

Landmarks Preservation Commission
December 15, 1998, Designation List 300
LP-2027

GORHAM BUILDING, 390 Fifth Avenue, aka 386-390 Fifth Avenue and 2-6 West 36th Street, Manhattan. Built 1904-1906; architect Stanford White of McKim, Mead and White.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 837, Lot 48.

On September 15, 1998, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Gorham Building and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 2). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Seven witnesses representing Manhattan Community Board 5, the Murray Hill Association, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, the Beaux Arts Alliance, the Society for the Architecture of the City, the Municipal Art Society, and the Historic Districts Council spoke in favor of designation. The owner of the building submitted a letter asking that the hearing be adjourned to another date. The hearing was closed with the proviso that it could be reopened at a later date if the owner wished to testify. The owner subsequently declined to do so. There were no speakers in opposition to this designation. The Commission also has received a letter in support of the designation from a local resident.

Summary

This elegant commercial building, constructed in 1904-05 for the Gorham Manufacturing Company, contained its wholesale and retail showrooms, offices, and workshops. Designed by Stanford White of the prominent architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White, the eight-story building is an adaptation of an early Florentine Renaissance style palazzo incorporating a two-story arcade, a four-story mid-section, and a two-story loggia. Crowned by an impressive copper cornice that projects eight feet from the building, it also features bronze friezes and balconies, designed by White and crafted by the Gorham company, and bas-relief sculpture by Andrew O'Connor. The Gorham Building, one of the early commercial palaces built on Fifth Avenue, north of 34th Street, early in the twentieth century, was widely praised for the beauty and artistry of its design. In 1923 the building was sold to Russeks, a women's apparel store, which occupied it until 1949. Since 1960, the building has been occupied by both retail and office tenants. Despite changes to the Fifth Avenue storefronts, the building remains a striking reminder of the role of Fifth Avenue as an elegant shopping street in the early years of the twentieth century.



DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The History of the Gorham Manufacturing Company¹

The Gorham Manufacturing Company was based in Providence, Rhode Island. Rhode Island had been a center for silver manufacture since the late seventeenth century, primarily in Newport, and then in Providence during the late eighteenth century. Jabez Gorham, the founder of the Gorham Manufacturing Company, apprenticed in 1806 at the age of fourteen to the gold and silversmith and jeweler, Nehemiah Dodge, in Providence. After his apprenticeship, he and four other men created a firm that manufactured gold jewelry. After 1818, Gorham made jewelry on his own, selling wares in his shop and to peddlers, who traveled throughout New England. He also traveled widely selling his own wares in Boston and New York.

In 1831, he opened a workshop manufacturing silver in Providence with Henry Webster, forming the firm Gorham & Webster which created silver spoons, forks, thimbles, and other small goods. William Price joined the firm in 1837, renamed Gorham, Webster & Price, until Jabez's son, John, became partner and the firm became known as Jabez Gorham & Son. Jabez Gorham retired in 1847, but the company continued under his name.

In 1865, the Gorham Manufacturing Company was incorporated with John Gorham as president. Under his leadership the company expanded its production to include sterling and electroplated wares, ecclesiastical goods, and bronzes. These were marketed "through trade catalogues, retail and wholesale showrooms . . . and exclusive retail distributors nationwide."² The work of the Gorham Manufacturing Company was given the highest award at the Exposition Universelle of 1889 in Paris, and the company was characterized as "the foremost silversmiths in the world, famous for original, artistic designs and finest workmanship."³

In 1859, the company opened a wholesale showroom in Manhattan on Maiden Lane. Following retail trends after the Civil War, the company moved northward to Bond Street and again to Union Square at the southern end of the fashionable Ladies Mile shopping area. In 1884, it moved again into the Queen Anne style building on Broadway and East 19th Street, which it had commissioned from architect Edward H. Kendall. It occupied the two lower stories as showrooms, while bachelor flats were at the upper stories. (This building is a designated New York City Landmark.)

The Gorham Building⁴

By the beginning of the twentieth century, fashionable commerce was moving northward from the Ladies Mile area, between Union Square and Madison Square, to Fifth Avenue north of 34th Street, then a residential area.⁵ The Gorham Building was one of the first commercial palaces built on Fifth Avenue above 34th Street, along with the Tiffany & Co. building (McKim, Mead & White, 1903-06), 397-409 Fifth Avenue at East 37th Street, and the B. Altman & Co. building (Trowbridge & Livingston, 1905-13), 355-371 Fifth Avenue at East 34th Street. (Both are designated New York City Landmarks.) Many of the city's most fashionable stores followed this trend in the years prior to World War I. In 1907 critic A.C. David described Fifth Avenue as "the only American street devoted for over a mile of its length exclusively to retail trade of a high class which has taken on a specific character. . . . It provides exclusiveness (in the matter of retail trade) for the masses. . . . One gets the impression on Fifth Avenue that all the world is there, that all the world has more money than it needs, and that all the world rather likes to exhibit its superfluity."⁶

In 1903, the president of the Gorham Manufacturing Company, Edward Holbrook,⁷ began to lease land on the southwest corner of Fifth Avenue and West 36th Street, most of which was owned by the John Jacob Astor estate.⁸ Holbrook then commissioned Stanford White of the firm of McKim, Mead and White to design the building. The building was intended to be a showcase for the display of Gorham products for both the retail and wholesale trade and to incorporate workshop facilities to create the goods. Holbrook specified that the building be utilitarian, fireproof, and suited to the "needs of a great commercial enterprise."⁹ The new building differentiated the various activities of the company by floor. The first floor, with a ceiling of Guastavino arches covered with bas-reliefs, was a showroom for gold and silver tableware displayed in mahogany cases. The second floor showroom displayed custom-designed goods. The third floor was occupied by the bronze, ecclesiastical, and hotel departments, and included a room decorated like a chapel to exhibit stained-glass windows. The fourth floor contained the wholesale department, and the remaining floors contained offices, stock rooms, polishing rooms and the stationary and engraving departments. The

building opened to the public on September 5, 1905.¹⁰

Stanford White of McKim, Mead & White¹¹

One of the most famous and prolific firms in the history of American architecture, McKim, Mead & White exerted considerable influence over the development of this country's architecture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The firm was initially established in 1872 as a loose partnership between Charles Follen McKim (1847-1909) and William Rutherford Mead (1846-1928) and enlarged in 1877 to include William B. Bigelow (dates undetermined), a Beaux-Arts-trained architect, who was McKim's brother-in-law. When Bigelow left the firm in 1879, Stanford White was invited to replace him "as a specialist in drafting and interior design."¹²

