

23rd POLICE PRECINCT ("TENDERLOIN") STATION HOUSE (now Traffic Control Division), 134-138 West 30th Street, Manhattan. Built 1907-08; R. Thomas Short, architect.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 805, Lot 82.

On July 14, 1998, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the 23rd Police Precinct Station House, and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 2). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. A representative of the New York City Police Department spoke in favor of designation. In addition, the Commission has received letters from Community Board 5 and the Historic Districts Council in support of designation.

Summary

The 23rd Police Precinct Station House, located on the south side of West 30th Street between Sixth and Seventh Avenues, was erected in 1907-08 to the design of R. Thomas Short, who is best known as a designer of apartment buildings as a partner in the firm of Harde & Short. This station house served the legendary Tenderloin section of midtown Manhattan that was previously part of the 19th Precinct, one of the city's busiest. The police had occupied a smaller station house across the street since 1869. One of the first station houses constructed in Manhattan for the Police Department following the Consolidation of Greater New York, it was one of the earliest in New York to solely employ automobile patrols. The unusual Medieval Revival style of the building, more commonly associated with armories, resulted from a police commissioner's desire for a building that "look[s] like a police station" and forcefully asserted the authority of the police. Four stories high plus a mezzanine story, the building has a prominent base of light gray rusticated granite arranged as simulated towers; a central automobile entrance, with an arched Guastavino tile vault, that leads to the recessed doorway and central courtyard area beyond; and upper stories, faced in buff ironspot Roman brick, that terminate in a bold bracketed cornice and crenellated roof parapet. The building has remained in continuous use by the Police Department, and now serves the Traffic Control Division.



DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

New York City Police Station Houses: Post-Consolidation

Following the Consolidation of Greater New York City in 1898, the design and construction of adequate and suitable public buildings (schools, police and fire stations, courthouses, etc.) was of major concern as the city grew in population and importance, and the need for municipal services increased. Manhattan's older nineteenth-century police station houses, in particular, were deemed unacceptable. As stated by William McAdoo, police commissioner in 1904-05:

the station-houses and the prisons connected therewith in a large number of the precincts in Greater New York are a positive disgrace to the city. . . Many of the buildings. . . are very old, have been allowed to run down, and are in bad condition. As a rule, the prisons are unsanitary, poorly ventilated, and without modern improvements. . . The officers' quarters are thoroughly inferior.¹

McAdoo was not very successful in convincing city officials to renovate existing station houses and to build new ones. In May 1906, the New York City Board of Health condemned thirty-three Manhattan station houses (exempting only three), and threatened to close them unless the request of the new police commissioner, Theodore A. Bingham (also a Health Board member), for two million dollars for new stations was appropriated by the Board of Estimate and Apportionment.² Over the next decade, the Police Department expanded its program of new station house construction, in Manhattan as well as the other boroughs, and a grandiose new police headquarters was also built.³ The Real Estate Record & Guide had remarked in 1898 that in New York "there is not even one architecturally decent police station."⁴ The majority of the new post-Consolidation station houses, generally well-received, were designed in monumental variants of neoclassical, neo-Renaissance, and Beaux-Arts styles.

The Tenderloin⁵

During much of the nineteenth century, New York City was considered the leading center of vice and crime in the United States -- some estimated that New York had more crime than the entire rest of the country. Within Manhattan in the late nineteenth century, the section considered to be the most crime-ridden was the area of western midtown that came to

be called "the Tenderloin," roughly bounded by 23rd and 42nd Streets and Fifth and Seventh Avenues (by the turn of the century, it extended northward and westward). The name was supposedly derived from Alexander S. ("Clubber") Williams; upon his appointment in 1876 as captain of the 29th Police Precinct that served this area, he looked forward to getting some of "the tenderloin" after long service in other neighborhoods. Williams, a millionaire by the time of his forced retirement in 1895, was a legendary symbol of the police graft and corruption that were major problems in New York City, nowhere more so than in the Tenderloin, particularly during the heyday of Tammany Hall. Around 1885 it was estimated that "at least half of the buildings in the district were devoted to some sort of wickedness,"⁶ including the city's densest concentration of brothels, saloons, gambling parlors, sex shows, dance halls, and "clip joints." Sixth Avenue in this vicinity was thought to be one of the worst streets in the city. Reformers considered the area so bad that they dubbed it "Satan's Circus."

