near the major centers of employment. At first, this group's need for low-cost housing was met by partitioning existing rowhouses into one- and two-room units. By the 1840s, builders began erecting the city's first tenements. About fifty feet deep, these four- and five-story buildings were arranged in a double line of rooms with windowless bedrooms and stairs at the center of the building. Usually a second tenement was erected at the rear of the same lot, with families in both buildings sharing the same backyard pump and privy. Larger buildings, known as double-deckers or railroad flats, began appearing in the 1860s. These occupied as much as ninety percent of a standard 25 x 100 foot lot, and had twelve to sixteen rooms per floor, only four of which (two front, two back) had direct access to light and air.

Living conditions were overcrowded and unsanitary in all these buildings. Low incomes and high rents forced families to sublet a portion of their apartments or take in lodgers. Plumbing remained inadequate: water rarely reached above the first floor and was often only available from a tap in the yard; sewers and privies frequently overflowed, making these shared facilities unusable. Construction was flimsy and highly flammable; fires were a frequent occurrence, though halls and stairs were often so cramped as to make escape impossible. The streets were strewn with garbage and animal refuse; factories, slaughterhouses, and bone and fat rendering establishments operated side by side with tenements.

Under these conditions such infectious diseases as cholera, diptheria, and typhus were rampant. While some medical experts believed that infection could be linked to specific bacteria, most subscribed to the popular notion that unsanitary conditions (poor ventilation and drainage, exposure to sewer gas) produced unhealthy vapors called "miasmatic emanations" which were the chief source of disease. Thus, the poor ventilation and sanitary conditions in tenements were seen as a threat to public health, especially since it was realized that the diseases which originated in the slums tended to spread to wealthier districts. For many social commentators, bad housing was also a causative factor in the social degradation that led to crime, delinquency, pauperism, alcoholism, and prostitution. A report by the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, a charitable organization founded in

1843 that was frequently at the forefront of the housing reform movement in nineteenth-century New York, argued that:

> The tenements of the poor in this city are generally defective in size, arrangement, supplies of water, warmth, and ventilation..... The occupants consequently often suffer from sickness and premature mortality; their ability for self-maintenance is thereby impaired or destroyed, social habits and morals are debased, and a vast amount of wretchedness, pauperism and crime is produced.[2]

Motivated, therefore, both by fear of disease and by humanitarian concerns, reformers began organizing as early as the 1840s to attack the problems of the slums. From the first they took a two-pronged approach--lobbying for the enactment of housing and sanitary codes, and building model tenements which they hoped would demonstrate the feasibility of providing hygienic, comfortable housing for the working poor at market rates. Almost invariably, the sponsors of model tenements sought out innovative designs which would develop "better ways of utilizing the typical city lot" and improvements in "planning and equipment which speculative builders might find it profitable to follow."[3]

The first model tenement projects in New York were Gotham Court, at 36-38 Cherry Street (demolished) erected in 1850-51 by the philanthropist and businessman Silas Wood, and the Workingmen's Home at Mott and Elizabeth Streets (demolished) designed by architect John Ritch and erected in 1855-56 by the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor.[4] Because of problems engendered by the plans of these buildings, they were soon abandoned by their sponsors. Interest in model tenements ceased for a time as reformers turned their attention to lobbying for minimum sanitary and fire codes which they succeeded in passing in 1867.[5] However, these measures proved to be inadequate and the 1870s brought renewed interest in the design of model tenements.

In Brooklyn, merchant Alfred T. White, who had studied civil engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic in Troy, began experimenting with plans for a model tenement in 1872.[6] A newspaper article describing a new type of tenement being used in London for Sir Sidney Waterlow's Industrial Dwellings piqued his interest and, after corresponding with Waterlow and visiting the English buildings, White commissioned Brooklyn architect William S. Field to design a similar project, called the Home Buildings, at Hicks and Baltic Streets in Cobble Hill. The Home Buildings, erected in 1876-77, and the Tower Buildings, a second project on the adjoining block erected in 1878-79, are narrow six-story buildings arranged around the perimeters of a grassy quadrangle.[7] In most cases the buildings are only two rooms deep so that each room has windows facing out onto the court or onto the street. Access to the apartments is by means of open stairs and galleries -- a feature taken directly from Waterlow's buildings which recommended itself to White as a means of escape in case of fire and as a preventative for disease. White followed these early projects with the now partially demolished Riverside Buildings of 1890.[8] Similar in plan to the

Tower and Home Buildings, the three Riverside Buildings formed a "U" around a large open space that constituted fifty-one percent of the project's half-block site.

White's projects proved to be the first financial and architectural successes of the model tenement movement in New York. The money for the projects had largely come from White and his relatives using the financial mechanism of a limited-dividend company. Such companies, which financed most privately funded model housing projects in Britain and America prior to World War I, raised capital from philanthropically-minded investors who agreed to accept a fixed dividend normally set at three to seven percent with the understanding that any higher profits would be reserved for additional construction. With the White projects, careful tenant selection, good management, and ample space for commercial tenants all contributed to the financial success of the company which paid about a five percent dividend. However, the lower cost of Brooklyn real estate must have also been an important factor in its success. Some idea of the difference in the value of Manhattan and Brooklyn real estate can be obtained by contrasting the $81,892 purchase price for the 200 x 300 foot site of the Riverside Buildings in 1889 with the $210,000 purchase price for the 200 x 513 foot site of the City and Suburban First Avenue Estate in 1897 (about $1.30 a square foot versus $2.00 a square foot, the latter purchase made during a depression when land prices had been steadily falling).[9]

It was in Manhattan, of course, that the problems of overcrowding were gravest. Here the vast majority of tenements continued to be erected by individual developers on standard 25 x 100 foot lots. In December 1878, a new publication, The Plumber and Sanitary Engineer, sponsored a competition aimed at improving the standard of planning for such buildings, calling for plans which would eliminate windowless inner rooms. One-hundred-ninety entries were received, with the first prize going to architect James E. Ware for what would become known as a dumbbell plan. Such plans narrowed at the center to create side courts which provided light and air to inner bedrooms and a center hall. Amendments to the housing code passed in 1879 favored the dumbbell plan which was widely adopted. But in practice it provided little improvement over existing conditions. The rear yards between buildings were frequently no more than ten feet deep and the side courts were nothing more than airshafts only two feet wide. Too narrow to admit much light or air these shafts proved to be convenient receptacles for trash and cooking odors. Unfireproofed, they tended to act as flues in case of fire.

In 1894 Ernest Flagg published an article in Scribner's Magazine calling attention to the defects of the dumbbell plan which he felt stemmed from its adherence to the standard 25 x 100 foot lot. Flagg observed that tenements were seldom put up singly but in "blocks of from two, three, and four, up to twenty or more," with no attempt made "to depart from the stereotyped plan."[10] He argued that by combining four lots to create a 100 x 100 foot plot, one could build a square building with an ample central court and corner stairs. Such a building, he said, would employ less wall enclosure, corridors, and partitions than four conventional buildings while providing greater room space, light, ventilation, and fire protection with

each cluster of apartments set off by firewalls.

Light-court plans had been used in Europe for some time for middle-class apartment buildings and subsidized workers' housing and had appeared in New York for such luxury and upper middle-class apartment buildings and apartment hotels as Richard Morris Hunt's Stuyvesant Apartments (1869-70, demolished), Henry J. Hardenbergh's Dakota (1880-84), and James E. Ware's Osborne Apartments (1883-85). While Alfred T. White had succeeded in employing a perimeter scheme for his Brooklyn projects, his one imitator in Manhattan, the Improved Dwellings Association's complex on First Avenue between East 71st and 72nd Streets designed by Vaux & Radford and George Da Cunha in 1879-82, had to employ a much denser plan incorporating several modified dumbbells and by 1899 Elgin Gould doubted a similar project could be erected in Manhattan at prevailing land prices.[11] Flagg's contribution was to demonstrate that the courtyard type could be adapted to meet the needs of speculative tenement builders in Manhattan, producing a prototype with "properly lighted and well-ventilated apartments"[12] that had the same amount of rentable space as four conventional tenements and could be erected at the same or lower cost.