Born in New York, Stanford White (1853-1906) was the son of the well-known literary and music critic Richard Grant White. In 1870, at the age of sixteen, he entered the office of Gambrell & Richardson as an apprentice. Two years later, White succeeded McKim as head draftsman, working first on sketches for Trinity Church, Boston, which he prepared under Richardson's supervision. White became quite adept in the Richardsonian Romanesque style and contributed greatly to many of Richardson's designs, especially in residential work, interior design, and architectural sculpture and ornament on public commissions. In 1878, he left the firm to travel in Europe, accompanied part of the time by McKim and living part of the time in the studio of his sculptor friend, Augustus St. Gaudens, with whom he was collaborating on the Farragut Memorial for Madison Square (1876-81).

Formed in 1879, the firm of McKim, Mead & White initially specialized in the design of Shingle Style resort and suburban houses. In 1882-83, the firm began to shift to a more ordered, classicizing form of design, signaled by, among other works, the Italian Renaissance Villard Houses at 451-457 Madison Avenue (Joseph M. Wells, designer, 1882-85, a designated New York City Landmark). In response to this new emphasis on ordered designs, White formulated a style that freely combined features of several classical styles, but was primarily Italian Renaissance in form. Notable examples of the style include his Madison Square Garden (1887-91, demolished); Judson Memorial Church, Tower, and Hall on Washington Square South (church, 1888-93, tower and hall, 1895-96; all designated New York City landmarks); the King

Model Houses on the north side of West 139th Street (1891-92; in the St. Nicholas Historic District); the Century Association Clubhouse, 7 West 43rd Street (1889-91, a designated New York City Landmark). In addition to the Gorham Building, notable early twentieth-century examples include the Tiffany & Co. building (cited above) and the Knickerbocker Trust Co. (1902-04, demolished) at the northwest corner of Fifth Avenue and West 34th Street.

The firm's national reputation and influence was greatly enhanced by the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, which presented a vision of a neo-classical city of monumental buildings and ushered in a new era in American urban planning, known as the City Beautiful movement. These trends were subsequently reflected in a number of projects for which White served as partner-in-charge or chief designer including the New York University, now Bronx Community College, campus (plan, 1892-94; construction, 1894-1912)¹³ and the Bowery Savings Bank, now GreenPoint Bank, 130 Bowery (1893-95, a designated New York City landmark and interior landmark). White also continued to design city and country houses for the firm's wealthy clients, working in a variety of historic styles and often acting as interior decorator, furnishing the houses with antiques and art objects he had acquired on frequent trips to Europe. Shortly before White's death, his inventory was destroyed in a large warehouse fire, leaving him in debt and forcing him to sell his partnership in the firm. In 1906, White was shot and killed on the roof garden of Madison Square Garden. McKim, despondent at the loss of his friend and the negative press coverage, retired in 1907. Mead gradually withdrew from the firm until his official retirement in 1919, leaving the work of the firm to a talented group of junior partners.

The Design of the Gorham Building

For the Gorham Company, White designed an eight-story building in an adaptation of the early Florentine Renaissance style and clad it in limestone. White wrote that he "strove for a feeling of elegance and simplicity in both the exterior and interior."¹⁴ The design of the Gorham Building emphasizes the horizontal. Early Florentine Renaissance elements appearing on the building include an impressive projecting copper cornice (originally polychromed and gilded on the underside), an arcaded base, simple midsection, loggia-like attic, the use of the classical orders, symmetry, and its disciplined use of ornament. This ornament included bronze balconies

and friezes designed by White and executed by the Gorham Company, and sculpted bas-reliefs in the spandrels above the arcaded base (removed c. 1936) and the lion-flanked cartouche above the sixth floor, designed by Andrew O'Connor. These elements, combined with its corner siting, give the Gorham building a striking visual effect. Architectural historian Leland Roth has noted that the rounded corner treatment with a slightly wider pier was derived from White's handling of a prominent corner in the Judge Building (1888-90, in the Ladies Mile Historic District).¹⁵ The Gorham Building was constructed to be completely fireproof and at the time was described as "one of the first in this city to be entirely constructed of Guastavino arches, in steel skeleton, and combined with ribs and domes self-supported and self-decorating, . . . of brown fireclay, Portland cement and modern masonry."¹⁶ Protection against fire was a major concern given the value of the goods within the building.