At the same time, the district had another side, a more affluent, distinctly higher class character, as described in 1885:

What the First Precinct is, commercially and financially, the Twenty-ninth or "Tenderloin Precinct" is socially. . . No other command approaches it in importance as the centre of civilization and all that makes the Nineteenth Century city life agreeable. It embraces nearly all the great caravansaries, parks, clubs, theatres and stores. Within it are the most frequented streets and avenues, and at night city life for the "upper ten [percent]" alone exists within its boundaries. . . Its population is, mainly, the "upper ten," and those who serve them.⁷

By the turn of the century, the southwestern section of the Tenderloin became one of the foremost African-American neighborhoods in Manhattan, and Seventh Avenue between the West Twenties and Forties was referred to as the "African Broadway."⁸ William McAdoo wrote in 1906 that the "Tenderloin precinct, as every one knows, is the most important precinct in New York, if not in the United States, or probably in the world, from the amount of police business done there and from the character of the neighborhood."⁹ He also identified other changes occurring in the district: "The New Tenderloin, which begins at Forty-second Street and runs up to

Sixty-second Street, is rapidly depleting the ranks of the sporting vicious element in the Old Tenderloin."¹⁰ In the early twentieth century, part of the old Tenderloin district developed as the Garment and Fur Center.

The 29th Police Precinct Station House (1869, Nathaniel D. Bush, architect) was located at 137-139 West 30th Street, with a separate jail structure. The boundaries of the 29th Precinct were 14th and 42nd Streets, and Park/Fourth and Seventh Avenues. As early as 1885, it was proposed to separate this busy district into two precincts. It was, however, merely re-numbered the 19th Precinct in January 1887. After Consolidation in 1898, the 1869 station house was considered overcrowded, with insufficient dormitory quarters for the patrolmen. Police Commissioner Michael C. Murphy in 1901 again supported plans to reduce the size of the 19th Precinct, declaring it "so large as to be unwieldy."¹¹ Several re-districting plans failed over the next few years, as the turnover in police commissioners was frequent.

In April 1903, architect R. Thomas Short filed for the construction of a new four-story brick and limestone 19th Police Precinct Station House (with a stable to the west), expected to cost \$125,000, to replace the 1869 station house on the same site. In June 1903, however, Police Commissioner Francis V. Greene requested that the Board of Estimate and Apportionment discontinue plans for that station, and instead divide the precinct and acquire two new sites. In November, the New York Times reported on the conditions at the "dilapidated police station" with its many missing panes of glass, sick policemen sleeping in their uniforms, vermin, and "evil-smelling gases."¹² The Board of Estimate voted in December 1903 to appropriate funds for acquisition of a different site for a new police station house. Needing additional space in the meantime, Commissioner McAdoo "seized upon the building next door and broke doors through. It was property owned by the city, and I furnished two nice floors there for dormitories."¹³

23rd Police Precinct Station House: "The Tenderloin Station"¹⁴

In April and May 1905, four lots on the south side of 30th Street, across from the old station house, were conveyed to the City of New York for the new police station. McAdoo wrote in 1906 that he had found pre-existing plans for a new precinct station house:

Outwardly it looked like a second-class

apartment-house. It gave no suggestion of its official character, and the internal arrangements were more fanciful than practical. The architect had followed the usual lines with regard to these structures. . . I sent for the architect in this case and had him make radical changes in the outward appearance of the house so as to cause it to look like a police station. . . His improved plan I considered a very good one. I then appointed a committee consisting of old and experienced officers, inspectors, and men who had been on the force thirty and forty years, and this committee was ordered to co-operate with the architect and to see that the plans were made practical and in keeping with the real wants of the police: that prisoners, for instance, would not be exposed in coming from the patrol wagons to the gaze of passers-by and young children [from P.S. 26 to the east] in front of the station-house. . . that the prison was thoroughly isolated from the rest of the station, and that it was as well ventilated and comfortable as any prison or detention place should be. In a word, that all those things which experience shows essential to be found in station-houses would be in the new building. These new plans were adopted, and the work is to progress on those lines unless changed by some authority. I feel sure that this new building will really be a model station-house...¹⁵

In May 1906, the New York Times reported that demolition was proceeding on the site of the new Tenderloin Station, noting that several thousand dollars had been wasted on past plans that had failed under several commissioners, and that "'the new station' has become a standing joke." McAdoo's successor, Commissioner Theodore A. Bingham, reportedly had "tentative plans. . . for a station that shall resemble a warlike armory," with more and roomier cells and dormitory quarters, and a stable at the rear yard.¹⁶

Apparently Short was retained as architect throughout the period of planning for the station house, and again filed in July 1906, for the construction of a four-story-plus-mezzanine, steel-framed fireproof station house, expected to cost \$154,000. The Real Estate Record & Guide indicated that

the exterior will be of brick and granite, with bluestone coping. . . The drawings show a massive edifice. . . of castellated design.