While Flagg's arguments had little immediate impact on speculative builders, they caused a revolution in the thinking of housing reformers and became in the words of I.N. Phelps Stokes "the starting point of model tenement-house planning in New York."[13]

The 1890s were, of course, a period ripe for reform.[14] Immigration and industrialization were bringing new people to American cities in unprecedented numbers. Cleveland, Buffalo, Washington, Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and every other major city were experiencing problems with housing. In New York, where immigration was most intense, more than two-thirds of the 3,500,000 inhabitants lived in 90,000 tenement houses. A protracted depression and the increasing power of big business, led to social unrest and labor strife. Traditional values, whether dealing with the family or the role of government, were called into question. Reform was the watchword of the day, be it concerned with good government, public health, women's rights, temperance, the City Beautiful, or tenement reform. Settlement houses, such as the Neighborhood Guild of New York (1886) and the New York College Settlement (1887) on Rivington Street, were among the first in the nation, and did much to publicize conditions in the slums, though the words and photographs of Jacob Riis' <u>How the Other Half Lives</u> of 1890 may have been the most influential vehicle in awakening the American public to conditions among New York's immigrant poor.

In 1894, newspaper accounts of conditions in the slums prompted the New York state legislature to appoint a committee headed by <u>Century Magazine</u> editor Richard Watson Gilder to investigate the tenement-house problem. The interest aroused by the work of the commission led the venerable Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor to sponsor a two-day conference in March 1896 on housing. Here, according to Jacob Riis, the reformers set up a plan of action "to deal with the matter of housing the people... ."

To the Good Government Clubs fell the task ... of compelling the

> enforcement of existing tenement-house laws. D.O. Mills, the philanthropic banker, declared his purpose to build hotels which should prove that a bed and lodging as good as any could be furnished to a great army of homeless men.... On the behalf of a number of capitalists, who had been identified with the cause of tenement-house reform for years, Robert Fulton Cutting, the president of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, offered to build homes for working people that should be worthy of the name, on a large scale.[15]

Following the conference, it was decided to form the Improved Housing Council which, working independently of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, would sponsor an architectural competition to solicit designs for model tenements. The program for the competition took as a given the ideas put forth in Ernest Flagg's Scribner's article and called for 100-foot square light-court buildings to be erected on a 200 x 400 foot plot. Only seventy percent of the lot was to be covered, with fifty-five percent in clear rentable space; buildings were to be divided into separate quadrants with each unit containing its own fireproof stair; apartments were to be only two rooms deep with cross ventilation in all the rooms; minimum sizes were set for the light courts, bedrooms and living rooms; and it was suggested that each family be provided with as many amenities as possible including its own toilet. The architects were also required to demonstrate that their buildings could earn a five percent return on invested capital at prevailing rentals for tenement apartments.[16] Twenty-eight entries were received, three of which were recommended for prizes. In July 1896, the City and Suburban Homes Company, the model housing company Cutting had promised, was established and pledged to build the prize-winning designs from that competition.

For its board, the company assembled a group of wealthy philanthropists, many of whom were already leaders in the field of model housing.[17] These included Samuel D. Babcock, president of the International Bell Telephone Company, financers R. Fulton Cutting and Bayard Cutting, banker D. Ogden Mills, and railroad magnate Cornelius Vanderbilt -- all of whom were major shareholders in the Improved Dwellings Association, builder of the model tenement at First Avenue and East 71st Street. Also lending their expertise, were Alfred T. White, developer of the Home, Tower, and Riverside buildings in Brooklyn, banker Isaac N. Seligman and builder John D. Crimmins, shareholders in the Tenement Dwellings Company, builders of a small tenement on the Lower East Side, and financer Adrian Iselin, Jr., who had privately built a number of subsidized small cottages in New Rochelle. For its president, the board selected Elgin R. L. Gould, a political scientist and expert on municipal affairs who had written the landmark study, The Housing of the Working People, "a detailed, scholarly analysis of housing reform in Europe and America which concentrated upon the financing and achievements of all model tenements in operation."[18] It was Gould's contention that with proper management, decent housing for the working poor could "be furnished on a satisfactory commercial basis."[19]

Like most of the other model housing companies, City and Suburban was established as a limited-dividend corporation, paying its investors a fixed

five percent dividend. The philosophical basis for such endeavors was in Gould's words, the "recognition that the housing problem can only be solved by economic methods" and that philanthropy was "powerless to do much because the field is altogether too vast." By paying a dividend it was hoped that the company would establish a "middle ground between pure philanthropy and pure business"[20] and so encourage speculative investors to follow its lead. City and Suburban tried to attract a far greater amount of capital than was usually available to limited-dividend housing companies. The company's original stock offering was for $1 million, set at $10 a share so that, as E.R.L. Gould put it, it could establish "a clientage recruited from the thrifty masses as well as the large-hearted rich." Thus, City and Suburban hoped to appeal to all those who wished to "invest their means for useful ends" but required "a sound security."[21] Apparently it was successful in that endeavor -- for in 1902 when Jacob Riis wrote The Battle of the Slums, the company had an invested capital $2,300,000, with 250 of the 400 stockholders, holding ten shares or less, "a healthy sign" Riis said "that the company is holding the confidence of the community."[22]

This philosophic and practical need to earn a profit on its investment set City and Suburban apart from some of the other model tenement companies of the period which were completely philanthropic in intent. In particular, the handsome Shively Sanitary Tenements (East River Homes) at 507-515 and 517-523 East 77th Street and 508-514 and 516-522 East 78th Street (built 1910-11) which provided housing for poor tuberculosis victims and their families during their recovery period, were completely underwritten by Mr. and Mrs. William Kissam Vanderbilt at cost of $1 million for the buildings and $81,000 for the land. All profits from rental of the apartments were placed in trust, with the proceeds split between subsidies for the families of residents too sick to work and endowments for the care of indigents at Presbyterian Hospital and the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

City and Suburban Homes Company

In its first year of operation City and Suburban began work on three projects, commissioning designs from the prize winners of the Improved Housing Council's competition. The first prize winner, Ernest Flagg, seems to have been instrumental in getting his long-time patron, Mrs. Alfred Corning Clark, to underwrite the company's initial project, a group of six model tenements at 217-233 West 68th Street and 214-220 West 69th Street (demolished). Mrs. Clark, heir to the Clark family's vast Upper West Side real estate holdings, donated the land for the project and $100,000 in cash in exchange for stock. The buildings were constructed in 1896-98 and were described by the New York Times as being as perfect "as science to date can make them."[23] The company also acquired a half-block site at First Avenue, East 64th, and East 65th Streets early in 1897, though the land did not become available for development until 1898. Second prize winner James E. Ware was commissioned to design a pair of buildings fronting on First Avenue which were completed in December 1899. City and Suburban eventually acquired the rest of the block, and between 1900 and 1906 Ware's firm designed eleven additional buildings for the First Avenue Estate. The block was completed in 1915 with two buildings designed by Philip H. Ohm, who had

headed City and Suburban's architectural department since 1906. Third prize winner Percy Griffin was commissioned to design small brick and half-timber cottages for Homewood, the company's suburban development between Sixteenth and Eighteenth Avenues, 67th to 74th Streets in Brooklyn.[24] These were offered for sale with payments over a twenty-year period to such wage earners as mechanics, letter-carriers, policemen, firemen, and bookkeepers, following the model of a program which had proven successful in Belgium.

