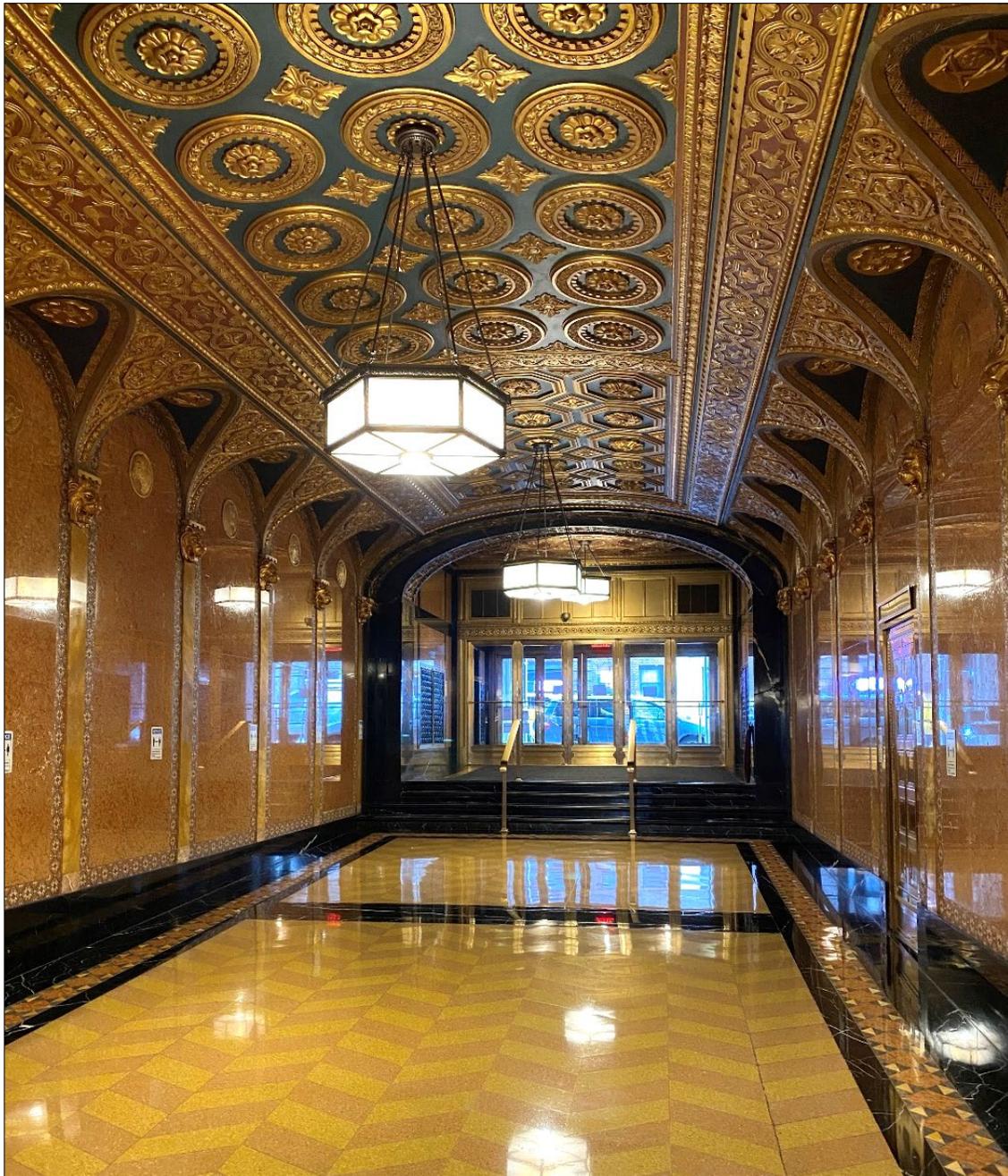


200 Madison Avenue First Floor Lobby Interior



DESIGNATION REPORT

200 Madison Avenue First Floor Lobby Interior

LOCATION

Borough of Manhattan
200 Madison Avenue
(aka 200-214 Madison Avenue,
11-19 East 35th Street, 10-20 East 36th Street)

LANDMARK TYPE

Interior

SIGNIFICANCE

Designed by Warren & Wetmore and built in 1925-1926, the glittering neoclassical lobby of 200 Madison Avenue contains a richly embellished through-block arcade and elevator hall.



First Floor Lobby, 200 Madison Avenue, c. 1926
Museum of the City of New York

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Lisa Kersavage, Executive Director
Mark Silberman, General Counsel
Timothy Frye, Director of Special Projects and
Strategic Planning
Kate Lemos McHale, Director of Research
Cory Herrala, Director of Preservation

REPORT BY

Matthew A. Postal, Research Department

EDITED BY

Kate Lemos McHale and Margaret E. Herman

PHOTOGRAPHS BY

LPC Staff

COMMISSIONERS

Sarah Carroll, Chair
Frederick Bland, Vice Chair
Diana Chapin
Wellington Chen
Michael Devonshire
Michael Goldblum
John Gustafsson
Anne Holford-Smith
Everardo Jefferson
Jeanne Lutfy
Adi Shamir-Baron

200 Madison Avenue

First Floor Lobby Interior

Manhattan

Designation List 526 LP-2654

Built: 1925-26

Architect: Warren & Wetmore

Landmark Site: 200 Madison Avenue (aka 200-214 Madison Avenue, 11-19 East 35th Street, 10-20 East 36th Street), Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 865, Lot 14; consisting of a through-block arcade, extending from East 35th to East 36th Street, and perpendicular elevator hall, the East 35th and East 36th Street entrance foyers, and the fixtures and interior components of these spaces, which may include but are not limited to the historic wall surfaces, ceiling surfaces, floor surfaces, mirrors, lighting fixtures, attached furnishings, vestibule and elevator doors, decorative metalwork and attached decorative elements

Calendared: July 20, 2021

Public Hearing: September 28, 2021

On September 28, 2021, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the 200 Madison Avenue First Floor Lobby Interior as a New York City Landmark and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No.1). The hearing was duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of the law. Two people testified in support of designation, including representatives of the owner, and the New York Landmarks Conservancy. No one spoke in opposition. The Commission received two letters in support of designation, from Senator Brad Hoylman and the Murray Hill Neighborhood Association.

