

HAMILTON-HOLLY HOUSE, 4 St. Mark's Place, Manhattan. Built 1831.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 463, Lot 11.

On May 18, 2004, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Hamilton-Holly 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. Ten people spoke in favor of designation, including representatives of State Senator Thomas K. Duane, State Assemblymember Deborah J. Glick, City Councilmember Margarita Lopez, the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, Historic Districts Council, and New York Landmarks Conservancy. One of the building's owners appeared at the hearing, but took no position in regard to designation. In addition, the Commission received a letter in support of designation from the Municipal Art Society.

Summary

The large town house at 4 St. Mark's Place in the East Village section of Manhattan was constructed in 1831 in the Federal style, characterized and made notable by its unusual 26-foot width and 3-1/2-story height, Flemish bond brickwork, high stoop, long parlor-floor windows, Gibbs surround entrance with triple keystone and vermiculated blocks, white marble base with openings also with Gibbs surrounds, molded pediment lintels, peaked roof, and double segmental dormers. The entire block of St. Mark's Place (East 8th Street) between Third and Second Avenues was built by English-born real estate developer Thomas E. Davis, who sold this house in 1833 to Col. Alexander Hamilton, son of the late first U.S. Secretary of the Treasury. This was the home during the next nine years of Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton, the senior Hamilton's widow; her daughter, Eliza Hamilton Holly, and her husband Sidney; and Col. Hamilton and his wife Eliza. In 1843-49, it was the home of Isaac C. Van Wyck and his son Cornelius, oil and candle merchants; the Van Wyck family retained ownership until 1863. By the 1850s, houses on this formerly fashionable block were no longer single-family dwellings. No. 4 was owned from 1863 to 1903 by butter merchant John W. Miller; in the 1860s, a large two-story rear addition was built with a first-story meeting hall. From 1901 to 1952, the house was owned and used in part by the musical instruments firm of C. Meisel, Inc. The building had a significant and colorful theatrical history from 1955 to 1967, reflecting its location on St. Mark's Place during the cultural ascendancy of the East Village. Among other



uses, it was the Tempo Playhouse, New Bowery Theater, and Bridge Theater, noted venues for experimental theater, contemporary music and dance, and early underground films. Despite the loss of some architectural details, the Hamilton-Holly House is among the rare surviving and significantly intact large Manhattan town houses of the Federal style, period, and 3-1/2-story, dormered peaked-roof type.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The Development of the Greater Washington Square Neighborhood¹

The area of today's Greenwich Village was, during the 18th century, the location of the small rural hamlet of Greenwich, as well as the country seats and summer homes of wealthy downtown aristocrats, merchants, and capitalists. A number of cholera and yellow fever epidemics in lower Manhattan between 1799 and 1822 led to an influx of settlers in the Greenwich area, with the population quadrupling between 1825 and 1840.² Previously undeveloped tracts of land were speculatively subdivided for the construction of town houses and rowhouses. Whereas in the early 19th century many of the wealthiest New Yorkers lived in the vicinity of Broadway and the side streets adjacent to City Hall Park between Barclay and Chambers Streets, by the 1820s and 30s, as commercial development and congestion increasingly disrupted and displaced them, the elite moved northward into Greenwich Village east of Sixth Avenue. For a brief period beginning in the 1820s-30s, Lafayette Place, including the grand marble Greek Revival style LaGrange Terrace (1832-33, attributed to Seth Geer),³ St. Mark's Place, and Bond, Great Jones, East 4th and Bleecker Streets were among the most fashionable addresses, the latter developed with three block-long rows of houses in 1827-31.

A potter's field, located north of 4th Street below Fifth Avenue since 1797, was converted into Washington Military Parade Ground and expanded (to nearly nine acres) in 1826 and landscaped as Washington Square in 1828. This public square spurred the construction of fine houses surrounding it, beginning with a uniform row of twelve 3-1/2-story Federal style houses (1826-27) on Washington Square South (4th Street), between Thompson and MacDougal Streets, by Col. James B. Murray and others. On Washington Square North, west of Fifth Avenue, Federal and Greek Revival style town houses were built between 1828 and 1839, while east of Fifth Avenue, "The Row" of thirteen large Greek Revival style town houses was developed in 1832-33 by downtown merchants and bankers who leased the properties from the Trustees of Sailors Snug Harbor. The University of the City of New York (later New York University) constructed its first structure, the Gothic Revival style University Building (1833-36, Town, Davis & Dakin), on the east side of the Square.

