DESIGNATION REPORT

935 St. Nicholas Avenue Building

Landmarks Preservation Commission

Designation Report
935 St. Nicholas Avenue
June 27, 2023

Designation List 534
LP-2670

DESIGNATION REPORT

935 St. Nicholas Avenue Building

LOCATION

Borough of Manhattan
929-939 St. Nicholas Avenue (aka 462-466 West 157th Street)

LANDMARK TYPE

Individual

SIGNIFICANCE

935 St. Nicholas Avenue, an architecturally distinct early 20th-century Neo-Gothic Revival style apartment building in the Washington Heights neighborhood, was the well-established home to jazz trailblazers, Duke Ellington, and Noble Sissle, each for over 20 years.

NYC Municipal Archives
c. 1940 Tax Photograph

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935 St. Nicholas Avenue Building

935 St. Nicholas Avenue, (aka 929-935 St. Nicholas Avenue, 462-466 West 157th Street), Manhattan

Designation List 534
LP-2670

Built: 1915
Architect: Gronenberg & Leuchtag

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan, Tax Map Block 2107 Lot 72
Building Identification Number (BIN): 1062491

Calendared: April 4, 2023
Public Hearing: June 6, 2023
Designation: June 27, 2023

On June 6, 2023, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the 935 St. Nicholas Avenue Building 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. At the public hearing on June 6, 2023, representatives of Manhattan Community Board 12 and the Historic Districts Council testified in support of designation. In addition, the Commission received correspondence in support of designation from Save Harlem Now! and the New York Landmarks Conservancy. No testimony was received in opposition to designation.

Summary

935 St. Nicholas Avenue Building

Located prominently at the corner of West 157th Street and St. Nicholas Avenue in Washington Heights, Manhattan, 935 St. Nicholas Avenue is a neo-Gothic Revival-style brick, limestone and terra-cotta apartment building designed by Gronenberg & Leuchtag and built in 1915. The intact and architecturally significant early-20th century apartment building is culturally significant as home to Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington (from 1939 to 1961) and Noble Lee Sissle (from 1950 to 1972), two pioneers of jazz music who were among the most prolific composers, musicians, and bandleaders in American history.

Born in Washington, D.C., Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington (1899-1974) was one of America's most innovative and prolific jazz orchestra leaders from the start of his career in New York in 1923 until his death in 1974. Ellington is best remembered for the more than 3,000 songs that he composed during his lifetime. In 1939, Ellington moved into an apartment at 935 St. Nicholas Avenue with his family. During his time in the building in the 1940s and 1950s, Ellington wrote many songs that have become American jazz standards, such as "Sophisticated Lady," "Satin Doll;" "Don't Get Around Much Anymore," and "I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart." Ellington also composed musical suites consisting of pieces linked by subject matter, including *Black, Brown and Beige* (1943), a portrayal of African American history; *Liberian Suite* (1947); and *A Drum Is a Woman* (1956), and created music for film and television scores. He was on the cover of *Time Magazine* in 1956 while he lived on St. Nicholas Avenue and would later be awarded the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1966 and the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1969, among many other honors and accolades.

Noble Lee Sissle (1889-1975) was born in Indianapolis and moved to New York in 1916. During World War I, Sissle was a member of the 369th regimental band organized by James Reese Europe, part of the African American regiment known as the "Harlem Hell Fighters." Sissle began to collaborate with Eubie Blake around 1914. Their first musical, *Shuffle Along*, opened in 1921 and ran for two years. It was the first successful Broadway musical with an all-Black cast. This musical introduced such songs as "I'm Just Wild about Harry," (which would later be the campaign song for President Harry S. Truman), "Love Will Find a Way," "Simply Full of Jazz," and many more. Sissle later formed his own orchestra which toured Europe and the U.S. from the 1930s through the 1950s and appeared in movies and television shows. Sissle was founder and president, from 1937 to 1957, of the Negro Actors Guild of America, an organization established to try to eliminate stereotyping of African Americans in theatrical and cinematic performances. Duke Ellington was the organization's co-vice-president along with Ethel Waters and Marion Anderson. During the time Sissle lived at 935 St. Nicholas Avenue, he became known as the unofficial "Mayor of Harlem," writing many articles for the *New York Age* and the *New York Amsterdam News* and hosting a show on the local New York radio station WMGM from 1954 to 1971.

935 St. Nicholas Avenue is architecturally significant for its neo-Gothic Revival style, characterized by textured brickwork and elaborate terra-cotta details, and as an exemplary representation of early 20-century apartment design in the Washington Heights neighborhood. The building is also culturally significant as the long-

standing home of two celebrated jazz trailblazers, Duke Ellington and Noble Sissle who played integral roles in shaping the history of jazz and transforming it into an American art form. The building retains a high degree of integrity to its period of construction as well as the period when it served as the residences of Duke Ellington and Noble Sissle.

Building Description

935 St. Nicholas Avenue Building

Description[1]

935 St. Nicholas Avenue is a six-story neo-Gothic Revival style brick, limestone, and terra-cotta apartment building located at the southwest corner of St. Nicholas Avenue and West 157th Street, in the Washington Heights section of Manhattan. It was designed by Gronenberg & Leuchtag and constructed in 1915 for the Lehigh Building Corporation. The property retains its historic architectural character.

Primary (East) St. Nicholas Avenue Facade

The St. Nicholas Avenue facade is clad in blonde brick, rusticated at the first story, and divided by continuous brick and/or terra-cotta cornices above the first, fifth, and sixth stories. Ornamented with Gothic and Tudor design elements, the building's eight bays are skillfully grouped to create the appearance of five bays. The center bay features a two-story terra-cotta enframement, divided by colonettes topped by shields, an elaborately carved cornice above the first story, and lintel decorated with quatrefoils above the second story. The remaining windows at the first story are topped by a label molding. The entrance and adjoining window are recessed within Tudor arches decorated with foliate moldings and shields. The paired windows at the second story are also set within Tudor arches. The center bay is defined by quoins from the third through the fifth story as are the tripartite windows with their spandrel panels decorated with quatrefoil tracery and shields, At the sixth story, two sets of paired windows framed within Tudor arches topped by a label molding are offset by a trio of colonnettes that extend through the cornice to the parapet. In the exterior bays which are offset by brick and terra-cotta colonnettes between the second and sixth stories the same decorative treatment as in the center bay is used for the fenestration. In contrast to the heavily ornamented exterior and central bays, the interior bays are simple unornamented brick. The fenestration between the second and fifth stories is recessed from the plain of the wall and features only simple sills. Above the cornice, here decorated with basketweave brick, the sixth floor has paired windows with keyed surrounds topped by label moldings. The parapet features brick, stone and terra-cotta battlements topped by finials. The parapet wall at the end bays has panels that feature trefoil tracery centered between colonnettes topped with pinnacles. While the center bays have identical panels centered between three colonnettes, the parapet wall above the remaining bays have battlements with a centered brick pediment with a stone and terra cotta coping and pinnacles. Two historic iron fire escapes are symmetrically arranged on the facade from the second to sixth stories.

Alterations

Historic six-over-one and eight-over-one sash and multi-light casements with transom replaced; and main entrance door replaced; one non-historic light fixture; security cameras with conduits; fuel pipes; intercom; grilles at first-story windows; signage.

