

The WILBRAHAM, 1 West 30th Street (aka 282-284 Fifth Avenue), Manhattan.
Built 1888-90; D[avid]. & J[ohn]. Jardine, architects.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 832, Lot 39.

On December 15, 1998, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Wilbraham and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (LP-2033)(Item No. 5). Two people spoke in favor of designation, including a representative of the Historic Districts Council. This building was reheard on May 18, 2004 (Item No. 1). Four people spoke in favor of designation, including representatives of State Senator Liz Krueger, the Historic Districts Council, and New York Landmarks Conservancy. Both hearings had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. In addition, the Commission has received several letters in support of designation, including those from Councilmember Christine C. Quinn, Community Board 5, the Metropolitan Chapter of the Victorian Society in America, and 29th Street Neighborhood Association.

Summary

The Wilbraham, built in 1888-90 as a bachelor apartment hotel, was commissioned by prominent Scottish-American jeweler William Moir as a real estate investment. It was designed by the versatile New York architectural firm of D. & J. Jardine, whose principals, David and John Jardine, were brothers and also of Scottish birth. Located at the northwest corner of Fifth Avenue and West 30th Street, the Wilbraham is eight stories high (plus basement and penthouse) and crowned by a mansard roof. Clad in a handsome combination of Philadelphia brick, Belleville brownstone, and cast iron, the Wilbraham is extraordinarily well-detailed and reflects the influence of the Romanesque Revival style in the rock-faced stonework and excellent, intricately carved stone detail. The *Real Estate Record & Guide* in 1890 called it “quite an imposing piece of architecture.” The building’s two-story shopfront housed the famous china and glassware importing firm of Gilman Collamore & Co. from 1890 to about 1920. The Wilbraham was constructed when this area was changing due to the inroads of commerce, but was still fashionable for clubs, theaters, apartments, and hotels. The bachelor apartment hotel, or “bachelor flats,” was a multiple dwelling building type that arose in the 1870s to serve the city’s very large population of single men. The Wilbraham catered to professional men of means. Each apartment contained a two-room suite with a bathroom but no kitchen; a residents’ dining room was provided on the eighth floor. In 1934-35, the apartments were remodeled to include kitchens, and the building ceased to operate solely as bachelor flats. The Wilbraham, an outstanding extant example of the bachelor apartment hotel building type, has remained in residential use.



DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Fifth Avenue, from 23rd to 34th Streets, in the 19th Century¹

By 1837, Fifth Avenue was extended north of 23rd Street to 42nd Street, and the surrounding land was sold as building lots. Madison Square, formerly part of “The Parade” and located on the east side of the avenue between 23rd and 26th Streets, was reserved as a park and opened in 1847. Gradually, New York’s elite moved “uptown” as they escaped the encroachment of commerce farther downtown, and Fifth Avenue in this area became the most fashionable address and home to the some of the city’s wealthiest individuals.² Most of the residences along the avenue were speculatively-built brownstones. Numerous churches also located in this vicinity.³

Amos R. Eno’s Fifth Avenue Hotel (1856-59, Griffith Thomas, with William Washburn; demolished 1908), at Fifth Avenue and 23rd Street across from Madison Square, was initially dubbed “Eno’s Folly” because it was built so far north. It soon became one of the most famous hotels in the city and spurred construction of other hotels west and northwest of Madison Square (particularly in the triangle formed by the intersection of Fifth Avenue with the diagonal of Broadway). This district contained the city’s best hotels,⁴ as well as men’s social clubs that followed their constituents uptown.⁵ Apartment houses and apartment hotels began to appear on the avenue in the early 1870s. In 1876, Delmonico’s, the well-known restaurant, moved to 212-214 Fifth Avenue (at 26th Street).⁶ By the 1870s, the theater district also relocated northward from Union Square to the Madison Square vicinity.⁷ Madison Square Garden, opened in 1879 at Madison Avenue and 26th Street and replaced with a new building (1889-91, McKim, Mead & White; demolished 1925), became one of the nation’s premiere theater and entertainment centers. The shopping area known as Ladies’ Mile developed to the south between 14th and 23rd Streets, with the great department stores along Sixth Avenue and retail shops extending east to and along Broadway. Fifth Avenue in the late 19th century was also at the eastern edge of the legendary and crime-ridden section of midtown Manhattan known as “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).⁸ Beginning in the 1880s, as commerce encroached and the exclusivity of the area faded, many prominent New York families moved farther up Fifth Avenue around Central Park.⁹

Hotels and apartment houses continued to be built in the vicinity. The Knickerbocker Apartments (1882-

84, Charles W. Clinton, demolished), 243-249 Fifth Avenue (at 28th Street), was a luxury building that included one floor of bachelor apartments. Holland House (1891, Harding & Gooch), 274-280 Fifth Avenue (at 30th Street), was for a brief period the most opulent and luxurious hotel in the city. This was surpassed by the Waldorf Hotel (1891-93, Henry J. Hardenbergh), expanded in 1895-97 as the Waldorf-Astoria, also by Hardenbergh (now demolished), which was on the site of the Astor residences.¹⁰ The Wilbraham evokes the history of this stretch of Fifth Avenue as a fashionable area of shops, theaters, clubs, and residences.

William Moir¹¹

The Wilbraham was built as a real estate investment for prominent jeweler William Moir (1826-1896), who resided at 6 West 20th Street. Born in Aberdeen, Scotland, Moir immigrated to New York City around 1840 and was apprenticed to watchmaker Alexander Martin. He later became a journeyman to jeweler Emmet T. Pell at 315 Hudson Street, and after Pell retired in 1844, purchased the business with his brother John Moir (d. 1895). J. & W. Moir ran a successful operation at that location for 25 years, until John’s withdrawal from the firm. In 1870, William Moir commissioned a five-story, cast-iron-clad structure (Theodore A. Tribit, architect) for his own business at No. 711 [originally 373] Sixth Avenue, at the southwest corner of West 23rd Street.¹² Moir’s business in 1872 included

*a fine selection of French clocks and bronzes, specially imported by him, and a yet larger stock of watches, native and foreign, jewelry, diamonds, and silver-plated ware. The diamond jewelry is noticeably good, and is all made on the premises.*¹³

At the time of his death, he was called “one of New York’s oldest and best known retail jewelers.”¹⁴ He was treasurer for 22 years of the First Presbyterian Church, 48 Fifth Avenue.¹⁵ His widow, Emily Hun Sexton Moir, dedicated a memorial window (c. 1910, designed by Tiffany Studios and containing Scottish references) in his honor in the church. Moir also served as a trustee of the Presbyterian Hospital and a director of the Greenwich Bank and Greenwich Savings Bank, and was a member of the Saint Andrew’s Society of the State of New York, for men of Scottish ancestry. He was buried in Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn.