The company's city projects were intended for less affluent workers. Sites for these projects were selected not just on the basis of availability of land and access to public transportation, though these factors were of primary concern, but also on the basis of whether there was a demand for such apartments in the neighborhood; thus, the company sought neighborhoods which were "perhaps not the most densely populated, but at all events where a positive need exists." [25] Accordingly, the Alfred Corning Clark Estate was located on the outskirts of a tenement house district, six blocks from the city's most densely populated block, three blocks from the second, and only 200 yards from the third, while the First Avenue Estate was located in a tenement neighborhood once known as "Battle Row."[26] The tenants who moved to the City and Suburban projects were primarily servants, craftsmen, cigar makers, porters, painters, factory workers, nurses, waitresses, dressmakers, and salesclerks. In the East Side projects the majority of the tenants came from the surrounding neighborhood and were chiefly native-born Americans, Germans, Bohemians, English, Swedes, Irish, Scots, Cubans, and Hungarians representing the ethnic make-up of Yorkville which then extended from 60th Street to 96th Street. It should be noted that this practice of drawing tenants from the surrounding neighborhood seems to have been standard for model tenement projects so that in Brooklyn Alfred T. White's Riverside Buildings had a large proportion of Scandinavian tenants who were "largely sea-faring" and were attracted to the project because of its proximity to the harbor.[27]

City and Suburban's later development projects in Manhattan included the Avenue A (York Avenue) Estate, a full block of model tenements and a residential hotel for women constructed between 1901 and 1913 to the designs of Harde & Short, Percy Griffin, and the City and Suburban architectural department. On its completion the Avenue A Estate was "the largest individual low-rent housing project in the world."[28] Concerned that the housing available to African-Americans at the turn of the century could "only be characterized as disgraceful" and aware that "a colored man in this city on the average now pays higher rental and gets far less for his money than does the white man,"[29] the company erected the Tuskegee (1902) and Hampton (1912) (Howells & Stokes, architects for both), the first model tenements in New York built expressly for African-Americans. (Located in the "San Juan Hill" section of the Upper West Side, these buildings were replaced by the Lincoln Tower Apartments in the 1960s.) It was also responsible for James H. Jones Memorial Building, a single light-court tenement at 413-417 East 73rd Street erected in 1906 to the designs of Philip H. Ohm. Writing about these projects Jacob Riis was to say:

> The company's 'city homes' come as near to being that as any can. There is light and air in abundance, steam heat in winter in the

> latest ones, fireproof stairs, and deadened partitions to help on the privacy that is at once the most needed and hardest to get in a tenement. The houses do not look like barracks. Anyone who has ever seen a row of factory tenements that were houses, not homes, will understand how much that means. .... All together, the company has redeemed its promise of real model tenements.[30]

He later adds:

> The company's rents average a dollar a week per room, and are a trifle higher than those of the tenements round about; but they have so much more in the way of comfort that the money is eagerly paid.[31]
>
> No one could have done a greater and better thing for the metropolis than to demonstrate that it is possible to build homes for the toilers as a business and net a business interest upon the investment.[32]

Described by Roy Lubove in his The Progressives and the Slums as "the 'model' model tenement company of the Progressive era,"[33] City and Suburban became the most sucessful of all the limited-dividend housing companies both here and abroad with an invested capital of $6 million and 12,000 tenants by 1911.[34] In the 1930s, many years after other companies ceased operations, City and Suburban owned fourteen property complexes including the First Avenue Estate, the York Avenue Estate, garden apartments in Queens, and a housing development in Brooklyn.[35] The company attributed its success to three factors: careful, economical management that emphasized good tenant relations, scientific architectural planning that produced the largest possible rental space, and large-scale production.[36] Wherever possible large sites were acquired since they allowed maximum flexibility in planning while providing some measure of control over the character of a neighborhood. In addition, the cost of administration was considerably less per unit in a large development. The high cost of building in Manhattan coupled with the company's desire to provide tenants with as many amenities as possible led to high-density development. Fully eighty percent of the First Avenue and Avenue A sites were covered with buildings, "a higher proportion than that of any other American or British project. The large scale was determined not only by the high cost of land but a philosophical commitment to modifying the economics of construction."[37] As the company's 1924 Annual Report noted, "the low prices obtained in food distribution by chain store large scale organization are an inspiration and incentive to accomplish similar results in housing."[38] In the 1930s when the federal government seriously began to develop a housing policy, City and Suburban's large-scale development projects, financial structure, and management techniques were studied and used as guidance for the development of new programs.

The First Avenue Estate

The City and Suburban First Avenue Estate is located on the former

grounds of the Colored Home and Hospital, an institution founded in 1839, that had begun to erect a home, hospital, and chapel on First Avenue between East 64th and East 65th Streets in 1849. In April 1897, City and Suburban purchased the site from the institution for $210,000, agreeing to delay possession for a year's time.[39] In July 1898, James E. Ware filed plans with the Department of Buildings to erect a pair of buildings fronting on First Avenue which were completed in 1899.[40] A native New Yorker,[41] James Edward Ware (1846-1918) was educated at the College of the City of New York and apprenticed in the office R. G. Hatfield, a noted mid-nineteenth century New York architect whose works included the pioneering cast-iron Baltimore Sun Building (1851, James Bogardus, iron founder), the Second Empire Seaman's Savings Bank on Wall Street, the Institute for Deaf and Dumb, and several buildings for the Department of Charities and Corrections on Randall's Island. Ware established his own office in 1869 and continued practicing until his death in 1918. He took his two sons, Franklin B. and Arthur, into his firm in 1879 and 1900, respectively, and worked in partnership with Herbert Spencer Styne-Harde briefly in the late 1890s. Ware's extensive practice included city and country houses, grand hotels, school buildings, churches, apartment buildings, tenements, and warehouses. Although trained in the Second Empire style, he was an early exponent of the Queen Anne style as exemplified by his group of rowhouses erected for Ira Doying on East 67th Street of 1878-80 which were published in the American Architect and Building News in September 1880. His Osborne Apartments (1883-85), a massive ten-story structure at the corner of West 57th Street and Seventh Avenue combining Romanesque and Florentine Renaissance Revival elements, was one of the city's finest early luxury apartment buildings. Other works included the Gothic Revival Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, 917 Madison Avenue, of 1899 and the Twelfth Regiment Armory at Columbus Avenue and 61st Street of 1886. However, judging by his biographical entry in Who's Who in New York, Ware was proudest of his experimental fireproof warehouses for the Manhattan Warehouse Company, one at Lexington Avenue and 42nd Street and another at Seventh Avenue and 52nd Street, and of his work with model tenements.

Ware's prize-winning design in the Plumber and Sanitary Engineer's competition of 1878, has been criticized by modern historians as being extremely conservative, with approximately 90 percent of the lot covered by two wings linked by a narrow service core containing stairs and water closets. Nonetheless in comparison with the other entries in the competition, Anthony Jackson notes In A Place Called Home, Ware's project was well planned: "the open positioning of the staircase with its fireproof enclosure was a great advance from the dark interior flimsy stairway. The resultant elimination of interior corridors above the ground floor and the ease of access from dwellings to water closets, ... were also major improvements" and the courts though not really adequate seemed to be the "best available compromise."[42]

In his design for the Improved Housing Council's competition of 1896, Ware based his plan on Ernest Flagg's 100-foot square light-court design, published in Scribner's in 1894. Flagg, of course, had also reworked his design for the competition and had placed first. In his second-place project, Ware modified Flagg's design by employing courtyard entrances with

access to the street via an arched passageway. Two of these 100-foot buildings were combined at the rear to form a U-shaped complex which became the basic unit of his 200 x 400 foot block design. Arranged so that they faced onto the avenues and side streets, these units were separated by interconnecting driveways or "courtways" as Ware called them. While the passageways to the courtyard were not constructed, this U-shaped configuration was adopted for the initial buildings on First Avenue as was the system of interconnecting driveways for the block.