Primary West 157th Street (North) Facade

The West 157th Street facade is similar to the St. Nicholas Avenue facade although it is more simply ornamented at the first and second stories of the center bay. There is one historic fire escape.

Alterations

Historic six-over-one and eight-over-one sash and multi-light casements replaced; non-historic iron

security grilles at first-story windows; security cameras with conduits; light fixtures with conduits All windows have been replaced at the West 157th street façade. Non-historic iron security grilles at first-story windows. Non-historic security cameras and light fixtures at first story of the façade. One fire escape replaced.

Secondary (South) Facade

The facade is unornamented and clad in brick, The flatheaded and segmental arched fenestration features stone sills. The parapet wall above is capped with clay tile coping. Sloped areaway with secondary entrance

Alterations

All windows have been replaced.

Secondary (West) Facade

The facade is unornamented and clad in light-colored brick above a stone and brick base. The segmental fenestration features stone sills. The parapet wall is capped with clay tile coping. There is one possibly historic fire escape. Partially visible recessed areaway with secondary entrances.

Alterations

Historic window sashes replaced; lights with conduits; security camera with conduit; one fire escape replaced.

History of Washington Heights and Northern Harlem[2]

The 935 St. Nicholas Avenue Building is located at the corner of St. Nicholas Avenue and West 157th Street, in the northern Manhattan neighborhood known as Washington Heights. Indigenous peoples have lived in this area for thousands of years. Manhattan and the west part of the Bronx was home to the Wiechquaeskecks, a Munsee-speaking people.[3] St. Nicholas Avenue follows the route of a Wiechquaeskecks trail, later called Harlem Lane and Kingsbridge Road. It runs diagonally north from West 111th Street, near Sixth Avenue, to West 124th Street, and then turns north, ending at West 193rd Street.

Located above the northern section of Harlem and the neighborhoods of Hamilton Heights and Sugar Hill, the area has been strongly shaped by its elevated topography. Washington Heights is named for Fort Washington, which was erected during the Revolutionary War on a ridge between what is now 18lst and 186th Streets. Additionally, General George Washington used the grand Georgian-style home of Roger Morris at Edgecombe Avenue near 160th Street (now known as the Morris/Jumel Mansion, 1765, remodeled c. 1810, a designated New York City Landmark) as his military headquarters in 1776.[4]

New York State passed legislation to create St. Nicholas Avenue in April 1866. The Commissioners of Central Park were given the duty to "lay out and establish the grade of an avenue not exceeding one hundred feet in width, to be called the avenue St. Nicholas."[5] In the early 19th century, St. Nicholas was considered an anti-British symbol and patron saint of New York and the New York Historical Society.[6] Due to its topography and limited transit lines, Washington Heights remained rural for much of the 19th century. Early twentieth century residential development was significantly improved by new transit and public amenities that attracted residents to lower Washington Heights in greater numbers, and 935 St. Nicholas Avenue was built in 1915 as part of this.

In 1890, with support from the Washington Heights Taxpayers Association and other civic-minded groups, the city announced plans to construct an iron viaduct at West 155th Street connecting the proposed Central (now Macomb's Dam) Bridge with St. Nicholas Place (the viaduct and bridge are a designated New York City Landmark). This ambitious scheme, begun in 1890 and completed in 1895, improved vehicular and pedestrian circulation in northern Manhattan, linking the Bronx and central Harlem. The Interborough Rapid Transit (IRT) 157th Street subway station at Broadway opened in March 1906, connecting Washington Heights to Lower Manhattan. Additionally, the Independent (IND) subway, approved by the Board of Transportation in 1924, had a tremendous impact on the residential development of Manhattan's West Side in the 1920s and 30s.[7]

African Americans who had been pushed by discrimination and demolition out of neighborhoods on the west side of Manhattan such as San Juan Hill and the Tenderloin, began moving to Harlem in the early 20th century. Additionally, as part of the First Great Migration (1910-1940), hundreds of thousands of Black people moved north from the American South and the West Indies, changing the political, social, racial, and cultural landscape of New York City.[8] In 1920 New York City counted 152,467 Black people as compared with 91,709 in 1910. By

1930, New York City's Black population had reached 327,706, the majority living in Harlem.[9]

The demographics of this section of Washington Heights were slower to reflect this trend than Harlem and Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill to the south, and remained home to upper middle-class white families—with professions including stockbrokers, builders, manufacturers, doctors, lawyers, editors, insurance dealers, and the like—until the mid-1930s when the neighborhood attracted African American residents.[10] As African American families continued to move north, white families moved to neighboring suburbs. Census records indicate that the neighborhood during the 1940s and 1950s continued to be a primarily Black, middle-class family neighborhood.[11]

Apartment House Development in Washington Heights[12]

During most of the 19th century, the traditional ideal of upper-and middle-class housing in Manhattan was a privately owned and occupied single-family town house or mansion. Toward the end of the century, a steady rise in Manhattan land values generated by a rapidly increasing population and an expanding commercial sector on a finite amount of land, made this ideal increasingly unattainable for all but the city's wealthiest. Multiple dwellings, or "tenements," became the standard mode of housing for the majority of Manhattan residents starting in the 1870s. The American upper classes long resisted the concept of shared habitation, due largely to its association with the overcrowding and inadequate light, air, and sanitary facilities of the tenements occupied by the city's immigrant poor. By the end of the 19th century, stronger regulation of housing laws and advancements in the design and construction of multiple dwellings began to sway upper class opinions on apartment living.[13]

At the turn of the 20th century, after a period of national economic instability, there was a surge of apartment house construction for the middle and upper classes. The financial success of large-scale, luxury apartment houses based on the Parisian model, like the Dakota, had paved the way for acceptance of apartment-house living by affluent households.[14] At the same time, technological innovations, such as the introduction of electricity, which allowed apartment house builders to replace the expensive, cumbersome, and slow hydraulic elevators with cheaper, faster, and more compact electrical units, made taller buildings more feasible and desirable.[15]

By 1900, the designers of apartment houses had devised and refined interior plans to accommodate a separation of public rooms (parlor, dining room, and library), private rooms (bedrooms or chambers), and service spaces (kitchen and servant's rooms). The rooms in the new apartment buildings were relatively large, ventilated, and lit by large windows, and were well-appointed with wood paneling, ornate plasterwork, and modern appliances. Soon, apartments began to be seen as an attractive investment for developers, and the era of the smaller luxury "French flats" would end with the construction in New York City of new courtyard apartment buildings, monumentally scaled and generally of classically inspired design.[16]

Washington Heights became an increasingly popular area for apartment building developers after the arrival of the IRT, and then the IND subway lines. Because vast areas of Washington Heights had not already been developed with narrow row houses, it gave developers the ability to build on larger lots than in other parts of the city, and potentially attract higher income residents with the appeal of larger apartments on higher ground with "fresh air and ample sunshine."[17] An example of the early era of construction in the area is the Maybell, at 941 St. Nicholas Avenue (aka 465 West 157th Street), built in

1905 at the northwest corner St. Nicholas Avenue and 157th Street, designed by the firm of Glasser & Ebert.[18] Most apartment buildings in Washington Heights in the first decade of the 20th century were five-story story structures, and with increased use of elevators in residential buildings, after 1912 fireproof apartment houses with elevators predominated.[19] By 1915, according to an article in the *New York Tribune*, there was a high demand for apartment houses in Washington Heights.[20] Many of the new buildings that were built in this period in Washington Heights were typically six stories or taller, with a high number of suites, and most contained light courts, fireproofing and elevators.[21]

935 St. Nicholas Avenue[22]

935 St. Nicholas Avenue is a six-story neo-Gothic Revival-style brick, limestone, and terra-cotta apartment building located at the southwest corner of St. Nicholas Avenue and West 157th Street in Washington Heights. It was designed by Gronenberg & Leuchtag and constructed in 1915 for the Lehigh Building Corporation.[23] The architects designed the building for multi-family residential use, requiring that each room have a window onto a street, yard, or light court.[24] The building was constructed with elevators and central light courts, and windows on all four facades. The design of the street-facing facades reveals a sophisticated use of the neo-Gothic Revival style, featuring textured brickwork and elaborate terra-cotta details, including trefoil tracery and pinnacles.