Entrance is through an archway into a central court. . . Part of the first floor and the mezzanine floor are to be the headquarters of the police inspector assigned to the Tenderloin. Both these floors will contain muster rooms for the "cops." The upper floors are to be fitted as dormitories finished with up-to-date sanitary arrangements.¹⁷

Construction bids were opened in December 1906; the low bidder, at \$198,000, was F.T. Nesbitt & Co., which received the contract. The "semi-vitrified" (ironspot) facing brick was supplied by Harbison-Walker Refractories Co. Construction began in April 1907. This precinct's number and boundaries were finally changed in July 1907, in the midst of the construction of the new building. The old 19th Precinct was divided at 23rd Street, the southern portion remaining the 19th Precinct and the northern portion (to be served by the new station) called the 23rd Precinct. The 23rd Police Precinct Station House was finished in May 1908 and occupied in August. The Police Department's Annual Report of 1908 announced: "It is no boast to claim that this is the finest [station house] in the United States, both architecturally and in interior arrangement. The old station house opposite has been utilized as a store and supply depot." The report also indicated that disbursements for the building and furnishings had totaled over \$208,000.¹⁸ At some point, either during final planning or during construction, the decision had been made to use only automobile patrols at this station,¹⁹ rather than horse-drawn patrol wagons, making this one of the earliest stations in New York to do so. Thus, the original building plan (which had called for a stable at the rear) was revised for the change.

The unusual Medieval Revival style of the building, more commonly associated with armories, forcefully asserted the authority of the police, a major concern in this busy and highly visible precinct. The use of the style undoubtedly reflected Short's response to McAdoo's request for a building that "look[s] like a police station." Since the late 1870s, national guard armories in New York City had been designed in variants of medieval imagery to connote their military function as well as convey the concepts of power and control.²⁰ A number of police stations built in Brooklyn in the 1890s also featured similar medieval motifs, such as towers and crenellation.²¹ The 23rd Police Precinct Station House appears to be unique in the use of this style for a police station house in Manhattan. The prominent base of rusticated light gray granite is arranged as

simulated towers. The central automobile entrance, with an arched tile vault by the Guastavino Fireproof Construction Co.,²² leads to the recessed doorway and central courtyard area and garage beyond. The upper stories, faced in buff ironspot Roman brick, terminate in a bold bracketed cornice and crenellated roof parapet.

The 23rd Police Precinct Station House was published in two contemporary architectural journals, with widely divergent views. In 1908, *Architects' & Builders' Magazine* referred to the "fortress-like structure" as a "model police station."²³ Critic Montgomery Schuyler, however, in 1911 thought that "'Military Gothic' is a foolish mode of architecture to be applied to the uses of a modern police station," noting that the police did not have to hold off angry mobs.²⁴ Today the building is seen as an interesting and dramatic design solution for a police station, by an inventive architect in response to a police commissioner's request for a building that "look[s] like a police station," at a time when the City of New York required a variety of new municipal buildings in great number.

The Architect: R. Thomas Short²⁵

R [ichard] Thomas Short (c. 1870-1950), despite his prominence in New York City at the turn of the century, has remained a somewhat elusive figure. Born in Canada, he moved to Brooklyn in his youth and in 1887 was the author of the publication *Proper Homes and How to Have Them*. By 1894, Short had established an architectural practice in Brooklyn, then moved his practice to Manhattan in 1898, and became employed as head draftsman in the prominent firm of James E. Ware & Son. Short won first prize in an influential model tenement design competition sponsored by the Charity Organization Society in 1900. He established the firm of Harde & Short in 1901 with the English-trained architect Herbert Spencer Styne-Harde (1873-1958), also in Ware's office; the firm lasted until around 1916. Harde & Short's first commission in 1901 was from the City & Suburban Homes Co. for a pair of buildings at the western end of the Avenue A (York Avenue) Estate, between East 78th and 79th Streets; construction took place in 1902-03. Short's competition design was revised for these structures, incorporating features from Ware's initial buildings for the company's earlier First Avenue Estate, begun in 1898 and located between East 64th and 65th Streets.²⁶

Harde & Short became well known for its highly distinctive apartment house designs, often elaborately ornamented with terra cotta. These included Red

House (1903-04), 350 West 85th Street; 45 East 66th Street Apartments (1906-08); Alwyn Court Apartments (1907-09), 182 West 58th Street; and the Studio Building (1907-08), 44-48 West 77th Street.²⁷ The firm also designed the White Rats' Club (1912, demolished), 226 West 46th Street, and a number of theaters in Brooklyn.²⁸

In addition to the 23rd Police Precinct Station House, Short was responsible for the design of the neo-Georgian style 75th Police Precinct Station House (1903), 5-37--5-47 50th Avenue, Hunters Point, Queens; an apartment house at 100 Elton Street (1908); the Moorish style Kismet Temple Shriners Mosque (1909-10, with Benjamin W. Levitan), 92 Herkimer Street;²⁹ an apartment building at 1225-1231 Bushwick Avenue (1915); Bushwick Hospital (1915, demolished), Putnam and Howard Avenues; the Brevoort and Clark Theaters (1917-18, demolished), Bedford Avenue and Brevoort Place; the Kingsway Theater (1920), 948-956 Kings Highway; the Columbus Council, Knights of Columbus Building (1924-25, with [John T.] Riggs), 1-7 Prospect Park West; and Bushwick Savings Bank, Grand Street and Graham Avenue; all in Brooklyn. He was also the architect of many of the vaudeville theaters associated with the Century Circuit. Very little is known of the later years of his, or Harde & Short's, practice. Around the time his professional directory listings ended in 1916, Short's address was his residence at 370 Macon Street, Brooklyn. He moved to Baldwin, [L.I.], around 1932.