In his final design for the First Avenue Buildings, Ware also provided space for stores at street level. Entrances to the apartments were placed at the center of the East 64th and East 65th Street facades and in the center court separating the two buildings. Each building contained seventy-nine, two-, three-, and four-room apartments and two street-level stores (soon after the buildings were completed, two ground-story apartments facing onto First Avenue were converted to commercial use).[43] Each apartment had abundant access to light and air, was soundproofed, and was supplied with steam heat, hot water, and gas ranges and fixtures. Living rooms (combined kitchens and sitting rooms) had stationary earthenware wash tubs and large porcelain sinks as well as such built-ins as dressers, mantel shelves, and coal closets. In the bedrooms there were enclosed closets (instead of the wood wardrobes which were the common lot of tenement dwellers). Shower and tub rooms were available on the first floor and in the basement. The basement also contained locker rooms for tenant storage, a special room for baby carriages, and laundry facilities including a steam-drying system, supplied free of charge.

Ware's plans for these buildings were much admired, as an article by T.M. Clark in The American Architect of 1907 makes abundantly clear:

> The tenements in this block are intended for families of the most modest income, but they are planned by their skillful designer, Mr. James E. Ware, with as much care as if they were palaces.[44]

Clark was particularly impressed with Ware's varied floor plans, "spacious well-lighted stairs," convenient arrangement of living rooms which "were spacious enough to form...a pleasant family-sitting room," placement of water closets, "not out of the kitchen, as is often seen, still less out of the public staircase hall, but conveniently ... among the bedrooms, ... with a window to the outer air," and treatment of bedrooms to ensure privacy of adults and children, handled with a "sympathy and delicacy for which [Mr. Ware] cannot be too highly praised."[45]

In his competition project, Ware had originally envisioned an elaborate exterior treatment for the buildings, complete with roof gardens and corner towers. The realities of the limited budget, the necessity to include commercial space, and the subsequent omission of certain features in the plan, notably the courtyard entrances, apparently were responsible for the reworking of his design. His executed project drew on Ernest Flagg's solution for the Alfred Corning Clark Estate in its use of light-reflecting brick and limestone,[46] planar brick surfaces, and Beaux-Arts style decorative motifs, and in its employment of fire escapes to emphasize the

attic story.[47]

Here the facades are faced with tan Roman brick trimmed with stone and arranged in a tripartite composition consisting of a one-story base, four-story midsection and one-story attic. Windows are grouped in a 3-1-2-1-3 pattern on the avenue facades and are arranged in a 3-4-3 pattern on the side streets, though the side street pattern is slightly irregular because of the placement of bathrooms in the large front apartments. Decorative elements include raised brick Gibbs surrounds at the first story, stone belt courses above the first and fifth stories, stone sills and lintels on the upper-story windows and a dentiled cornice. On the side street facades elaborately carved stone doorways enriched with cartouches and console brackets support ledges which form the base for second-story fire escape balconies. Stone enframements with broken pediments and cartouches are employed in the gently graded entrance court off First Avenue. An iron fire escape balcony extends across the entire length of the facade setting off the attic story. The original balustraded parapet has been replaced, but the building still retains portions of its original metal-framed shopfronts.

In March 1900, only three months after the First Avenue buildings were completed, James E. Ware & Son filed plans to erect another pair of buildings at 403-409 East 64th Street and 404-408 East 65th Street which were constructed between June 1900 and June 1901.[48] According to the company's Fifth Annual Report (1908), "in appearance, design, and equipment [these] strongly resembled the First Avenue buildings except for some minor changes to improve amenities." The new buildings each contained twenty-five two-room, sixty-five three-room, and five four-room apartments. In a change from the previous project, the four-room apartments now had private baths requiring some minor adjustments in the floor plans. To the company's mind, however, probably the most important change was the creation of "playrooms in the basements for children to play in wet weather." Over the years the company was to construct similar playrooms in its buildings at both the First Avenue and Avenue A Estates, where they were used not just for children's play but also for concerts, dances, lectures, magic lantern shows, and company-sponsored Christmas and May parties. It should be noted that City and Suburban prohibited children from playing in the interior courtyards of its buildings where the noise might be disturbing to others, and discouraged unsupervised play in the street where the children might be prey to unwholesome influences; however, the company made a concerted effort to locate its developments near schools and playgrounds, to provide play spaces in the basements of its buildings, and to find responsible adults to supervise play groups, atheletic teams, and social groups.[49]

As City and Suburban's Annual Report of 1901 suggested, the facade treatment of this second pair of buildings is very similar to that of the first buildings in the complex. The same light-colored brick and stone trim are employed, the tripartite composition is repeated, and many decorative details reappear, among them the stone belt courses, plain stone window sills and lintels, raised brick Gibbs surrounds, dentiled cornice, and crowning sixth-story fire escape. Here, however, there are entrances at either end of the facades. These have paired wood and glass doors which allow light to enter the vestibules. The doors are recessed within heavy

segmental-arched enframements enriched by foliate moldings, oversized keystones and garlanded console brackets which support projecting hoods. Areaway railings run in front of the buildings.

In August 1901, only two months after the second building phase at the First Avenue Estate was completed, Ware filed plans for five buildings to be erected on sixty-foot wide lots at 411-417, 419-421, and 423 East 64th Street.[50] Here, Ware adapted a solution employed by Ernest Flagg at the Alfred Corning Clark Estate, pairing back-to-back units to create alternating central and open side courts. In plan the individual units are closer to Ware's own buildings at the First Avenue Estate though they contain more two-room units than in previous buildings in response to a demand from young couples for such apartments. The buildings also cover more of the lot than the other buildings at the First Avenue Estate, presumably as a means of compensating for rapidly escalating prices brought on by material shortages and labor unrest. Because of those conditions, City and Suburban was forced to delay the start of construction to June 1902, completing the buildings in June 1903.

In this group Ware continued the basic exterior articulation of the earlier buildings on the block but introduced some changes in detail. Again the buildings were faced with tan brick trimmed with stone. Belt courses create a tripartite story grouping, windows are arranged in a rhythmic pattern, and iron balconies extend across the facades beneath the sixth-story windows. Here stone skewbacks and keystones are substituted for Gibbs surrounds on the first-story windows, the door surrounds have broken pediments and are ornamented with garlands and cartouches, a Doric frieze has been inserted under the dentiled cornice, and the roof parapet is crenellated and ornamented with faceted terra-cotta panels.

Ware's final involvement with the First Avenue Estate began in December 1904 when he was asked to plan a group of four tenements on seventy-five foot wide lots which were constructed at 410, 412, 414, and 416 East 65th Street in 1905-06.[51] Here he again reworked a plan by Ernest Flagg, in this case a design for a seventy-five foot wide tenement that Flagg had proposed in 1900 when a group of architects were invited to test the provisions of a new tenement house act (the "New Law"). Flagg's original design was for a rectangle with longitudinal extensions and a central court. Ware rearranged the various elements, increasing the size of the rectangle and substituting transverse arms for the longitudinal extensions to increase the size of the side courts. In terms of the amenities offered by City and Suburban, the plans document a return to larger apartments and to greater use of private baths and private halls within the apartments.