The building was widely praised when it opened. One writer stated that the design of the Gorham Building "[raised] the standard of excellence in commercial architecture . . . to a height previously unknown. . . . It was declared to be one of the most artistic buildings in the city."¹⁷ Other critics declared it "'the best piece of work that Mr. White ever did' and 'perhaps the most beautiful store building in America.'¹⁸ The Gorham Company itself was extremely pleased with the building and White's role in the design:

Mr. White often expressed himself as being as much interested in the Gorham building as he had ever been in the problem of designing and executing an artistic building for modern commercial needs, and his success must be attributed largely to the keen interest which he showed, to his careful watchfulness over every detail, and to the enthusiasm which he inspired in every one who came in contact with him on this work.¹⁹

Subsequent History

In 1923, the Gorham Company moved further uptown, and the building and the leasehold of the site were sold to the Martic Realty Company, which was acting on behalf of Russeks, a store devoted to women's apparel.²⁰ Russeks, which also called itself the "Institute of Paris Fashions," moved into the building in 1924, after "extensive alterations."²¹ These alterations included the installation of new show windows and the erection of "four additional stories to the four-story extension to the eight-story

brick office building" (apparently at the western end of the West 36th Street facade).²² Also during the period of Russeks' ownership, a rear addition (apparently at the southwest corner of the building, not visible from the street) and a new front, probably replacing the bas-reliefs above the arches, were constructed in 1936.²³ In 1937, No. 384 Fifth Avenue to the south was combined internally with the building, a new limestone front was created at the base, show windows were constructed, and the entrance was rearranged.²⁴

Spear Securities Corporation took over the leasehold and building in 1949.²⁵ In 1959-60, the building was converted for office use by the architect Herbert Tannenbaum.²⁶ Jacques Schwalbe bought the building and leasehold in 1970. In 1996, they were then transferred to 390 Fifth LLC, a part of the Hilson Management Corporation also run by members of the Schwalbe family.²⁷ The storefront was altered again in 1995.²⁸

The tenants of the building over the years have been in the apparel trade and publications. Despite alterations to the Fifth Avenue storefronts, the building continues to evoke the power of White's design. It is a reminder of Fifth Avenue as a luxurious shopping district, and is an excellent example of an early twentieth-century elegant American commercial palace.

Description²⁹

The eight-story fireproof Gorham building is prominently sited on the southwest corner of Fifth Avenue and West 36th Street. Clad in Bedford, Indiana limestone, the exterior is divided by intermediate cornices into three sections -- a decorated, arcaded two-story base, a simple four-story midsection, and a loggia-like highly embellished two-story attic. The building is capped by a broad modillioned copper cornice that cantilevers eight feet from the building on all sides. Originally gilded and polychromed, the cornice is now weathered green. Bronzework, crafted by the Gorham Manufacturing Company and designed by Stanford White, is used in the frieze above the base and in the balconies. The one-bay, eight-story addition on the west side is faced in limestone, punctuated by tripartite and paired window openings above a ground-story entrance.

Fifth Avenue Facade

This facade originally had three arches in the base. (The main entrance to the building was located at the center of the base in the middle arch.) The arches have been replaced by an aluminum and glass storefront (c.1960 with later modifications)

corresponding to the double-height first story and second story of the original base. The frieze above the base contains applied bronze ornament crafted by the Gorham Manufacturing Company. This is surmounted by a dentilled limestone cornice.

The four-story midsection has six bays of rectangular window openings with slightly projecting sills on each story. Thin limestone string courses separate the stories. The one-over-one wood window sashes are historic. A simple, spare frieze topped by a band of dentils separates the midsection from the attic. An ornate bronze balcony carried on foliate, scrolled stone corbel brackets is placed in front of the two middle window openings at the fifth story. The bronze grillework of the balcony contains two "G"s, for Gorham, which are centered in front of both windows. A decorative cartouche is located above the sixth story at the center of the facade. It is flanked by two lions. A ribbon motif stretched between the lions is inscribed "ANNO D. MCMIII," the date of the building. Paneled pilasters set on the corner piers flank the ends of the midsection facade.

The loggia-like two-story attic is also divided into six bays by Corinthian columns. The end columns are engaged and flanked by paneled pilasters on the corner piers. Both at this level and in the midsection the corner is slightly rounded in order to emphasize the turning of the wall, and the pier is wider for further emphasis. The two-story window openings between the columns, which originally allowed light into the design studios and workshop rooms, were covered by metallic grilles (removed when Russeks moved into the building). The window sashes, steel-framed at the upper level and double-hung wood-framed at the lower level, are separated by limestone panels. The columns support a shallow entablature, above which is a dentil molding and an egg-and-dart molding. The ornate modillioned copper cornice, originally gilded and polychromed on the underside, has a palmette cresting. It extends eight feet from the facade.

West 36th Street Facade

This facade consists of fourteen bays corresponding to seven arches in the base. (A secondary entrance was located at the center of the base, and service doors were located in the arch furthest to the west.) The existing two-story Fifth Avenue aluminum and glass storefront continues around the corner to replace most of the easternmost arch. The remainder of the base consists of an arcade which is two stories in height composed of polished gray granite Ionic columns supporting arches with keystones, which then support an

intermediate cornice. The column capitals and keystones have anthemion and palmette motifs. The inner faces of the arches are paneled, and the arches are outlined with stringcourse. The ends of the arcade, which terminates at the corners of the building, are engaged columns set in piers with pilasters. The original display windows have been removed. Aluminum and glass show windows above cast-stone bases rise to the height of the column capitals. However, the recessed tripartite sash, each section with four lights, in the arches appears to be original. The spandrels between the arches originally contained bas-reliefs with swags and emblems of the silversmith trades (removed and replaced with smooth limestone, probably in 1936). The current building entrance is in the westernmost arch. The infill is non-historic, consisting of glass doors set below a projecting metal canopy, set in a black granite frame with a white granite panel above. The arcade is spanned by a bronze frieze and stone cornice, which is continued from the Fifth Avenue facade.

The midsection of the West 36th Street facade has the same treatment as the Fifth Avenue facade with rectangular window openings with slightly projecting sills and thin limestone stringcourses separating the stories. The one-over-one wood sashes are historic. The bronze balcony, centered on the fifth floor facade, is four bays wide on this side and contains the letter "G" in the grillework in front of each of the four middle windows. There is no cartouche on this side. The treatment of the corner pilasters and the frieze separating the midsection from the attic is a continuation of the Fifth Avenue facade.

The loggia-like two-story attic with its columns, crowning entablature, and impressive cornice is a continuation of the Fifth Avenue treatment. The window sashes are like those on Fifth Avenue.