Consistent with the demographics of the neighborhood, census records indicate that the building's early residents were predominately immigrants from Russia, Germany, Austria, and Poland. African American residents began to live in the building in increasing numbers in the 1930s.[25] Around 1939, advertisements for apartments at 935 St. Nicholas Avenue were listed in the *New York Amsterdam News* as "A Rare Opportunity For a Few Select Families," listing the number of rooms in each apartment and the available amenities.[26]

In 1939, legendary jazz composer, musician, and bandleader Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington moved into the building to an apartment on the fourth floor—and as noted in the section on Ellington below, he and his band took over the entire floor that year. Ellington resided here for over 20 years through the height of his career. Noble Lee Sissle, another jazz pioneer and an important figure of the Harlem Renaissance, resided in the building from 1950 to 1972.

Architects: Gronenberg and Leuchtag[27]

Herman Gronenberg (1889-1931) and Albert J. H. Leuchtag (not determined-1959) formed a successful architectural partnership and were active in the first decades of the twentieth century. Their use of the Gothic Revival style for this building was rare for the firm, since they favored the neo-Renaissance and neo-Romanesque styles.

The firm specialized in the design of apartment buildings and examples of their work can be found in many designated historic districts, including the Upper East Side Historic District and Extension, the Expanded Carnegie Hill, NoHo, Grand Concourse, Greenwich Village, and Sullivan-Thompson Historic Districts, extensions of the West End-Collegiate and Riverside-West End Historic Districts, and the Dorrance Brooks Square Historic District. In addition to 935 St. Nicholas Avenue, the firm designed four other apartment buildings in the vicinity in 1915, including 78-86 Edgecombe Avenue and 90-96 Edgecombe Avenue in the Dorrance Brooks Square Historic District,[28] and two buildings on the southside of 171st Street.[29] Gronenberg died in 1931 and five years later the *New York Times* announced that A. J. H. Leuchtag had resumed the practice of architecture.

Neo-Gothic Revival Style[30]

The neo-Gothic Revival style was popular in New York City from 1905 to 1930, but more commonly associated with ecclesiastical design rather than residential or commercial buildings. The most impressive example of the style is the Woolworth Building designed by Cass Gilbert in 1913, a designated New York City landmark, which upon its formal opening, became the most famous skyscraper building in the world. A fine example of the neo-Gothic Revival style applied to a residential apartment building is Tudor City (1925-1928), designed by Fred F. French & Co., a designated New York City Historic District.[31] H. Douglas Ives. Gronenberg & Leuchtag employed elements of the neo-Gothic Revival style at 935 St. Nicholas Avenue, including brick corbels, label moldings at windows, quatrefoil tracery, pointed arches, battlements, and finials. Additionally, ornamental pressed bricks, terra-cotta tile, and incised carvings of foliated and geometric patterns grace the primary façades.

Jazz: An Original American Art Form [32]

935 St. Nicholas Avenue is culturally significant as the home of two internationally celebrated jazz composers, musicians, and band leaders, Edward Kennedy "Duke" Duke Ellington, and Noble Sissle in the 20th century, for more than 20 years each. Both contributed to and led the development of jazz music and its eventual undisputed recognition as a significant original American art form.

Initially developed at the turn of the 20th century in New Orleans, jazz grew in many cities and represents a mixture of cultures, passions, and musical skill, with its roots in African musical traditions. It is described as "complex harmony, syncopated rhythms, with a heavy emphasis on improvisation,"[33] and as vocals imitated by instruments.[34]

Ragtime, which grew in New York's Tin Pan Alley (47 to 55 West 28th Street, Tin Pan Alley Buildings, are designated New York City Landmarks) in beginning of the 20th century, was a piano-focused style and the first music created by Black musicians to be widely accepted by white audiences and imitated by white musicians. Noble Sissle was one of the earliest trailblazers of "hot music," as jazz was called when it was introduced to Harlem around 1917, during the Harlem Renaissance. Many scholars regard the end of World War I as the unofficial beginning of what was called the "New Negro Renaissance," "the New Negro Movement," the Jazz Age, or most commonly—the Harlem Renaissance. Although it began largely as a literary movement, the Harlem Renaissance soon became a much broader cultural movement. Encompassing music, the fine arts, theater, education, and political activism, it ushered in a new sense of pride and self-determination within the African American community.[35] Harlem's African American intellectuals, artists, actors, educators, musicians, the bourgeoning Black middle class and everyday working-class people were active in establishing institutions that advanced the arts, social justice, education, and health and medical services during the era.

During this time, early proponents of the idea of the "New Negro," such as Alain Locke, W. E. B. DuBois and James Weldon Johnson, preferred "sorrow songs" and Negro Spirituals as opposed to "entertainment music." They thought "jazz, blues and "dance music," played by musicians like Noble Sissle, "did nothing to uplift the Negro race."[36] In addition, racist articles called jazz "the devil's music" and "immoral,"[37] Propagated by the political and social dislike of the Black population, the music was labeled as "savage," and an "evil influence on the young people of today."[38] In some parts of the country, jazz was banned.[39] In some ways the

ridicule only added to the popularity of jazz music.

As an art form and broadly popular musical expression, jazz was a defining theme of the Harlem Renaissance, and many jazz musicians were driving forces for change and advancement for the African American community. Prominent among these, Noble Sissle was a member of the Harlem Hellfighters' band during World War I and co-produced, along with Eubie Blake, the first successful Black musicals *Shuffle Along* and *Chocolate Dandies* on Broadway in the 1920s. Duke Ellington, the first internationally acclaimed jazz composer, created musical suites that depicted African American life. He once noted that as a musician, "you have to go to New York to be recognized."[40] In 1927, Duke Ellington began his tenure at the legendary Cotton Club where national radio broadcasts provided him national audience, a first for an African American band leader.[41]

Big Band or Swing jazz music evolved in New York City between the late-1920s to the 1940s, and, as dance music, became widely accepted by vast American audiences."[42] It is characterized by its multi-layered musical arrangements and larger bands and orchestras consisting of ten to seventeen members, comprising more musical instruments with a dedicated horn section, for which Duke Ellington is known. The music progressed from being played in dance halls to performances in concert halls during the WWII era—or Swing band era—with its joyful, uplifting, and inclusive sound. [43] By the mid-1940s, modern jazz, or bebop, emerged from the late-night jam sessions at Minton's Playhouse in Harlem and became fully entrenched in American music culture. Known for its emphasis on flair, virtuosity, instrumental technique, complex structures, and expansive rhythm sections,[44] bebop was popularized by the "new guard" of jazz, including Charlie Parker (1920-1955), Dizzy Gillespie (1917-1993), and Thelonious Monk (1917-1982). Modern jazz shook established musical norms and was a statement of radical ownership according to Monk, who said, "We're going to create something that they can't steal… because they can't play it."[45]

