

Landmarks Preservation Commission  
February 26, 2002, Designation List No. 335  
LP-2114

PHELPS STOKES - J. P. MORGAN, JR. HOUSE (now part of the Morgan Library), 231 Madison Avenue at the southeast corner of Madison Avenue and East 37th Street, aka 225-231 Madison Avenue, 24 East 37<sup>th</sup> Street, Manhattan. Built 1852/1853; enlarged 1888, architect R. H. Robertson; renovated 1905.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 866, Lot 58.

On January 8, 2002, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Phelps Stokes - J. P. Morgan Jr. House and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 2). The hearing was duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. A representative of the owner stated that he was present to listen to the testimony. Seven witnesses spoke in favor of designation, including representatives of State Assemblyman Richard Gottfried, the Murray Hill Neighborhood Association, the Historic Districts Council and the Society for the Architecture of the City. One witness asked the Landmarks Preservation Commission to also consider designating the interiors of the building. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. In addition, the Commission received a resolution from Manhattan Community Board 6 in support of designation.

#### Summary

The Phelps Stokes - J. P. Morgan, Jr. House is a rare surviving freestanding mansion in midtown Manhattan, recalling the initial residential development of Murray Hill. Notable for its associations with two prominent New York families, it has achieved additional significance as an integral component of the Pierpont Morgan Library, one of New York City's most esteemed cultural institutions. Originally designed in the Italianate style, it was built in 1852/53 for Isaac Newton Phelps as one of a group of houses for members of the Phelps family along the blockfront of Madison Avenue between East 36th Street and East 37th Street. Phelps's daughter Helen and her husband Anson Phelps Stokes commissioned architect R. H. Robertson to expand the house in 1888. Robertson's designs harmonized with the original while adding neo-Renaissance characteristics. When J. Pierpont Morgan purchased the house for his son J. P. Morgan, Jr., in late 1904, it was subsequently further renovated. Much of the exterior character it assumed then still survives today. The Pierpont Morgan Library purchased the house in 1988, incorporating it into its museum and program operations.



## DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

### Murray Hill and the Development of the Phelps Houses

Murray Hill, the midtown Manhattan community that extends between East 34th Street on the south, East 40th Street on the north, Fifth Avenue on the west, and Third Avenue on the east, is named after Robert and Mary Murray the area's mid-eighteenth-century landholders and farmers. By the 1840s, as residential development was moving northward from the areas near Union Square, the Murray heirs began to subdivide the property and sell it off.<sup>1</sup>

In 1847, Mary Murray sold the eastern blockfront of Madison Avenue between East 36th Street and East 37th Street, divided into four lots, to John J. Phelps (lot 25, at the corner of East 36th Street), Isaac N. Phelps (lot 58, at the corner of East 37th Street), and George D. Phelps (lot 22, in the middle of the blockfront, and lot 52, which is east of the other three lots and extends through the lot between East 36th Street and East 37th Street). Lots 25, 22, and 58 were each 65 feet wide and 157 feet deep, while lot 52 was 18 feet wide and 197 feet 6 inches deep. The three men recorded an agreement in 1849 to develop the lots with first-class dwellings, which was reinforced in another agreement recorded the following year. Also in 1850, George Phelps sold lot 22 to his nephew William E. Dodge. Then John and Isaac Phelps and William Dodge recorded an agreement that would allow them to build stables behind their houses and maintain a common alleyway, all on lot 52.<sup>2</sup>

The various members of the Phelps family involved in the property transactions on Madison Avenue and William Dodge were partners in the firm of Phelps, Dodge & Company, which had been founded in 1832 by Anson Greene Phelps (1781-1853). The firm, originally involved in merchandising, had expanded into manufacturing, mining, and railroads. William Earl Dodge (1805-1883) had married Melissa Phelps, one of Anson G. Phelps's seven daughters. By 1850, the various family members were well positioned financially to build a cluster of houses in a section of the city that was becoming newly fashionable for prosperous New Yorkers.<sup>3</sup>

The three men constructed three identical freestanding houses on their three lots with stables behind the houses that were accessed by an alleyway from East 36th Street and East 37th Street. The houses were completed in 1852 or 1853.<sup>4</sup> Each three-story house was constructed of brick and apparently faced with a light pink brownstone above a stone foundation and had a peaked roof.<sup>5</sup> The houses were 46 feet wide and 60 feet deep with their main entrances facing

Madison Avenue and were known by the addresses of 219, 225, and 229. The three houses are depicted in a panoramic view made in 1855 from the Latting Observatory, situated north of the New York Crystal Palace on the site of today's Bryant Park.<sup>6</sup> This view makes clear that most development in the Murray Hill area at the time was still to the south and the east. The architect of the Phelps houses is unknown. In the early 1850s, the number of professional architects in the city was still quite small. The date of the houses, and their rectilinear, restrained Italianate character, suggest that they might have been designed by someone like John B. Snook of Trench & Snook, the architectural firm that had designed the Italianate A. T. Stewart Department Store in 1846, or Griffith Thomas, who designed a house of somewhat similar Italianate character for William B. Astor II, built in 1856 at the southwest corner of Fifth Avenue and West 34th Street.<sup>7</sup>

In 1865, Anson Phelps Stokes (1838-1913), the son of Caroline Phelps and James Stokes and grandson of Anson Greene Phelps, married his cousin Helen Louisa Phelps, the daughter of Isaac Newton Phelps.<sup>8</sup> Their son, Isaac Newton Phelps Stokes, was born in his maternal grandparents' house at 229 Madison in 1867.<sup>9</sup> A few years before his death, he compiled his memories of growing up in New York and his reminiscences of the house and its very pleasant conservatory.<sup>10</sup> In 1879, Anson Phelps Stokes organized the banking firm of Phelps, Stokes & Company with his father and father-in-law. Helen Louisa Phelps Stokes inherited her parents' house at 229 Madison Avenue, and in 1888 embarked on an expansion and remodeling campaign under the direction of architect R. H. Robertson. At that time the peaked roof was removed, the attic story added, and a large four-story extension added along East 37th Street that doubled the size of the house. Robertson's design respected the Italianate character of the original house, yet added neo-Renaissance elements that gave it a more fashionable and up-to-date appearance.<sup>11</sup>

Robert H. Robertson (1849-1919), who had begun his career with William A. Potter, had achieved success as designer of academic and religious architecture in the Romanesque Revival style. When he went into independent practice in the 1880s, he achieved a thriving career designing religious, institutional, and commercial structures. While much of his work was of a bold and often eclectic character, his designs for the Stokes House were restrained and sober, enlivened only by projecting bays and the carved foliate brownstone plaques on the East 37th

Street extension (and perhaps the intricate wrought-iron balustrades fronting the first-story windows).<sup>12</sup>