Construction of the Wilbraham¹⁶

In April 1888, William Moir purchased, for \$245,000,¹⁷ a townhouse located at the northwest corner of Fifth Avenue and West 30th Street. Plans were filed in October 1888 by architects D. & J. Jardine for a six-story (plus basement) bachelor flats building on this site, to be fireproof, framed in iron, and clad in Philadelphia brick, Belleville (N.J.) brownstone, and cast iron, at an estimated cost of \$150,000. Construction began immediately, but plans were amended and approved in November 1888 to substitute steel for the proposed iron beams and girders.¹⁸ In December, Moir conveyed the property to his wife Emily. A rendering of the proposed six-story Wilbraham capped by a high balustrade parapet was published in January 1889 in *Building*. An amendment filed in June 1889, however, increased the height of the building two stories including a one-story mansard roof, so that the completed building was eight full stories. This increase in height reflected the maximum possible return that Moir could achieve on his investment. In 1885, a New York City law had been enacted to limit the height of all new residential construction to a height of 80 feet (six stories), but hotels and apartment hotels, including bachelor flats, were exempt because they were considered commercial properties.¹⁹ Another amendment filed in July 1889 added a penthouse to the roof of the Wilbraham, with three servants' rooms and a kitchen. The building was completed in May 1890. An alteration application was filed by the Jardine firm in October 1890 to add another two servants' rooms to the penthouse, which were completed in 1891; William Moir pleaded for these rooms in a letter to the Buildings Dept. because "in the carrying on of the work in the building they are a positive necessity."²⁰

A store has continually occupied the building's two-story base, with frontage on Fifth Avenue and two bays on West 30th Street. Each apartment in the Wilbraham contained two rooms -- a parlor and a bedroom -- and the floors were arranged so that it was possible to combine apartments together. Typical of apartment hotels, kitchens were not included in the apartments, instead a residents' dining room was provided on the eighth floor. The *Real Estate Record & Guide* called it "the most elegantly appointed among the bachelor apartment houses in New York City."²¹ The building was equipped with technological amenities, including the latest in plumbing and ventilation, a manually-operated Otis elevator, steam heating, both gas and electric lighting, and an internal communication system connected with the superintendent. Tenants were also provided the housekeeping services of a hotel.

The Architects: D. & J. Jardine²²

Born in Whithorn, Wigtownshire, Scotland, David Jardine (1830-1892) trained under his builder-architect father before immigrating to America around 1850. In New York City he established an architectural practice by 1855, then was a partner in Jardine & [Edward G.] Thompson in 1858-60. His brother, John Jardine (1838-1920), also born in Whithorn, immigrated to the United States and worked for the U.S. government during the Civil War in the design of monitors and gunboats. John moved to New York City, and in 1865 formed an architectural partnership with David. D. & J. Jardine, which lasted until David's death, was one of the more prominent, prolific, and versatile architectural firms in the city in the second half of the 19th century. George Elliott Jardine (1841-1902), another brother from Whithorn, began working for the firm around 1887. All three brothers were members of the Saint Andrew's Society of the State of New York (a possible source of their commission from Moir). A fourth member of the firm, from about 1886 to 1891, was Jay (Joseph) H. Van Norden.

D. & J. Jardine was active in rowhouse development in Greenwich Village and on the Upper East and Upper West Sides from the late-1860s through the mid-1880s. The firm achieved prominence for its designs, in a variety of contemporary styles, for religious structures, store-and-loft buildings, warehouses, office buildings, and apartment houses. D. & J. Jardine designed a number of notable cast-iron-fronted buildings, including: No. 319 Broadway ("Thomas Twin")²³ (1869-70); G. Rosenblatt & Bro. Buildings, 57 Walker Street (1870), and 734 Broadway (1872-73); Davies Building (1874-75), 678 Broadway; Jones Building (1875-76, demolished), 171-175 8th Avenue, for drygoods merchant Owen Jones; B. Altman & Co. Building (1876-80), 625-629 Sixth Avenue; No. 121 Mercer Street (originally owned by the New York Eye & Ear Infirmary) (1879);²⁴ and Baumann Brothers Furniture and Carpets Store (1880-81), 22-26 East 14th Street. Among the firm's other notable extant commissions are: the Fourth Reformed Presbyterian Church (1874), 359-365 West 48th Street; D.S. Hess & Co. Building (1880), 35-37 West 23rd Street; and the Castree-Halliday Buildings (1887), store-and-loft structures located at 13-17 Jay Street.²⁵ Aside from the Wilbraham, the firm's multiple-residential structures, few of which survive, included the Jardine Apartments (1872, demolished), 203-205 West 56th Street, one of New York City's earliest French flats buildings;²⁶ Clermont Apartments (1878, demolished), 1706-1708

Broadway; St. Marc Hotel (1880, demolished), 434 Fifth Avenue; Palermo Apartments (1882, demolished), 125 East 57th Street; Dundonald Flats (1885), 71 West 83rd Street;²⁷ and the Alpine (1886-87, demolished), bachelor flats at 1282-1286 Broadway.

David Jardine was called by the *American Architect & Building News* “one of the best known of the older generation of New York architects.”²⁸ After his death in 1892, John and George Jardine were joined by William W. Kent in the firm of Jardine, Kent & Jardine. In 1911, the firm became Jardine, Kent & [Clinton M.] Hill; its successor firm after 1913 was Jardine, Hill, & [Harris H.] Murdock. John Jardine committed suicide in 1920 at the age of 82. The firm continued as Jardine, Murdock, & Wright after 1936.

Design of the Wilbraham

The period of the 1880s in New York City was one of stylistic experimentation in which architects (including those of the various multiple dwelling building types), incorporated diverse influences, such as the Queen Anne, Victorian Gothic, Romanesque, Renaissance, and neo-Grec styles, French rationalism, and the German *Rundbogenstil*. The desire of architects and clients for originality, variety, and novelty was demonstrated, as well, by a freedom in design and materials. This was a period of interest in, and availability of, various types and colors of brick for exterior cladding. There was also great interest in the use of several materials in combination (such as brick, terra cotta, stone, and cast iron), both to achieve varied and picturesque effects of color, texture, and ornament, and to exploit their functional qualities.

The Wilbraham’s design reflects the influence of the Romanesque Revival style, which gained popularity in the 1880s due to the work of the distinguished Boston architect Henry Hobson Richardson. This influence is seen in the rock-faced stonework and arched openings, as well as the noteworthy, intricately carved, stone detail, particularly the residential entrance on West 30th Street. In this building, the Jardines freely interpreted the Romanesque Revival style, making creative use of its ornament while mixing it with classical references. The Wilbraham is extraordinarily well-detailed and employs a handsome combination of materials, colors, and textures -- the red Philadelphia brick, warm Belleville brownstone, and cast iron. The *Real Estate Record & Guide* in 1890 called the Wilbraham “certainly the ‘crack’ apartment house of its kind in New York City... quite an imposing piece of architecture.”²⁹

The Bachelor Apartment Hotel or “Bachelor Flats”³⁰

Throughout the 19th century, large numbers of New Yorkers lived in multiple residences, including converted dwellings and hotels, due (among other factors) to real estate conditions that made single-family residences prohibitive to all but the wealthy. The bachelor apartment hotel, or “bachelor flats,” was a variation on one of the purpose-built multiple dwelling building types that emerged in New York City in the early 1870s (and in such cities as Boston, Washington, and Chicago in the 1870s-80s). Though the contemporary terms were sometimes employed imprecisely, the building types came to be defined as follows: 1) the *apartment house* or *French flats* consisted of apartments with suites of rooms (including a bathroom and kitchen) for middle- and upper-middle-class residents (luxury apartment houses emerged after 1880); 2) the *apartment hotel* or *residential hotel* had apartments, for basically long-term residents, with suites of rooms (including a bathroom but no kitchen), while a dining room and other services were provided; and 3) the *hotel*, for transient visitors and long-term residents, had a variety of services, as well as a dining room open to the general public.