Summary

200 Madison Avenue
First Floor Lobby Interior

200 Madison Avenue was designed by Warren and Wetmore. Constructed in 1925-26, it is located between East 35th Street and East 36th Street in Murray Hill. This office structure contains one of midtown Manhattan's most ornate office building lobbies. It is a richly embellished, somewhat theatrical space, designed to express the success of the building's owner and tenants.

To conform to the 1916 Zoning Resolution, the building was divided into two sections: the nine-story base facing Madison Avenue originally contained an apartment hotel, while the 25-story tower contained offices and showrooms. The first-floor lobby, which originally served only the tower, has a T-shaped plan that incorporates a through-block arcade and elevator hall. To negotiate the sloping site, the arcade incorporates steps, ramps, and landings. Both spaces employ glistening materials that reflect light, such as brass, marble, and polished terrazzo, as well as gilded plaster with ornament inspired by Renaissance, Baroque, and 18th-century English sources. The vaulted ceilings and upper walls are blanketed with dense fields of low plaster relief set against dark green and red grounds.

Notable architectural features include a shallow saucer dome above the East 35th Street entrance and an elaborate groin vault where the arcade and elevator hall intersect. The surfaces of these richly ornamented spaces are enlivened with plant forms and animals, both real and imagined, including medallions that depict sheep, rams, and

horses, as well as lion heads, dragons, griffins, owls, eagles, and peacocks.

Warren & Wetmore, one of New York City's leading architectural firms in the early 20th century, were consistently inventive interpreters of the classical tradition, producing a great number of New York City landmarks and landmark interiors, such as Grand Central Terminal, Steinway Hall, and the New York Central Building. The first-floor lobby of 200 Madison Avenue is among their least known and best-preserved interiors, appearing much as it did when the building opened in 1926.

Description

200 Madison Avenue
First Floor Lobby Interior

Description

The first-floor lobby has a T-shaped plan, consisting of the East 35th and East 36th Street foyers, a through-block arcade, and a perpendicular elevator hall. The arcade and entrance foyers have highly polished marble walls, patterned terrazzo floors, and gilded plaster ceilings inspired by Renaissance, Baroque, and 18th English sources.

Each recessed street entrance has five brass doors. Above the East 35th Street entrance is a grid of windows. The foyer has marble walls with floral mosaic trim and a ceiling decorated with neoclassical reliefs. Above the five brass doors that open from the foyer into the arcade is a black marble arch that frames a grid of windows.

The East 36th Street entrance foyer has a low ceiling, and marble walls with decorative grilles framed in brass. The west wall incorporates a brass door with a glass panel. Above the five doors that open from the foyer into the arcade, are five horizontal panels. The three center panels are painted gold, whereas the outer panels are grilles.

Due to the slope of the site, the through-block arcade incorporates steps, ramps, and landings, and transitions from a one-story volume at East 36th Street to a double-height space at East 35th Street. There are three groups of black marble steps: inside the East 35th Street foyer, south of the elevator hall, and near the East 36th Street landing. At the south end of the arcade, near East 35th Street, is large saucer dome with rosettes, resting on elaborate pendentives and lunettes that display images of animals.

The terrazzo floors have fields of yellow and pink chevrons, bordered by mosaics and black marble. The walls are polished pink marble, trimmed with floral mosaics, with a black marble base. The ceiling incorporates dense fields of raised octagonal and circular reliefs, flanked by continuous bands of low relief, supported by round arches that rest on gilded lion heads. Below each head is a raised pilaster-like panel flanked by floral mosaics.

Opposite the elevator hall, on the arcade's west wall, is a brass door that leads to freight elevators (not part of designation). The door is framed by brass moldings and grilles, and (non-historic) white glass panels. Above these elements is an arched panel with a gilded owl flanked by birds. To the right and left, the walls are polished black marble. Near the top of the adjoining pink marble bays are animal medallions. On the east wall, north of the elevator hall, is a pair of illuminated building directories, as well as two widely spaced brass doors.

Where the arcade and elevator hall meet at the center of the T-shaped lobby, a groin vault springs from black marble pilasters. The elevator hall extends east, toward Madison Avenue, ending at a framed opening beneath an arched panel. Narrower than the arcade, the floors are terrazzo, with yellow and pink chevrons bordered by black marble and mosaics. The elevator hall has a shallow ceiling vault with four rows of rosettes set inside square frames. Where the vault meets the side walls are several gilded courses of molding and a continuous frieze of peacocks.

The elevator doors have black marble surrounds. The brass doors incorporate vertical panels that display round arches and framed rosettes. There are two brass mailboxes. Resting on a marble shelf, each mailbox has a decorative cornice and a shell-like form set inside a round arch. At the east end of the elevator hall are two brass doors and a decorative lunette, which is embellished with gilded

reliefs that depict an owl flanked by birds. The bottom of the lunette, which rests on a single pilaster at each side, is probably original and has simple reliefs.

Alterations

Alterations and non-historic elements within the lobby include the installation of non-historic lighting fixtures in original locations, brass handrails on steps, security turnstiles at the west end of the elevator hall, illuminated exit signs, illuminated directory screens in the elevator hall, and modification of original floor signs above elevators. A non-historic freestanding reception desk is located in the middle of the arcade, aligned with turnstiles. The turnstiles and desk cover parts of the marble and mosaic floor. Behind the desk, the area has been reconfigured and the panels are non-historic. The ceiling vault, HVAC unit, side panels, and lighting fixtures in the East 36th Street foyer are non-historic.