The Murray Hill neighborhood underwent a number of changes in the post-Civil War period.<sup>13</sup> The war made many new millionaires and had enriched many already successful businessmen. The city's most successful dry goods merchant, Alexander Turney Stewart, became its wealthiest citizen through supplying blankets and uniforms to the army and navy. In 1865 he purchased the Townsend mansion on Fifth Avenue and West 34<sup>th</sup> Street, replacing the house, which was barely ten years old, with a grandiose white marble-clad Second Empire mansion (John Kellum, 1864-69, demolished) that "set the standard for rich men's houses in the Gilded Age."<sup>14</sup> In 1869 Cornelius Vanderbilt began building a huge depot and train yard at Fourth Avenue and East 42<sup>nd</sup> Street to service three railroad lines. Completed in 1871, Grand Central Depot was the southern terminus for steam rail lines in the city. The tunnel under Park Avenue was freed for use by the horse-drawn railroad that connected to the depot, and the avenue had been landscaped with planted malls since the early 1850s. With "the upper surface of the avenue guaranteed against such intrusion," the "inclosed parks above the tunnel seemed to furnish the necessary magnet for drawing the wealth and fashion of New York to this quarter."<sup>15</sup> The Episcopal Church of the Incarnation (a designated New York City Landmark), designed in the Gothic Revival style by architect Emlen T. Littel, had been built on Madison Avenue at East 35th Street in 1864. In the years following the Civil War, Madison Avenue, became increasingly developed and fashionable, attracting William Seward, who had been Lincoln's Secretary of State, George F. Baker, William Whitelaw Reid, James Goodwin, Henry O. Havemeyer, Percy Pine, and Henry G. Marquand, among others, not to mention John Pierpont Morgan.<sup>16</sup>

#### The Morgans on Madison Avenue

John Pierpont Morgan (1837-1913), the son of international banker Junius Spencer Morgan, had arrived in New York from London in 1857. Following the death of his first wife, Amelia Sturges from tuberculosis, Pierpont Morgan had set up housekeeping in 1862 with his cousin James Goodwin at 42 West 21st Street. He purchased furniture for the library of the house from Gustave Herter. In 1864, the two moved to a house on Madison Avenue, north of 38th Street, that they had rented from Levi P. Morton. Morgan hired Herter Brothers, the rising decorating firm formed by Gustave and his stepbrother Christian, to furnish the interiors. Soon thereafter he began to court Frances Louisa Tracy, and they were married the

following year. When they returned from their honeymoon, they moved into the Madison Avenue house. In the fall of 1868, the Morgans, by then the parents of two children, Louisa and John Pierpont, Jr., called Jack, moved to a rented house on East 14th Street for a year, then to house at 6 East 40th Street, next door to the Fifth Avenue mansion of William Henry Vanderbilt. They also seem to have purchased additional furniture from Herter Brothers. This was to be the Morgan home in New York City for the next twelve years, during which time two more daughters, Juliet and Anne, were added to the family.<sup>17</sup>

By 1880 Pierpont Morgan was well on his way to becoming the most powerful banker in the United States, and he wanted to buy his own house. Both he and his wife wanted to stay in the Murray Hill area, which was also the neighborhood of many of their friends and business associates. Early that year he approached the Phelps family about buying the house at Madison Avenue and East 36th Street. The asking price was \$225,000, so he sought advice from Junius Morgan. The elder Morgan thought the price was too high, but Pierpont Morgan eventually was able to gain his father's approval. Even though he would have liked something "more modern," he was hopeful that he and Fanny would find it to be "just the house we desire and if we don't we can tear it down and build again."<sup>18</sup> The title of the property was conveyed by John Phelps's heirs to Morgan.<sup>19</sup> Morgan then began almost two years of work to modernize the house. Because the Dodges and the Stokeses, who still owned the properties to the north, wanted to retain a unified appearance to the blockfront, Morgan made only modest changes on the exterior, moving the entrance from Madison Avenue to East 36th Street and adding a curvilinear projecting bay in place of the original entrance. However, under the direction of Herter Brothers, the interiors were completely redone and redecorated.<sup>20</sup> The house was also the first private residence in New York to be completely electrified by means of a steam plant installed under the stables. In his later years, Jack Morgan recalled the effect: "I still remember the . . . excitement and interest that I felt on the occasion of my return from school for the Christmas holidays in 1882, when, at the coming of dusk the [electric] lights began to glow. That was the second time I had seen that form of light."<sup>21</sup>

Pierpont Morgan began collecting fine art and decorative art in a wide variety of forms as a young man, following the example set by his father, Junius S. Morgan. The scope and volume of his collection began to expand massively after 1880, although he kept most of his art treasures at his house in England, in order to avoid federal import taxes. At the urging of his

nephew Junius Morgan, he expanded the scope of his collection to include books, fine bindings, and related items. Because books were not taxed when imported, Morgan brought, added to, and kept most of his book collection in New York. With this collection, Morgan joined the company of such New York book collectors as Samuel Tilden and James Lenox whose holdings formed the basis of the New York Public Library research collection. By 1900, the collection was outgrowing Morgan's home, so he determined to build a dedicated library, and perhaps, not so incidentally, expand the complex of family holdings, an action that echoed what the Phelps family had done fifty years earlier.<sup>22</sup>

The death of Melissa Stokes Dodge meant that the lots immediately to the east and the north were available for acquisition. In March 1902, Morgan summoned Charles McKim of the prestigious architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White to 219 Madison Avenue, telling him that he had purchased most of the north side of East 36th Street between his house and Park Avenue. Morgan wanted McKim to design a private library building with an attached study in the middle of the block and a house for his daughter and son-in-law, Louisa and Herbert Satterlee, at the eastern end of the block. McKim designed the exquisite Italian Renaissance-inspired pavilion, faced with mortarless white marble blocks, that became the first building of the Morgan Library. The building was finally completed in 1906 at a cost of \$1.2 million.<sup>23</sup>

McKim also designed the house for the Satterlees that was built at 37 East 36th Street (1903-06, no longer standing). But while that house was under construction, Louisa and Herbert moved into the Dodge house at 225 Madison Avenue, which Morgan had purchased at the same time he purchased the land for the library and the new Satterlee house. Then in late 1904, he was able to complete the family complex by the purchase of 229 Madison Avenue from Helen Phelps Stokes for his son Jack and daughter-in-law Jane, who was known as Jessie.<sup>24</sup>

John Pierpont Morgan, Jr. (1867-1943), the second child of Pierpont and Frances, had gone on to Harvard after attending St. Paul's, graduating in 1889. He married Jane Norton Grew of Boston in 1890. The couple moved to New York and rented a house at 8 East 40th Street, while building a new house, designed by R. C. Sturgis of Sturgis & Cabot of Boston, at 8 East 36th Street. In 1892 he became a partner in the Morgan banking firm. His father sent Jack and his family to London in 1898 to take over J. S. Morgan & Co., the British branch of the Morgan banking enterprise. But by 1904, the elder Morgan wanted him back in New York. The younger Morgans leased a

house at 22 Park Avenue between East 35th and East 36th Street as an interim home while waiting to move into the Stokes house.<sup>25</sup> In January 1905, Jack wrote to his mother, "It is extra nice of Father to let us have it. It will be perfectly charming to be so near 219 and 225 [Louisa and Herbert's home]. Certainly Father has managed to get his family close about him this winter at any rate."<sup>26</sup>