Later History³⁰

This building served as the station house for the 23rd Precinct until 1924, when it was re-numbered the 7th Precinct. It became the 14th Precinct in 1929. A new station house for the 14th Precinct opened in 1969 at 357 West 35th Street. After that time, the West 30th Street building continued in operation as a traffic control unit of the Police Department, currently called the Traffic Control Division.

Description

The Medieval Revival style building is four stories high plus a mezzanine story. The original one-over-one wood-frame windows and transoms have been replaced with anodized aluminum ones of the top-tilt variety.

Base Consisting of the ground and mezzanine stories, the base is faced in rusticated light gray granite and arranged with four simulated rounded towers. The windows have keyed enframements; original iron grilles have been removed. The base is

capped by a bold cornice and crenellated parapet with the City seal in the center (a flagpole has been placed above the seal).

The central round-arched automobile entrance has a Guastavino tile vault, cement and asphalt block paving, and is flanked on each side by granite facing and granite steps leading to wood and glass doors with sidelights (the west wall also has a small window). Two small non-historic light fixtures have been installed on the Guastavino tiles. The recessed arched doorway, leading to the central interior courtyard area beyond, has large, original double wooden doors with elaborate decorative metal hinges (the doors have been painted with Police Dept. logos). It appears that there were iron gates at the outside edge of the entranceway that have been removed. Original sconces flanking this entranceway have been replaced with smaller metal sconces of Gothic design. A spandrel plaque above the entrance originally identified this as the 23rd Police Precinct [a wooden plaque covering the original, placed here in the 1990s for a television show, incorrectly refers to this as the 27th Precinct].

One-story arched gateways capped with crenellation flank the facade. That on the east leads to the station's pedestrian entrance, through a small outer court (paved with concrete); a hanging bracketed metal sign above the arch identifies the building as the "Traffic Control Division." The historic entrance door is wood and glass, covered with an historic iron grille, and set below a transom; granite steps lead to the doorway. A metal sconce, similar to those at the automobile entrance, is placed to one side. The gateway on the west side has an historic iron gate; the gate on the east gateway has been removed.

Upper Stories The upper three stories, faced in buff ironspot Roman brick, terminate in a bold bracketed cornice and crenellated roof parapet. The rectangular windows have transoms above. The second story has a central segmental-arched and recessed balcony. There are four arched openings (two in the balcony, and one at each end) that retain their historic wood and glass doors. The upper story is flanked by large corbels at each end.

East and West Walls The side walls are faced in red brick and have fenestration with replacement sash; the west wall has a fire escape that descends from the top to a basement level.

Sidewalk [that portion located on the Landmark Site] Adjacent to the building, in the two midsections between the "towers," are a metal grate to the east and a metal plate to the west, both framed in granite.

NOTES

1. William McAdoo, *Guarding a Great City* (N.Y.: Harper & Bros., 1906), 134, 137.
2. "33 Police Stations Condemned as Unfit," *New York Times* [hereafter NYT], May 19, 1906, 5.
3. Among the post-Consolidation police station houses were those for: the 40th Precinct (1901-02, Horgan & Slattery), 3101 Kingsbridge Terrace, the Bronx; 41st Precinct (1904-06, Stoughton & Stoughton), 3016 Webster Avenue, the Bronx; First Precinct (1909-11, Hunt & Hunt), 100 Old Slip; and 62nd Precinct (1912-14, Hazzard, Erskine & Blagden), 1086 Simpson Street, the Bronx. The Police Headquarters Building (1905-09, Hoppin, Koen, & Huntington) is at 240 Centre Street. All of these buildings are designated New York City Landmarks. The 4th Precinct Station House (1912, Hoppin & Koen), 16-20 Ericsson Place, is located within the Tribeca West Historic District.
4. "New Fire Engine Houses," *Real Estate Record & Guide* [hereafter RERG], Nov. 5, 1898, 652.
5. "Tenderloin," Carl Sifakis, *Encyclopedia of American Crime* (N.Y.: Facts on File, 1982), 702-703; "Tenderloin," *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, Kenneth T. Jackson, ed. (New Haven: Yale Univ. Pr., 1995), 1161; Augustine E. Costello, *Our Police Protectors: History of the New York Police from the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (N.Y.: A.E. Costello, 1885); NYC Police Dept., *Annual Report* (1886-1906); "Redistricting of Precincts," NYT, Apr. 14, 1898, 14; "The Future Tenderloin," NYT, Mar. 28, 1901, 2; "Projected Buildings," RERG, Apr. 18, 1903, 782; "New Tenderloin Station," NYT, Apr. 19, 1903, 8; "Greene Would Divide Tenderloin Precinct," NYT, June 4, 1903, 2; "To Cut the Tenderloin," NYT, Dec. 12, 1903, 9; McAdoo.
6. Herbert Asbury, *The Gangs of New York* (1928), quoted in Jervis Anderson, *This Was Harlem 1900-1950* (N.Y.: Noonday Pr., 1982), 14.
7. Costello, 367-368.
8. Anderson, 8.
9. McAdoo, 140.
10. McAdoo, 91.
11. "Changes in the Tenderloin," NYT, Mar. 23, 1901, 2.
12. "Dilapidated Police Station," NYT, Nov. 30, 1903, 2.
13. McAdoo, 137.
14. New York County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances; NYC, Dept. of Buildings, Manhattan, Plans, Permits and Dockets (NB 797-1906); "Projected Buildings," RERG, July 28, 1906, 202; "Bids Opened," RERG, Dec. 22, 1906, 1038; NYC Police Dept., *Annual Report* (1907), 8; "A Model Police Station," *Architects' & Builders' Magazine* (June 1908), 422-424; Montgomery Schuyler, "Architectural Aberrations: the Twenty-third Precinct Police Station House," *Architectural Record* (Aug. 1911), 181-184.
15. McAdoo, 140-141.
16. "Old 'Tenderloin' Station Awaiting its Doom," NYT, May 13, 1906, pt. 3, 4.