Southern elevation

The southern elevation is visible at the eighth story. It is an unadorned brick wall, except that the paneled corner pier turns the corner as does the projecting cornice.

Western addition

Approximately twelve feet wide, this addition is located to the west of the original Gorham Building. Eight stories high, it is faced in limestone. The ground story entrance is non-historic. Rising above the entrance are three levels of tripartite window openings with non-historic sashes. This portion of the addition corresponds to the height of the base of the original building. Rising above this are five stories of paired window openings, also with

non-historic sashes. The facade terminates in a parapet, just below the level of the projecting cornice of the main building.

Report prepared by
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Gale Harris, Landmarks Preservationist
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NOTES

1. Charles H. Carpenter, Jr., *Gorham Silver 1831-1981* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1982); Moses King, *King's Views of New York 1896-1915* (New York: Arno Press, 1980); "Gorham Company," *The Britannica Encyclopedia of American Art*, (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica Educational Corp., 1973), 241; "Gorham Manufacturing," *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, Kenneth T. Jackson, ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 474; "Gorham, Jabez," *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* 23 (New York: James T. White & Co., 1933), 303-304.
2. Jackson, 474.
3. King, 67.
4. Paul R. Baker, *Stanny: The Gilded Life of Stanford White* (New York: The Free Press, 1989), 361-362; Paul Goldberger, *The City Observed* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 119-120; John S. Holbrook, "The Gorham Building," *New York Architect*, 2 (Nov. 1908); "Gorham Building Ready," *New York Times*, Sep. 5, 1905, 14; *Real Estate Record & Guide*, Aug. 1, 1903, NB 593-03; Leland Roth, *The Architecture of McKim, Mead & White, 1870-1920* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1978), 65.
5. Henry Collins Brown, *Fifth Avenue--Old and New* (New York: Wynkoop Hallenbeck Crawford Co., 1924), 105-109; A.C. David, "The New Fifth Avenue," *Architectural Record*, 22 (July 1907), 1-14; "The New Fifth Avenue," *Real Estate Record & Guide* (Dec. 17, 1904), 1346; Robert A.M. Stern, Gregory Gilmartin, and John Massengale, *New York 1900* (New York: Rizzoli Intl. Publications, Inc., 1983), 196-201; Ronda Wist, *On Fifth Avenue: Then and Now* (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1992), 42-49.
6. David, 1-2.
7. Holbrook and his wife Frances commissioned a residence from C.P.H. Gilbert located at 2-4 West 52nd Street. Built in 1904-05, it was subsequently joined with the adjacent Morton Plant House at 651-653 Fifth Avenue to form the headquarters of Cartier, Inc. (a designated New York City Landmark).
8. New York County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances for Block 837, Lots 46-51. The Hotel Shelburn was previously on the site.
9. Holbrook, n.p.
10. "Gorham Building Ready," *New York Times*, Sep. 5, 1905, 14.
11. This section on Stanford White and the firm of McKim, Mead & White is excerpted from *(Former) James Hampden Robb and Cornelia Van Rensselaer Robb House* (LP-2026), report prepared by Gale Harris (New York: City of New York, 1998), which in turn is based on the entry on McKim, Mead & White in the Landmarks Preservation Commission, "Architect's Appendix," *Upper East Side Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1051) (New York: City of New York, 1981); Leland Roth, *McKim, Mead & White, Architects* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983); Leland Roth, "McKim, Mead & White" and Brendan Gill, "Stanford White" in *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects*, Adolf K. Placzek, ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1982); Mosette Broderick, "McKim, Mead & White" and "Stanford White" in *Encyclopedia of New York*; Richard Guy Wilson, "McKim, Mead & White, 1879-1920," in *Long Island Country Houses and Their Architects, 1860-1940*, Robert Mackay, Anthony K. Baker, Carol A. Traynor, ed. (New York: Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities, W.W. Norton & Co., 1997), 273-298.
12. Broderick, "White."

13. White's Gould Memorial Library and Interior (1894-99), Hall of Fame (1900-01); Hall of Languages (1892-95) and Cornelius Baker Hall (1892-1912) are designated New York City Landmarks.
14. Baker, 362.
15. Roth, *McKim, Mead & White, Architects*, 308.
16. "Commercial Palaces," *Architects' and Builders' Magazine*, 38 (Feb. 1906), 186. According to Buildings Dept. alteration docket ALT 1493-1924, new reinforced concrete floors were installed in the building when Russeks acquired it.
17. C. Matlack Price, "A Renaissance in Commercial Architecture," *The Architectural Record*, 31 (May 1912), 449.
18. Quoted by Baker, 362. See p. 453, note 6, for complete citation.
19. Holbrook, n.p.
20. "Latest Dealings in Realty Field," *New York Times*, Oct. 16, 1923, 37; "Fifth Av. Corner in \$1,800,000 Deal," *New York Times*, Oct. 23, 1923, 36; "Gorham's To Move," *New York Times*, Jan. 2, 1924, 31; "New Home for Russeks," *New York Times*, Sep. 21, 1924, II, 3; "Russeks Open New Store on Fifth Av.," *New York Times*, Sep. 26, 1924, 44. Gertrude Russek, the daughter of Russeks' founder, married David Nemerov who became the chairman of Russeks Fifth Avenue. Two of their children, Howard Nemerov (1920-1991) and Diane Arbus (1923-1971), achieved renown as a poet and a photographer respectively.
21. "Gorham Building Sold," *New York Times*, Nov. 2, 1923, 30.
22. New York City, Department of Buildings, Borough of Manhattan. ALT 1493-1924 and ALT 348-1925. The addition to the extension was designed by H. Craig Severance and Daniel M. Oltarsh. McKim, Mead & White had added an "entrance annex" at the west end of West 36th Street facade. This is shown in an oblique view, rising to the height of about four-and-a-half stories, and on the first floor plan, in *A Monograph of the Works of McKim Mead & White, 1879-1915* (reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1977), pls. 234, 237. Roth, *Architecture of McKim, Mead & White, 1870-1920*, 65, lists a 1915 addition, but does not specify where it is.
23. ALT 3162-1936.
24. ALT 1801-1937.
25. New York County, Office of the Register, Conveyances for Block 837, Lots 46-51.
26. Robert F.R. Ballard, *Directory of Manhattan Office Buildings* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1978), 59. See also ALT 1653-1959. A two-story aluminum and glass storefront, subsequently modified, on the Fifth Avenue facade and returning for one bay on West 36th Street was probably installed at that time. The storefront infill in the remaining bays on West 36th Street appears to date from the same time period.
27. New York County, Office of the Register, Conveyances for Block 837 Lots 46-51.
28. New York City Department of Buildings, Borough of Manhattan, Property & Owner Information Query. See Job numbers 101090070 and 101058230.
29. Parts of this description are based on Baker, 361-362; "Commercial Palaces," 186-190; "Gorham Building Ready," 14; Holbrook, "The Gorham Building,"; Leland M. Roth, *McKim, Mead & White, Architects* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1983), 305-308.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