The changes made to 229 Madison Avenue by Helen Stokes had made it a larger, more fashionable residence. Nonetheless, the Morgans decided that major interior remodeling over the course of the next year was in order. The Manhattan Buildings Department Alterations Docket lists Duveen & Co. at 122 Broadway, better known as dealers in antiques and fine art, as the architect of record for alterations in the amount of \$1,900.<sup>27</sup> Presumably the small figure reflects modest exterior work, primarily changing the entrance doorway and adding the more restrained wrought-iron balustrades at the bases of some of the first-story windows. The more elaborate wrought-iron balustrades, credited to Oscar Luetke, a fabricator of iron and bronzework, probably were specified by Robertson, as the curvilinear and foliate forms echo the motifs of the carved brownstone plaques on the East 37th Street facade.<sup>28</sup> The projecting curvilinear bay on the south wall of the building may also have been added at this time or may have been added by Robertson. The form and detail appears to be very similar to that of the bay added to the elder Morgan's house in 1882. The remodeled interior was a different matter, boasting forty-five rooms, twelve bathrooms, twenty-two fireplaces, and a formal ballroom. Tall paneled chimney stacks rose above the roofline, presumably to accommodate all the new fireplaces.<sup>29</sup> While the exterior of the house was not that different from that of the elder Morgans, the interior sensibility was in strong contrast to Herter Brothers interiors of 219 Madison.<sup>30</sup> The old stable, no longer necessary with the advent of automobiles, was converted to a squash court. Jack also changed the house number from 229 to 231, which was incorporated into the handsome wrought-iron transom above the entrance doors. The result was a house that harmonized with the home of the elder Morgans and evoked comfortable prosperity rather than wealthy ostentation. When the Satterlees' new house was completed in 1906, 225 Madison was demolished, and the space between 219 and 231 transformed into a garden. (The lot was split in half, with one half being added to each adjoining lot.)<sup>31</sup> Most of the site, encompassing the new library, the elder Morgans' house, and the garden, from midblock on East 36th Street to the south wall of 231 Madison Avenue was surrounded by a handsome

wrought-iron fence designed by McKim, Mead & White and set on a brownstone base. The fence continued with a different, more curvilinear, wrought-iron design, also on a brownstone base, in front of 231 and around the corner along East 37th Street.

#### Morgan Library: Growth and Expansion

Pierpont Morgan continued his avid collecting, filling the library with books, acquiring drawings and prints, and adding to his collection of paintings and sculpture. Upon his death in 1913, the bulk of the estate including the artworks and books were left to Jack.<sup>32</sup> However, he left instructions in his will, asking Jack to make a "suitable disposition" of his art collection so that it could be made "permanently available for the instruction and pleasure of the American people."<sup>33</sup> The following year, Jack put the entire art collection on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; Morgan had been one of the founding members and served on the board of trustees for many years. It was the only time that all the items were on view together. Then Jack sold a number of items to fulfill his father's cash bequests and pay New York State inheritance taxes. In 1916 and 1917, he gave the Metropolitan Museum about 7,000 art objects and the Wadsworth Athenaeum in Hartford about 1,300 objects. Some of the remaining paintings were dispersed to Morgan family members but the bulk of the collection remained in the Morgan Library in Jack's ownership.

Both Jack and Jane Morgan pursued their own collecting interests. Jack focused on incunabula (very early printed books), medieval and Renaissance manuscripts, fine bindings, literary manuscripts, modern printed books, drawings, and prints. Jane collected books in the arts.<sup>34</sup> Belle da Costa Greene, who Morgan had hired as librarian in 1905, was retained as head of the library and advisor on acquisitions.

In 1924, Jack and Jane Morgan transferred the library building and its site to a group of trustees, retaining alley right-of-way access for sixty-five feet behind their house at 231. The trustees then transferred the property to the Pierpont Morgan Library, a separate legal entity that brought the collection into the public domain. After Frances Morgan died on November 16, 1924, Jack gave the site of 219 Madison to the library as well. The house was demolished and a classically inspired library annex, designed by Benjamin Wistar Morris, was linked by an interior cloister to the McKim, Mead & White library building. The new building opened in 1928.<sup>35</sup>

#### From Phelps Stokes - Morgan House to Lutheran Church Headquarters

Jane Morgan had died in 1925, and Jack Morgan never remarried. He had remained the head of the Morgan banking business, but by the mid-1930s he had left the management mostly to other partners. He died of a stroke while in Florida in 1943. Early in 1944, the executors of his estate sold 231 Madison Avenue and its surrounding property to the United Lutheran Church in America for use as the headquarters of this Lutheran denomination. As the organization expanded its mission in the 1950s, it replaced the stable/squash court with a five-story brick office annex in 1957.<sup>36</sup>

In 1965, the newly formed Landmarks Preservation Commission designated the J. P. Morgan Jr. House as a New York City Landmark, one of its first official designations, citing its importance as a rare freestanding Italianate brownstone mansion and its important associations with the Morgan Library and the Morgan family. The Commission's action was not without controversy, as the Lutheran Church organization had announced plans to seek a zoning change for this section of Madison Avenue and to redevelop the property with a large office building. The Lutheran Church in America (the successor organization to the United Lutheran Church) filed a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the law and its application. In July 1974, the New York State Court of Appeals, the state's highest court, rendered its decision on the case of Lutheran Church in America v. City of New York (359 N.Y.S. 2d 7). The Court found the law unconstitutional as applied because the designated building was inadequate for the organization's needs, and the landmark status was removed from the property. However, the court refused to find the law itself unconstitutional. The zoning was never changed, and the proposed office building was never constructed.<sup>37</sup>

#### Phelps Stokes - Morgan House as Part of the Morgan Library

In 1988, the property was sold to the Pierpont Morgan Library and the house consolidated into the museum and its programs.<sup>38</sup> Thus the historic home of Jack Morgan, who did so much to ensure the long-term future of the Morgan Library, was reunited with the library and made an integral part of its operation. The garden site between the house and the library annex was redeveloped with a Landmarks Preservation Commission-approved glass-enclosed conservatory court, designed by Voorsanger & Mills, that links the two structures. The court was completed in 1991.<sup>39</sup>

## Description

The house is located on a large site at the southeast corner of Madison Avenue and East 37th Street, north of the 1927-28 Benjamin Wistar Morris addition to the Pierpont Morgan Library. A steel and glass conservatory structure, designed by Voorsanger & Mills and completed in 1991, links the two buildings. All three structures are set back from Madison Avenue behind a planted garden that is shielded by a brownstone retaining wall surmounted by a wrought-iron fence. The design of the fence changes in front of 231, being slightly lower and of a more curvilinear design. The four-story freestanding house is a brick structure, faced with resurfaced brownstone, set on a stone basement. Designed in the Italianate style and built as a three-story structure with exterior walls apparently faced in light pink brownstone, surmounted by a peaked roof, the house is now four stories high with a shallow, sloping roof, and the walls re-surfaced with brownstone cement.<sup>40</sup> The original Italianate detail has been modified to reflect the neo-Renaissance sensibility of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when it was significantly enlarged by Helen Stokes, then later renovated by Morgan. The brick-fronted extension at the eastern end on East 37th Street was added in 1957 to accommodate office use.

*Madison Avenue Facade* The three-bay facade is dominated by the center entranceway, approached by a high balustraded brownstone stoop. The steps extend sideways from the landing to the north. The arched entranceway contains a transom with wrought-iron tracery and the numerals 231, set above paired glass outer doors with wrought-iron grilles. These protect paired paneled wood inner doors. The entrance is shielded by a portico with Corinthian columns at the front of the stoop and engaged pilasters flanking the entrance. Full-length window openings with multi-pane French sash fronted by sinuous wrought-iron balustrades flank the center entrance. (The design of the balustrades is reflected in the design of the fence, but the fence is flatter in execution.) The openings have full surrounds supporting raised entablatures and sills carried on console brackets. At the second and third stories three window openings with multi-pane sash are set in surrounds with raised entablatures and sills carried on console brackets. The third story terminates in a projecting cornice. At the attic level, two groups of triple windows with Ionic colonnettes are surmounted by segmental-arch pediments.