17. "Estimates Receivable," RERG, July 28, 1906, 169-170.
18. NYC Police Dept., Annual Report (1908), 17 and 79.
19. The vehicles were powered by electricity rather than gasoline. According to "New York's Finest" (exhibition, New-York Historical Society, Oct. 20, 1998 - Mar. 21, 1999), electric patrol wagons were introduced to the department in 1901.
20. The following armories are designated New York City Landmarks: Seventh Regiment Armory (1877-81, Charles W. Clinton), 643 Park Avenue; Twenty-third Regiment Armory (1891-95, Fowler & Hough and Isaac G. Perry), 1322 Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn; Fourteenth Regiment Armory (1891-95, William A. Mundell), 1402 Eighth Avenue, Brooklyn; Squadron A Armory (Madison Avenue front) (1893-95, John R. Thomas), East 94th-95th Streets; First Battery Armory (1900-03, Horgan & Slattery), 56 West 66th Street; Sixty-ninth Regiment Armory (1904-06, Hunt & Hunt), 68 Lexington Avenue; Second Battery Armory (1908-11, Charles C. Haight), 1122 Franklin Avenue, Bronx; Eighth Coastal Artillery Armory (1912-17, Pilcher & Tachau), 29 West Kingsbridge Road, Bronx; and 369th Regiment Armory (1921-24, Tachau & Vought; 1930-33, Van Wart & Wein), 2360 Fifth Avenue. See the various designation reports for a discussion of medieval imagery.
21. Among these are the 18th Police Precinct Station House (1890-92, George Ingram), 4302 Fourth Avenue, and the 20th Police Precinct Station House (1894-95, William B. Tubby), 179 Wilson Avenue, both designated New York City Landmarks. Short, a Brooklyn resident, possibly knew these examples.
22. The Guastavino Co. attribution is based on notes made by George R. Collins, now in the Guastavino/Collins Collection, Avery Library, Columbia University.
23. "A Model Police Station," 422. Most of the article discussed the interior plan and features of the building.
24. Schuyler, 184. He did not specify what style he thought appropriate for a modern police station.
25. Dennis S. Francis, *Architects in Practice, New York City 1840-1900* (N.Y.: Comm. for the Pres. of Archl. Recs., 1979); James Ward, *Architects in Practice, New York City 1900-1940* (N.Y.: Comm. for the Pres. of Archl. Recs., 1989); LPC, architects files, and "Harde & Short," in *Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1647)(N.Y.: City of New York, 1990); Short obit., *Brooklyn Eagle*, Jan. 10, 1950, 11; *Brooklyn Directory* (1894-1910); "Kismet Temple's Mosque," *Masonic Standard*, Jan. 9, 1909, 1-2, and Apr. 2, 1910, 1-2; "New Kismet Temple Shrine," *Brooklyn Eagle*, Feb. 20, 1910, real est. sect., 5; "Kismet Temple," *Architects' & Builders' Magazine* (Oct. 1909-Sept. 1910), 325-326; "DeKalb Theater," *Architecture and Building* (Jan. 1912), 42; "White Rats' Club" and "Halsey Theater," *Architecture and Building* (Jan. 1913), 30-31 and 39; "New Amusement Center in Brooklyn," *RERG*, July 24, 1915, 133; "Two Theatres in Bedford Section," *RERG*, May 19, 1917, 703; "Brevoort Theater," *Architecture and Building* (May 1918), pl. 91-92; "Newsreel" [Kingway Theater], *Marquee* (1982), v. 14-4, 23; James E. Foley, [Columbus Council Building], *The Knights of Columbus in the State of New York 1891-1968* (N.Y.S. Council, Knights of Columbus, 1968), 150-151; [Columbus Council Building], *Wheeling Steel advertisement, Engineering and Business (Architectural Forum)*(Jan. 192[8]); *Atlas of the Borough of Brooklyn* (N.Y.: E. Belcher Hyde Map Co., 1929). Thanks to William D. Moore, director of the Livingston Masonic Library, for Short's obituary and Masonic information; to Andrew S. Dolkart for Brooklyn theater leads; and to Christopher Gray for Wheeling Steel ad.
26. The First Avenue and Avenue A Estates are designated New York City Landmarks.
27. The first three buildings are designated New York City Landmarks. No. 45 East 66th Street is also included in the Upper East Side Historic District. The Studio Building is located within both the Central Park West-76th Street Historic District and the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District. Andrew S. Dolkart, in *Morningside Heights: A History of its Architecture and Development* (N.Y.: Columbia Univ. Pr., 1998), identified several apartment buildings (1901-02, demolished) by Harde & Short on the 400 block of West 118th Street.
28. The firm's theater commissions included the Rialto Theater, Flatbush Avenue; Lyric Theater (1910, demolished), 854 Monroe Street; DeKalb Theater (1911), 1153-1167 DeKalb Avenue; Halsey Theater,