History and Significance

200 Madison Avenue
First Floor Lobby Interior

200 Madison Avenue contains one of Manhattan's least known and most impressive office building lobbies. As originally conceived, 200 Madison Avenue was a mixed-use structure – an office building and apartment hotel – that conformed to the use districts stipulated in the 1916 Zoning Resolution, adopted by the New York City Board of Estimate and Apportionment in July 1916. The lots on Madison Avenue were in a residential zone, while the lots at the rear of the site, facing East 35th and East 36th Streets, were in a commercial zone. These dual requirements would have a substantial impact on the plan of the first floor and its ornate T-shaped lobby.

Murray Hill

200 Madison Avenue is located within the Murray Hill section of Manhattan. Named for Robert and Mary Murray, who owned a country estate that extended from about present day East 33rd to East 39th Streets, the area first attracted significant residential development in the 1850s, when a tunnel was built to disguise the tracks of the New York and Harlem Railroad that traveled along Fourth (now Park) Avenue. Many prominent New Yorkers settled here, including members of the Phelps, Stokes, and Dodge families, who occupied a group of three Italianate style residences (c. 1852-53) on the east side of Madison Avenue.

The banker J. P. Morgan purchased the John Jay Phelps house at 219 Madison Avenue, at the corner of East 36th Street, in 1881. Though demolished in 1927 and replaced by the Morgan

Library Annex (1927-28), the Isaac Newton Phelps house at 231 Madison Avenue, which Morgan purchased for his son in 1904, stands at the corner of East 37th Street and is now part of the Morgan Library (1902-07, a New York City Landmark) & Museum.

Commercial development transformed the scale and character of nearby Fifth Avenue in the first decades of the 20th century. With the opening of the IRT subway along Park Avenue in 1904, many buildings were constructed between 34th and 42nd Streets for prominent retailers, such as B. Altman & Co. Department Store (1905-13), Tiffany & Company (1903-06), Gorham Manufacturing Company (1904-06), Lord & Taylor (1913-14), and immediately south of the New York Public Library, the Knox Hat Store and Manufacturing Company (1901-02), all New York City landmarks. On Madison Avenue, commercial activity arrived slightly later, gradually working its way north from Madison Square and 23rd Street. Whereas Fifth Avenue attracted mostly high-profile retail stores, this section of Madison Avenue, particularly below 34th Street, appealed to wholesalers, particularly silk companies.

In response to such changes, the Murray Hill Association was formed, headed by J. P. “Jack” Morgan, son of J. P. Morgan, who died in 1913.¹ New York City's passage of the 1916 Zoning Resolution established groundbreaking height and setback controls throughout the five boroughs and designated residential districts to exclude what were seen as incompatible uses.² Though Murray Hill was designated a “residence” district, Morgan remained vigilant about discouraging commercial development, particularly in the vicinity of his father's library on East 36th Street.

Initially, the Murray Hill Association used various legal means to deter development, often claiming that the Murray Hill Restrictive Agreement

(1847), which prohibited commercial structures of any kind between 33rd and 38th Streets, remained in effect.³ When the New York State Appellate Court ruled against the Murray Hill Association in January 1916, the Morgan family adopted new strategies. In addition to acquiring sites to steer future development in the neighborhood, it took legal action against developers and specific projects, including early development plans at 200 Madison Avenue.⁴

Madison Avenue Zoning

In the late 19th century, William Waldorf Astor—the great grandson of fur trader and real estate investor John Jacob Astor—owned the property where 200 Madison Avenue would eventually be built. The Astor family developed most or all of the site in the 1870s, including eight parcels at 200-214 Madison Avenue. By the 1910s, these houses were leased to both residential and commercial tenants. William Waldorf Astor, who moved to England in 1899, filed plans to redevelop the block in December 1917. He hired the architect Peabody Wilson & Brown, a firm specializing in country estates, which proposed a seven-story, \$1 million business structure that was designed to complement the neighborhood’s residential character.⁵

Though commercial buildings were permitted on most blocks in midtown Manhattan under the 1916 Zoning Resolution, a short stretch of Madison Avenue, north of 34th Street, was excluded. According to Astor’s American attorney, these restrictions mostly benefited the Morgan family and would “confiscate a large part” of the site’s financial value.⁶

While the Board of Appeal (now the Board of Standards and Appeals) approved Astor’s proposal to erect a business structure in February 1918, the Murray Hill Association continued to oppose the Board’s decision, claiming such changes

would make the area an undesirable place to live.

In February 1922, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court determined that such zoning restrictions were, in fact, constitutional and would stand. *The New-York Tribune* described the decision as a “boon to that neighborhood, which is of the finest residential character.”⁷ To satisfy such regulations, 200 Madison Avenue was required to be a mixed-use structure, and thus incorporated storefronts, showrooms, offices and, until 1939, an apartment hotel. Consequently, there were originally two lobbies: one for the apartment hotel on the lower floors, facing Madison Avenue, and the other for the offices above, entered from East 35th Street and East 36th Street.

200 Madison Avenue⁸

Jesse H(olman) Jones (1874-1956) organized the syndicate that built 200 Madison Avenue in early 1925. A Texas real estate developer, banker, and politician, he financed numerous residential and commercial ventures in Houston, Washington D.C., and New York City. Under the name Houston Properties Corporation, he was active in New York City from about 1923 to 1934. Though Jones was from Texas, he maintained (or shared) a “sumptuous office on the 11th floor of the great International Combustion Building” at 200 Madison Avenue.⁹ In later years, he played an important role in the U. S. Federal government, serving as chairman of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (1932-39) and Secretary of Commerce (1940-45).

Alfred B. Jones was president of the Houston Properties Corporation. He was later commissioner of the New York City Tunnel Authority, which had offices at 200 Madison Avenue during the 1930s and 1940s, when it merged with the Triborough Bridge Authority. The company’s vice president, Robert M. Catts, built or owned the Madison Belmont Building (1924-25, a New York City Landmark), which like

200 Madison Avenue was designed by Warren & Wetmore. Other New York City buildings erected by Houston Properties include apartment buildings at 1158 Fifth Avenue (1924, part of the Carnegie Hill Historic District), 612 Park Avenue (1925), 812 Park Avenue (1927), and 950 Fifth Avenue (1926, all part of the Upper East Side Historic District), and an office tower at 275 Madison Avenue (1930-31, a New York City Landmark).