*East 37th Street Facade* This long facade is set behind a narrow lawn that is protected by the wrought-iron fence on the brownstone base that continues around from Madison Avenue. The basement level

rises from a water table surmounted by a molding and has regularly spaced window openings set behind wrought-iron grilles. The areaway at the east end leads to a delivery entrance.

The first story contains a complex arrangement of openings articulated by a variety of detail. From east to west, these are a blind round arch flanked by paired Ionic pilasters; a carved stone panel with foliate motifs; a three-sided projecting bay with the openings flanked by Ionic pilasters and containing full-length multi-pane French sash set below transoms and fronted by wrought-iron railings; another carved foliate panel; and a full-height pier rising to a capital at the top of the third story. This pier marks the division between the original house and the 1888 extension. The openings with multi-pane sash continue as: a window surround surmounted by a full entablature with a sill carried on corbel brackets (the paired sash are set below transoms); a window opening flanked by Ionic columns surmounted by a pediment and fronted by a balcony with a wrought-iron railing; and a window surround surmounted by a full entablature with a sill carried on corbel brackets (the paired sash are set below transoms). The corner is articulated by a full-height pier terminating in a capital at the third story.

The second story echoes the articulation of the first story. In the 1888 extension, a wall panel rises above the blind arch. Paired window groups set in surrounds with shallow entablatures flanking a triple-window group rise above the projecting bay and are sheltered behind an angled balustrade. In the original house, the articulation is an angled oriel; a paired window set below a pediment and above a balustraded wall panel flanked by two oculi windows; and a single window set in a surround with an entablature. The window openings contain multi-pane sash.

At the third story in the extension, are a wall panel that continues from the second story; and paired windows with multi-pane sash set in surrounds, flanking an oval window. In the original house, single windows with surrounds below entablatures flank a central paired window set in a surround with an entablature. The windows have multi-pane sash. The third story terminates in a wide bandcourse below a projecting cornice.

The attic story at the fourth-floor level has three triple-window groups with Ionic colonnettes set below segmental-arch pediments like those seen on the Madison Avenue front of the house. The bases of the chimney stacks are still visible at the roofline, flanking the segmental-arch pediments.

*South Elevation* The south elevation of the original section of the house is still visible, but the extension has been obscured by the 1991 conservatory link. The

portion of the elevation closest to Madison Avenue has a rounded bay projecting from the basement level to the second story-level. Three window openings, with curving multi-pane sash, are set below a continuous cornice. The paired windows above the bay at the third story are set in a surround with an entablature. A pair of windows are set above a projecting cornice at the attic level. The next section of the elevation contains a full-height angled bay with paired window openings set at three levels. These windows light the interior stair hall. The projecting cornice sets off the attic level.

The date of the multi-pane sash seen throughout the house is puzzling. While they would not necessarily be out of character for a house built in the early 1850s, it would seem quite likely that small,

multi-pane sash would have been changed to one-over-one sash when the house was enlarged in 1888, similar to the sash in the Pierpont Morgan House at 219 Madison Avenue.<sup>41</sup> The only exception at 219 are the curving French sash in the projecting bays, where smaller panes were used. However, when Berenice Abbott photographed 231 Madison Avenue in 1937, the house had multi-pane sash.

Report prepared by  
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#### NOTES

1. *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, ed. Kenneth T. Jackson (New Haven and New York: Yale University Press and the New-York Historical Society, 1993), s.v. "Murray Hill" by Joyce Gold.
2. New York County, Borough of Manhattan, Reindexed Conveyances for Section 3, Block 866. Executors of Hannah Murray to Mary Murray, recorded April 13, 1846, Liber 477, Page 122, lots 22 and 58; Mary Murray to George D. Phelps, recorded March 22, 1847, Liber 487, Page 352, lots 22, 25, 30, 32, and 52; Executors of Hannah Murray to Mary Murray, recorded April 29, 1847, Liber 488, Page 362, Lots 22, 52, 58; Mary Murray to John J. Phelps, recorded May 15, 1847, Liber 488, Page 513, lot 25; Mary Murray to Isaac N. Phelps, recorded May 15, 1847, Liber 488, Page 514, lot 58; Mary Murray to George D. Phelps, recorded May 15, 1847, Liber 488, Page 516, lot 22; George D., John J. and Isaac N. Phelps (agreement), recorded May 3, 1849, Liber 522, Page 106, lots 22, 25, 52, 58; George and Harriet Phelps to William E. Dodge, recorded June 1, 1850, Liber 547, Page 147, lots 22, 25, 52; John J. Phelps to George D. and Isaac Phelps, William Dodge (agreement regarding stables and common alleyway), recorded June 1, 1850, Liber 547, Page 177, lot 52; George D. Phelps, John J. Phelps, and Isaac N. Phelps (agreement), recorded June 1, 1850, Liber 547, Page 181, lots 22, 25, 58.
3. *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. "Phelps, Anson Greene" by H[arold] U. F[aulkner] and "Dodge, William Earl" by W[illiam] B. S[haw].
4. Isaac Newton Phelps Stokes (see below) stated that the houses were built in 1853; other sources say 1852.
5. Information concerning the materials of the building comes from Jablonski Berkowitz Conservation, Inc. "Investigation of Brownstone Masonry J. P. Morgan Jr. House 231 Madison Avenue, New York, NY" September 24 2001, in Preservation files, Landmarks Preservation Commission, New York, and Renzo Piano Workshop/ Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners LLP, "The Pierpont Morgan Library landmarks presentation," January 29, 2002, in Research files, Landmarks Preservation Commission, New York.
6. *New York, 1855, from the Latting Observatory*, engraved by William Wellstone after Benjamin F. Smith, Jr., published by Smith, Fern and Company. This view also seems to depict a fourth house on East 36th Street on lots 30 and 32, which were still owned by George Phelps. See Elliot Bostwick Davis, "The Currency of Culture: Prints in New York City," 221, and cat. 143, 468, in *Art and the Empire City: New York, 1825-1861*, ed. Catherine Hoover Voorsanger and John Howat (New York and New Haven: Metropolitan Museum of Art and Yale University Press, 2000). The print is part of the Phelps Stokes Collection, owned by the New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundation. I. N. Phelps Stokes had reproduced the print in *The*

*Iconography of Manhattan Island* (New York: Robert H. Dodd, 1915-28), vol. 3, plate 145, with the following description: "The three houses occupying the block front on the east side of Madison Avenue between 36th and 37th Streets were erected in 1853. Mr. Isaac N. Phelps built on the corner of 37th Street, Mr. John J. Phelps on the corner of 36th Street, and Mr. George D. Phelps on the middle plot, which he later sold to Mr. William E. Dodge. This block front is now owned and occupied by Mrs. J. Pierpont Morgan, Sr., and Mr. J. P. Morgan."