Bebop was followed by cool jazz, introduced by Miles Davis (1926-1991) in 1948, incorporating contrasting subtleties, giving the musical arrangements more emphasis. Hard Bop, introduced in the 1950s, focused more on the blues, free jazz of the early 1960s eliminated the harmonic movement totally, and subsequent variations, such as jazz fusion, have abounded.[46] With its inclusiveness of stylistic variations, jazz often defies classification and today one can find traces of jazz in most music, from funk to R&B (rhythm and blues), to hip hop to electronica. Even as jazz emerged as an American artform, Black musicians were not considered "actual musicians," [47] having to constantly prove their musicianship, had no representation, and were not allowed into national musicians' unions. Black composers and lyricists such as Noble Sissle and Eubie Blake faced stereotypical slurs and caricatures and were not paid the same amount as their white counterparts for musical material.[48] This led to the foundation of organizations like the New Amsterdam Musical Association (NAMA) in 1904-present, and James Reese Europe's Clef Club in 1910.[49] NAMA, which originally only represented classical musicians, and Clef Club, ultimately represented both classical and jazz musicians, and helped to safeguard fair scheduling and payment.[50]

After World War II, Black veterans and musicians returned home to face racist Jim Crow tactics and treatment as "second-class citizens."[51] The musicians union was still segregated and most news articles that did write about jazz music focused on white musicians. Only the most established Black musicians, like Louis Armstrong (1901-1971) and Duke Ellington, were regularly featured in "*Down Beat*" magazine, one of the oldest popular magazines

dedicated to jazz music.[52]

During the Cold War era, jazz music and musicians were embraced by the United States government as "ambassadors of democracy." [53] President Dwight D. Eisenhower believed in using "cultural diplomacy" to counteract communist anti-American propaganda." [54] At the suggestion of New York Senator Adam Clayton Powell Jr., the government made jazz a key component of its cultural foreign policy agenda. The very popular Duke Ellington's big band, Dizzy Gillespie's integrated band, and others were sent throughout Europe and to some communist countries "whose notion of American diversity and pluralism in this era was largely restricted to white European ethnicity."[55] Overseas, jazz music that was once on the fringes of the musical spectrum became thought of as "hip, and cool," and "American culture at its most appealing."[56] In the United States, however, the "cultural and intellectual establishment" considered Jazz "the unwanted stepchild of the arts."[57] The result, however, solidified jazz music as an original American art form, and it would later be called by some, "American classical music."[58] Today jazz music and theory are taught in institutions of higher learning across the world and an important part of America's cultural heritage. In November 2011, The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designated April 30th as International Jazz Day, to extol the merits of jazz as a force for peace and unity.[59]

Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington[60]

Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington (1899-1974) lived at 935 St. Nicholas Avenue from 1939 to 1961, at the height of his career. Ellington was born to a middle-class Black family in Washington D. C. and moved to New York City in 1923 to further his musical career. He joined a band called the Washingtonians, made their first recording in 1924, and became the band leader. In 1927 they played for the first time at the Cotton Club as the Duke Ellington Band.[61] Ellington and his family resided at 379-381 Edgecombe Avenue from 1929-1939, located in the Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill Historic District,[62] an apartment house that was relatively close to the Cotton Club at Lenox Avenue and 142nd Street, where the band had extended engagements to perform in 1929-31, 1933, and 1937.[63] During their residency at the Cotton Club, the size of Ellington's band increased from six to eleven members, and his music was able to reach a larger American audience due to the live radio shows produced from the venue. As Ellington and his band increased the popularity of jazz, he became the spokesperson for his music and his people.[64]

In 1939, after having reached mainstream audiences, Duke Ellington moved to Apartment 4A at 935 St. Nicholas Avenue, and while living there with his family until 1961, he continued to gain national significance and influence, penning some of his most popular and memorable jazz compositions.[65] Not only did Ellington make the building his residence, a 1939 article in the *New York Amsterdam News* reported that "Ellington and his band had taken over the entire floor, where they live when in town, and they are soon embarking to a concert in Chicago."[66]

While living at 935 St. Nicholas Avenue, Ellington wrote many songs that are among his most famous works and have become American jazz standards, such as "Sophisticated Lady," "Satin Doll;" "Don't Get Around Much Anymore," and "I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart." He also wrote *Black, Brown and Beige* (1943), *Liberian Suite* (1947), and *A Drum Is a Woman* (1956); and created music for film and television scores. One critic hailed his music as "timeless yet contemporary" and "it earned him a place in the pantheon of great composers of the 20th century." [67] Ellington's 1943

score of "*Black, Brown and Beige,*" a musical narrative history of African Americans, presented at Carnegie Hall in 1943, initially received a lukewarm response by most critics, however, one critic hailed it as "the first Jazz symphony."[68] *Black Brown and Beige* was published in 1963, by his company Tempo Music.[69]

Ellington's brilliant character came from a deep pride and respect not only in the art of music, but also in his people, their achievements, tenacity, and the spirit of African Americans. He once stated that, "My men and my race are my inspiration."[70] "I try to catch the character and mood and feeling of my people."[71] This is exemplified in "*Beige*," the third and longest movement composed while he lived at 935 St. Nicholas Avenue:[72]

> Harlem Black Metropolis![73]
> Land of mirth!
> Your music has flung
> The story of "Hot Harlem"
> To the four corners
> Of the earth!"
>
> But did it ever speak to them
> Of what you really are?
> Did it say to them…
> "The joy I'm giving,
> Is the foil I use to lose my blues
> And make myself an honest living!"
> Did it speak to them
> That all your striving
>
> To make your rightful place with men
> Was more than jazz and jiving!" [74]
> How could they fail to hear
> The hurt and pain and anguish…
> Of those who travel dark, lone ways
> The soul in them to languish…[75]

Duke Ellington's fond affection for New York City, which he called "the City of Jazz," [76] is well known. He wrote that, "New York is its people, and its people are the city."[77] He later expressed that love of New York City in a song he wrote in 1972, in which he also mentioned his home neighborhood.[78]

> New York, New York!
> New York is a summer festival!
> New York is a Song,
> New York is a dance,
> New York is a summer, fall, winter,
> spring. Summer romance!
>
> Subway flights…
> Broadway brights…
> Lights and sights…
> A million delights.
> Thrill-filled thrill,
> Sugar Hill still
> Washington Heights…
>
> New York is a glitter,
> New York is a glamour,
>
> New York, New York!
> New York, New York!