The Houston Properties Corporation hired Dwight P. Robinson & Company to erect 200 Madison Avenue. Construction (NB 165-25) began in 1925 and was completed in May 1926. The apartment hotel, which sometimes used the address 210 Madison Avenue, had approximately 56 units on eight floors. The rest of the building, above the ninth floor, was offices and showrooms. A through-block arcade connecting East 35th Street and East 36th Street was located on the west side of the ground floor, as well as freight elevators and loading docks. At the time of construction, *Architecture and Building* magazine reported that 200 Madison Avenue was the sixth largest office building in the United States.¹⁰

200 Madison Avenue has been identified by several names. In the 1920s and 1930s it was most frequently called the International Combustion Building, named for the Combustion Engineering Corporation, a major tenant.¹¹ This company and its subsidiaries manufactured fuel burning and steam generation equipment. 200 Madison Avenue has also been referred to as the Astor Estate Building,¹² the Marshall Field Building,¹³ and the Tower Building, perhaps to distinguish between the office and hotel sections.¹⁴

Warren & Wetmore¹⁵

Warren & Wetmore designed 200 Madison Avenue and its first-floor lobby. One of New York City's most prolific architectural firms, this three-decade

partnership began in 1898 when Charles D(elevan) Wetmore, a Harvard-trained lawyer, commissioned architect Whitney Warren (1864-1941) to design a country house. Warren was a devoted Francophile, a founder of New York's Society of Beaux-Arts Architects, an officer in the French Legion of Honor, and a member of the Institut de France. After briefly attending Columbia University in New York City, he studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. Before returning in 1894, Warren spent almost a decade in Paris, working in the studios of architects Honore Daumet and Charlies Louis Girault.

The firm's first significant commission was a Beaux-Arts style clubhouse for the New York Yacht Club (1899-1900, a New York City Landmark). Over the next decade, it served a mostly east coast clientele, designing town houses on Manhattan's Upper East Side and large country estates. Warren & Wetmore collaborated with Reed & Stem on Grand Central Terminal (1903-13, a New York City Landmark). It was an extremely successful practice and the firm is credited for designing approximately three hundred buildings, mostly in the neoclassical style.

Warren & Wetmore specialized in office buildings, designing some of the earliest office towers that conformed to the 1916 Zoning Resolution. Among these are a significant group of interior landmarks: Steinway Hall (1924-25), the Madison Belmont Building (1924-25), the Erlanger (now St. James) Theater (1926-27), and the New York Central Building (1927-29). They also designed the Terrace Room in their 1919-21 addition to the Plaza Hotel on West 58th Street. Many of these interiors have features that resemble the first-floor lobby at 200 Madison Avenue, including rooms embellished with polished marble and painted plaster relief, as well as ornate mailboxes and elevator doors.

John B. Smeraldi

Warren & Wetmore were among the leading neoclassical architects of their generation. As with many of the firm's New York City lobbies, 200 Madison Avenue is a richly embellished, somewhat theatrical space – a commercial entryway that proclaimed the success and good taste of the owner and tenants. To accomplish this, the firm frequently relied on the celebrated muralist and interior decorator John B. Smeraldi (1868-1947). Born in Sicily, during the early years of his career he was chief designer with L(eon) Marcotte & Company and was later a partner in Schleich & Smeraldi, which became known as Schleich Studios, when Smeraldi moved to Los Angeles in 1923.¹⁶

Smeraldi worked on most, if not all, of Warren & Wetmore's New York City hotels and it seems highly likely that he or his partner, Emil J. Schleich, played a role in decorating the first-floor lobby. In midtown Manhattan, they worked on the interiors of the Vanderbilt Hotel (1913) Hotel Chatham (1917), McAlpin Hotel (1918), Hotel Commodore (1919), Ritz Carlton Hotel (1920-21, demolished), Ambassador Hotel (1921), and the Terrace Room at the Plaza Hotel. At the same time that 200 Madison Avenue was under construction, Smeraldi was also collaborating with Warren & Wetmore on the interiors of the Erlanger (now St. James) Theatre.¹⁷

Planning the Lobby

Various factors shaped the first-floor lobby's character, such as the slope of the site, zoning regulations, and current architectural trends. 200 Madison Avenue occupies a nearly square parcel bounded by three streets: Madison Avenue, East 35th Street and East 36th Street. From south to north, the block slopes up, allowing slightly taller storefronts and ceiling heights near East 35th Street. The impact

of these conditions is perceptible along Madison Avenue (not part of designation) and in the through-block arcade.

The first floor primarily serves retail tenants, with large storefronts facing the three streets. As originally built, there were separate entrances for the office tower and apartment hotel. Office tenants entered from the side streets, where the arcade connects East 35th and 36th Streets. The doors are positioned inside a deep recess, perhaps to conceal their visibility from Madison Avenue, which was in a residential zone and has a somewhat quieter atmosphere than Fifth Avenue, to the west.

Each entrance has five brass doors with glass panels that lead to shallow foyers with identical doors. Due to the slope, the south end of the arcade has considerably higher ceilings, as well as a multi-panel transom above the entrance which illuminates the East 35th Street foyer and the south part of the arcade. While the exterior transom is rectangular, the transom in the foyer has a rounded arch, complementing the shape of the ceiling vault in the arcade.

The lobby has a T-shaped plan. Where the ceiling in the arcade is highest, near East 35th Street, there is a shallow saucer dome, flanked by lunettes and pendentives. The rest of the arcade suggests the inside of an Italian Renaissance loggia or cloister, with a segmental barrel (or lunette) vault that springs from shallow pilasters that divide the marble walls into bays. Each bay incorporates a blind arch and pendentives, which project forward to meet the ceiling.