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

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Gorham Building is an elegant commercial building constructed in 1904-05 for the Gorham Manufacturing Company, then one of the foremost silversmiths in the world, to contain its wholesale and retail showrooms, offices, and workshops and was designed by Stanford White of the prominent architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White; that the Gorham Building, one of the early twentieth-century commercial palaces built on Fifth Avenue, north of 34th Street, was widely praised for the beauty and artistry of its design; that the building is considered to be one of White's best works; that the eight-story building is an adaptation of an early Florentine Renaissance style palazzo incorporating a two-story arcade, a four-story midsection, and a two-story loggia; that it is crowned by an impressive copper cornice that projects eight feet from the building and also features bronzework, designed by White and crafted by the Gorham Company, and bas-relief sculpture by Andrew O'Connor; and that the elaborate and highly detailed arcade and attic, which contrast with the broad, plain midsection are characteristic features of White's work; that the building has continued to be used for commercial purposes after the Gorham Manufacturing Company left; and that despite changes to the Fifth Avenue storefronts, the building remains a striking reminder of the role of Fifth Avenue as an elegant shopping street in the early years of the twentieth century.

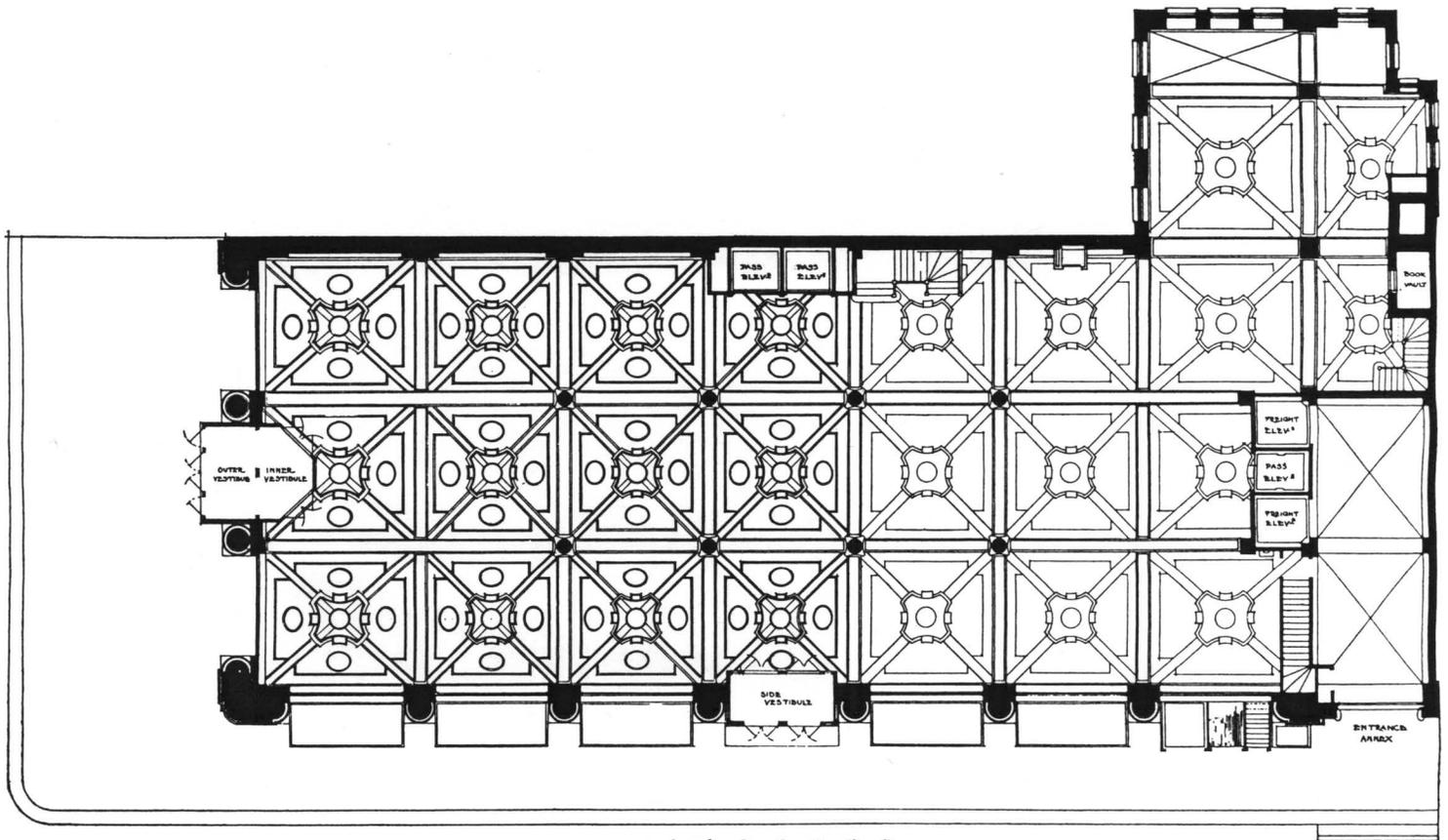
Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Gorham Building, 386-390 Fifth Avenue (aka 2-6 West 36th Street), and designates Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 837, Lot 48, as its Landmark Site.