Whether on tour or performing as one of America's "Ambassadors of Democracy",[79] Duke Ellington and his orchestra were known throughout the United States and the world. He toured Europe repeatedly after World War II and performed sacred music at Westminster Abby in 1973, Asia (1963–64, 1970), West Africa (1966), South America (1968), and Australia (1970). [80] He frequently toured North America, conducting music at many diverse venues including Carnegie Hall in 1943, 1946, and 1947. Ellington played the Newport Jazz Festival in 1956 and recorded live at that concert, which according to jazz critics is considered one of "the 50 great moments in jazz."[81] In 1970, he composed a ballet "The River" for the Alvin Alley and the American Ballet Theater.[82]

Duke Ellington received countless accolades and awards throughout his illustrious career.[83] Among these, he was on the cover of Time Magazine in 1956,[84] he was awarded the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1966, and he was presented The Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1969. In 1972, Yale University established the Duke Ellington Fellowship Fund, "to preserve and perpetuate Afro American musicals."[85] The French, Legion of Honor, also, the Handel Medallion, New York City's highest cultural award and an honorary Doctorate from Columbia University, in 1973.[86] Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington, died in New York City in 1974.[87]

Ellington's genius changed the way jazz was interpreted. His original compositions drew from classical music and highlighted soloists within the Ellington Big Band. Ellington's life, one jazz critic observed, "almost spans the life of jazz and has figured prominently in the surge which has brought jazz from the bawdy houses of New Orleans to the Metropolitan Opera House and even to Buckingham Palace."[88] Ellington once said, "I don't write jazz. I write Negro folk music."[89] He didn't believe music should be categorized, stating that "Categories are sometimes used as a crutch for weak artistic ability to lean on. The Category gives the artistic cripple's work an attractive gloss."[90] Ellington's versatility was unparalleled; he created popular music and songs, extended jazz works, suites as well as sacred music, ballet, and opera. He was famous for penning over 3,000 songs and had an immense impact on the popular music of the late 20th century.

Noble Lee Sissle[91]

Noble Lee Sissle (1889-1975) lived in an apartment in 935 St. Nicholas Avenue from 1950 until 1972. Sissle was born in Indianapolis, Indiana, to Reverend George A. Sissle (1852-1913), and Martha A. Sissle (1869-1916), a teacher. The family lived in a rare (for the time) integrated neighborhood.[92] They moved to Cleveland, Ohio in 1906, where again, unusual for that era, Noble attended an integrated high school.[93] While attending Butler University in Indianapolis, during summer months Sissle joined traveling gospel singers and for a short time he toured with Thomas Jubilee and the Hann Jubilee singers.[94] Sissle began to collaborate with Eubie Blake around 1914. After joining the Army in 1917, Sissle was a member of the 369th Regiment band, a segregated Black regiment known as the "Harlem Hellfighters." Sissle served as bandleader after its organizer's untimely death. The band brought syncopated jazz and ragtime music to Europe and became a favorite of European nobility, in particular England's King George VI.[95] After World War I, Sissle returned to the United States and formed Sissle's Sizzling Syncopators Orchestra.

Around this time Sissle and Blake resumed their collaboration, and 1921 the pair produced their Broadway musical *Shuffle Along*, which opened at the 63rd Street Music Hall in New York. It was an unprecedented success, with the first all-Black cast on the "Great White Way" as Broadway was known.[96] Several songs from that musical became hits, "I'm Just Wild about Harry," which would later, in 1948, be the campaign song for President Harry S. Truman; "Love Will Find a Way," "Simply Full of Jazz," and many more.[97]. The musical jump-started the career of many Black actors. dancers, singers, and musicians. Their second successful Broadway musical was *Chocolate Dandies*, with the winning formula of Sissle composing the lyrics and Blake writing the music, it opened at the New Colonial Theatre in 1924-1925, featured the young Josephine Baker. [98] Sissle and his orchestra would tour Europe from 1926 to 1932. Sissle produced and starred in two other shows: *Dixie on Parade* (1930) Sissle and Blake reunited to write the ill-fated *Shuffle Along of 1933*.[99] In 1939 Sissle played at ASCAP's Silver Jubilee Festival at Carnegie Hall. During World War

II, Sissle played with an army band and toured with his USO Camp Show.[100] In 1942 he finished a still-unpublished manuscript, "Memoirs of Lieutenant Jim Europe" which can be found in the collections of the Library of Congress.[101]

In addition to his tremendous influence on jazz music, in 1937, Noble Sissle was a founder of the Negros Actors Guild of America (NAG)[102] and remained involved in this significant endeavor while he lived at 935 St. Nicholas Avenue. Established for two reasons; first, as a benevolent organization, its main goal was "to help fellow entertainers in need, without recognition."[103] NAG also supported the Black actors in "contract negotiations with producers and agents, it also, helped Black actors secure opportunities in the entertainment industry,"[104] working closely with other organizations such as the NAACP and the National Urban League in cities throughout the country.[105] NAG tried to eliminate the stereotyping of African Americans in theatrical and cinematic performances. NAG maintained a historical archive for the recognition of Black excellence and contributions to the American theatre and promoted racial pride and fellowship among black performers. Members paid monthly dues and held many benefit concerts and testimonial dinners.[106] There were seven core directors, actors Leigh Whipper and Rex Ingram; musicians Ham Tree Harrington, Noble Sissle, and W. C. Handy; and actresses Muriel Rahn and Ada Brown. The founders Handy, Washington, Sissle, and Carter, handled the actual day-to-day operations. All officers of the organization worked on a voluntary basis and received no compensation.[107] The organization had several vice-presidents, including Ethel Waters, Marian Anderson, Duke Ellington, Edna Thomas, Paul Robeson. [108] Many Black entertainers benefited from the organization, including Lena Horne, and Perry Watkins.[109]

NAG was instrumental in helping Black entertainers preform at the 1939 World's Fair: Marion Anderson at the Hall of Music, Bill Robinson in the *Hot Mikado*, and an all-Black cast of Henrik Ibsen's, *A Doll's House.*[110] Additionally, NAG supported other organizations, and was an early supporter of the fledgling Screen Actors Guild.[111] After more than 45 years of helping Black entertainers, NAG dissolved in 1982.[112]

Because of his major contributions to jazz and Black culture, while living at 935 St. Nicholas Avenue, Noble Sissle was appointed as the honorary Mayor of Harlem in 1950.[113] Sissle also wrote many articles for the *New York Age* and the *New York Amsterdam News* and hosted a show on the local New York City public radio station WMGM from 1954 to 1971. Sissle received the Ellington Award from Yale university in 1972, for his musical legacy. Noble Sissle was a member of the American Society of Composers Authors and Publishers, from 1922 until his death in 1975.[114]

Conclusion

The neo-Gothic Revival-style building at 935 St. Nicholas Avenue is architecturally significant as a distinctive example of early-20th-century apartment house construction in Washington Heights and is culturally significant for its long association with two legendary jazz musicians and band leaders, reflecting New York City's importance as the epicenter of jazz music and culture in the 20th century. It retains a high degree of integrity to its period of construction, and to the mid-century period when it was home to Duke Ellington and Noble Sissle for more than 20 years each, solidifying its importance in New York City history.

Endnotes

[1] NB Number: 257-1915, Architect: Gronenberg & Leuchtag, Manhattan Department of Buildings.

[2] Information in this section was taken in part, from the following sources: Landmarks Preservation Commission, Morris-Jumel Mansion (LP-0888), (New York: City of New York, 1975); and "Washington Heights," in The Encyclopedia of New York City, ed. Kenneth Jackson (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995).