For the facades of these buildings, Ware once again reprised the theme established with his first buildings at the First Avenue Estate, using light brick and stone trim, a tripartite composition, and Beaux-Arts details. Attention is focused on the doorways set off by granite and limestone enframements. These are enriched by a boldly carved cartouches and broken pediments. The pediments act as the frame for the decorative iron guard rails set in front of a central second-story windows which in turn are decorated with stone skewbacks and console keystones. As in Ware's earlier

buildings, sixth-story balconies add a strong horizontal accent, but here the balconies extend only beneath the windows and not to the corners of the facades. Wide balconies, handsomely decorated with curved brackets and finials, are also placed beneath the windows at each story. The buildings are crowned by cornices decorated with modillions and corner brackets. (The brackets are missing at 410 and 412 East 65th Street.)

With the completion of these buildings in 1906, City and Suburban occupied the entire site it had acquired from the Colored Home and Hospital in 1896. The balance of the lots on the block facing onto York Avenue remained in the hands of William C. Schermerhorn and did not become available until City and Suburban purchased the site from his heirs in 1913. The company waited another year till it had completed its last building at the Avenue A Estate before filing plans to develop the new property.[52] Designs for the new project were prepared by Philip H. Ohm, who headed City and Suburban's construction and architectural department.

Ohm had established a private practice in 1894 and worked in Harlem until 1898 when he opened an office at 35 Broadway in downtown Manhattan.[53] In 1904, City and Suburban decided to set up its own construction company, and Ohm may have been hired then to supervise the construction of two buildings, designed by Percy Griffin, at 503-509 East 78th Street and 504-508 East 79th Street. By 1906, the responsibilities of the constructive department had expanded, and Ohm had begun planning model tenements for the company's Avenue A project. Between 1906 and 1915 Ohm designed nine model tenements and a hotel for that project, the James H. Jones Memorial model tenement at 413-417 East 73rd Street (1906), the Phipps Houses III on West 64th Street (1911), and the final two buildings at the First Avenue Estate (1914-15). With the completion of its two large Manhattan developments, City and Suburban seems to have closed its architectural department, and nothing more is known about Ohm.

In his design for 425 East 64th Street and 430 East 65th Street Ohm employed a pair of light-court buildings which shared an enclosed side court. Like the later buildings at the Avenue A Estate, these had arched passages leading to a central courtyard with corner entrances. Plans of this type were common for European apartment buildings and had been part of Ware's original concept for this project though they were not adopted. Ohm's interest in courtyard entrances may have been prompted by Henry Atterbury Smith's successful design for the Shively Sanitary tenements which were located opposite City and Suburban's Avenue A Estate. The other novel aspect of this design was Ohm's use of stairs that are aligned in different positions to the court, a feature which presumably allowed him to create more efficient apartment layouts.

For the facades of these buildings Ohm employed materials similar to those used by Ware, light-colored brick, stone, marble, and terra cotta. Projected bays topped by shaped parapets articulate the facade. The chief decorative feature is an elaborate stone portal framed by immense brackets that carry an overhanging cornice forming the base for a fire escape balcony, a feature quoted directly from Ware's First Avenue buildings.

Related in size, scale, use of materials and decorative detailing, the buildings of the First Avenue Estate have a strong visual homogeneity. On the Ware buildings the unbroken line of sixth-story balconies also acts as a powerful linking device. In plan, the buildings display variations of the center light-court solution, incorporating side courts and rear alleyways as well to ensure that every apartment is provided with adequate light and ventilation. Such buildings became standard for middle-class housing following the adoption of the Tenement House Act of 1901, (the "New Law"), but remained beyond the means of the working poor. Thus they are of interest both as manifestations of the work of the nation's most successful builder of philanthropic housing and as an exploration of an important housing type. That the First Avenue Estate is one of only two full city block developments of light-court model tenements in the country, and that there are significant variations among the buildings in the block -- all employed by Ware and Ohm in order to maximize light and air and to offer greater amenities -- makes it all the more important.

Subsequent History and Influence

The years prior to World War I were the period of City and Suburban's greatest growth, though the company continued to operate housing projects including the First Avenue Estate until the 1961.[54] In the period between the World Wars, the company continued to build housing though its focus shifted from Manhattan to the outlying boroughs which had been made accessible to workers by the construction of the subway and elevated lines. In 1919-20, City and Suburban built its first group of garden apartments at Homewood designed by Andrew J. Thomas, a talented young architect who was perhaps the most innovative designer of this building type in New York between the wars. In the 1930s City and Suburban developed the Celtic Park Apartments in Woodside, Queens, employing the architects Ernest Flagg (one unit, 1931-32) and Springsteen & Goldhammer (five units, 1933-38). In Manhattan, the company purchased several model tenements projects from the heirs of their original sponsors. These included the former Shively Sanitary Tenements, renamed the East River Homes, which City and Suburban bought in 1924 and ran as low-cost rental apartments, and two properties acquired from the Phelps-Stokes Fund in 1925, the Dudley Homes at 339-349 East 32nd Street (demolished) and 52-58 East 97th Street (built 1922, Sibley & Featherston, architects). In 1929-30, the company bought three "Old Law" tenements and five commercial buildings on Goerck and East Houston Streets which it renovated into modern rental apartments to serve the largely Jewish community of the Lower East Side. The Junior League Hotel at the Avenue A Estate, which had begun losing money in the early 1930s, was taken over entirely by City and Suburban in 1933 which continued to operate it as the East End Hotel for Women. In addition, sixty-seven houses in Cedarhurst, Nassau County, erected by Mrs. Russell Sage as a model housing project, were purchased from her estate in 1920 and sold to their occupants at cost over a five-year term. During this period, the company also made improvements to its older apartments at the First Avenue and Avenue A Estates installing electricity, baths, and modern appliances, and in some cases reconfiguring room arrangements. A 1939 Federal Housing Administration study attests to the fact that:

> Although the rentals of the housing projects operated by the company increased from slightly over $4 per room per month in 1899 to a range of from $9 to $11 in 1930, all of the projects in operation in 1930 were tenanted by families in the lowest quarter of the range of rentals paid in New York at that time.[55]

Following World War II, material and labor shortages and the imposition of rent controls which made even modest new construction for low-income tenants non-competitive with existing rental buildings discouraged the company from building new housing. However, it was still operating eight properties in 1950 -- the First Avenue Estate, the Avenue A (York Avenue) Estate, including the East End Hotel for Women, the James H. Jones Memorial Building on East 73rd Street, the Homewood Garden Apartments, the East River Homes (formerly Shively Sanitary Tenements), the Dudley Homes, the East 97th Street property, and the Celtic Garden Apartments. One property, the Alfred Corning Clark Estate, had been sold in 1924 because it lacked central heating and bathrooms and was considered too costly to modernize, and two others, the Goerck-Houston Street buildings and the Tuskegee-Hampton Estate, were condemned for urban redevelopment projects (the Dudley was also later condemned as part of the site of Kips Bay Plaza). The company had paid off its mortgages and made capital improvements to its remaining buildings, and still had considerable cash in hand when in December 1951, it acquired the innovative Hillside Homes,[56] a multi-block low-density moderate income project, designed by Clarence Stein in 1934, located at Boston Road and Seymour Avenue in the Bronx. City and Suburban remained in operation until 1961, when the majority of its shares were acquired by the Scheuer family through the Diversified Management Corporation, a real estate holding company.[57] In April 1961, City and Suburban merged with Diversified and the outstanding five percent of the stock was purchased at $50.25 per share. The First Avenue Estate remained in the hands of the Sheuer family until it was purchased by Rockefeller University in 1966 for housing. It was sold to its present owner, the Stahl York Avenue Corporation, in 1977.