SCALE 0 5 10 15 20 25 30 FEET

SIDE ELEVATION

Building for the Gorham Company, New York City
Elevation drawing of West 36th Street Facade
Source: *A Monograph of the Work of McKim, Mead & White, 1879-1915*, pl. 237



SCALE: 1" = 10'-0" FEET

FIRST FLOOR PLAN
 THE GORHAM BUILDING, NEW YORK CITY
 1906

Building for the Gorham Company, New York City
 First Floor plan
 Source: *A Monograph of the Work of McKim, Mead & White, 1879-1915*, pl. 237



Building for the Gorham Company, New York City
Source: *A Monograph of the Work of McKim, Mead & White, 1879-1915*, pl. 234

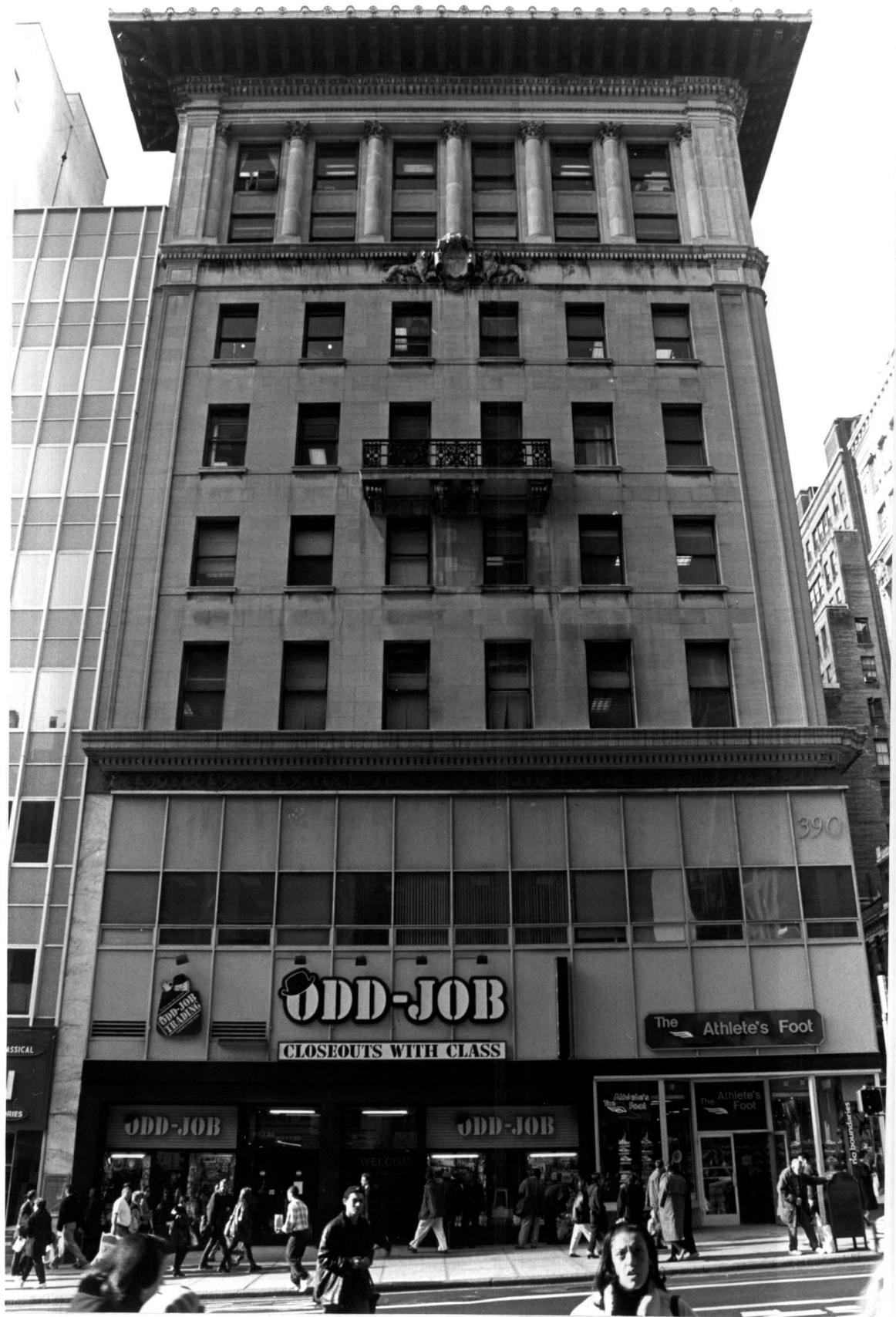


Gorham Building, New York City

Source: Museum of the City of New York, Leland M. Roth, *McKim, Mead & White, Architects*, 308.