In 1832, the Common Council created the 15th Ward out of the eastern section of the large 9th Ward, its boundaries being Sixth Avenue, Houston and 14th Streets, and the East River. According to Luther Harris' recent history *Around Washington Square*, during the 1830s-40s "this ward drew the wealthiest, most influential, and most talented people from New York City and elsewhere. By 1845, 85 percent of the richest citizens living in the city's northern wards resided in the Fifteenth."⁴ Fifth Avenue, extended north of Washington Square to 23rd Street in 1829, emerged as the city's most prestigious address. To the east, lower Second Avenue and adjacent side streets also became fashionable from the 1830s through the 1850s.

Thomas E. Davis and St. Mark's Place⁵

Both sides of the block of St. Mark's Place (East 8th Street) between Third and Second Avenues were built by speculative real estate developer Thomas E. Davis. Born c. 1795 in England, Davis immigrated to New Brunswick, N.J., where he worked briefly as a distiller. In 1830, he relocated to New York City and began to acquire real estate. Once part of Peter Stuyvesant's Bowery farm, East 8th Street was opened by the city in 1826, preceded by Third and Second Avenues in this vicinity in 1812 and 1816. St. Mark's Place extended the three blocks between Third Avenue and Avenue A (Tompkins Square). On the westernmost block of St. Mark's Place owned by Davis, he allocated the lots more generously than the Manhattan norm, each lot having a width of 26 feet and a length of 120 feet (rather than 100 feet). Grand 3-1/2-story Federal style marble-and-brick-clad town houses with balconies were constructed here in 1831.⁶ In February 1832, Davis sold No. 4 St. Mark's Place and three adjacent houses for \$56,000 to merchant Samuel David Rogers and his wife, Frances, but these properties reverted eight months later, for \$46,000, to Davis.

Also in 1831, Davis developed Carroll Place, both sides of Bleecker Street between Thompson Street and LaGuardia Place, with Federal style houses.⁷ He obtained the backing of the J.L. & S. Josephs & Co. Bank, which represented the interests of the Rothschild family in the U.S. from 1833 to 1837. In the early 1830s, Davis became involved with the Stuyvesant family in the development of the former Bowery farm to the north of St. Mark's Place as an elite residential neighborhood. Davis acquired a major portion of the Staten Island real estate holdings of the late Governor Daniel Tompkins at a sheriff's sale in 1834, and continued to amass property along the island's northern shore. Plans were made to develop this property into a summer retreat to be named New Brighton, and five Greek Revival style residences were built along Richmond Terrace in 1835; Davis' own mansion became the nucleus of the Pavilion Hotel (1836, John Haviland). In 1836, Davis conveyed New Brighton to a syndicate of five

New York businessmen for the then astronomical sum of \$600,000. Davis also became involved with a group of New York investors in a failed scheme, chartered as the New Washington Association in 1835, to build a town at the head of Galveston Bay in Texas. According to Luther Harris, “in an 1840 auction following the Panic of 1837, Davis picked up over 400 lots on Fifth Avenue blocks north of Twentieth Street, for a few hundred dollars each, with plans to erect elegant residences there.”⁸ His real estate was listed in the 1860 census as worth \$1.5 million.⁹

Federal Style Rowhouses in Manhattan¹⁰

As the city of New York grew in the period after the Revolution, large plots of land in Manhattan were sold and subdivided for the construction of groups of brick-clad houses. Their architectural style has been called “Federal” after the new republic, but in form and detail they continued the Georgian style of Great Britain. Federal style houses were constructed from the Battery as far north as 23rd Street between the 1790s and 1830s. The size of the lot dictated the size of the house: typically each house lot was 20 or 25 feet wide by 90 to 100 feet deep, which accorded with the rectilinear plan of New York City, laid out in 1807 and adopted as the Commissioners’ Plan in 1811. The rowhouse itself would be as wide as the lot, and 35 to 40 feet deep. This allowed for a stoop and small front yard or areaway, and a fairly spacious rear yard, which usually contained a buried cistern to collect fresh water and the privy. During the early 19th century, several houses were often constructed together, sharing common party walls, chimneys, and roof timbering to form a continuous group. The houses were of load-bearing masonry construction or modified timber-frame construction with brick-clad front facades. With shared structural framing and party walls, each house in a row was dependent on its neighbor for structural stability. With the increasing availability of pattern books, such as Asher Benjamin’s *American Builders Companion* (published in six editions between 1806 and 1827), local builders had access to drawings and instructions for exterior and interior plans and details.