To negotiate the sloping site, Warren & Wetmore employed a sequence of broad steps, ramps, and landings. The steps, which rise in threes or fours, extend the full width of the arcade. They are positioned inside both entrances, close to the foyers, as well as slightly south of where the arcade and elevator hall meet. To mark these transitions, the

designers chose materials of contrasting color. Whereas the palette of the walls and floor is pinkish orange or yellow, the steps and arched enframements are black marble with white veins. Similar marbles were used in the foyers, on the lower walls of the arcade, and on the raised pilasters that support the groin vault, where the arcade and elevator hall meet.

From the East 35th and 36th Street entrances, the elevator hall is mostly hidden from view. Located at the center of the block, this east-west passage aligns with the mass of the office tower, which begins to rise at the 10th floor. This long rectangular space is about 13 feet wide – slightly narrower than the arcade. As originally planned, the reception desk was placed at the far (east) end of the elevator hall, beneath a semi-circular lunette panel. There was originally no access from the elevator hall to Madison Avenue, nor to the apartment hotel.

For the convenience of tenants and visitors, ten elevators were positioned close to the arcade. Arranged in rows of four and six, along the north and south walls, each elevator has twin brass doors. A pair of large brass letter boxes, manufactured by the Cutler Mail Chute Company of Rochester, New York, are installed near the west end, on either side, between the first two elevators. Introduced by James Gould Cutler in the 1880s, this amenity was found in most 20th century office buildings. Outgoing mail could be deposited on any floor and would drop through a chute to the first floor for collection. Many of these boxes were custom designed to complement a building's interior decoration. In 200 Madison Avenue, for instance, both letter boxes are embellished with a neoclassical entablature, a round arch that frames a scallop shell, as well as the manufacturer's eagle logo.

Decorating the Lobby

Glistening materials give the arcade and elevator hall

a sense of richness and glamour. Gilded plaster, polished marble and brass enliven most surfaces, reflecting natural and artificial light sources, as well as movement through the lobby. All of the service doors are polished brass and the lustrous floor is terrazzo and marble. An early example of this common and durable paving technique, in the early 1920s electric grinders and metal divider strips were introduced and individual mosaic tesserae were replaced by more finely granulated marble laid in a pigmented cement that was polished to produce a smooth finish. The lobby floor has an almost continuous chevron pattern, alternating orange, and yellow trapezoids with a uniform rhythm, suggestive of footsteps. The border is black marble, incorporating rows of orange marble diamonds and yellow marble triangles.¹⁸

The lobby's ornament is mostly neoclassical, blending Renaissance, Baroque, and English Georgian-style motifs. Canopied with low relief, the saucer dome is blanketed with various moldings and the ceiling reliefs shimmer against dark green and red grounds. Much of the ceiling is gilded (or painted) plaster, anticipating the lavish kind of detail often associated with the Art Deco style, which blossomed in the mid-1920s, as 200 Madison Avenue was being constructed. Like the magnificent first-floor lobby in the Fred French Building (1926-27, a New York City Landmark and Interior Landmark) at 551 Fifth Avenue, it is an opulent but transitional design. The lobby of 200 Madison Avenue dazzles with the intensity of many subsequent Art Deco interiors but does so using classical ornament and traditional materials.

Gilded representations of animals, both real and imagined, enliven the walls and ceilings. The pendentives and lunettes that support the saucer dome at the south end of the arcade are embellished with what appear to be extinct dodo birds and dragon-like creatures, as well as peacocks, a

common symbol of refinement, pride, and beauty. Peacocks also appear on the upper walls of the elevator hall, where they alternate with rosettes in the friezes.

Each of the bays in the arcade have round medallions depicting sheep, rams and horses, flanked by projecting lion heads with open and closed mouths. The edge of the ceiling is trimmed with a frieze that integrates birds on a reddish ground that recalls Japanning, an 18th century European finish that imitated Asian lacquer.

Where the arcade aligns with the elevator hall is an elaborate ribbed groin vault decorated with twisting vines, stylized eagles posed on tiny globes (a probable patriotic symbol) and multiple dog-like animals. On the west wall spreads a lunette that frames an owl, a symbol of wisdom and intelligence, flanked by birds, possibly doves. It aligns with an identical lunette at the east end of the elevator hall and the original location of the lobby's reception desk.

Later Building History

200 Madison Avenue was completed in 1926. In subsequent decades, many of the tower floors were leased to commercial tenants as showrooms, such as Gotham Hosiery, Hudson Hosiery, Japan Cotton and Silk Trading Company, Kaiser-Roth Hosiery, Maidenform, Shapiro Glove Company, Simplicity Pattern Company, Vanity Fair Mills, as well as various trade associations and publishers.

The apartment hotel closed in the late 1930s and was converted to offices in 1940. At this time, the originally separate hotel lobby on Madison Avenue (not part of this designation) was modified and connected to the elevator hall. At this time, the *New York Herald Tribune* described 200 Madison as “one of most interesting structures on Murray Hill” and “home of many important concerns.”¹⁹

200 Madison Avenue was acquired through

foreclosure by the Continental Bank & Trust Company in 1941.²⁰ In 1965, a group of investors, Lawrence A. Wein, Harry B. Helmsley, George V. Comfort, and members of Carl M. Loeb, a Wall Street investment firm, purchased the building from Maurice Urdang & Associates.²¹

The current owners, 200 Madison Avenue Associates, and George Comfort & Sons Inc., the building's manager, have been excellent stewards of the structure, making sensitive upgrades and keeping the historic lobby remarkably well preserved. As a result, this opulent and well-maintained first-floor space looks much as did when the building opened in 1926.

Conclusion

The first-floor lobby of 200 Madison Avenue is an outstanding example of early 20th century interior design, reflecting the prominent architectural firm Warren & Wetmore's longstanding interest in Renaissance and 18th-century English decorative motifs. Consisting of an arcade and elevator hall, this lavish T-shaped lobby is one of Manhattan's most distinguished neoclassical interiors.