7. The Astor house is discussed and pictured in Robert A. M. Stern, Thomas Mellins, and David Fishman, *New York 1880: Architecture and Urbanism in the Gilded Age* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1999), 570-573. Thomas also added the center section to the Astor Library on Lafayette Place between 1856 and 1859.
8. *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. "Stokes, Anson Phelps" by H[arris] E[dward] S[tarr].
9. Stokes became a well-respected architect and active social reformer, like many other members of his family. He was also an amateur historian and avid bibliophile and collector of material pertaining to New York City and its history, much of which now comprises the Phelps Stokes Collection in the New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundation. He was also the contemporary of Jack Morgan. Both men were born in 1867; Morgan died in 1943 and Stokes in 1944. In *Random Recollections of a Happy Life* (New York, 1941) Stokes discusses the social and philanthropic obligations of the Stokes family and his collecting activities among other things. See *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, s.v. "Stokes, I(saac) N(ewton) Phelps" by Deborah Gardner and *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. "Stokes, Isaac Newton Phelps" by Martin E. Gettleman.
10. Stokes, *Random Recollections*.
11. Surviving records are sketchy on Robertson's designs for the house. The Manhattan Alterations Docket lists Alteration Permit 1910 of 1888 for 229 Madison Avenue; Helen L. Phelps Stokes, owner; R. H. Robinson [sic], architect; work to cost \$75,000. The building is listed as 3 stories, 56 feet high, 46 feet front, and 60 feet deep with a peaked roof, stone foundation, brick upper walls, independent (not party) walls, and classified as a dwelling. The proposed work is listed as building up the peaked roof to 4 stories, 63 feet high, and adding an extension, 4 stories, 63 feet high, 55 feet wide, and 58 feet deep.
12. *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects* (New York: The Free Press, 1982), s.v. "Robertson, Robert Henderson" by Sarah Bradford Landau. See Stern et al. for listings and discussion of many of Robertson's buildings between 1880 and 1900.
13. Information in this section is based on *Murray Hill Historic District* (LP-2102) essay prepared by Gale Harris (New York: City of New York, 2002), 24-25.
14. Stern, *New York 1880*, 576.
15. "Fourth Avenue," *Real Estate Record and Guide*, December 15, 1877, 965.
16. For information on residents of Madison Avenue in Murray Hill see "Historical Notes on No. 231 Madison Avenue, Manhattan," compiled by Ellen W. Kramer, ca. 1968, in Research files, J. P. Morgan, Jr. House, Landmarks Preservation Commission, New York.
17. Jean Strouse, *Morgan: American Financier* (New York: Harper Collins, 1999), 108, 114, 117, 129, and 194. For more information on the relationship of Gustave and Christian Herter with Morgan, see Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, "Patronage and the Artistic Interior," 84-85, and Sophia Riefenstahl, "Chronology," 227, in *Herter Brothers: Furniture and Interiors for a Gilded Age* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., in association with the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1994).
18. Strouse, *Morgan*, 195, quotes Morgan.

19. William W. and Ellen Phelps, Ellen Phelps Dodge, and Davis S. Dodge to John Pierpont Morgan, recorded March 4, 1881, Liber 1576, Page 352, lots 25, 52.
20. Strouse, *Morgan*, 195, 226-229, and Freylinghusen, 86-88, discuss the redecoration of the interiors and the Herter Brothers firm. Christian Herter, probably with the architectural assistance of Charles Atwood who was then employed by the firm, was directly responsible for the work. Frances Morgan met with Herter regularly to discuss various aspects of the decor. See Riefenstahl, 233. The newly redone interiors were photographed for reproduction in *Artistic Houses, Being a Series of Interior Views of a Number of the Most Beautiful and Celebrated Homes in the United States with a Description of the Arts Treasures Contained Therein* (New York: D. Appleton, 1883), vol. 1, pt. 1, 75-80. The photographs have been reproduced with new commentary in *The Opulent Interiors of the Gilded Age* with new text by Arnold Lewis, James Turner, and Steven McQuillan (New York: Dover, 1987), 144-147. It seems plausible to assume that Helen Stokes's remodeling and expansion campaign in 1888, was inspired by the work that Morgan had done on his house earlier in the decade.
21. John Douglas Forbes, *J. P. Morgan, Jr, 1867-1943* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981), 8.
22. Jean Strouse, "Mr. Morgan and His Library," 11-21, in *The Morgan Library: An American Masterpiece* (New York: Pierpont Morgan Library, 2000).
23. Ibid., 22-23; Strouse, *Morgan*, 488-492. Executors of Melissa P. Dodge to J. Pierpont Morgan, recorded April 28, 1903, Section 3, Liber 93, Page 313, lots 22, 25, 33, 52, all of 30 and 32.
24. Strouse, *Morgan*, 493. Helen L. Phelps Stokes to John Pierpont Morgan, recorded December 21, 1904. Section 3, Liber 106, Page 82, lot 58. Helen and Anson Phelps Stokes seem to have moved across the street. The Manhattan Alterations Docket for 1905 records Alteration Permit 227, at the southwest corner of Madison Avenue and 37 Street; A. P. Stokes, owner; Howell & Stokes, architect [this was their son's firm]; brick building, 28 feet wide, 90 feet deep, 4 stories, classified as a dwelling; work to cost \$10,000; commenced March 14, 1905, completed September 28, 1905.
25. Forbes, 30-31, 54-55
26. Quoted in Strouse, *Morgan*, 539-540.
27. Joseph and Henry Duveen had established offices in London and New York. The firm was heavily patronized by Pierpont Morgan and later Jack Morgan. See National Gallery of Art: The Collections, Provenance Index for biographical information, [www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov).
28. The Alterations Docket, Alterations Permit 1080-1905, states that 229 Madison Avenue is a brick building, but this may refer to the underlying structure. The 1885 *Robinson Atlas of Manhattan* and the 1897 *Bromley Atlas of Manhattan* indicate that the front wall, the East 37th Street wall, and the front portion of the south wall are faced with stone. The attribution of the ironwork to Oscar Luetke, as well as the stoop design to Robertson, is cited in Bonnie Yochelson, *Berenice Abbott: Changing New York* (New York: New Press and the Museum of the City of New York, 1997), cat. 14, Middle East Side, J. P. Morgan House, photographed January 27, 1937, Abbott File 168. Abbott's photography was funded by the Works Progress Administration, Federal Art Project, working out of the Museum of the City of New York. A group of researchers compiled information on the various buildings she photographed. This research served as the basis for the commentary on the catalog entries in Yochelson. The information was updated by Peter Simmons, Manager of Collection Access, Museum of the City of New York, when the catalogue was prepared. Oscar Luetke seems to have established himself as designer and manufacturer of wrought ironwork in New York in 1878. Three scrapbooks pertaining to his work are available in the New York Public Library Research Libraries collections. See Strouse, *Morgan*, 540, for a further description of the work undertaken for Jack and Jessie Morgan.
29. The chimney stacks are very apparent in photographs of the house taken in the late 1950s or early 1960s and available in the Research Files: J. P. Morgan, Jr. House. They had been removed by 1965.