With the growth and industrialization of New York City in the 19th century, the work force consisted of very large numbers of unmarried men. The number of bachelors in the city ranged from 125,000 (about 13% of the total population) in 1870,³¹ to nearly 45 percent of the male population over the age of 15 in 1890.³² Howard Chudacoff, in a recent study on the “bachelor subculture in America” from 1880 to 1930, identified 1890 (the year of the Wilbraham’s completion) as the peak year in American history of the number of unmarried males over the age of 15 – nearly 42 percent was the national average.³³ He and other historians have noted a variety of contemporary social factors that contributed to these numbers of single men: the exclusion of women from most occupations; the greater number of male immigrants; postponement of marriage due to low income level; dissatisfaction with the institution of marriage; and the availability of alternatives, including socializing outside of marriage, the emergence of a gay male community, and the attractions of the heterosexual “sporting male culture.”³⁴

Housing options for middle-class unmarried men in New York were severely limited. As rowhouses and better hotels were expensive, bachelors were forced to find quarters in boarding or rooming houses (usually converted rowhouses) with less privacy or security, in less-than-desirable rooms in

cheaper hotels or apartment buildings, or in such facilities as clubs and YMCAs. It was observed in 1898 that “the bachelor was not considered to be entitled to much consideration; any old thing was good enough for him... Anyone who was old enough and had the means to marry and yet did not, was not thought to be entitled to anything better.”³⁵ The emergence of the apartment hotel provided an alternative that accommodated unmarried men along with couples, families, and widows, but this was considered awkward as single men were seen as threatening married couples and traditional gender roles. Chudacoff comments that:

*Americans have always revered and depended on the family as the chief institution for promoting citizenship and social order. They have celebrated family life as a basic stabilizing influence in society. Those who valued the family in this way considered individuals and groups living outside the family setting as outcasts, people handicapped by an inability to participate in wholesome social life. These individuals were said to be destabilizing influences...*³⁶

The acute need for apartment hotels specifically for bachelors in New York City was reported by architect Emlen T. Littell in a paper read before the annual convention of the American Institute of Architects and published in 1876. He called for the construction of “club chambers, arranged for the special use of bachelors, [in which they] would find a permanent and real *home*.”³⁷ In his proposal were characteristics that would become standard in bachelor flats: convenient location on a commercial avenue; storefront on the ground floor; apartments consisting of (at least) a bedroom, parlor, and bathroom; and floor plans in which parlors joined another so “that friends occupying adjacent chambers might, if so inclined, enjoy joint possession... [as well as] suites for those wishing to chum together permanently might consist of a larger parlor, two bedrooms, and a bathroom.”³⁸ Littell concluded that “of single men, young and old... there is nothing which would conduce more to their welfare than the erection of such buildings; and, further, that there are few investments in real estate which would so amply reward the proprietor.”³⁹

The first American apartment hotel is believed to have been the Hotel Pelham (1856-57, Alfred Stone of Arthur Gilman’s firm) in Boston. In New York City, the proliferation of French flats is usually traced to the success of the Stuyvesant Apartments (1869-70, Richard Morris Hunt; demolished), 142 East 18th Street, which attracted a “respectable” clientele, while

one of the city’s earliest apartment hotels was the Grosvenor House (1871-72, Detlef Lienau; demolished), 35-37 Fifth Avenue (at 10th Street). Stevens House (1870-72, Richard Morris Hunt; demolished), Broadway and 27th Street, was originally built with apartments (above ground-floor stores), but the building was remodeled and enlarged in 1873-74 (Arthur Gilman, architect) as an apartment hotel. It has been suggested that Stevens House also then became one of the first bachelor apartment hotels in New York.⁴⁰ The Panic of 1873 slowed the construction of apartment hotels until economic recovery occurred around 1879-80.

Among the early buildings built as bachelor flats were the Benedick (1879-80, McKim, Mead & Bigelow), 79-80 Washington Square East; the Percival (1882, McKim, Mead & White; demolished), 230 West 42nd Street; the Gorham Building (1883-84, Edward H. Kendall), 889-891 Broadway;⁴¹ and the Alpine (1886-87, D. & J. Jardine). Between 1880 and 1915, hundreds of bachelor apartment hotels were erected. The *Real Estate Record & Guide* in 1890 reflected that

*the bachelors’ apartment house is a product of our modern life. It is not a social fad, ready to disappear directly. It has ceased to be a novelty. It has come to stay, for it fills a gap in the life of every unmarried man who has become weary of the boarding house, the furnished room, or the hotel.*⁴²

Historian Paul Groth noted that the success of American residential hotels, including bachelor flats,

*made possible a cultured, civilized life for men without the aid of a woman... provid[ing] domestic care as well as, or better than, a woman could. In some cases, then, the maxim “What every man needs is a good woman,” became “What every man needs is a good hotel.”*⁴³

The *Record & Guide* commented in 1898 that bachelor flats “began to arise one after the other, and each later one surpassing its predecessor in elegance, comfort and convenience,”⁴⁴ and by 1905 noted that “such buildings are found for the most part along Fifth Avenue south of Central Park, and in the cross streets adjacent, on Broadway, and in some other choice locations” south to 23rd Street.⁴⁵ The Wilbraham was thus one of the earlier bachelor apartment hotels located in the midst of a district where such buildings would flourish prior to World War I. The Wilbraham catered to single professional men of means. The 1900 census listed eleven single male “boarders” at the Wilbraham, ranging in age

from 28 to 80: two lawyers, two treasurers, two company “secretaries,” a music professor, a drygoods clerk, a silk manufacturer, an architect, and an actor. The 1910 census counted fifteen tenants, aged from 26 to 68: four lawyers, three stockbrokers, two newspaper solicitors, a publisher, a real estate agent, a shopowner, a civil engineer, a clerk, and a treasurer; only one of these men had resided here at the previous census.