Federal style rowhouses usually had a three-bay facade with two full stories over a high basement and an additional half story under a peaked roof with the ridge line running parallel to the front facade. Very modest houses could be two bays wide, while grander town houses had three full stories, and could be up to five bays wide. The front (and sometimes rear) facade was usually clad in red brick laid in the Flemish bond pattern, which alternated a stretcher and a header in every row. This system allowed the linking of the more expensive face brick with the cheaper, rougher brick behind. Walls were usually two “wythes,” or eight inches, thick. Because brick was fabricated by hand in molds (rather than by machine), it was relatively porous. To protect the brick surface and slow water penetration, facades were often painted.

The planar quality of Federal style facades was relieved by ornament in the form of lintels, entrances, stoops with iron railings, cornices, and dormers. Doorway and window lintels, seen in a variety of types (flat, incised or molded), were commonly brownstone. The most ornamental feature was the doorway, often framed with columns and sidelights and topped with a rectangular transom or fanlight, and having a single wooden paneled door. Some grander, later houses, like the Hamilton-Holly House, had large round-arched entrances with Gibbs surrounds. The entrance was approached by a stoop – a flight of brownstone steps placed to one side of the facade – on the parlor floor above a basement level. Wrought-iron railings with finials lined the stoop and enclosed areaways. Window openings at the parlor and second stories were usually the same height (the size sometimes diminished on the third story) and were aligned and the same width from story to story. The wood-framed sash were double hung and multi-light (typically six-over-six). Shutters were common on the exterior. A wooden cornice with a molded fascia extended across the front along the eave, which carried a built-in gutter. A leader head and downspout that drained onto the sidewalk extended down the facade on the opposite side from the doorway. Pedimented or segmental dormers on the front roof slope usually had decorative wood trim, and the top sash were often arched with decorative muntins. The roof was covered with continuous wood sheathing over the rafters and clad in slate.

The original design of the Hamilton-Holly House was characteristic of the Federal style in its Flemish bond brickwork, high stoop with wrought-ironwork, ornamented entrance, molded pediment stone lintels, molded and modillioned cornice, peaked roof, and segmental double dormers. It is made particularly notable as a grand town house by its 26-foot width, 3-1/2-story height, and long parlor-story windows (which originally opened onto a balcony), round-arched Gibbs surround entrance with triple keystone, vermiculated blocks, and fanlight, and white marble base with openings also with Gibbs surrounds. Surviving houses of this period with entrances with Gibbs surrounds are rare.¹¹ Despite the loss of the cornice and some other architectural details, the Hamilton-Holly House

is also among the rare surviving and significantly intact Manhattan town houses of the Federal style, period, and 3-1/2-story, dormered peaked-roof type (dating from 1803 to 1832).¹²

The Hamilton-Holly House¹³

In November 1833, the No. 4 St. Mark's Place house was purchased from Thomas E. Davis for \$15,500 by Col. Alexander Hamilton, son of the late Alexander Hamilton, the first U.S. Secretary of the Treasury.¹⁴ This was the home during the next nine years (until 1842) of the Hamilton and Holly families, including (according to city directories) variously, Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton, the senior Hamilton's widow; her daughter, Eliza Hamilton Holly, and her husband, Sidney Augustus Holly; and Col. Hamilton and his wife, Eliza P. Knox Hamilton.