[3] According to the U. S. Department of Interior Indian Affairs "descendants of the original Munsee now live among the Delaware Nation, the Delaware Tribe of Indians, the Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohicans, and the Shinnecock Nation, all of which are recognized by the U.S. federal government as Tribal Nations descended from those that once lived in what is now New York City." See Nan A. Rothschild, Amanda Sutphin, H. Arthur Bankoff, and Jessica Striebel Maclean, *Buried Beneath The City: An Archeological History of New York* (2022), 48.

[4] 1 Continental Army Commander-in-Chief General George Washington made the Morris-Jumel Mansion (then the Roger Morris House), which was vacant at the time, his headquarters after a loss at the Battle of Long Island; upon his evacuation, the house became a base of operations for British general and Hessian soldiers at various points of the British occupation. Robert Morris, a loyalist, fled to England at the start of the war, leaving the Morris-Jumel Mansion vacant. See: Landmarks Preservation Commission, Morris-Jumel Mansion (LP0308), (New York: City of New York, 1967).

[5] "Teddy Hill Drawing 'em At Minton's," *New York Amsterdam News*, February 15, 1940, 20; "Teddy Hill, Former Band Leader, Now in Business," *The New York Age*, February 1, 1941, 4.

[6] See https://www.nypl.org/blog/2015/12/09/santas-new-york-roots

[7] Ibid. The Beaumont Apartments Designation Report, (LP-2545), June 25, 2013, written by Theresa C. Noonan.

[8] https://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/migrations/great-migration

[9]https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Demographic_history_of New_York_City, https://blacknewyorkersnypl.org/migrations-and-black-neighborhoods/, accessed 11/25/2020.

[10] Information in this section taken from: Landmarks Preservation Commission, Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill Northwest Historic District, (LP: 2104), October 23, 2001, prepared by the Research Department; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Census of Population and Housing for 1900 and 1930; 1930s, that the demographics began to shift from predominately immigrants from Russia, Germany, Austria, and Poland to African American residents. Information in this section taken from: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Census of Population and Housing for 1920, 1930 and 1940.

[11] Information in this section taken from: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Census of Population and Housing, for 1940 and 1950.

[12] Information in this section taken from these sources: The Beaumont Apartments Designation Report, (LP-2545), (New York: City of New York, 2013), prepared by Theresa C. Noonan; Dorrance Brooks Square Historic District Report, (LP-2651), June 15, 2021; Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill Historic District Report, (LP: 2104), October 23, 2001.

[13] A "tenement" was initially defined as a dwelling for three or more families, living and cooking separately. Richard Plunz, *A History of Housing in New York City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 22.

[14] Information in this section taken from: Landmarks Preservation Commission, The Dakota Apartments Report (LP-0280), February 11, 1969).

[15] Information in this section taken from: Elizabeth Collins Cromley, *Alone Together: A History of New York's Early Apartments* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 155.

[16] Ibid, Dorrance Brooks Square Historic District Report (LP-2651).

[17] Demand for Heights Houses Realty Market Feature," The New York Tribune, August 22, 1915, C3.

[18] NB Number: 425-1905, Manhattan Department of Buildings; Irma and Paul Milstein Division of United States History, Local History and Genealogy, The New York Public Library. "The Maybell, northwest corner St. Nicholas Avenue and 157th Street; Plan of first floor; Plan of upper floors." The New York Public Library Digital Collections. 1908.

[19] Ibid.

[20] "Demand for Heights Houses Realty Market Feature," *The New York Tribune,* August 22, 1915, C3.

[21] Ibid.

[22] NB Number: 257, Real Estate Record & Builders

Guide, July 24, 1915, p. 127.
[23] There were three major companies constructing apartment buildings in Washington Heights during this era, Aldus Construction, S. B. Building Corporation, and Seventh Avenue Construction, architects Gronenberg & Leuchtag designed buildings for all three in addition to the Leigh Building Corporation, Demand for Heights Houses Realty Market Feature," *The New York Tribune,* August 22, 1915, C3
[24] Ibid.
[25] United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Census of Population and Housing for 1920, 1930 and 1940.
[26] Display Ad 106, *New York Amsterdam News*, November 4, 1939, 24.
[27] Ancestry.com, World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918 [database on-line] Provo: Ancestry.com Operations, 2005; Obituaries, New York Times, June 18, 1931, 27 and April 28, 1959, 35; "Real Estate Notes," New York Times, May 26, 1936, 42; Landmarks Preservation commission, "Architects' Appendix," Ladies Mile Historic District Designation Report (LP-1609), (New York, City of New York, 1989); "Architects' Appendix," Riverside - West End Historic District Designation Report (LP-1626), (New York, 1989); "Architects' Appendix," Upper East Side Historic District Designation Report (LP-1051), (New York, 1981); "Architects Appendix," Dorrance Brooks Square Historic District Report (LP-2651), (New York, 2021).
[28] Ibid, Dorrance Brooks Square Historic District Report (LP-2651).
[29] "Demand for Heights Houses Realty Market Feature," *The New York Tribune*, August 22, 1915, C3.
[30] Cyril M. Harris, American Architecture: An Illustrated Encyclopedia, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1998), 155, 225.
[31] Tudor City Historic District Designation Report, LP-LP-1579, (New York, City of New York, May 17, 1988).
[32] Cary D. Wintz, Paul Finkelman, *Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance*, "Jazz," (New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, Inc., 2004), 612-616; Ian McNulty, "First Notes: New Orleans and the Early Roots of Jazz," https://www.frenchquarter.com/jazzmasters/. accessed from the internet, 01/25/2023.
[33] Master Class, "What is Jazz'" https://www.masterclass.com/articles/what-is-jazz, access from the internet 01/25/2023.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Information in this section taken from: Sarah Ritchie, "The Harlem Renaissance: A Cultural, Social, and Political Movement," (Eastern Mennonite University, Harlem Research Journal 59132-Article Text 59390-1-10-20140804, accessed 10/06/2020.
[36] Ibid, Cary D. Wintz, Paul Finkelman, 615.
[37] "Local Terpsichorean Joins Fight on Immoral Dances Jazz Craze Must Go," *The Chattanooga News*, September 03, 1919, 6; "No Art Exempt In Moral Laws, Says Dr. VanDyke," *The New York Herald*, March 13, 1921, 2.
[38] Maureen Anderson, "The White Reception of Jazz in America," *African American Review*, 2004, V. 38, No. 1 (The Johns Hopkins University Press: Spring, 2004), 135-145.
[39] "Jazz Music Banned," *East Oregonian*, March 04, 1922, 7.
[40] Mercedes Ellington & Steven Brower, Duke Ellington American Composer and Icon, (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 2015, 36.
[41] Aaron J. Johnson, "A Date with the Duke: Ellington on Radio," The Musical Quarterly, Fall-Winter 2013, V. 96, No. 3/4, Duke Ellington (Oxford University Press: Fall/Winter 2013), 369-405, accessed from the internet 0601/2023; On December 4, 1927, Ellington and his band opened for the first time at the Cotton Club. Information in this section taken from: Terry Teachout, Duke: A Life of Duke Ellington, (New York: Gotham Books, Published by the Penguin Group, 2013), 73-77; Mercedes Ellington & Steven Brower, Duke Ellington American Composer and Icon, (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 2015) 38.
[42] Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz, *Jazz in America*, "Dixieland and the Swing Era," https://www.jazzinamerica.org/lessonplan/8/5/208, accessed from the internet, 0122/2023.
[43] Swing Street, "The difference between jazz Big band and an orchestra," https://issuu.com/swingstreetradio/docs/difference-between-jazz-big-band-an, accessed from the internet, 0122/2023.
[44] Bebop was designated as "musician's music," and "intellectual music meant for serious listening." The Jazz History Tree, *Bebop :1940*, https://www.jazzhistorytree.com/bebop/; Jazz style Periods, https://www.learnjazzstandards.com/wp-content/uploads/chord_charts/JAZZ_STYLE_PERIODS.pdf, accessed from the internet, 12/15/22
[45] Dmitri Tymoczko, "The End of Jazz?" *Transition*, 1996, No. 70 (1996), 72-81.
[46]John Edward Hasse and Bob Blumenthal, "Jazz," *Smithsonian, Folkways Magazin*e, 2011, https://folkways.si.edu/magazine-winter-2011-jazz-cover-story/ragtime/music/article/Smithsonian.
[47] Information taken from: Central Harlem Historic District Report, (LP-2607), May 28, 2018, written by Theresa C. Noonan and Barrette Reiter; Information in this section adapted from: Jacob Goldberg, "Paying Their