Gorham Building, 390 Fifth Avenue, aka 386-390 Fifth Avenue and 2-6 West 36th Street, Manhattan
Photo: Carl Forster



Gorham Building
Fifth Avenue facade
Photo: Carl Forster



Gorham Building
West 36th Street facade
Photo: Carl Forster



Gorham Building
Top: Detail of bas-relief sculpture by Andrew O'Connor
Bottom: Detail of balcony with Gorham bronzework
Photo: Carl Forster



Gorham Building
Top: Detail of upper portion of Fifth Avenue facade
Bottom: Detail of cornice
Photo: Carl Forster



Gorham Building

Top: Detail of balcony with Gorham bronzework on West 36th Street facade

Bottom: Detail of arches and bronze frieze on West 36th Street facade

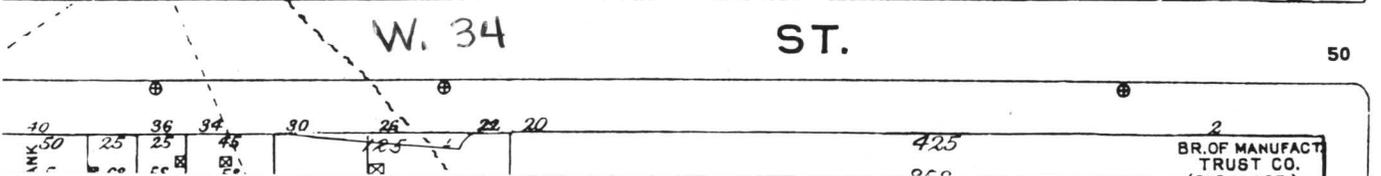
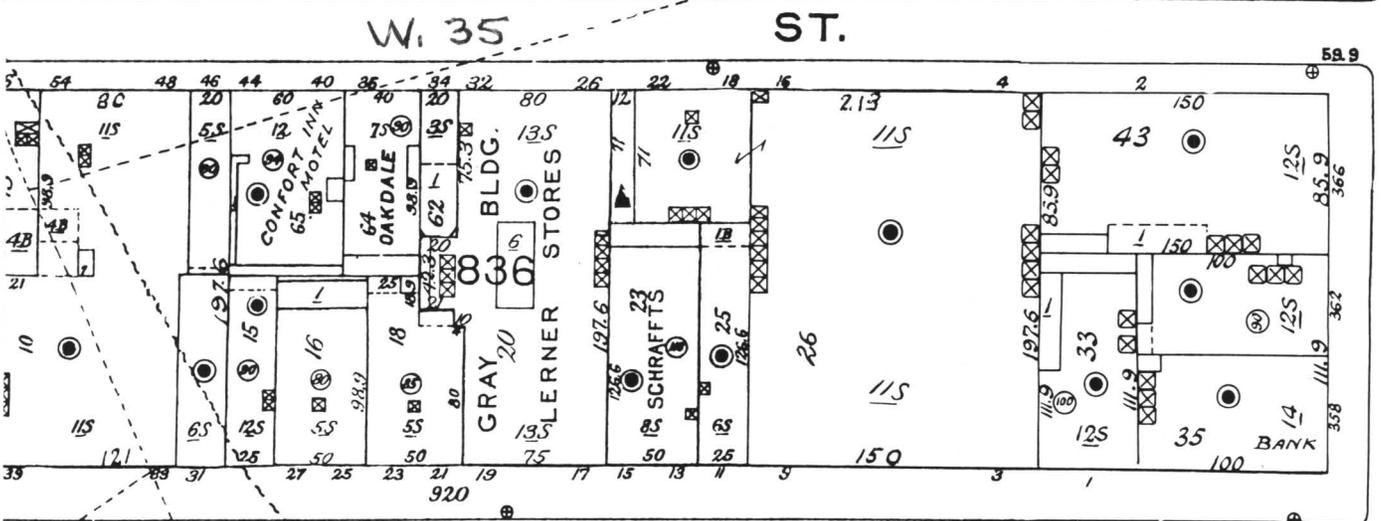
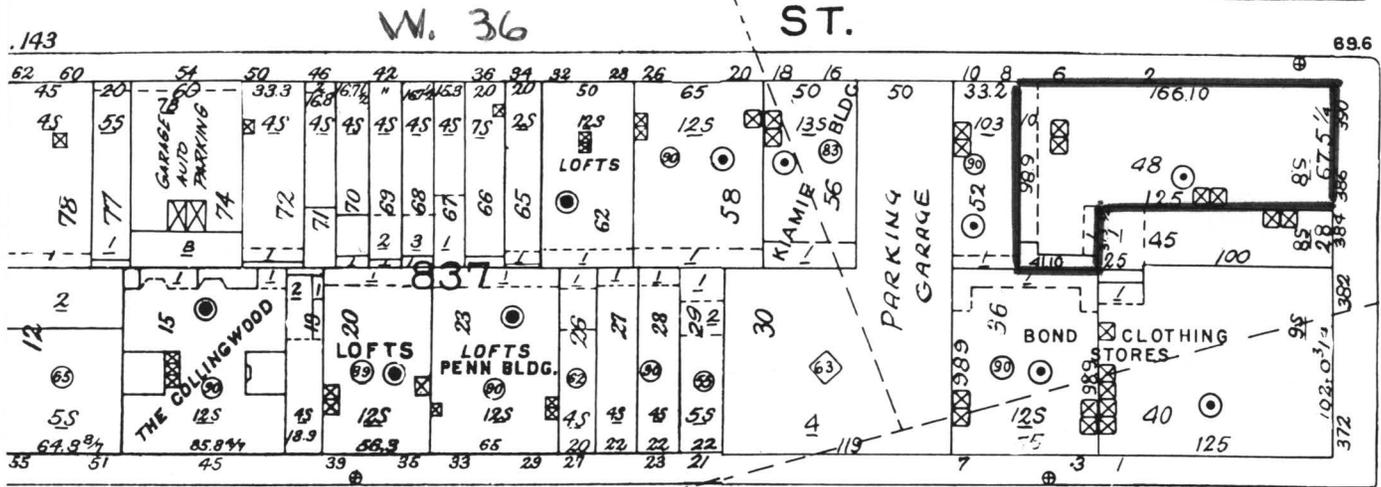
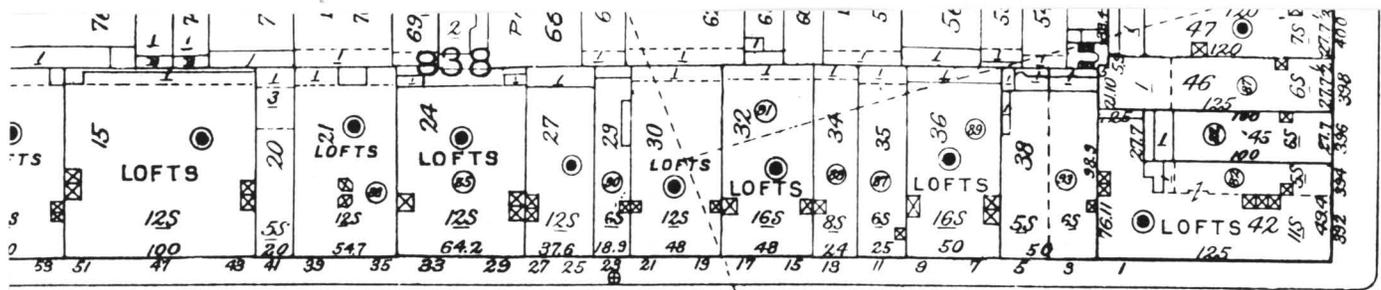
Photo: Carl Forster