The First Avenue Estate has been influential since the first buildings at the complex were completed. Widely published in the early days of the company, the initial First Avenue buildings provided a successful demonstration of the feasibility of light-court tenement design and were an inspiration to both the framers of the New Law of 1901 and the organizers of other turn-of-the-century model tenement companies. Among the early companies which were directly related to City and Suburban were Ernest Flagg's New York Fireproof Association, established in 1899 and originally financed by Darius Ogden Mills whom Flagg had come to know through his work with City and Suburban; the Phipps Houses, established by industrialist Henry Phipps in 1905 at the suggestion of City and Suburban's president Elgin Gould and subsequently organized with the advice of the company and managed by its staff; and the Phelps-Stokes Fund, established by Caroline and Olivia Stokes, who were early investors in City and Suburban and served on its board and who on erecting the Dudley and 52-58 East 97th Street turned over the management of these properties to City and Suburban.[58]

Other light-court model tenement projects included the Billings at 326-330 East 35th Street of 1905 designed by Andrews & Withers, the Bishop at 56-82 Hester Street of 1901-02 and De Forest Fireproof Tenements at 203-205 East 27th Street of 1906-07 designed by Ernest Flagg, the Shively Sanitary Tenements of 1910-11 designed by Henry Atterbury Smith, the Hartley Open Stair Tenements at 521-531 West 47th Street of 1912-13 designed by Henry Atterbury Smith and William P. Miller, the Rogers Tenement at 425-427 West 44th Street of 1915 designed by Grosvenor Atterbury, and the Emerson Tenements at 746 Eleventh Avenue of 1917 designed by William Emerson. It should be noted that while several of these buildings were extremely experimental in design, the cost of their construction tended to be absorbed by their sponsors and not charged against operating expenses. Even so, only a few model tenement companies, notably Ernest Flagg's Fireproof Association, approached City and Suburban in terms of profitability or longevity and none approached it in size. It was precisely these factors which interested the next generation of housing experts as they began to study the City and Suburban Company and its projects in the 1930s.

Thus, in 1939 the Federal Housing Administration regarded "the policies and practices evolved in the successful management ...[of] one of the oldest limited dividend housing corporations in existence" worthy of study as "a guide to more recent ventures into the field of limited dividend housing operations" and hoped that by publishing a study of City and Suburban's operations, Four Decades of Housing with a Limited Dividend Corporation, "the principles of rental housing operations gleaned from the corporation's 40-year experience would serve to further the building operation of multi-family structures for investment rather than speculation."[59] After analyzing the company's operations the report concluded:

> In toto, the management has pursued a course calculated to preserve its investment while doing its share toward activating better housing for low-income groups. Its financial success is illustrated by its balance sheet. Its leadership in promoting better housing has received acknowledgement from time to time by other interested groups. Its activities have been pointed out as as a model worthy of duplication by other groups interested in attacking the same problems. Its policies and practices have been followed by other similar organizations. And today, after more than four decades of unceasing activity, it is continuing its forward movement with building activity.[60]

For James Ford, writing in 1936, in his monumental survey Slums and Housing, the company's financial policies and architectural achievements were also of interest, but it was the sheer size of its projects that were most impressive. While there were other projects that covered large portions of city blocks, notably Alfred T. White's Riverside Buildings of 1890 in Brooklyn, the First Avenue Estate is one of only two full city block developments of light-court model tenements in the nation. It can be seen as an important achievement in the social housing movement, bracketed in time between White's English-inspired low-density developments and the post-War I projects like the Coops and Amalgamated Houses.

Report prepared by Gale Harris
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NOTES

1. This material on the development of low-income housing in New York is taken from James Ford, Slums and Housing (Cambridge, Mass., 1936); Anthony Jackson, A Place Called Home: a History of Low-cost Housing in Manhattan (Cambridge, Mass., 1976); Roy Lubove, The Progressives and the Slums: Tenement House Reform in New York City, 1890-1907 (Pittsburgh, 1962); Jacob Riis, The Battle with the Slum (New York, 1902).

2. Quoted in Jackson, 24-25.

3. Ford, 123.

4. For these buildings see Jackson, 6-16;

5. For the tenement law of 1867 see Jackson, 35-39; and Lawrence Veiller, "Tenement House Reform in New York City, 1834-1900," in The Tenement House Problem ed. Robert W. De Forest and Lawrence Veiller (New York, 1903), 94-97.

6. Alfred T. White, "Sun-Light Tenements," National Housing Association Publications 12 (Mar. 1912); "Alfred Tredway White," Dictionary of American Biography.

7. The Home Buildings and Tower Buildings are within the Cobble Hill Historic District.

8. The Riverside Buildings are within the Brooklyn Heights Historic District.

9. White, 19; City and Suburban Homes Company, First Annual Report (1897). For real estate prices in 1897 see "The Real Estate Market," Real Estate Record, Jan.-June, 1897.

10. Ernest Flagg, "The New York Tenement-House Evil and Its Cure," Scribner's Magazine 16 (July 1894), 109.

11. Elgin R.L. Gould, "The Housing Problem," Municipal Affairs 3 (Mar. 1899), 121-22. On this building see also Jackson, 59-60; "The New York Tenement House System," Leslie's Illustrated, Dec. 30, 1882, p. 315, reproduced in "Statement with Supporting Information Concerning the Entire Block Bounded by York Avenue..." submitted on behalf of the owner of Block 1490, April 15, 1988.

12. Flagg, 109.

13. I.N. Phelps Stokes, "Appendix: Notes on Plans," in Ford, Slums and Housing, p. 883.

14. Harold U. Faulkner, Politics, Reform and Expansion (New York, 1959), 23-47; Gwendolyn Wright, Moralism and the Model Home (Chicago, 1980), 105-116.

15. Jacob Riis, 128-129.

16. This rate was comparable to the earnings on a conservative investment at the time. Eugenie Ladner Birch and Deborah S. Gardner, "The Seven-Percent Solution, A Review of Philanthropic Housing, 1870-1910," Journal of Urban History, 7 (August 1981), 406.

17. See "New York's Great Movement of Housing Reform, The Review of Reviews 14 (December 1896), 693-99.

18. Lubove, 102.

19. Gould, The Housing of Working People, quoted in Lubove, 102.

20. Gould, "The Housing Problem," 122.

21. Ibid, 123.

22. Riis, 13.

23. "Health and Profit," New York Times, November 29, 1896, p. 13.

24. Percy Griffin, "Model Cottages at Homewood," Municipal Affairs 3 (Mar. 1899), 132-37.

25. "New York's Great Movement," 697.

26. This section is based on the company's Annual Reports, 1897-1907.

27. White, 16.

28. Federal Housing Administration, Four Decades of Housing with a Limited Dividend Corporation (Washington, D. C., 1939), 59.

29. City and Suburban Homes Company, Fifth Annual Report (1901), 9.

30. Riis, 133.

31. Ibid., 136.

32. Ibid., 137.

33. Lubove, 249.

34. Birch and Gardner, 422.

35. FHA, 27-71.

36. Gould, "Model Tenements Not a Failure," New York Times, January 19, 1913, p. 13; City and Suburban Homes Company, Twenty-eighth Annual Report (1924), 7.

37. Birch and Gardner, 423; See also FHA, 59, 71-75.

38. Annual Report (1924), 7.

39. Real Estate Record & Guide, May 8, 1897, p. 787; "To Build Model Homes," New York Times, April 3, 1897.

40. New York City, Department of Buildings, Manhattan, New Building Application, 549-1899.

41. This section on James E. Ware is based on Dennis Steadman Francis, Architects in Practice in New York City, 1840-1900 (New York, 1979), 80; Who's Who in New York, 7th ed. (New York, 1918), 1119; Landmarks Preservation Commission, Architect's Appendix, Upper East Side Historic District Report; Landmarks Preservation Commission, Research Files; Clio Group, "James E. Ware's First Avenue Estate: An Architectural Evaluation," (March, 1989), 2-4; James E. Ware obituary, New York Times, April 15, 1918, p. 15.

42. Jackson, 53.

43. The following discussion of the amenities in the First Avenue buildings is taken from the Fourth Annual Report, 1900.