Gilman Collamore & Co.⁴⁶

Occupying the Wilbraham’s two-story shopfront (and basement) on Fifth Avenue upon its completion was Gilman Collamore & Co., famous dealers in expensive fine china, porcelain, pottery, glassware, and “bric-a-brac,” who specialized in high-quality imported French and English goods. Gilman Collamore (1834-1888), born in West Scituate, Mass., trained in the china importing firm of his uncle in Boston. Collamore moved to New York City in 1854 and worked in the same business with his brother Davis Collamore; he established a firm under his own name in 1861. An advertisement for his business at 731 Broadway in 1868 called it “importers and dealers in china, glass, silver-plated ware, &c.”⁴⁷ Prior to its move to the Wilbraham, the firm was located at 19 Union Square. After Collamore’s death, the company was run by John Joseph Gibbons (d. 1917). *King’s Handbook* remarked in 1893 that

*in houses of wealth and taste it seldom happens that there are not wares obtained through Collamore’s... A large part of its imported goods cannot be found in any other house in America... [which] has always maintained itself at the head of its line of trade by virtue of the artistic excellence of its goods.*⁴⁸

Gibbons purchased the Wilbraham from Emily Moir for one million dollars in 1908. Of the sale, the *Real Estate Record & Guide* stated that it

*shows the growing necessity of tenants on the avenue owning their own property in every case where it is possible. The supply is getting very limited, and as soon as the present inactivity is over investors will be climbing over each other to get choice avenue property.*⁴⁹

In the *New York Times*, Gibbons said he believed that Fifth Avenue would “continue to be the best for high-class retail trade.” The building, called by the *Times* “one of the first and finest bachelor apartment houses erected in the Fifth Avenue section,” was also to continue in that use.⁵⁰ Around 1920, a new building at 15 East 56th Street was constructed to house Gilman

Collamore & Co.

Fifth Avenue in the 20th Century⁵¹

After the turn of the century, Fifth Avenue between Madison Square and Central Park was largely transformed into a commercial thoroughfare. As the heyday of Ladies’ Mile ended, the section of Fifth Avenue north of 34th Street developed a high-end retail trade, with specialty shops catering to the upper class and selling such items as jewelry, perfume, and furs. The section of the avenue south of 34th Street developed as “the main artery of the new wholesale trade centre,”⁵² according to the *New York Times* in 1915. The theater district moved to Times Square, new grand hotels were built near Central Park, large department stores opened around Herald Square, and the vicinity of Madison Square was developed with office buildings. *Town & Country* commented in 1903 that “the brown-stone streets are blossoming out, here and there, with odd houses, all designed for business purposes. They break the monotonous line and make that part of the city a place of pleasant contrasts...”⁵³ It was estimated that by 1907 the avenue had seen a 250 percent increase in real estate values. In 1908, Fifth Avenue was widened to accommodate the increased commercial and automobile traffic. Many 19th-century residences were demolished, and those that remained were converted to commercial use or had their facades replaced. The new buildings were tall store-and-loft or office structures, some associated with the textile industry.⁵⁴ Many of the great hotels in the area were demolished and replaced by office structures retaining the original names.⁵⁵ Holland House was converted to an office building about 1925. The Waldorf-Astoria Hotel was torn down for the Empire State Building (1929-31, Shreve, Lamb & Harmon), then the tallest building in the world.⁵⁶

Later History of the Wilbraham⁵⁷

The Wilbraham was sold in 1927 by the John J. Gibbons estate to the 1 West 30 St. Corp.⁵⁸ A Manhattan directory in 1929 listed fifteen female and ten male residents,⁵⁹ though a Buildings Dept. application in 1930 still listed “bachelor apartments” as the use. The building was conveyed to the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. in 1934 due to unpaid taxes and a mortgage default. Architects Emery Roth and D. Everett Waid, with the firm of Bing & Bing, general contractors, made interior alterations in 1934-35, which included the creation of six apartments with kitchens on floors three through eight; creation of a second-story office; and extension of the penthouse for the creation of two

apartments. The *New York Times* reflected that “a striking illustration of the fact that Fifth Avenue south of Thirty-fourth Street has not entirely lost its charm as a residential neighborhood is presented in the recent renovation of the old Wilbraham apartment building.”⁶⁰ Metropolitan Life sold the property in 1944, and it has changed hands a number of times since. The Wilbraham has continually remained a residence, although its name was changed by 1984 to the Tiffany.

Description

The Wilbraham, located on the northwest corner of Fifth Avenue and West 30th Street, is eight stories high (plus basement and a rooftop penthouse). Clad in Philadelphia brick, Belleville (N.J.) brownstone, and cast iron, the building is articulated in a tripartite manner, with a two-story base, three-story midsection, and three-story upper section (including a one-story mansard roof), all separated by cornices. The facades are pierced by window groupings that are linked vertically. The Fifth Avenue facade is two bays wide, while the West 30th Street facade is seven bays with slight projections in the center and western end. A metal fire escape was added to this center section. The building retains its wood sash windows.

Base: Fifth Avenue The two-story base consists of two wide bays, separated by a monumental cast-iron Composite order half-round column set on a cast-iron pier (that has been covered with a veneer of polished granite). At each end of the base is a rusticated stone pier (consisting of bands of rock-faced stone alternating with smaller bands of delicate decorative carving) with a polished granite base/watertable and a carved capital with a foliate-and-head design. Each bay of the ground story originally had a display window with a transom and bulkhead, and an entrance door with a transom. There are now non-historic single-pane display windows (with rolldown gates), and non-historic double entrance doors with a transom in the southern bay; the storefront is surmounted by a non-historic projecting metal signband with large lettering. The ground floor is surmounted by cast-iron spandrel panels with dentils and a ribbon design that continues from the central column. The second story has paired one-over-one double-hung wood windows separated by cast-iron colonnettes. The base is capped by a cast-iron and stone cornice with dentils (this cornice originally held lettering for Gilman Collamore & Co.).

Base: West 30th Street [east to west]

The easternmost two bays are similar in treatment to the Fifth Avenue facade (minus entrances), and are a continuation of the ground-floor storefront. Both

display windows retain their original decorative iron framing and bulkhead/grille (now covered with wood). A non-historic projecting metal signband with large lettering, similar to that on Fifth Avenue, surmounts the storefront; both bays have rolldown gates.

The slightly projecting central two bays are clad in rock-faced stone with quoins above a high polished granite watertable. Wide round-arched openings are set into this section below smooth-finished and molded surrounds on the ground floor. The eastern bay originally had a basement entrance door surmounted by two windows set within the arch, and steps with iron railings; currently the portion below the stone spandrel panel has non-historic metal service doors, and a non-historic metal fan grille is placed within the arch. The western bay has non-historic entrance doors (to the storefront) with a transom, set below the round-arched transom. A canopy has been placed within this arch, and there is a rolldown gate. The second-story paired windows have a central column, transom, and outer colonnettes surmounted by carved stone ornamental brackets.

The next two bays to the west are similar in treatment to the storefront bays on each facade. The ground floor of the eastern bay is filled with masonry, a door, louvers, and a metal grille. The ground floor of the western bay is filled with masonry, glass block and several small windows, and is partly covered with a metal grille.