After Alexander Hamilton's death in 1804 in a duel with Aaron Burr, Eliza S. Hamilton (1757-1854) was left nearly destitute to raise their seven children -- the youngest was only two -- by herself. Born in Albany, she was the second daughter of the wealthy and aristocratic Gen. Philip and Catherine Van Rensselaer Schuyler. Her father's death just four months after her husband's provided her with a modest inheritance of money and property, but she lived the next five decades on modest means, relying on friends (who organized a secret subscription fund to cancel Hamilton's debts) and family, also petitioning the government for her husband's pension and other benefits. Most of Alexander Hamilton's substantial debt had accrued with the purchase of a 35-acre Harlem summer estate property, its landscaping, and the construction of a house, The Grange (1801-02, John McComb, Jr.).¹⁵ Realizing that Eliza could not be publicly dispossessed of The Grange, Hamilton's executors purchased the home and sold it to her at half price. She retained the property until November 1833, when it was sold for \$25,000 to Thomas E. Davis, at the time of the Hamiltons' purchase from Davis of No. 4 St. Mark's Place.

According to Ron Chernow, author of *Alexander Hamilton*, a recent biography,

*Because Eliza Hamilton tried to erase herself from her husband's story, she has languished in virtually complete historical obscurity. ... In fact, she was a woman of towering strength and integrity who consecrated much of her extended widowhood to serving widows, orphans, and poor children. On March 16, 1806, less than two years after the duel, Eliza and other evangelical women cofounded the New York Orphan Asylum Society, the first private orphanage in New York.*¹⁶

She served as second directress, and then from 1821 to 1848 as first directress, of the Society.

Col. Hamilton (1786-1875), the eldest living son, graduated from Columbia College in 1804 and became a lawyer, later serving in the Duke of Wellington's army and as a U.S. infantry captain in the War of 1812. He married Eliza P. Knox in 1817. In 1822, he became a U.S. district attorney in Florida, and was appointed land commissioner of eastern Florida by President Monroe in 1823. Upon his return to New York, he became involved in real estate. Eliza Hamilton Holly (1799-1859), the youngest Hamilton daughter and wife of merchant Sidney Augustus Holly (died c. 1842), became her mother's primary caretaker in her later years. Neither sibling had children.

In 1841, the Washington Marine (later Washington Mutual) Insurance Co. foreclosed on No. 4 St. Mark's Place, though the Hamiltons and Hollys appeared in the 1842-43 city directory as still living here. In 1843-45, Eliza Hamilton and Eliza Holly (now a widow) lived at No. 63 Prince Street; they moved to Washington, D.C., where Eliza Hamilton survived to the age of 97.

From 1843 to 1849, No. 4 St. Mark's Place was the home of Isaac C. Van Wyck and his son, Cornelius I. Van Wyck, oil and candle merchants in the firm of Isaac C. Van Wyck & Son. It appears that it became a boardinghouse right after their residency. The Van Wyck family retained ownership of the house until 1863.

The St. Mark's Place Neighborhood and Hamilton-Holly House in the Late 19th Century¹⁷

Commercial and institutional intrusions and the arrival of immigrants ended St. Mark's Place's fashionable heyday before the Civil War. In the 1850s, Broadway north of Houston Street was transformed from a residential into a significant commercial district. Also beginning in the 1850s, the Lower East Side (the area bounded roughly by 14th Street, the East River, the Bowery/Third Avenue, and Catherine Street) became known as *Kleindeutschland* ("Little Germany") due to the huge influx of German-speaking immigrants. Aside from their presence as residents, these immigrants contributed in significant ways to the vibrant commercial and cultural life of the neighborhood and the city at large. By 1880, this neighborhood constituted one-fourth of the city's population and was the leading German-American center in the U.S. A massive exodus of Jews from Eastern Europe from the 1880s to World War I led to approximately two million Jewish immigrants settling in New York; most lived for a time on the Lower East Side, establishing their own cultural and religious institutions here.

This block of St. Mark's Place also began to change in the 1850s, as the former residents moved northward and their single-family residences were converted into multiple dwellings or boardinghouses, as well as other uses, such as clubs or community cultural institutions.¹⁸ Hastening the change in the residential character of St. Mark's Place, a wide variety of major cultural, religious, commercial, and educational institutions located nearby in the mid- to late-19th century, including Cooper Union (1853-58, Frederick A. Petersen), Astor Place and Third Avenue; and Tompkins Market/ 7th Regiment Armory (1855-60, James Bogardus and Marshall Lefferts; demolished), Third Avenue and East 7th Street. The New York Free Circulating Library, Ottendorfer Branch, and German Dispensary (1883-84, William Schickel), 135 and 137 Second Avenue, among others, catered to the German community.¹⁹ The Third Avenue elevated railroad opened in 1878. Most of the Federal style houses on this block of St. Mark's Place were demolished for denser development with French flats and tenements between 1874 and 1902.²⁰