Arcadia Dance Hall, and Broadway Sporting Club (1912, demolished), 912-942 Halsey Street; and Minden motion picture theater (1915, demolished), 887 Madison Street.

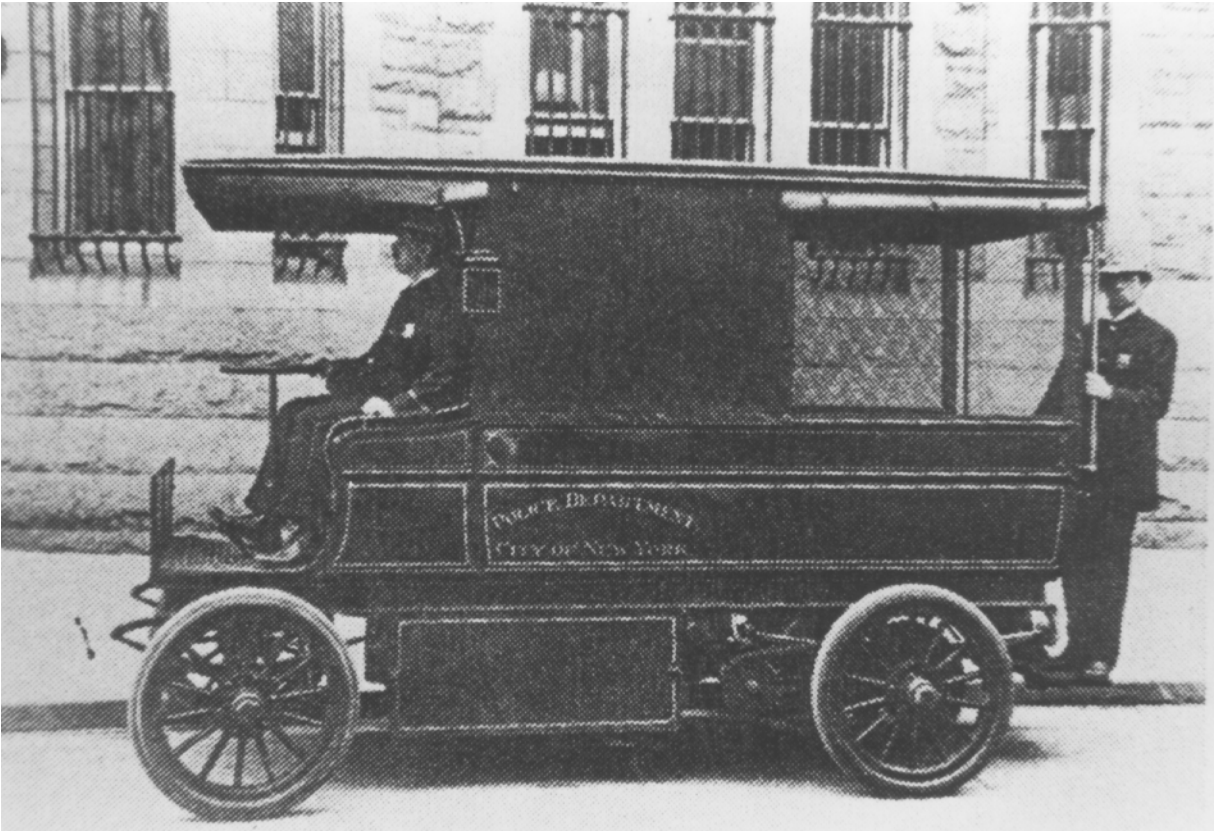
29. This commission was won in competition. It is believed to be the oldest surviving intact American Shriners temple. Short was a member of several Masonic branches, including the Kismet Temple, as well as the Elks, in Brooklyn.
30. Information on the precinct numbers was supplied by John Reilly, retired policeman. NYC, Official Directory (1972-1978); NYC Police Dept., Official Roster (1993) and "New Precinct Station House Opens," Spring 3100 (July-Aug. 1969), 11.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the 23rd Police Precinct ("Tenderloin") Station House has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the 23rd Police Precinct Station House was erected in 1907-08 to the design of architect R. Thomas Short; that this station house served the legendary Tenderloin section of midtown Manhattan that was previously part of the 19th Precinct, one of the city's busiest, and that the police had been a presence on this block of West 30th Street since 1869; that the new station house was one of the first constructed in Manhattan for the Police Department following the Consolidation of Greater New York, at a time when many new municipal buildings were needed, and was one of the earliest in New York to solely employ automobile patrols; that the unusual Medieval Revival style of the building, more commonly associated with armories, resulted from a police commissioner's request for a building that "look[s] like a police station" and forcefully asserted the authority of the police; that among the building's prominent features are the light gray rusticated granite base arranged as simulated towers, the central automobile entrance with an arched Guastavino tile vault leading to the recessed doorway and central courtyard area beyond, and upper stories faced in buff ironspot Roman brick that terminate in a bold bracketed cornice and crenellated roof parapet; and that the building has remained in continuous use by the Police Department, more recently serving traffic control divisions.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the 23rd Police Precinct ("Tenderloin") Station House, 134-138 West 30th Street, Borough of Manhattan, and designates Manhattan Tax Map Block 805, Lot 82, as its Landmark Site.