44. T.M. Clark, "Apartment Houses," American Architect 91 (Jan. 5, 1907), 8.

45. Ibid, 8-9.

46. These materials were also used for Flagg's St. Luke's Hospital, since, as Gwendolyn Wright puts it, "white was a sign of visible sanitary awareness" and in the 1890s "Things not only had to be clean, they had to look clean." Moralism and the Model Home, 120.

47. For Flagg's design see Bacon, 250.

48. New Building application, 203-1900.

49. Annual Reports, 1901-10.

50. New Building application, 1420-1901.

51. New Building application, 49-1904.

52. New Building application, 331-1914.

53. For Ohm see Francis, 58; Clio Group, 4; David Handlin, "An Analysis of the York Avenue Estate," in "A Report: Opposing Landmark Designation," (Dec. 30, 1988), 56-57; David Handlin, "The Architectural Significance of the York Avenue Estate," in "Closing Argument of Kalikow 78/79 Company regarding the Proposed Designation of the York Avenue Estate....," Apr. 17, 1990.

54. This section of the later development of City and Suburban is largely based on the company's Annual Reports, 1915-1949/50 and on the FHA study of 1939. For its later garden apartment projects see also Bacon, 263; Robert A.M. Stern, Gregory Gilmartin, Thomas Mellins, New York 1930 (New York, 1987), 449, 481, 490; Richard Pluntz, "Institutionalization of Housing Form in New York City, 1920-1950," in Housing Form and Public Policy in the United States (New York, 1980), 158-61.

55. FHA, 60.

56. "Stock Control of Hillside Houses Sold by Nathan Straus and Family," New York Times, December 21, 1951, p. 41.

57. New York County, County Clerk, File 15742-1960, Certificate of Incorporation, Court and Record Division, New York County Courthouse; File 392-1896, Division of Old Records, Surrogates Courthouse.

58. For Flagg's involvement with City and Suburban and the New York Fireproof Tenement Association see Bacon, 244-53; for the company's involvement in the creation of the Phipps Houses see "The Phipps Model Tenements Again," Real Estate Record and Guide, Mar. 4, 1905, p. 460; and Roger Starr, Phipps Houses (New York, 1980), 3 (Copy on file at the Landmarks Preservation Commission in the Phipps Houses research file); for the Stokes sisters see Franklin H. Williams to David Todd, letter dated June 22, 1989, in the Landmarks Preservation Commission, City and Suburban Homes Company, Avenue A (York Avenue) Estate, LP file.

59. FHA, 2.

60. Ibid., p. 91.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of these buildings, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate has a special character, special historical and aesthetic interest and value as a part of the development, heritage and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate, built between 1898 and 1915, is the oldest extant project of the largest and most successful of the privately financed limited-dividend companies which attempted to address the housing problems of the nation's working poor at the turn of the century; that the company's investors included many prominent New Yorkers; that the investors voluntarily agreed to limit their profits from the company in order to provide wage-earners with comfortable, safe, hygienic, well-maintained housing at market rates; that by paying a dividend, the company attempted to establish what its president E.R.L. Gould described as "a middle ground between pure philanthropy and pure business" and to encourage others to invest in housing of an equally high caliber; that City and Suburban's success in building model tenements encouraged others to enter the field, notably the industrialist Henry Phipps who established the Phipps Houses in 1905; that in the 1930s when the federal government began to seriously develop a national housing policy, City and Suburban's large-scale development projects, management techniques, and financial structure were studied and used as guidance for the development of new programs; that from its inception City and Suburban Homes has been linked to the light-court tenement, a building type first proposed by the architect Ernest Flagg in Scribner's Magazine in 1894 as an economically viable alternative to the dark, unventilated dumbbell tenements of the period; that in 1896, in preparation for the formation of City and Suburban, the Improved Housing Council, an offshoot of the prestigious Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, held a competition to solicit model designs for light-court tenements; that the winners of that competition were commissioned to design City and Suburban's first three projects; that the second prize winner, the distinguished New York architect James E. Ware, was asked to rework his plans for the buildings at 1168-1190 and 1194-1200 First Avenue; that Ware, who was highly regarded for his luxury apartment buildings, won critical acclaim for the First Avenue buildings and was subsequently commissioned by City and Suburban to design eleven more buildings on the block; that these included buildings of varying widths in which he experimented with the placement of courts, stairs, halls, and apartment configurations in order to maximize light and air and to offer greater amenities; that these variations in plan are reflected externally in the massing of the buildings and in the placement of doors and windows; that the twin buildings 429 East 64th Street and 430 East 65th Street designed by Philip Ohm are later interpretations of the light-court type featuring courtyard entrances; that within the framework of a limited budget the buildings in the complex were designed in contemporary architectural styles and feature such details as cartouches, heavy garlands, raised three-

dimensional brickwork, elaborately carved stone doorways, massive brackets, and decorative ironwork; that in his designs Ohm employed details inspired by earlier Ware buildings on the block; that the similarities in size, scale, use of materials, and decorative detailing between the various buildings on the block creates a strong sense of visual homogeneity; that in its projects City and Suburban emphasized large-scale development likening itself to a chain store, able to offer quality goods at bargain prices because of large-scale organization; that when it was completed in 1915 the First Avenue Estate comprised 1059 apartments and was second in size only to City and Suburban's Avenue A Estate among the model tenement complexes in Manhattan; that City and Suburban's First Avenue Estate is one of the only two full city block developments of light-court model tenements in the country; and that the First Avenue Estate can be seen as an important achievement in the social housing movement, bracketed in time between Alfred T. White's English-inspired low-density developments and such post-World War I projects as the Coops and Amalgamated Houses.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 21, Section 534, of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate, 1168-1190 First Avenue a/k/a 401 East 64th Street, 1194-1200 First Avenue a/k/a 402 East 65th Street, 403-409 East 64th Street, 411 East 64th Street, 417 East 64th Street, 419 East 64th Street, 421 East 64th Street, 423 East 64th Street, 429 East 64th Street, 404-408 East 65th Street, 410 East 65th Street, 412 East 65th Street, 414 East 65th Street, 416 East 65th Street, and 430 East 65th Street, and designates Tax Map Block 1459, Lots 1, 10, 22, and 30, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.