From 1863 to 1903, the former Hamilton-Holly House was owned by John W. Miller (died c. 1896) and his estate. Miller, a butter merchant in the firm of John W. Miller & Bro. at the Washington Market, resided around the block at No. 41 East 7th Street. A two-story, nearly 53-foot rear addition to the Hamilton-Holly House was built c. 1865-66 in the large rear yard.²¹ Apparently, a first-story interior hall was created at this time. According to *New York Times* advertisements in 1874, it appears to have been a rental meeting hall; in 1880, Republicans of the 14th Assembly District met here. The upper stories became apartments, and a fire escape was installed on the front facade. In 1896-99, a commercial tenant was Central Art Studio (Emil Heyman, proprietor) for commercial photographs and crayon portraits. John W. Miller's will was probated in 1896, at which time his estate was worth \$250,000 plus an additional \$35,000 in real estate. No. 4 St. Mark's Place was placed at auction in 1903 (along with Miller's other properties on this block: Nos. 16 and 20 St. Mark's Place and Nos. 19-27 and 41 East 7th Street).²²

20th Century History of Greenwich Village and the East Village²³

After a period of decline, Greenwich Village was becoming known, prior to World War I, for its historic and picturesque qualities, its affordable housing, and the diversity of its population and social and political ideas. Many artists and writers, as well as tourists, were attracted to the Village. At the same time, as observed by museum curator Jan S. Ramirez,

*As early as 1914 a committee of Village property owners, merchants, social workers, and realtors had embarked on a campaign to combat the scruffy image the local bohemian populace had created for the community. ... Under the banner of the Greenwich Village Improvement Society and the Greenwich Village Rebuilding Corporation, this alliance of residents and businesses also rallied to arrest the district's physical deterioration... their ultimate purpose was to reinstate higher-income-level families and young professionals in the Village to stimulate its economy. Shrewd realtors began to amass their holdings of dilapidated housing.*²⁴

These various factors and the increased desirability of the Village lead to a real estate boom – “rents increased during the 1920s by 140 percent and in some cases by as much as 300 percent.”²⁵ According to Luther Harris

*From the 1920s through the 1940s, the population of the Washington Square district changed dramatically. Although a group of New York's elite remained until the 1930s, and some even later, most of their single-family homes were subdivided into flats, and most of the new apartment houses were designed with much smaller one- and two-bedroom units. New residents were mainly upper-middle-class, professional people, including many young married couples. They enjoyed the convenient location and Village atmosphere with its informality, its cultural heritage, and, for some, its bohemian associations.*²⁶

Older rowhouses were remodeled to attract a more affluent clientele or as artists studios.

New York University, particularly after World War II, became a major institutional presence around Washington Square.²⁷ Vanderbilt Hall (1950), the main building of the Law School, at the southwest corner of the Square at MacDougal Street, was the vanguard of the university's expansion and new construction to the south. During the 1950s, the area south of Washington Square, to Houston Street, was also targeted for urban renewal. The surviving historic streets to the west became particularly popular for coffee houses, restaurants, and clubs.

The residential and cultural desirability of the “East Village” increased with the removal of the Third Avenue El in 1955. As indicated by Terry Miller,

*the psychological barrier that had marked the eastern boundary of Greenwich Village was gone. Blocks that once had no prestige were suddenly seen as intriguing, and apartments here were less costly than those in Greenwich Village. ... As artists and writers moved east, the blocks from St. Mark's Place to Tenth Street were the first to hint that the Lower East Side was being transformed. Realtors began marketing the area as "Village East," and by 1961 as the "East Village," a name that stuck.*²⁸

In the 1950s, the East Village became home to a number of key Beat Generation writers, including Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs, Norman Mailer, and W.H. Auden. The neighborhood was renowned for its protest art and politics, galleries, poetry and coffee houses, bookstores, clubs, and the *East Village Other* "underground" newspaper (1965-72).