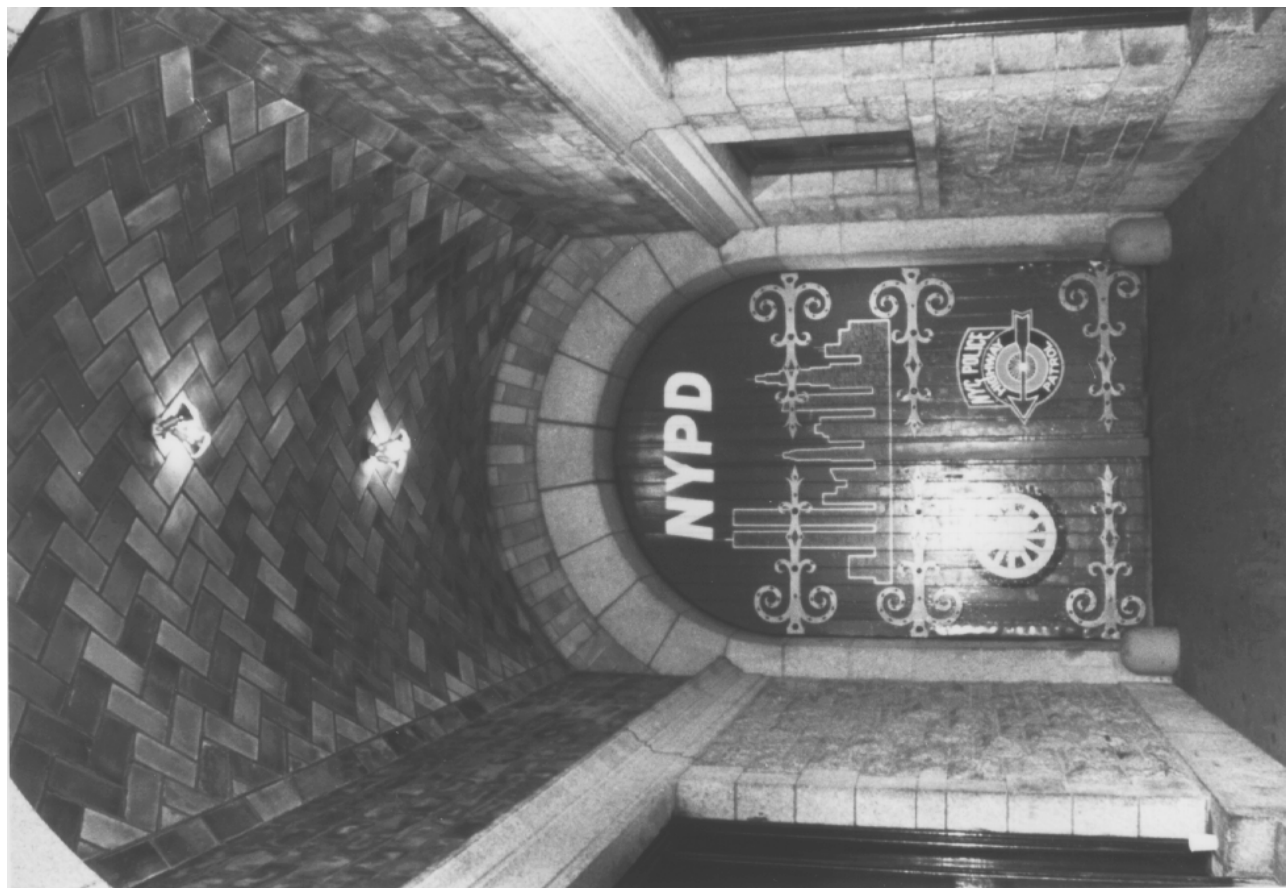
Electric patrol wagon in front of the 23rd Police Precinct ("Tenderloin") Station House
Source: New York Police Dept. Museum