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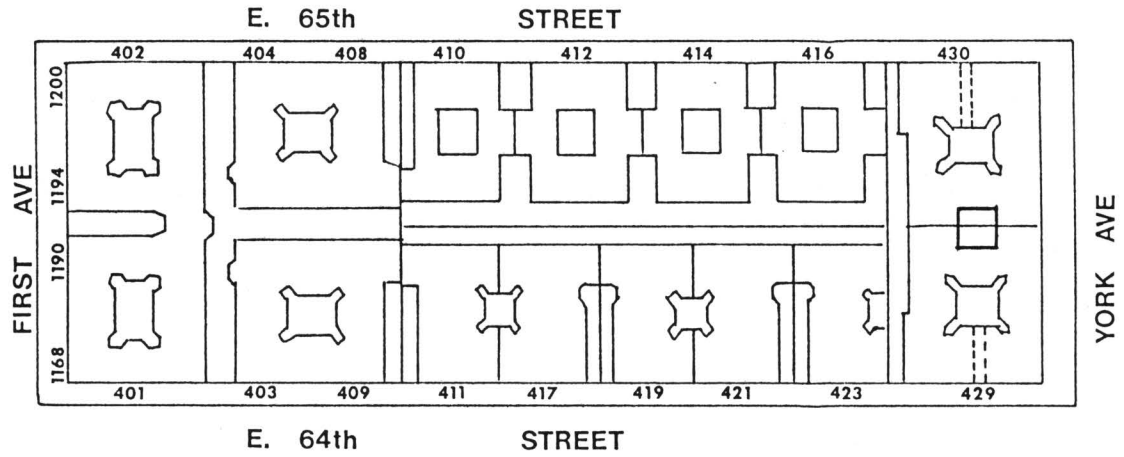
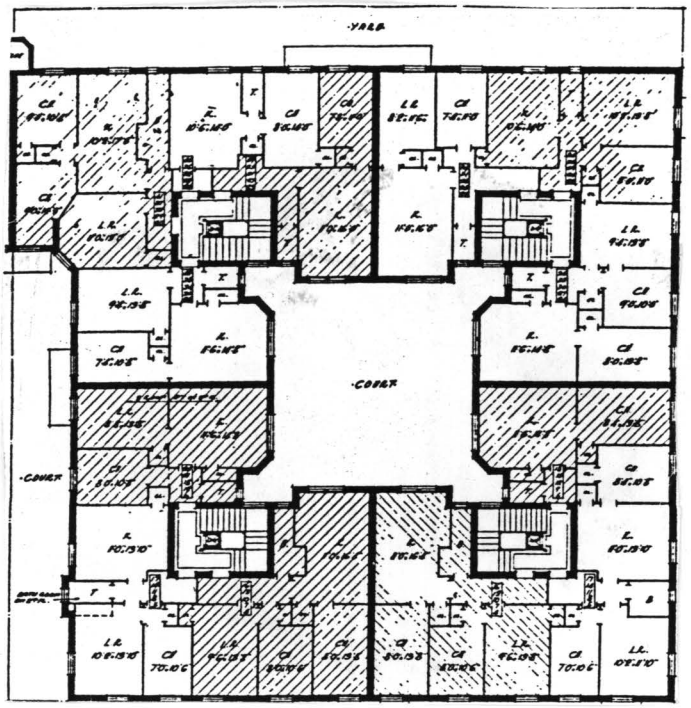
CITY AND SUBURBAN HOMES COMPANY

FIRST AVENUE ESTATE



LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DESIGNATED - APRIL 24, 1990



City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate: 1168-1190 First Avenue (plan, corner unit)

City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate: 1168-1190, 1194-1200 First Avenue
Photo Credit: Carl Forster

City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate: 1194 First Avenue (courtyard entrance)
Photo Credit: Carl Forster

City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate: 401 East 64 Street a/k/a 1168-1190 First Avenue
Photo Credit: Carl Forster

City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate: 403-409 East 64 Street
Photo Credit: Carl Forster

City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate: 411-417 East 64 Street
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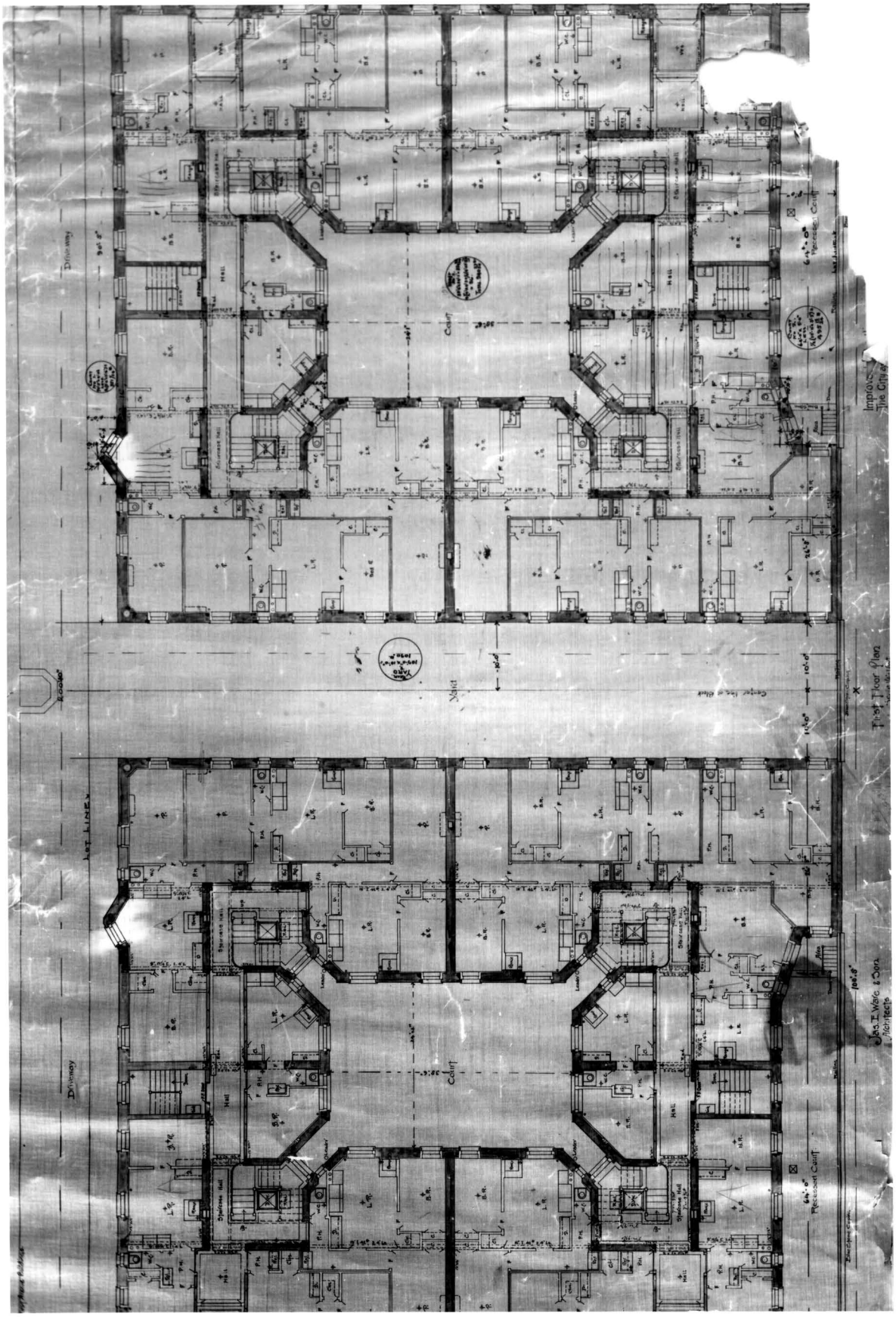

City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate: 404-408 East 65 Street, 403-409 East 64 Street (first floor plan)
Credit: New York City Department of Buildings

City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate: 419-421 East 64 Street
Photo Credit: Carl Forster

City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate: 423 East 64 Street
Photo Credit: Carl Forster

City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate: 429 East 64 Street
Photo Credit: Carl Forster

City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate: 429 East 64 Street (courtyard)
Photo Credit: Carl Forster

City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate: 404-408 East 65 Street
Photo Credit: Carl Forster

City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate: 410 East 65 Street
Photo Credit: Carl Forster

City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate: 412 East 65 Street
Photo Credit: Carl Forster

City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate: 414 East 65 Street
Photo Credit: Carl Forster

City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate: 416 East 65 Street
Photo Credit: Carl Forster

City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate: 430 East 65 Street
Photo Credit: Carl Forster

City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate: 429 E.64 Street and 430 E.65 Street (York Avenue facade)
Photo Credit: Carl Forster

ADDENDUM to the CITY AND SUBURBAN HOMES COMPANY, FIRST AVENUE ESTATE DESIGNATION REPORT (LP-1692)

On August 16, 1990, the Board of Estimate, in one of its final actions prior to its termination, voted to affirm the designation as a Landmark of the majority of the full block of the City and Suburban Homes Company, First Avenue Estate. The Board also voted, however, to delete from the designation two of the buildings that the Landmarks Preservation Commission had included: 429 East 64th Street and 430 East 65th Street.