From World War I to the 1940s, Second Avenue between East 14th and Houston Streets had been considered the heart of New York's Jewish community, known as the "Yiddish Rialto" for its role as the world's center of Yiddish theater. As Yiddish theater declined, the East Village gave rise in the 1950s to off-Broadway theater, including the Phoenix Theater (1953-61) in the former Louis N. Jaffe Art Theater (Yiddish Art Theater) building, 181-189 Second Avenue;²⁹ the Orpheum Theater (1958), 126 Second Avenue; and Ellen Stewart's La Mama Theatre (1962), 321 East 9th Street (after 1969 at 74 East 4th Street).

The East Village's "counterculture" scene centered on St. Mark's Place. Nos. 19-25 (in part formerly Arlington Hall) had been the Polish National Home (Polski Dom Harodowy) since the 1920s. In the 1960s, "the Dom" was associated with a number of seminal figures of the period, including Timothy Leary and his "psychedelic celebrations," the counterculture band The Fugs, and Andy Warhol's "The Exploding Plastic Inevitable," featuring his films performed with live music by the Velvet Underground. For a time the Electric Circus disco, this facility became a community center after 1971.

20th-Century History of the Hamilton-Holly House³⁰

From 1903 to 1952, the former Hamilton-Holly House was owned by the family of Charles and Anna C. Meisel. The first story was used, beginning in 1901, by the musical instruments import-export firm of C. Meisel, Inc. (established 1878) and the Italian-Musical String Co. The basement level was adapted for commercial use. Other businesses listed here in directories between 1929 and 1950 included a dental laboratory, a photography studio, and a general contractor, as well as the Omega Delta Phi fraternity. At the time of its sale in 1952, the building contained, according to the *Times*, "a store, club, apartments and auditorium."³¹

Rev. Nicola (Nick) Arseny, of Cleveland, Ohio, was the owner of this property from 1952 to 1961. A 1955 application for a Certificate of Occupancy indicated that the building was to house a basement store; an art gallery (front) and theater (rear) on the first story; a one-family apartment (front) and office (rear) of the second story; and a one-family apartment on the third story (plus attic). From 1955 until 1967, this building had a significant, colorful, and controversial theatrical history, reflecting its location on St. Mark's Place during the cultural ascendancy of the East Village and of off-Broadway theater. Actress-manager Julie Bovasso established and directed the 132-seat Tempo Playhouse here in 1955, where she is credited with the American premieres of works by Jean Genet, Eugene Ionesco, and Michel de Ghelderode. The non-profit theater was closed for a portion of the 1955-56 season as the City's License Department insisted that it required a theater license. Plays performed at the Tempo were: Genet's *The Maids*; Gertrude Stein's *In a Garden* and *Three Sisters Who Are Not Sisters*; Arthur Schnitzler's *The Gallant Cassiam*; Jean Cocteau's *The Typewriter*; Ionesco's *Amedee* and *The Lesson*; Howard Blankman's Amish musical *By Hex*; de Ghelderode's *Escorial*; George Bernard Shaw's *Press Cuttings* and *O'Flaherty, V.C.*; Henrik Ibsen's *Lady From the Sea*; and Moliere's *The Doctor in Spite of Himself*. The first Obie Awards, given for off-Broadway theater by the fledgling *The Village Voice* in 1955-56, recognized Ms. Bovasso as best actress in *The Maids* and, in a special citation, the Tempo Playhouse as best experimental theater.

In December 1957, the front portion of the first story opened as the Pyramid Gallery with an exhibition of drawings by contemporary painters and sculptors. The theater was known in 1958 as the Pyramid Theater, which presented Michael Hastings' *Don't Destroy Me* and the New York premiere of Seymour Barab's opera *Chanticleer*, and, later, as the Little Theater, in which Schnitzler's *Anatol* was performed. In July 1959, the Key Theater was established here by Nils L. Cruz and Robert E. Judge. The *Times* mentioned that it was a "115-seat house, equipped with a proscenium stage."³² Performed here were Eugene O'Neill's early short plays *The Movie Man*, *Abortion*, and *The Sniper*; August Strindberg's *The Dance of Death*; James Comorthoon's *Every Other Evil*; Anton Chekhov's one-act plays *On the High Road*, *The Wedding*, and *The Anniversary*; and "Lorca and 3 New Playwrights," including Federico Garcia Lorca's *The Virgin, the Sailor, and the Student/ Chimera*. By 1961, the building housed three sculptors' studios.