Endnotes

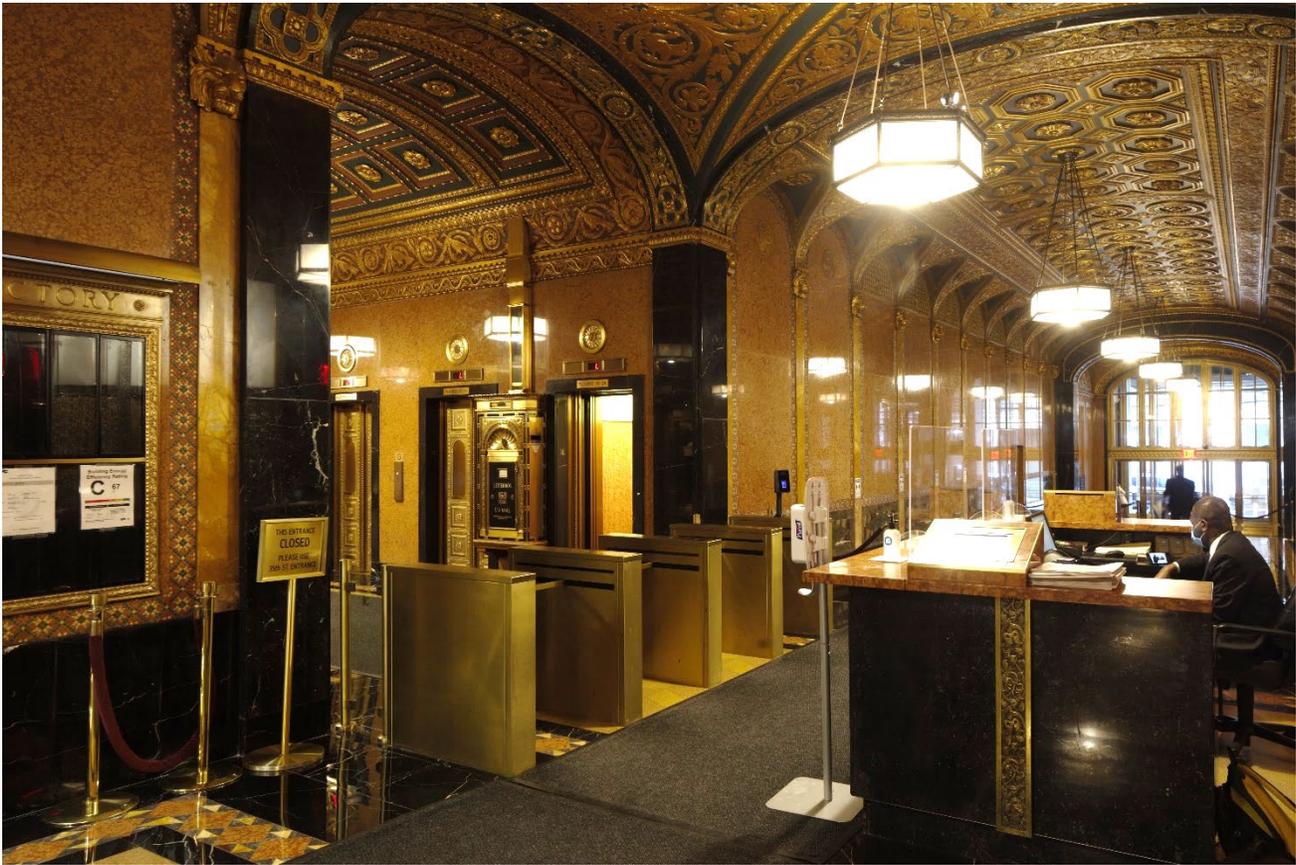
- ¹ The Murray Hill Association was formed in May 1914 to “secure the cooperation and concerted action of all persons interested in preserving the residential character of the Murray Hill district.” See “Murray Hill Assn Formed,” *The Sun*, May 22, 1914, 7.
- ² For further information on the 1916 resolution, see: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/about/city-planning-history>.
- ³ “Murray Hill Historic District Designation,” by various authors, New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (2002), 4.
- ⁴ “Murray Hill Loses Restriction Appeal,” *The New York Times*, January 22, 1916, 12.
- ⁵ For a rendering of the original proposed structure, see: *Real Estate Record and Guide*, May 4, 1918, 571.
- ⁶ “Madison Ave. Fight Reopened by Astor,” *New York Sun*, February 24, 1918, 9.
- ⁷ “Astors Lose Fight Against Murray Hill,” *The New-York Tribune*, February 25, 1922, 15.
- ⁸ This section is based on materials in the Jesse Holman Jones papers at the Biscoe Center for American History, University of Texas, and “275 Madison Avenue Designation Report” by Michael D. Caratzas, New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (2009).
- ⁹ “Jesse H. Jones’ Real Personality Gives Lie to Fictitious Character Built Up By Writers After Capture of Democratic Convention,” *The Brooklyn Eagle*, January 29, 1928, 6F.
- ¹⁰ Peter Pennoyer and Anne Walker, *The Architecture of Warren & Wetmore*, W. W. Norton & Company (New York, 2006), 191.
- ¹¹ “Inter. Combustion in Fine New Home,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (January 30, 1927), 6. This article called 200 Madison Avenue an “outstanding addition to Murray Hill.”
- ¹² Alfred and Joyce Pommer, *Exploring Manhattan’s Murray Hill* (2013), viewed at googlebooks.com
- ¹³ Catts announced in 1925 that Marshall Field & Co. would lease space on the ground and upper floors. See *The Brooklyn Eagle*, March 13, 1925, 23. G. H. Edgell, *The American Architecture of To-Day* (New York: Scribner’s, 1928), 350.
- ¹⁴ *Architecture and Building*, July 1926, plates 136-40.
- ¹⁵ The most complete study of Warren & Wetmore’s work can be found in Pennoyer and Walker, *The Architecture of Warren & Wetmore*, cited in endnote 10. This section is based on their research, as well as various designation reports produced by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.
- ¹⁶ For brief obituaries of Smeraldi, see: *The New York Times*, May 15, 1947; *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 15, 1947, 15.
- ¹⁷ To access these and other Landmarks Preservation Commission designation reports, see: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/lpc/designations/designation-reports.page>
- ¹⁸ The National Mosaic and Terracotta Association was founded in 1923. *Modern Mosaics and Terrazzo Floors* (L. Del Turco & Bros: New Jersey, 1924), viewed at <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000567119>. For information about the workers, see Javier Grossutti at https://italianacademy.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/papers/paper_fa07_Grossutti.pdf
- ¹⁹ “Soviet to Have Offices Near the Morgan Block,” *New York Herald Tribune*, July 12, 1939, 33; “New York Home of Many Important Concerns,” *New York Herald Tribune*, April 28, 1940, C6.
- ²⁰ “Large Midtown Building Faces Foreclosure Sale,” *The New York Times*, September 14, 1941, C11.
- ²¹ “News of Realty: Deal on East Side,” *The New York Times*, June 7, 1965.