The westernmost bay has the main residential entrance to the building. Flanking the entry are paired squat piers with carved capitals, above a polished granite watertable/base, that support a decorative entablature, from which springs a round arch. The entry has a low stone platform and non-historic doors and a transom. The arch above the entrance has a transom (now covered) set below a smooth-finished, molded surround with a prominent foliate keystone and banderole with the carved inscription “WILBRAHAM.” The spandrels are ornamented with elaborate carving. A canopy is hung by cables over the entrance within the arch, and a non-historic light fixture is placed on the arched surround. The second story has a paired window similar to those on the center bays of the West 30th Street facade.

Midsection This section, clad in Philadelphia brick with stone trim, consists of the third through the fifth stories. The Fifth Avenue bays are tripartite, while those on West 30th Street are double. The window groupings are linked vertically by colossal decorative stone half-round columns, edge moldings/

colonnets surmounted by decorative carving, and keyed enframements. Original windows are single-pane wood sash with transoms (transoms on the fourth story are round-arched). Stone spandrel panels have ornate foliate carving. Additionally, there are small original windows located in the center bays and in the next two bays to the west on the West 30th Street facade. The section is capped by a smooth-finished stone cornice with voussoirs, keystones, and dentils.

Upper Section This section consists of the sixth through the eighth floors, the last a mansard roof. The Fifth Avenue bays are tripartite, while those on West 30th Street are double. Original windows are one-over-one double hung wood sash. The sixth-story windows are segmental, flanked by piers with corbels, and are surmounted by a stone cornice with voussoirs and corbels. The westernmost bay is capped by a pediment above the sixth story. The seventh-story windows are separated by rock-faced stone piers and are surmounted by a rock-faced band course. The top-story mansard roof, now covered in standing-seam copper but originally slate with cresting, has dormers with paired windows set on rock-faced bases, with decorative frames and shed roofs with eaves dec-

orated with egg-and-dart designs; and four tall brick-and-stone chimneys on the West 30th Street facade (each having projecting non-historic metal vents). A non-historic metal railing lines the roof, upon which there is a roof garden.

Penthouse The one-story penthouse (dating from 1890-91 and 1934-35), set back at the western half of the roof, is visible from the street.

West Wall The top two stories of the western wall (brick, partly painted), as well as the building's water tank, are visible above the adjacent building.

Report prepared by
JAY SHOCKLEY
Research Department

Research assistance
Glenn Modica, intern

NOTES

1. M. Christine Boyer, *Manhattan Manners: Architecture and Style, 1850-1990* (N.Y.: Rizzoli, 1985); Mosette Broderick, "Fifth Avenue," in Jan Cigliano and Sarah Bradford Landau, *The Grand American Avenue 1850-1900* (San Francisco: Pomegranate Artbooks, 1994); David Dunlap, *On Broadway: A Journey Uptown Over Time* (N.Y.: Rizzoli, 1990); Charles Lockwood, *Manhattan Moves Uptown: An Illustrated History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1976); Jerry E. Patterson, *Fifth Avenue: The Best Address* (N.Y.: Rizzoli, 1998); Kenneth T. Jackson, ed., *The Encyclopedia of New York City* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Pr., 1995); Timothy J. Gilfoyle, *City of Eros: New York City, Prostitution, and the Commercialization of Sex, 1790-1920* (N.Y.: W.W. Norton & Co., 1992).
2. William Backhouse Astor, Jr., and John Jacob Astor III erected residences at 350 Fifth Avenue (1856, unknown) at 34th Street, and 338 Fifth Avenue (1859, Griffith Thomas) at 33rd Street, now both demolished. A.T. Stewart followed with a marble mansion at the northwest corner of 34th Street (1864-69, John Kellum; demolished 1903).
3. These included the Church of the Transfiguration (1849-50, architect unknown), 1 East 29th Street; Trinity Chapel (1850-55, Richard Upjohn), 15 West 25th Street; and Marble Collegiate Church (1851-54, Samuel A. Warner), 272 Fifth Avenue (at 29th Street), all designated New York City Landmarks.
4. On Broadway were the Albemarle (1859-60, Renwick & Auchmuty, demolished) at No. 1101-1109 (at 24th Street); the St. James (1860-62, Thomas & Son; demolished 1896) at No. 1131-1137 (at 26th Street); Hoffman House (1864-65 and 1882-84, John B. Snook; demolished 1915) at No. 1113-1117 (at 25th Street); Grand Hotel (1868, Henry Engelbert) at No. 1232-1238 (at 31st Street), a designated New York City Landmark; Gilsey House (1869-71, Stephen D. Hatch) at No. 1200 (at 29th Street), a designated New York City Landmark; and the Victoria (1879, conversion of an apartment house of 1870-74, designed by Richard

- Morris Hunt and Arthur Gilman; demolished) at No. 1140-1154 (at 27th Street). On Fifth Avenue were the Brunswick (1871, demolished) at No. 225 (at 26th Street), and the Cambridge at No. 328-334 (at 33rd Street).
5. Clubs included the Union League Club (1868 to 1881), 39 Madison Avenue (at 26th Street); Knickerbocker Club (1872), 249 Fifth Avenue (at 28th Street) and (1882), 319 Fifth Avenue (at 32nd Street); New-York Club (1874 to 1888), 1 West 25th Street and (1888), 370 Fifth Avenue (at 35th Street); Racquet Court Club (1875-76, Alfred H. Thorp), 776-782 Sixth Avenue (at 26th Street); Calumet Club (1886), 267 Fifth Avenue (at 29th Street); Reform Club (1890), 233 Fifth Avenue (at 27th Street); Grolier Club (1889, Charles W. Romeyn), 29 East 32nd Street, a designated New York City Landmark; and the Manhattan Club (1890 to 1899), in the former A.T. Stewart mansion.
 6. This was the location of the Cafe Martin after 1899 (demolished c. 1912).
 7. The three blocks along Broadway between West 28th and 31st Streets boasted half a dozen theaters, including Daly's Fifth Avenue Theater (1873, demolished), 29-31 West 28th Street; Daly's Theater (1879 to 1899, demolished), No. 1221 (at 30th Street); and Wallack's (1882; demolished 1915), No. 1218-1224 (at 30th Street).
 8. For more on the Tenderloin, see: LPC, *23rd Police Precinct ("Tenderloin") Station House Designation Report* (LP-2019)(N.Y.: City of New York, 1998), prepared by Jay Shockley; and Gilfoyle.
 9. Many of their former residences on the avenue were taken over for commercial use, some with the ground floors converted into specialty shops, while others on the side streets were converted to brothels.
 10. Three other hotels were the Imperial (1889-96, McKim, Mead & White; demolished), 1242-1258 Broadway (at 32nd Street); the Martinique (1897-1911, Henry J. Hardenbergh), 1260 Broadway (at 32nd Street), a designated New York City Landmark; and the Wolcott (1902-04, John H. Duncan), 4-10 West 31st Street.
 11. Moir obit., *New York Times* (NYT), Mar. 22, 1896, 5, *New-York Daily Tribune* (NYDT), Mar. 23, 1896, 5, *The Scottish-American*, Mar. 25, 1896, 5, and *The Jewelers Circular*, Mar. 25, 1896, 23; William Moir Death Certificate No. 9807, Manhattan (Mar. 21, 1896); "William Moir's Charitable Bequests," NYT, Mar. 27, 1896, 1; "Gifts to Presbyterian Charities," NYDT, Mar. 27, 1896, 7; "Sale of Moir Property," NYDT, Aug. 1, 1896, 12; "Disposition of Moir Property," NYDT, Sept. 27, 1896, II, 1; "New York Scot Memorialized," *The Scottish-American*, Jan. 4, 1911, 5; Alexander L. Moir, *Moir Genealogy and Collateral Lines* (Lowell, Mass.: author, 1913), 181-182 and 312-315; [W. Moir Building], LPC, *Ladies' Mile Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1609)(N.Y.: City of New York, 1989), 399-401, and Margot Gayle and Edmund V. Gillon, Jr., *Cast-Iron Architecture in New York* (N.Y.: Dover Publ., 1974), 113; "Sale of an Important Corner in the Dry Goods District," NYT, Aug. 1, 1896, 12.
 12. This building is located within the Ladies' Mile Historic District.
 13. "Among the Jewelers," NYT, Dec. 20, 1872, 2.
 14. *Jewelers Circular*.
 15. The church (1844-46, Joseph C. Wells) is located within the Greenwich Village Historic District.
 16. NYC, Dept. of Buildings, Manhattan, Plans, Permits and Dockets (NB 1455-1888 and Alt. 1930-1890); New York County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances; Wilbraham rendering, *Building*, Jan. 19, 1889; "A Bachelors' Home on Fifth Avenue," *Real Estate Record & Guide* [REG], Sept. 6, 1890, 305-306; "The Wilbraham," REG, Sept. 13, 1890, 335.