From 1961 to 1967, No. 4 St. Mark's Place was owned by Theodora Colt Flynn Bergery (1928-2004), a descendant of the Rhode Island branch of the Colt family, related to Samuel Colt, inventor of the Colt revolver. Bergery was a sometime poet, stage and movie actress, interior decorator and painter. After traveling with her children for years in France, where she encountered small circuses, Bergery purchased this building in order to produce her own circus, The Children's Circus, which debuted in December 1961 and ran for two winters. She hired the Gangler Brothers Circus and, according to the *Times*, "the Gangler-Bergery families have been playing together and living together on the upper floors of the building with the animals." Bergery re-named it the Bowery Theater "to try to revive the days when the Bowery was a jazzy place."³³ William C. Curtis' *The Kumquat in the Persimmon Tree* played at the Bowery Theater in 1962. By June 1963, it had become The Howff, "a theater-café with a Scottish atmosphere run by a Welshman born in Turkey,"³⁴ Roy Guest, who had previously operated a well-known folk music club in Edinburgh. It showcased *The World of Kurt Weill in Song*, with Martha Schlamme and Will Holt, the revue *Rule, Britannia??*, and the Israeli pantomime duo Solomon and Mina Yakim.

As the New Bowery Theater in 1964, it was the site of Malcolm L. LaPrade and Alan Helm's musical comedy *Will the Mail Train Run Tonight?* and Jerry Douglas' musical *Never Say Dye*. In March 1964 (after the City closed the Gramercy Arts Theater), it also became the venue for the showing of early avant-garde "underground" films by the Film-Makers' Cooperative under Jonas Mekas, then film critic of *The Village Voice* and editor-publisher of *Film Culture* magazine. The work of the Kuchar Brothers was introduced here, including the premiere of "Lust for Ecstasy." The district attorney's office raided the theater, seizing Jack Smith's allegedly "obscene" film "Flaming Creatures" and arresting Mekas. He was again arrested for showing Genet's "Un Chant d'Amour."

In 1965-66, No. 4 St. Mark's Place was the location of the noted and eclectic Bridge Theater, and also contained an art gallery. "Light artist" Rudi Stern later called the Bridge "the most exciting theater in New York City at that time."³⁵ One of the theater's specialties was experimental plays. Arthur Sainer's *The Bitch of Waverly Place*, *The Blind Angel*, and *God Wants What Men Want* were performed here, as well as Georg Buchner's *Woyzeck*. This was also a significant downtown venue for contemporary dance, in a program called "Dance at the Bridge." Among the noted dancers and choreographers (many associated with Judson Church's experimental dance program and with Merce Cunningham) whose work was performed here were Lucinda Childs, Yvonne Rainer, Meredith Monk, Trisha Brown, and Kenneth King,³⁶ whose performances were reviewed by the *New York Times* and *Dance* magazine. Underground films continued being shown here, as the downtown venue of the midtown Film-Maker's Cinematheque. Contemporary classical music and unconventional music were featured here as well, including Yoko Ono and The Fugs, in a series of midnight shows in 1965. "The operators of the embattled Bridge Theater," according to the *New York Times*, were brought before the Department of Licenses in April 1966 on various petty violations, but mainly for the burning of an American flag in "LBJ," an anti-Vietnam War skit, during a benefit. The theater was charged with "a show... that was immoral, indecent and against the public welfare" and with "not obtain[ing] an open flame permit."³⁷ A committee of artists and writers, headed by poet Allen Ginsberg, held a press conference at the theater and denounced "petty officials... [who were] conducting a campaign of harassment to drive avant garde artistic endeavors out of the city."³⁸ The charges were ultimately dropped, but the building's use as a theater ended.