Findings and Designation

200 Madison Avenue, First Floor Lobby Interior

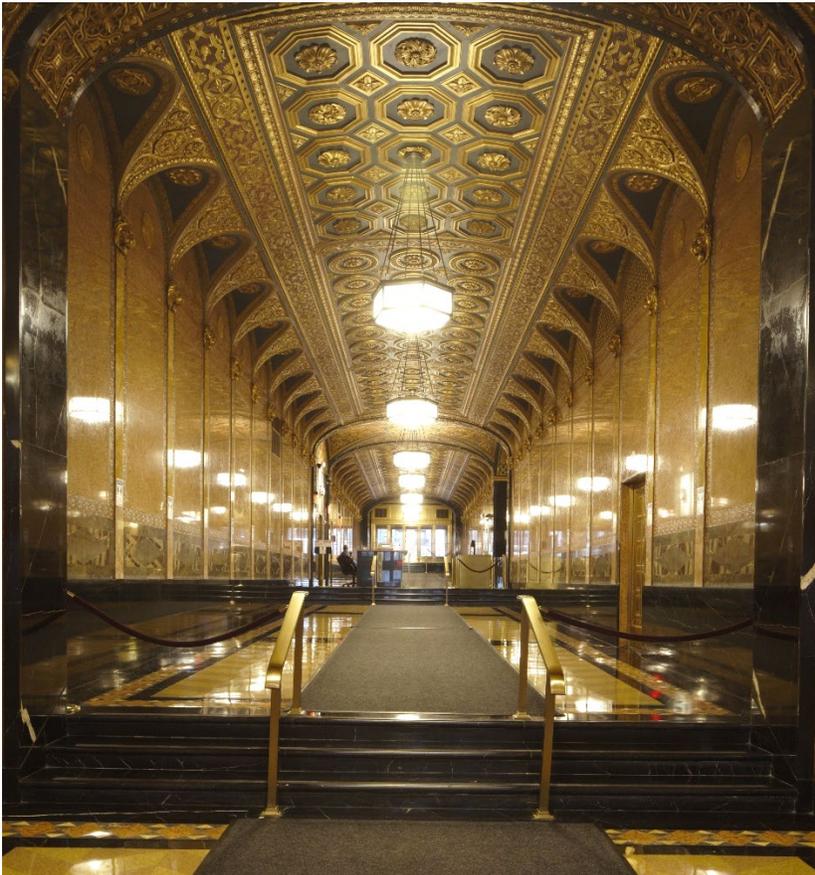
On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and the other features of this building and site, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the 200 Madison Avenue First Floor Lobby Interior has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

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 an Interior Landmark the First Floor Lobby Interior of 200 Madison Avenue, consisting of a through-block arcade, East 35th and East 36th Street entrance foyers, and the fixtures and interior components of these spaces, which may include but are not limited to the historic wall surfaces, ceiling surfaces, floor surfaces, lighting fixtures, attached furnishings, foyer and elevator doors, decorative metalwork and attached decorative elements, and designates Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 865, Lot 14 as its Landmark Site, as shown in the attached map.