17. *NYT*, Aug. 1, 1896.
18. NB application 1455-1888, amendment approved Nov. 14, 1888. Apparently iron columns were still used in the building. The Jardine firm had previously stated in the application on Oct. 23, 1888, that “we would submit that this building is to be erected in the most substantial manner and will be strictly fireproof.” A party wall of the adjacent building to the north was reinforced in order to be incorporated in the construction.
19. See: Sarah Bradford Landau and Carl W. Condit, *Rise of the New York Skyscraper 1865-1913* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Pr., 1996), 112-113.
20. Alt. application 1930-1890, letter dated Nov. 6, 1890.
21. Sept. 13, 1890.
22. LPC, architects files; 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); D. Jardine obit., *American Architect & Building News [AABN]*, June 18, 1892, 173; “John Jardine a Suicide,” *NYT*, June 24, 1920, 26; “D., J., and G. Jardine,” William M. MacBean, *Register of Saint Andrew’s Society of the State of New York 3* (N.Y.: S.A.S., 1923), 44-45 and 50; George A. Morrison, Jr., *History of the Saint Andrew’s Society of the State of New York 1756-1906* (N.Y.: S.A.S., 1906), 266; Record and Guide, *A History of Real Estate, Building and Architecture in New York City* (N.Y.: Arno Pr., 1967), reprint of 1898 edition, 685-689; Gayle and Gillon.
23. No. 317 Broadway was demolished in 1971.
24. 319 Broadway is a designated New York City Landmark. 57 Walker Street is located within the Tribeca East Historic District. 734 Broadway and 678 Broadway are located within the NoHo Historic District. B. Altman & Co. Building is located within the Ladies’ Mile Historic District. 121 Mercer Street is located within the SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District.
25. 35-37 West 23rd Street is located within the Ladies’ Mile Historic District. 13-17 Jay Street are located within the Tribeca West Historic District.
26. Record and Guide, 600.
27. 71 West 83rd Street is located within the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District.
28. June 18, 1892.
29. Sept. 6, 1890, 305.
30. E.T. Littell, “Club Chambers and Apartment Hotels,” *AABN*, Feb. 19, 1876, 59-60; “Apartment Hotels,” *REG*, Jan. 20, 1877, 42; “Apartment Houses IV,” *AABN*, Jan. 17, 1891, 39; “The Pierpont,” *REG*, Feb. 12, 1898, 283-284; “The Apartment Hotel,” *REG*, Aug. 12, 1899, 240; Charles H. Israels, “New York Apartment Houses,” *Architectural Record*, July 11, 1901, 481; “‘Apartment House’ and ‘Tenement House’,” *REG*, Mar. 21, 1903, 538; “Bachelor Apartment Houses,” *REG*, Jan. 21, 1905, 131-132; Elizabeth C. Cromley, *Alone Together: A History of New York’s Early Apartments* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Pr., 1990), 187-193; Howard P. Chudacoff, *The Age of the Bachelor: Creating an American Subculture* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Pr., 1999); Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America* (Cambridge: MIT Pr., 1981); Paul Groth, *Living Downtown: The History of Residential Hotels in the United States* (Berkeley: Univ. of Cal. Pr., 1994); Jefferson Williamson, *The American Hotel* (N.Y.: Arno Pr., 1975), 115-117; “Apartment Hotels,” in Robert A.M. Stern, Gregory

Gilmartin, and John Massengale, *New York 1900* (N.Y.: Rizzoli, 1983), 272, 275; Sarah B. Landau, "Richard Morris Hunt: Architectural Innovator and Father of a 'Distinctive' American School," in *The Architecture of Richard Morris Hunt*, Susan R. Stein, ed. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Pr., 1986), 61-66; Leland M. Roth, *McKim, Mead & White Architects* (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1983), 50-51; "[The Benedick] Bachelors as Artists in Residence," *NYT*, Apr. 27, 1997, IX, 7; "[The Percival] From School to Residences..." *NYT*, June 16, 1996, IX, 7; LPC, *Gorham Building Designation Report* (LP-1227)(N.Y.: City of New York, 1984), prepared by Lydia Latchinova; New York State Census (1900-10). For bachelor apartments in other cities, see: Douglass S. Tucci, *Built in Boston: City and Suburb 1800-1950* (Boston: N.Y. Graphic Soc., 1978), 104-106; James M. Goode, *Best Addresses: A Century of Washington's Distinguished Apartment Houses* (Washington: Smithsonian Inst., 1988); C.W. Westfall, "From Homes to Towers: A Century of Chicago's Best Hotels and Apartment Buildings," in *Chicago Architecture 1872-1922: Birth of a Metropolis*, John Zukowsky, ed. (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1987).

31. Cromley, 115.
32. United States Census (1890), cited in Chudacoff, 50.
33. Chudacoff, 247.
34. As defined by Timothy Gilfoyle, "sporting males," in opposition to "respectable" middle-class family virtues, glorified bachelorhood, male sexual freedom, prostitution, and male bonding through such activities as drinking and fighting.
35. "The Pierrepont," 283.
36. Chudacoff, 4. Historian Gwendolyn Wright similarly observed that the presence of unmarried women in hotels was even more controversial, "since it was considered a grave threat when women abandoned domesticity." Wright, 141.
37. Littel, 59.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid, 60.
40. Landau (Hunt), 76 (fn. 55). The Stevens House was renovated in 1879 into a transient hotel and renamed the Victoria.
41. The Gorham is a designated New York City Landmark.
42. Sept. 6, 1890, 305.
43. Groth, 211. George Chauncey, in his pioneering work *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (N.Y.: BasicBooks, 1994), 158, notes that "the increasing number and respectability of apartment houses and hotels helped make it possible for a middle-class gay male world to develop."
44. "The Pierrepont," 283.
45. *REG*, Jan. 21, 1905, 131. Three surviving bachelor flats buildings in the Madison Square North Historic District are: 8 West 28th Street (1888, Charles Romeyn & Co.); 26 West 27th Street (1900-01, Lorenz F.J. Weiher, Jr.); and 210 Fifth Avenue (1901-02, John B. Snook & Sons).