Gorham Building
Detail of base on West 36th Street
Photo: Carl Forster



Gorham Building
Detail of entrance on West 36th Street
Photo: Carl Forster



AVE.

5TH

Gorham Building, 390 Fifth Avenue, aka 386-390 Fifth Avenue and 2-6 West 36th Street, Manhattan
Landmark Site: Borough Manhattan Tax Map Block 837, Lot 48
Source: Sanborn Manhattan Landbook, 1997-98

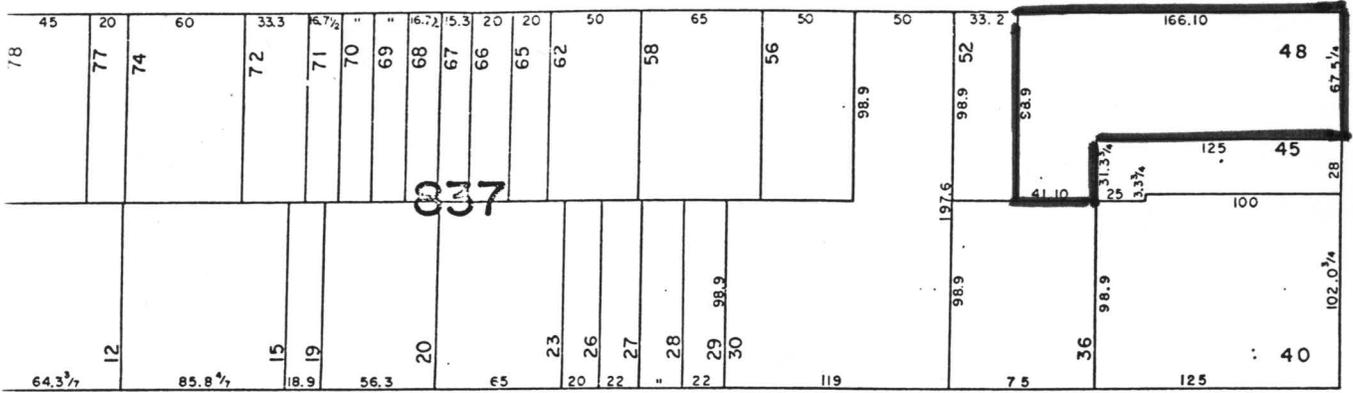


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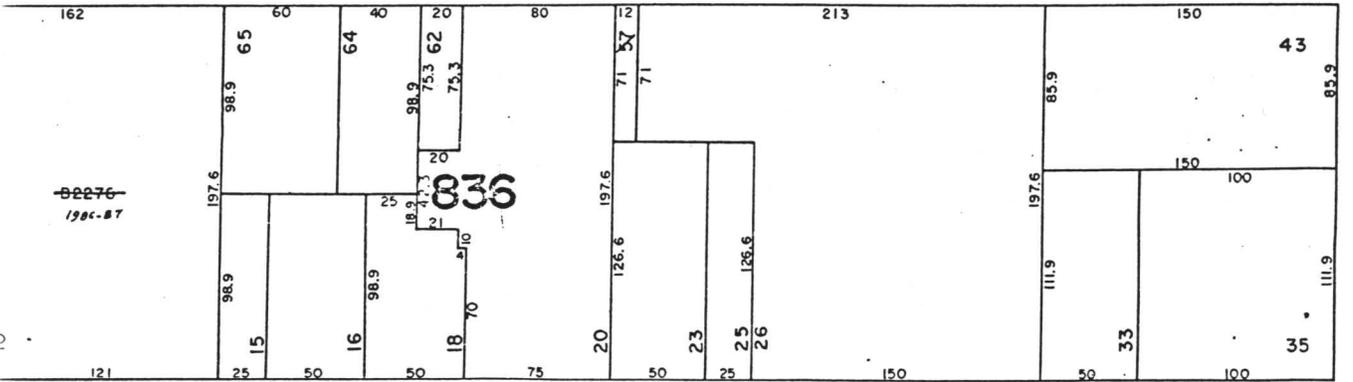
BL LOT NEW DROP
836 10 82278

W. 36TH ST.



AVE.

W. 35TH ST.



SEE PAGE 2

5TH

34TH ST.



SEE PAGE 10

Gorham Building, 390 Fifth Avenue, aka 386-390 Fifth Avenue and 2-6 West 36th Street, Manhattan
 Landmark Site: Borough Manhattan Tax Map Block 837, Lot 48
 Source: Dept. of Finance, City Surveyor, Tax Map