Dues," Allegro, 114, No. 2 February 2014.
[48] Information taken from: 55 West 28th Street Building, Tin Pan Alley Designation Report, (LP-2630), December 10, 2019,) written by Sarah Moses.
[49] Jacob Goldberg, "A brief history of the Clef Club," *Allegro*, V. 115, No. 2, February, 2015, https://www.local802afm.org/allegro/articles/a-brief-history-of-the-clef-club/, accessed from the internet 05/25/2023.
[50] Information taken from: Central Harlem Historic District Designation Report, (LP-2607), May 29, 2018), written by Theresa Noonan and Barrett Reiter.
[51] John Gennari, National WWII Museum, Jazz in the Late 1940s: American Culture At Its Most Alluring, (September 15, 2021), https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/moden, accessed from the internet, 12/15/22
[52] Down Beat Magazine was established in Chicago in 1934, its focus is mainly jazz, blues and popular music and is still being published today online. There are many other magazines that focused on jazz music, there was, Jazz Hot (1934-present), Jazzwise (1997-present), is the biggest in Europe. Jazziz (1970-present), JazzTimes (1970-present)
[53] Ibid., David M. Carletta, 115-134; John Gennari, National WWII Museum, *Jazz in the Late 1940s: American Culture At Its Most Alluring*, (September 15, 2021), https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/modern-jazz-late-1940s, accessed from the internet, 12/15/22
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid. David M. Carletta
[56] Ibid. John Gennari
[57] Ibid. David M. Carletta
[58] Eric Grode. "Ahmad Jamal, Jazz Pianist With a Measured Approach, Dies at 92," *The New York Times*, April 16, 2023.
[59] On the 30th of April 2023, 190 countries participated in the celebration.
[60]Information in this section taken from: Edward Kennedy Ellington, *Music is My Mistress*, (New York: Doubleday Press, 1974); Mercedes Ellington & Steven Brower, *Duke Ellington American Composer and Icon*, (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 2015.
[61] Information in this section taken from: Terry Teachout, *Duke: A Life of Duke Ellington*, (New York: Gotham Books, Published by the Penguin Group, 2013, 46-51).
[62] Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill Northeast Historic District, (LP-2104), (New York: City of New York, October 23, 2001).
[63] Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill Northeast Historic District, (LP-2104), October 23, 2001.
[64] Ibid., Aaron J. Johnson, 373-376.
[65] United States of America, Bureau of the Census. Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1940; Bureau of the Census. 1913-1/1/1972. Population Schedules for the 1950 Census, 1950 - 1950. Washington, D. C: National Archives at Washington, D. C.
[66] "Show Life," *The New York Amsterdam News*, September 16, 1939, 17.
[67] Ibid. Mercedes Ellington, 68.
[68] Ibid.; Terry Teachout, 235-256.
[69] Ibid., Ellington; Maurice Peress, *Dvorak To Duke Ellington: a Conductor Explores America's Music and Its African American Root*s, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 153-159.
[70] Ibid., Duke Ellington.
[71] Ibid, Duke Ellington.
[72] Ibid.; Richard O. Boyer.
[73] Ibid., Maurice Peress, 186-187
[74] Ibid., Maurice Peress, 186-187.
[75] Ibid., Maurice Peress, 187.
[76] Ibid., Ellington, 129.
[77] Ibid., Ellington, 66.
[78] Ibid., Ellington, 67-68.
[79] Fred Kaplan, "When Ambassadors Had Rhythm," *The New York Times*, June 29, 2008.
[80]Duke and his band did a tour of Russia in 1971 and a concert in Westminster Abbey in London of his sacred music in December 1973, Published on February 20, 2020, https://www.udiscovermusic.com/artist/duke-ellington/ accessed form the internet,02/22/2023.
[81] Ibid. Mercedes Ellington, 48.
[82] Ibid. Mercedes Ellington.
[83] For a full list of all the awards and achievements consult Duke Ellington's autobiography Edward Kennedy Ellington, *Music is My Mistress*, (New York: Doubleday Press, 1974), 476-490.
[84] "Mood Indigo & Beyond," *Time Magazine*, August 20, 1956, http://www.time.com/time/covers/0%2C16641%2C19560,820%2C00.html, accessed form the internet,02/02/2023, accessed form the internet,02/22/2023.
[85] Duke Ellington Oral History, Yale University Archives, https://archives.yale.edu/repositories/7/resources/5484, accessed form the internet,02/13/2023.
[86] Jack Jones, "From the Archives: Jazz Great Duke Ellington Dies in New York Hospital at 75," *Los Angeles Times*, May 25, 1974.
[87] Wilson, John S. "Duke Ellington, A Master of Music, Dies at 75." *The New York Times*, May 25, 1974, 61.
[88] Information in this section taken from: Richard O. Boyer, "The Hot Bach – I," *The New Yorker Magazine*, June 16, 1944, accessed from the internet 02/24/2023.