46. Moses King, *King's Handbook of New York* (Boston: M. King, 1893), 850; *New York City Directories* (1887-1921); G. Collamore obit., *NYT*, Mar. 16, 1888, 3; ["Davis Collamore"], *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* 7 (N.Y.: James T. White & Co., 1897), 47-48; D. Collamore obit., *NYDT*, Aug. 14, 1887, 5; "Artistic Pottery and China," *NYT*, Dec. 4, 1880, 8; "Rare China and Glass Ware," *NYT*, Jan. 1, 1886, 5; N.Y. County; Gibbons obit., *NYT*, Jan. 30, 1917, 9; "John Joseph Gibbons," Moses King, *King's Notable New Yorkers* (Boston: M. King, 1899), 529.
47. *NYT*, Sept. 23, 1868, 8.
48. *King's Handbook*.
49. "Million Dollar Sale on Fifth Avenue," *REG*, Jan. 4, 1908, 52.
50. "In the Real Estate Field," *NYT*, Jan. 3, 1908, 14.
51. Patterson; A.C. David, "The New Fifth Avenue," *Architectural Record* (July 1907), 1-14; "Evolution of a Fashionable Shopping Street," *REG*, July 15, 1911, 39-41; "Wholesale Trade Centring on Fifth Avenue, Just Below Choice Retail District," *NYT*, July 4, 1915, VII, 1; "\$8,000,000 Fifth Avenue Block Improvement...," *NYT*, Feb. 1, 1920.
52. July 4, 1915.
53. Quoted in Patterson, 76.
54. New structures included the Wills Building (1909, James B. Baker), 286-288 Fifth Avenue, adjacent to the Wilbraham, and the Textile Building (1920-21, Sommerfeld & Steckler), across the avenue at No. 295-299.
55. Among these were the St. James Building (1896-98, Bruce Price), the Brunswick (1906-07, Francis H. Kimball and Harry E. Donnell), and the Victoria (1912-15, Schwartz & Gross). These are included within the Madison Square North Historic District.
56. The Empire State Building is a designated New York City Landmark.
57. N.Y. County; NYC, Dept. of Buildings (Alt. 2709-1934); "5th Avenue Corner Sold By An Estate," *NYT*, June 8, 1927, 44; "Alter Apartment in Mid-Fifth Av.," *NYT*, Sept. 1, 1935, XI, 1; "Living Amid Office Buildings With A Legend of Lillian Russell," *NYT*, May 18, 1968, 22. [Rumors have abounded by long-time residents that Diamond Jim Brady and Lillian Russell kept a suite at the Wilbraham; this cannot be substantiated].
58. The storefront was leased to Emerald Chocolates, Inc.
59. One noted tenant around this time was stage actor Wilton Lackaye (1862-1932), who had begun performing in New York in 1883 and had triumphed in the role of Svengali in "Trilby" (1894). "Wilton Lackaye," *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* 3 (N.Y.: James T. White & Co., 1893), 516-517.
60. Sept. 1, 1935.

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 Wilbraham 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 Wilbraham, commissioned by prominent Scottish-American jeweler William Moir as a real estate investment, was built in 1888-90 as a bachelor apartment hotel; that it was designed by the versatile New York architectural firm of D[avid]. & J[ohn]. Jardine, brothers and also of Scottish birth; that at eight stories (plus basement and penthouse) and crowned by a mansard roof, the Wilbraham is clad in a handsome combination of Philadelphia brick, Belleville brownstone, and cast iron; that the building is extraordinarily well-detailed and reflects the influence of the Romanesque Revival style in the rock-faced stonework and excellent, intricately carved stone detail, the *Real Estate Record & Guide* in 1890 calling it “quite an imposing piece of architecture;” that the two-story shopfront on Fifth Avenue housed the famous china and glassware importing firm of Gilman Collamore & Co. from 1890 to about 1920; that the Wilbraham was constructed at a time when the area of Fifth Avenue and Broadway north of 23rd Street was changing due to the inroads of commerce but was still fashionable for clubs, theaters, apartments, and hotels; that the Wilbraham, which catered to professional men of means, is an outstanding extant example of a bachelor apartment hotel, or “bachelor flats,” a multiple dwelling building type that arose in the 1870s to serve the city’s very large population of single men; and that the Wilbraham has continually remained in residential use.

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 Wilbraham, 1 West 30th Street (aka 282-284 Fifth Avenue), Borough of Manhattan, and designates Manhattan Tax Map Block 832, Lot 39, as its Landmark Site.



The Wilbraham, rendering

Source: *Real Estate Record & Guide*, Sept. 13, 1890



The Wilbraham, 1 West 30th Street (aka 282-284 Fifth Avenue)