30. Ron Chernow, *The House of Morgan* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990), 265, characterized it: "Somber and brooding outside, it was light and airy within. It had white marble fireplaces, French revival furniture, and crystal chandeliers."
31. J. P. and Frances Morgan to John Pierpont Morgan, Jr., recorded December 21, 1906, Section 3, Liber 129, Page 243, lot 58.
32. Strouse, "Mr. Morgan," 26; Strouse, *Morgan*, 684-688. Anson Phelps Stokes, who died a few months later, was among the many attendees at Morgan's funeral, held at St. George's Church on Stuyvesant Square. Ibid., 683. In addition to banking ties, Stokes, like Morgan, was one of the founders of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.
33. Quote in Strouse, *Morgan*, 685.
34. Forbes, 130-142, 147-148. Chernow, 265.
35. John Pierpont and Jane Morgan to the Trustees of the Pierpont Morgan Library, recorded February 18, 1924 and June 27, 1924, lots 52, 30, 32, 33. John Pierpont Morgan to Pierpont Morgan Library, recorded February 3, 1927, Liber 3582, Page 434, lot 25. Chernow, 265-267; Strouse, *Morgan*, 689.
36. Chernow, 471-475; *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. "Morgan, John Pierpont" by Erling A. Erickson. Executors of John Pierpont Morgan to United Lutheran Church in America, recorded January 18, 1944, Liber 4258, Page 165.
37. See Research Files: J. P. Morgan Jr. House for the legal history of the property. The Pierpont Morgan Library and Annex (LP-0239) was designated a New York City Landmark on May 17, 1966.
38. Chernow, 475. Block 866, Lot 58, Deed, recorded May 31, 1988, Reel 1408, Page 1728.
39. Concomitantly with the designation of the Phelps Stokes - Morgan House, the Commission is considering a proposal by the Morgan Library to replace the Voorsanger & Mills conservatory and the 1957 office building with three pavilions to house new library facilities, designed by Renzo Piano.
40. Testing of the exterior facing, carried out prior to recent restoration work on the house, revealed the color and condition of the original stone..
41. The Pierpont Morgan House was photographed ca. 1907, after the library was finished and the garden created between the two house. Slightly different versions of the same view are reproduced in Chernow, plates, and Strouse, *Morgan*, plates. Part of the south elevation of 219 Madison is shown, but the window sash types cannot be distinguished with certainty.

## FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, architecture, and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Phelps Stokes - J. P. Morgan, Jr. House has a special character, 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 the Phelps Stokes - J. P. Morgan, Jr. House is a rare surviving freestanding mansion in midtown Manhattan, recalling the initial residential development of Murray Hill; that it is notable for its associations with two prominent New York families, and that it has achieved additional significance as an integral component of the Pierpont Morgan Library, one of New York City's most esteemed cultural institutions; that it was originally designed in the Italianate style and built in 1852/53 for Isaac Newton Phelps as one of a group of houses for members of the Phelps family along the blockfront of Madison Avenue between East 36th Street and East 37th Street; that Phelps's daughter Helen and her husband Anson Phelps Stokes commissioned architect R. H. Robertson to expand the house in 1888; that Robertson's designs harmonized with the original while adding neo-Renaissance characteristics; that when J. Pierpont Morgan purchased the house for his son J. P. Morgan, Jr., in late 1904, it was subsequently further renovated, and much of the exterior character it assumed then still survives today; and that when the Pierpont Morgan Library purchased the house in 1988, it was incorporated into the museum forming a vital part of its ongoing program.

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 Phelps Stokes - J. P. Morgan, Jr. House (now part of the Pierpont Morgan Library), 231 Madison Avenue (aka 225-231 Madison Avenue, 24 East 37<sup>th</sup> Street), Borough of Manhattan, and designates Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 866, Lot 58, as its Landmark Site.



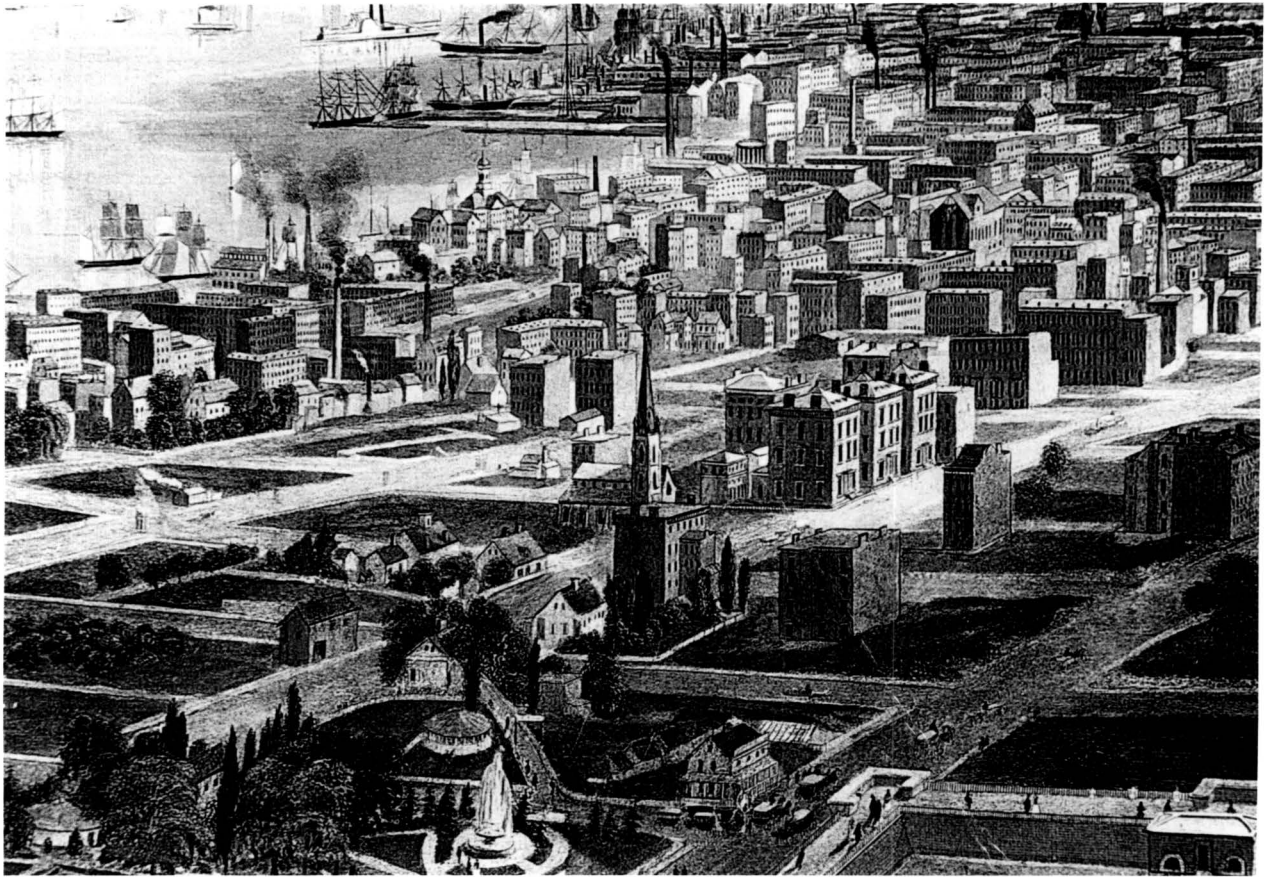
PHELPS STOKES - J. P. MORGAN, JR. HOUSE  
231 Madison Avenue at the southeast corner of Madison Avenue and East 37th Street,  
aka 225-231 Madison Avenue, 24 East 37<sup>th</sup> Street, Manhattan  
Photo: Carl Forster



PHELPS STOKES - J. P. MORGAN, JR. HOUSE

Photo taken between 1950-1965

Source: Research files, LPC



Detail from New York, 1855, from the Latting Observatory, engraved by William Wellstood after a painting by Benjamin F. Smith, Jr. representing Murray Hill c. 1853-54.  
To the right of the church spire are the three houses facing Madison Avenue built by members of the Phelps family.