[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid. Ellington, 38.
[91] Robert Kimball and William Bolcom, "*Reminiscing With Noble Sissle and Eubie Blake*," (New York: Cooper Square Press, 1973), 20; Maurice Peress, Dvorak To Doke Ellington: a Conductor Explores America's Music and Its African American Roots, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 12-13.
[92] Ibid. Robert Kimball and William Bolcom, 22.
[93] Central High School in Cleveland, Ohio, had six Black students, including Noble Sissle, Ibid., Robert Kimball and William Bolcom, 30.
[94] Ibid., Robert Kimball and William Bolcom, 32-33.
[95] Werner Bamberger, "Noble Sissle Dead at 86; Band Leader and Lyricist," The New York Times, December 19, 1975, 48.
[96] Ibid., Maurice Peress; Robert Kimball and William Bolcom.
[97] https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-production/shuffle-along-9073, accessed from the internet, 03/02/2023.
[98] Ibid., Robert Kimball and William Bolcom, 128-129; https://www.playbill.com/production/the-chocolate-dandies-new-colonial-theatre-vault-0000011927, accessed from the internet 03/02/2023.
[99] Ibid., Maurice Peress; Robert Kimball and William Bolcom, 222-228.
[100]"Noble Sissle Dead at 86; Band Leader and Lyricist," The New York Times, December 19, 1975, 48.
[101]Noble Lee Sissle, "Memoirs of "Jim" Europe," *African American Odyssey*, https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/aaodyssey:@field(NUMBER+@band(musmisc+ody0717)), accessed from the internet 03/08/2023.
[102] "Sissle Named President of Actor's Guild," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, December 18, 1937, 21.
[103] "What the Negros Actors Guild Is Doing," *The New York Age*, July 29, 1939, 7.
[104] Jonathan Dewberry, "Black Actors Unite: The Negro Actors' Guild," The Black Scholar, March-April-May-1990, V. 21, No. 2, Black Cinema (March-April-May-1990), 2-11.
[105] Jonathan Dewberry, "Black Actors Unite: The Negro Actors' Guild," *The Black Scholar*, March-April-May-1990, V. 21, No. 2, Black Cinema (March-April-May-1990), pp. 2-11.
[106] Ibid., Jonathan Dewberry, 2-11.
[107] Ibid., Dewberry, 2-11.
[108] The organization had several vice-presidents, simply because many entertainers were often, not in New York City with regularity, and they would need a quorum for meetings. They include Ethel Waters, Marian Anderson, Duke Ellington, Edna Thomas, Paul Robeson, J. Rosamond Johnson, Louis Armstrong, and Frank Wilson. Their office address for many years was 1674 Broadway.
[109] Ibid., Dewberry, 2-11.
[110] Ibid., Dewberry, 2-11.
[111] Ibid., Dewberry. 2-11.
[112] Ibid. Dewberry, 2-11.
[113] Cary D. Wintz, Paul Finkelman, 449-451.
[114] "Noble Sissle Dead at 86; Band Leader and Lyricist," *The New York Times*, December 19, 1975, 48.

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 935 St. Nicholas Avenue 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, state, and the nation.

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 935 St. Nicholas Avenue Building and designates Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 2107, Lot 72 as its Landmark Site, as shown in the attached map.

935 St. Nicholas Avenue Building, 935 St. Nicholas Avenue
June 2023, Bilge Klose

935 St. Nicholas Avenue
June 2023, Lisa Buckley

Main Entrance detail
June 2023, Theresa C. Noonan

935 St. Nicholas Avenue
June 2023, Bilge Klose

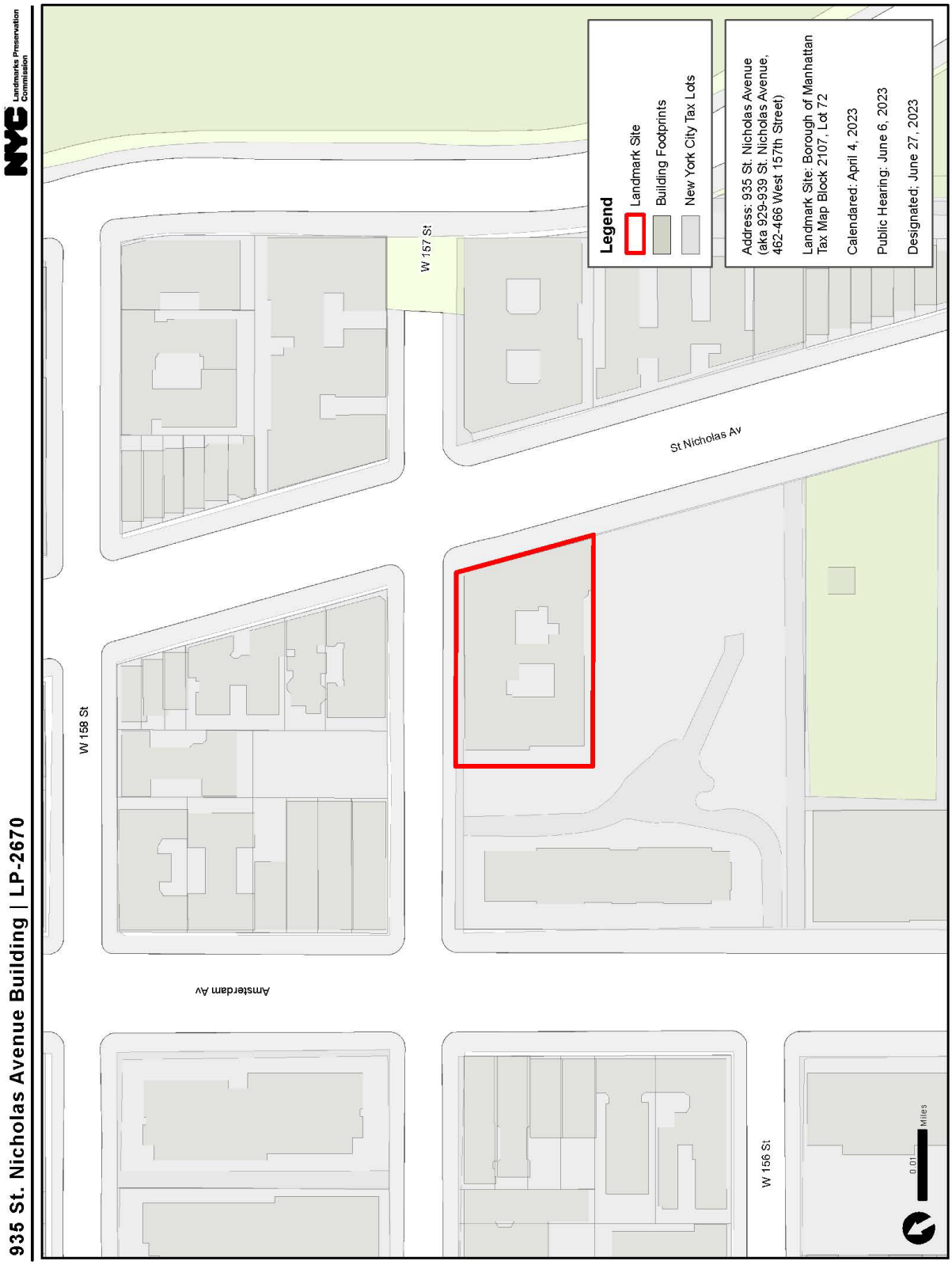
Terra-cotta Detail
June 2023, Theresa Noonan

Terra-cotta Detail
June 19, 2023, Theresa C. Noonan

West 157th Street façade detail
June 2023, Theresa C. Noonan

West 157th Street façade detail
June 2023, Theresa C. Noonan

Eastern façade detail
June 2023, Lisa Buckley


935 St. Nicholas Avenue Building | LP-2670
Landmarks Preservation Commission
Legend
Landmark Site
Building Footprints
New York City Tax Lots
Address: 935 St. Nicholas Avenue (aka 929-939 St. Nicholas Avenue, 462-466 West 157th Street)
Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 2107, Lot 72
Calendared: April 4, 2023
Public Hearing: June 6, 2023
Designated: June 27, 2023
W 157 St
St Nicholas Av
W 158 St
Amsterdam Av
W 156 St
0 01
Miles
Graphic Source: MapPLUTO, Edition 22v2, Author: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, DHW, Date: 6.27.2023