Photo: Carl Forster



The Wilbraham, Fifth Avenue facade

Photo: Carl Forster



The Wilbraham, Fifth Avenue façade, detail of third through fifth stories

Photo: Carl Forster



The Wilbraham, Fifth Avenue façade upper section

Photo: Carl Forster



The Wilbraham, upper section

Photo: Carl Forster



The Wilbraham, spandrel details

Photo: Carl Forster



The Wilbraham, West 30th Street entrance

Photo: Carl Forster





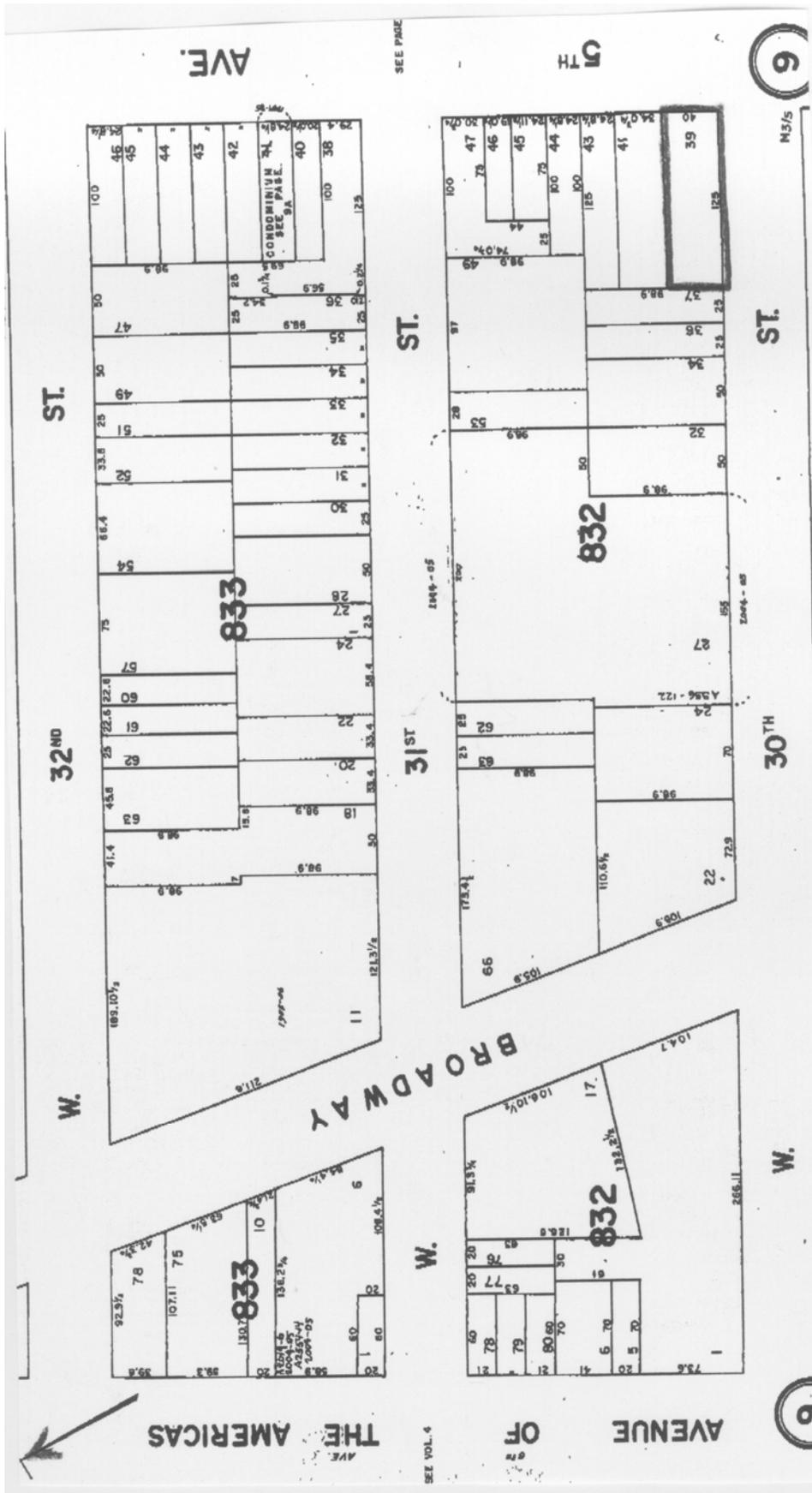
The Wilbraham, pier carving details

Photo: Carl Forster



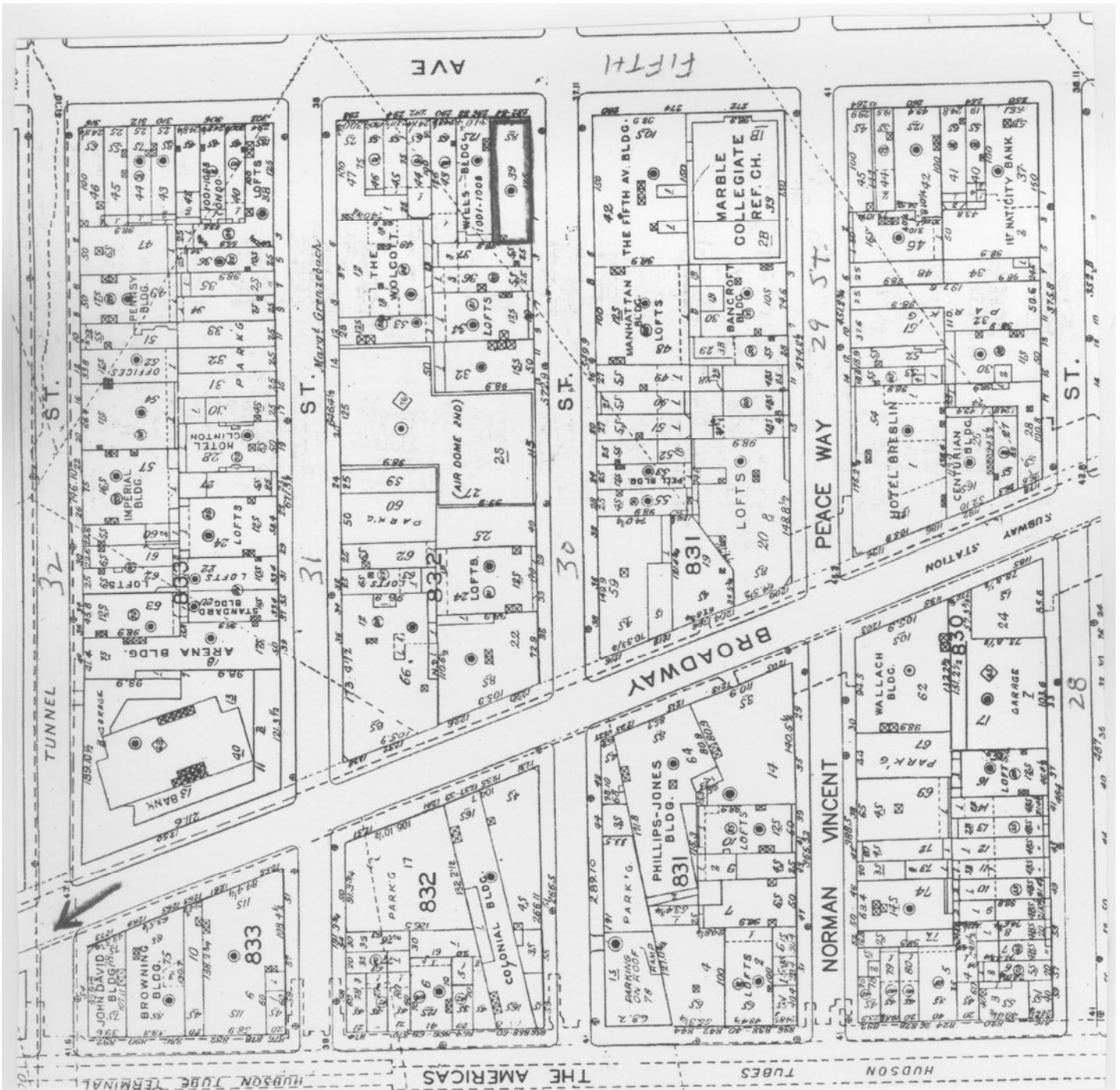
The Wilbraham, cast-iron column detail

Photo: Carl Forster



The Wilbraham

Landmark Site: Manhattan Tax Map Block 832, Lot 39
 Source: Dept of Finance, City Surveyor, Tax Map



The Wilbraham

Source: Sanborn, *Manhattan Land Book* (2003-2004), pl. 55