37<sup>th</sup> Street facade

PHELPS STOKES - J. P. MORGAN, JR. HOUSE

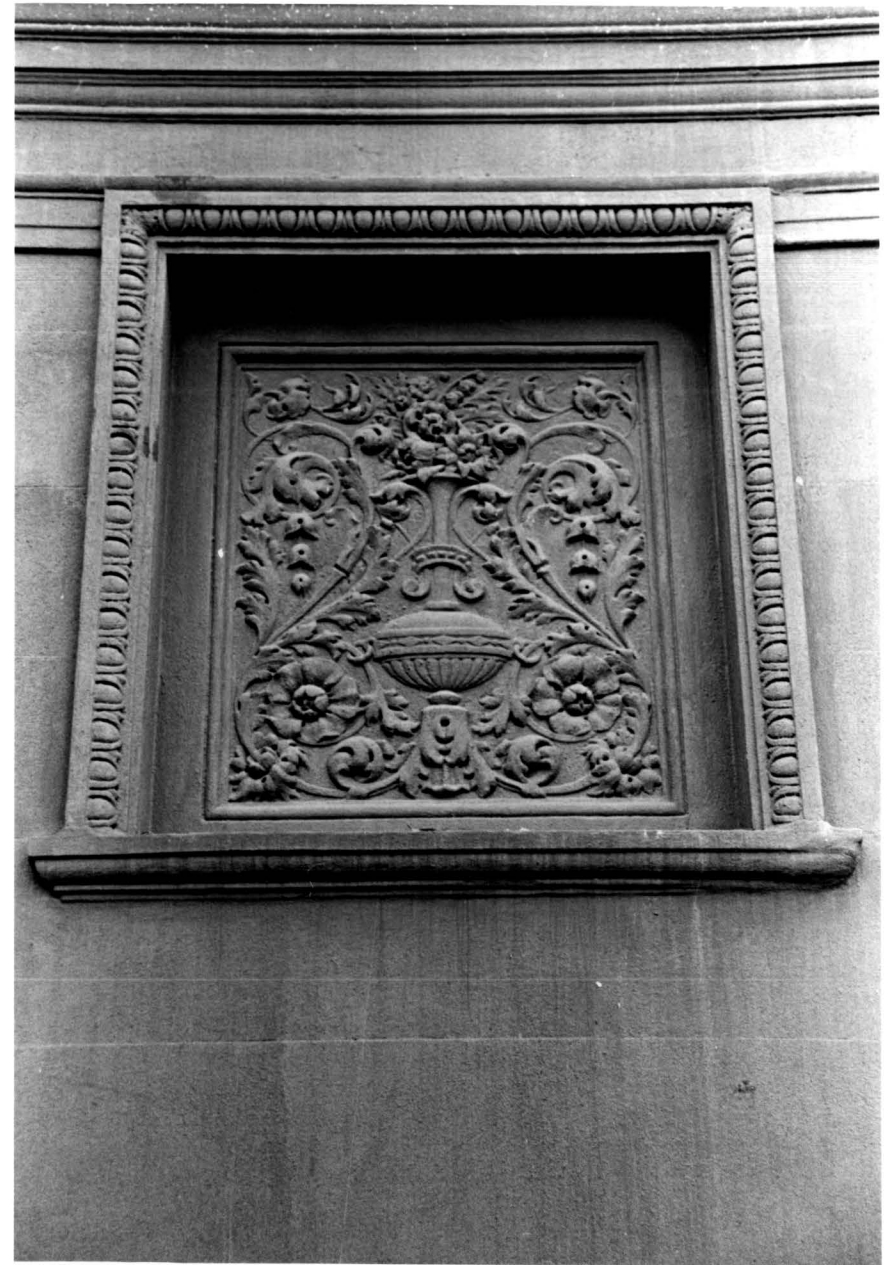
Photos: Carl Forster

Eastern and southern facades





Entrance detail



Detail, 37<sup>th</sup> Street facade

PHELPS STOKES - J. P. MORGAN, JR. HOUSE

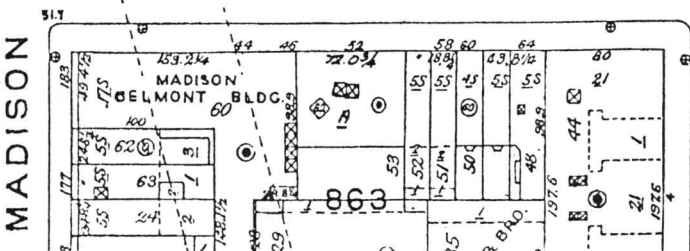
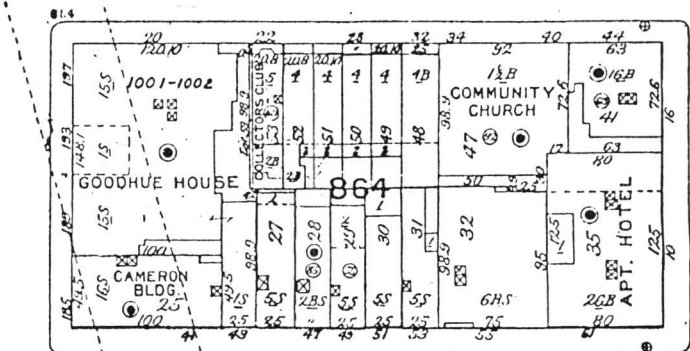
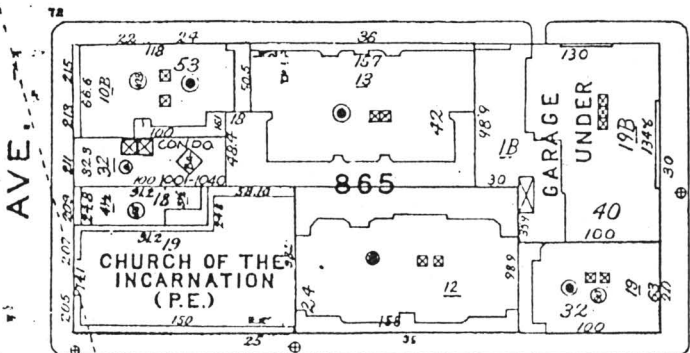
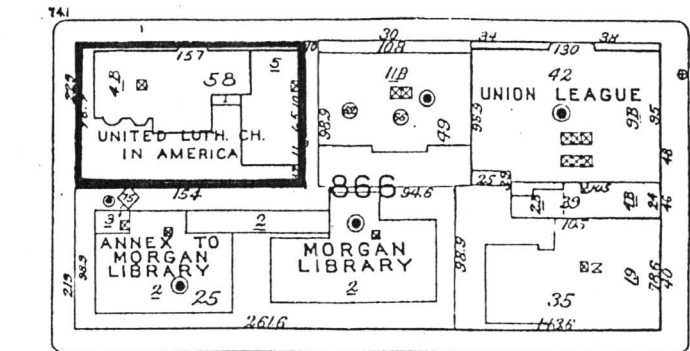
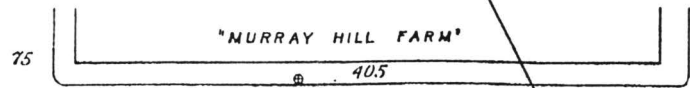
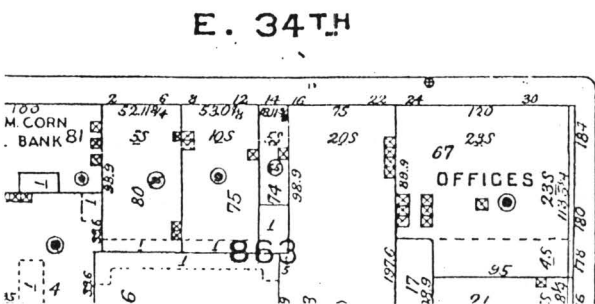
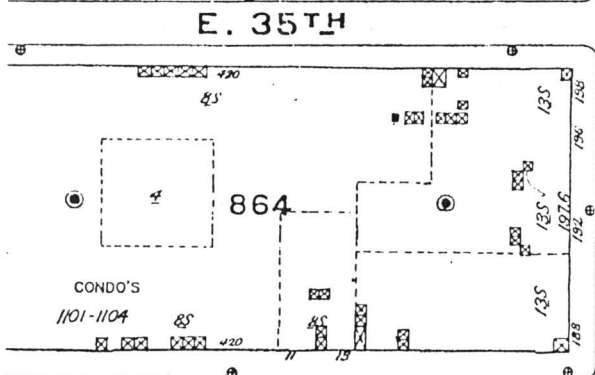
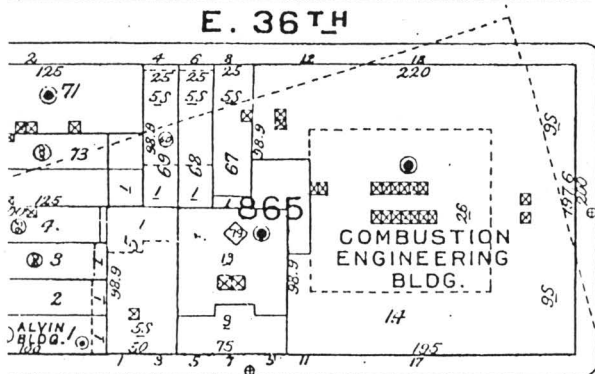
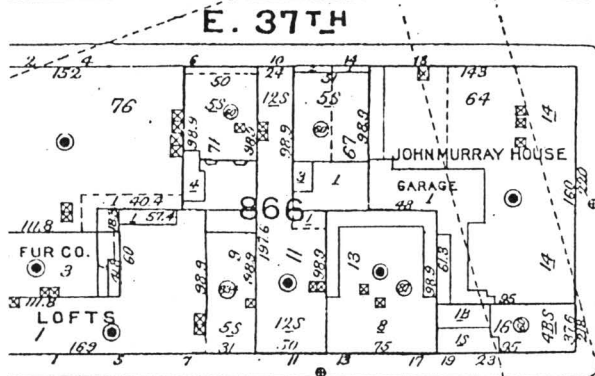
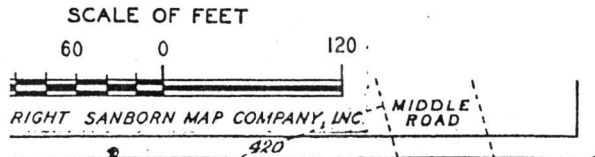
Photos: Carl Forster