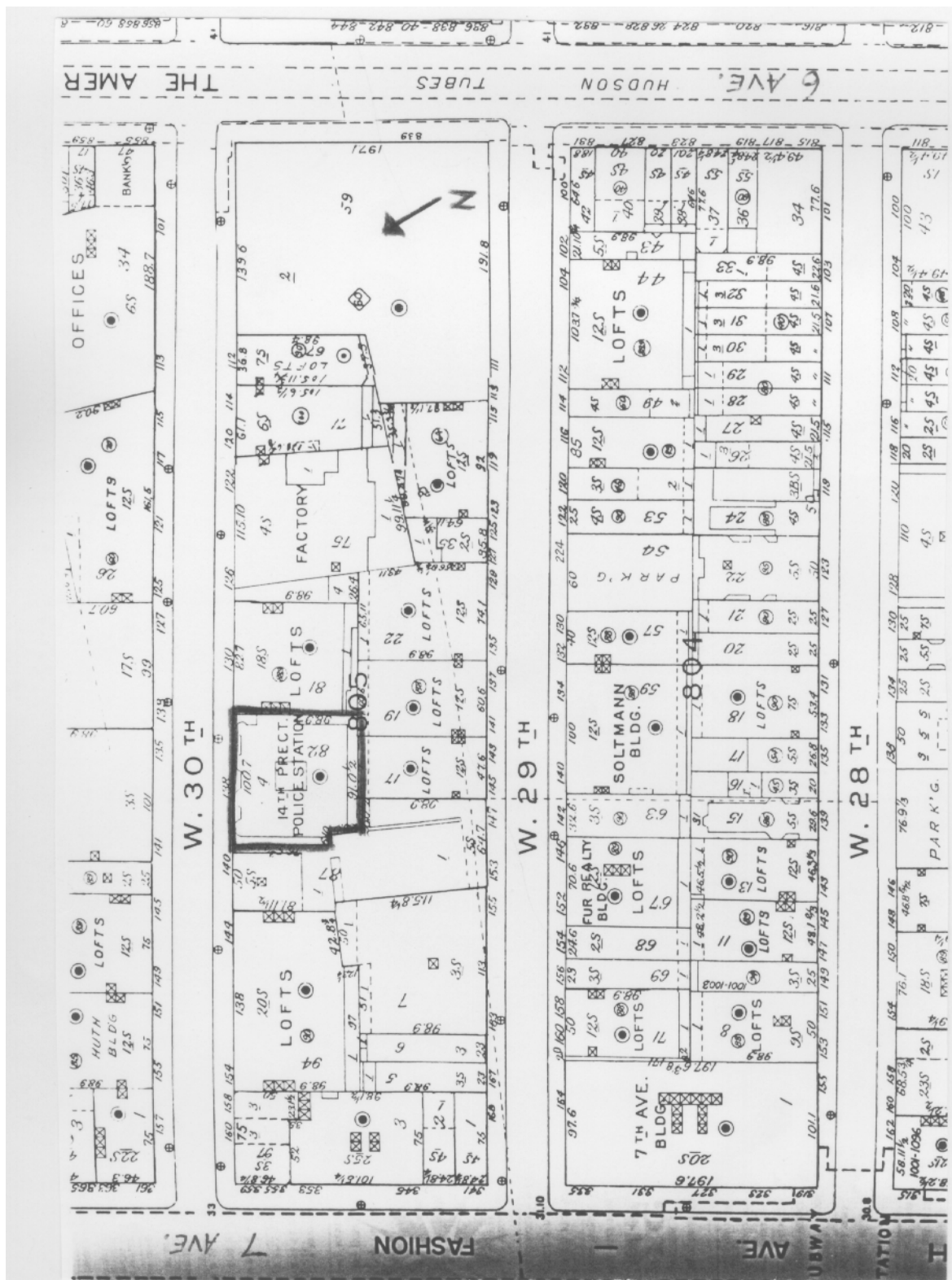
23rd Police Precinct ("Tenderloin") Station House, 134-138 West 30th Street
Photo: Carl Forster



23rd Police Precinct (“Tenderloin”) Station House, second-story balcony
Photo: Carl Forster



23rd Police Precinct (“Tenderloin”) Station House
 (upper) cornice and crenellated roof parapet detail; (lower) automobile entrance with Guastavino tile vault
Photos: Carl Forster



23rd Police Precinct ("Tenderloin") Station House, 134-138 West 30th Street
 Source: Sanborn, *Manhattan Land Book* (1997-98), pl. 55