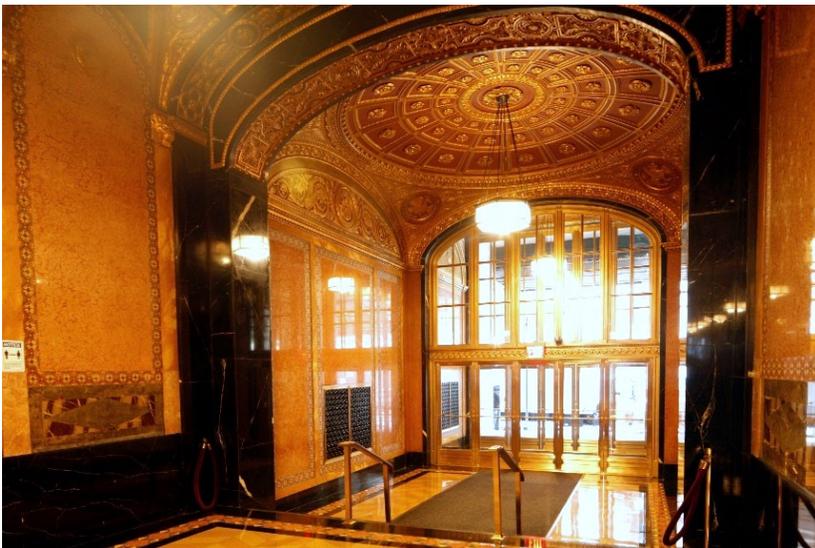


Arcade and elevator hall, 200 Madison Avenue

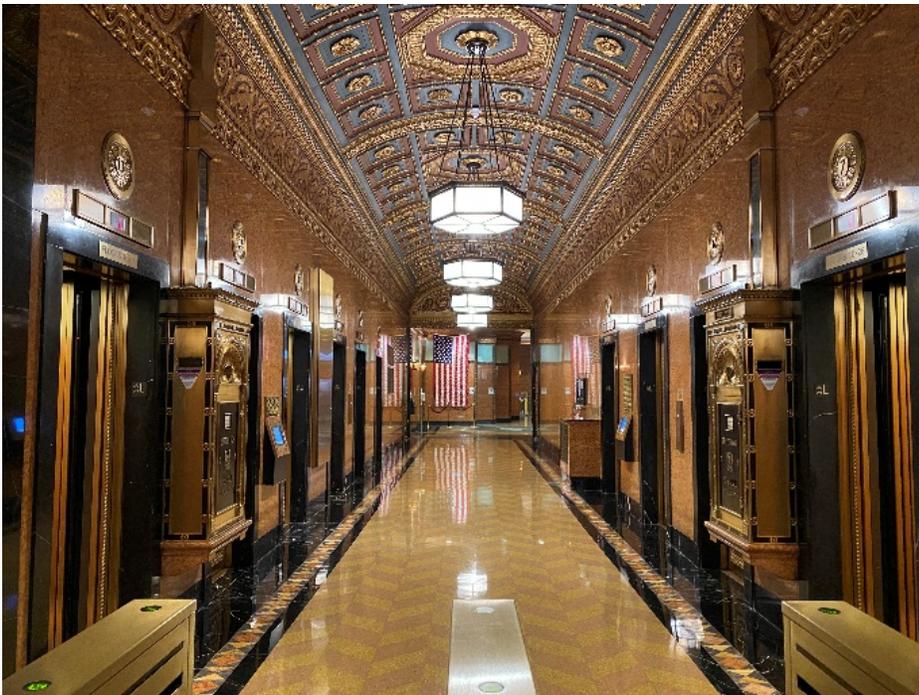
Bilge Kose, November 2021



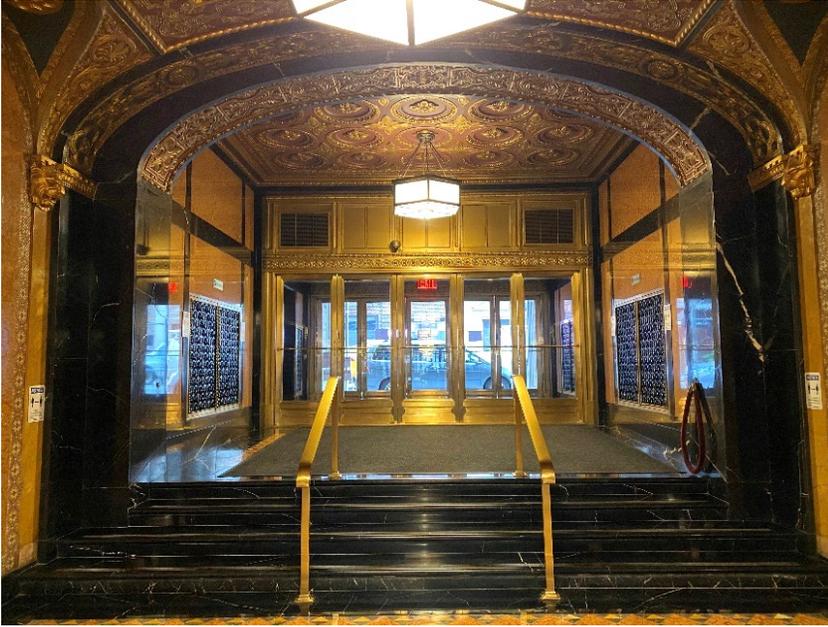
Arcade, view to East 36th Street
Bilge Kose, November 2021



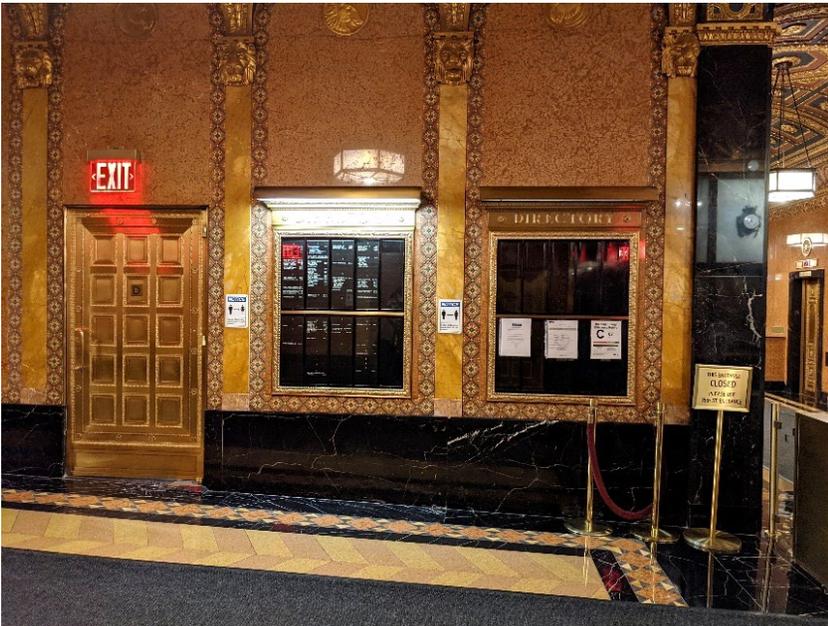
Arcade, view to East 35th Street
Jessica Baldwin, November 2021



Top left: view to reception desk in arcade
Top right: mailbox and elevator doors,
Left: elevator lobby, view east towards Madison Avenue
 Matthew A. Postal,
 November 2021



Arcade, East 36th Street steps
Kate Lemos McHale, November 2021



Arcade, adjacent to Elevator Hall
Matthew A. Postal, November 2021



Plaster details
Groin vault in Arcade
Matthew A. Postal, November 2021



Plaster details
Adjacent to East 36th Street steps
Matthew A. Postal, November 2021



Legend

-  Landmark Site
-  Building Footprints
-  New York City Tax Lots

Address: 200 Madison Avenue (aka 200-214 Madison Avenue, 11-19 East 35th Street, 10-20 East 36th Street)
 Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan, Tax Map Block 865, Lot 14
 Calendered: July 20, 2021
 Public Hearing: September 28, 2021
 Designated: November 9, 2021

Graphic Source: MapPLUTO, Edition 21v1, Author: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, DHW, Date: 11.09.2021