PHELPS STOKES - J. P. MORGAN, JR. HOUSE

Window details, 37<sup>th</sup> Street facade

Photos: Carl Forster



67

140

74.5

AVE.

70.2

64.1

140

61.8

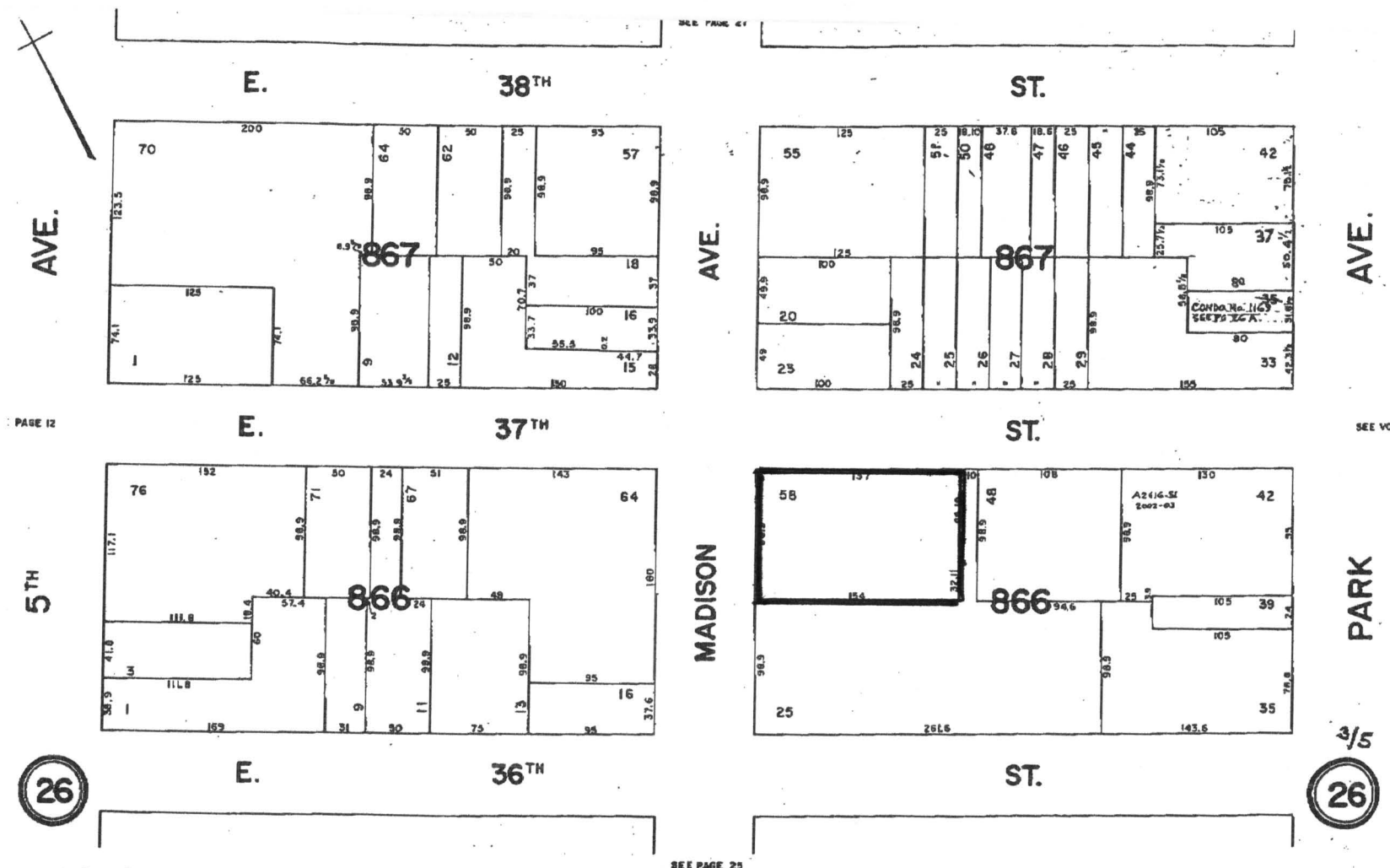
PARK

PHELPS STOKES - J. P. MORGAN, JR. HOUSE

231 Madison Avenue at the southeast corner of Madison Avenue and East 37th Street,  
aka 225-231 Madison Avenue, 24 East 37th Street, Manhattan

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 866, Lot 58

Source: Sanborn Manhattan Landbook, 2000-2001



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PHELPS STOKES - J. P. MORGAN, JR. HOUSE  
 231 Madison Avenue at the southeast corner of Madison Avenue and East 37th Street,  
 aka 225-231 Madison Avenue, 24 East 37th Street, Manhattan  
 Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 866, Lot 58  
 Source: New York City Department of Finance, City Surveyor, Tax Map 26