It was purchased in 1967 by Saul and Sarah Arons and Sanford F. and Bettie Ann Cohen; this ownership was later transferred to 4 St. Marks Place Realty and Stone Free Realty LLC. Saul Arons (1907-1995), a Polish-born furrier whose firm was the House of Aronowicz, operated "Mr. A," fur traders, in The Underground in the basement of No. 4 St. Mark's Place in the 1970s. Previously, Ground Floor Attic, an antiques store, was located in the basement level until 1966.³⁹ A commercial tenant in 1967 was the Headquarters, a used-clothing emporium and cabaret. From c. 1969 to at least 1993, the first-story space was Limbo, a clothing store. Since 1980, Trash & Vaudeville has been a tenant, now occupying the entire basement and first-story commercial spaces. The upper stories are residential.

Description

No. 4 St. Mark's Place is a 26-foot-wide and 3-1/2-story Federal style town house clad on the first through the third stories of the front facade in Flemish bond brickwork. The basement level, entirely clad in white marble (now painted) and surmounted by a watertable, has two openings with Gibbs surrounds (originally windows, now with a non-historic eastern metal-and-glass door and a non-historic western angled storefront, both with rolldown gates). The concrete-paved areaway has concrete steps down and a rolldown gate beneath the stoop; originally there were a wrought-iron fence and gates. A high, wide non-historic brick and stone stoop with non-historic wrought-iron railings and high gates leads to the round-arched entrance, which has a stone (now painted) Gibbs

surround with triple keystone (with vermiculated central keystone) and vermiculated blocks, deep paneled reveals (including in the arch), and a decorative molded transom bar (the double metal doors and single-pane fanlight are non-historic). The windows of the first through the third stories have molded pediment stone lintels. The long first-story windows, originally with nine-over-nine double-hung wood sash, originally opened onto a balcony having a wrought-iron railing (removed pre-1939); the eastern window has a single commercial storefront pane, while the western opening currently has a shopfront entrance with a non-historic metal-and-glass door. Non-historic iron stairs with a metal platform lead to this entrance and a fixed-box neon sign has been placed above it; lights are placed above the first story. Sash was originally six-over-six double-hung wood; second-story windows currently have one-over-one double-hung sash (with metal grates), while third-story windows have paired small one-over-one double-hung sash. A downspout is placed at the western edge of the building. A late-19th-century decorative iron fire escape was placed on the western section of the second and third stories, leading to the western dormer. A banner pole has been placed on the third story. The house originally had a molded and modillioned wooden cornice; this was removed (post-1939) and the cornice area was parged and terminated by a metal gutter. The peaked roof has original segmental double dormers, originally faced with colonnettes and now parged on all sides; four-over-four double-hung wood sash with segmental tops were replaced with rectangular one-over-one wood sash.

Report prepared by
JAY SHOCKLEY
Research Department

NOTES

1. Luther Harris, *Around Washington Square: An Illustrated History of Greenwich Village* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Pr., 2003); LPC, *Greenwich Village Historic District Designation Report* (LP-0489)(N.Y.: City of New York, 1969); Rick Beard and Leslie C. Berlowitz, edit., *Greenwich Village: Culture and Counterculture* (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Pr., 1993).
2. Jan S. Ramirez, "Greenwich Village," in Kenneth T. Jackson, edit., *The Encyclopedia of New York City* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Pr., 1995), 506.
3. Of the original nine houses, Nos. 428-434 are extant and are designated New York City Landmarks.
4. Harris, 35.
5. Charles Lockwood, *Bricks and Brownstone: The New York Rowhouse, 1783-1929, An Architectural and Social History* (N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, 1972), 50-51 and 197, and *Manhattan Moves Uptown: An Illustrated History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1976), 58-60; Walter Barrett (Joseph Scoville), *The Old Merchants of New York* (N.Y., 1864), 133; LPC, *St. George-New Brighton Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1883)(N.Y.: City of New York, 1994); New York County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 279, p. 309-312 (Feb. 6, 1832), and Liber 288, p. 582 (Oct. 22, 1832); "New Washington Association," www.tsha.utexas.edu website.
6. One house on this block, No. 20 (Daniel LeRoy House), is nearly intact and was designated a New York City Landmark in 1969.
7. The houses have been demolished except for Nos. 144-146 (remodeled in 1919 by Raymond Hood), 145, and 149.
8. Harris, 23.
9. U.S. Census, 18th Ward, New York City (1860), 385.
10. Adapted from LPC, *281 East Broadway House (Isaac T. Ludlam House) Designation Report* (LP-1993)(N.Y.: City of New York, 1998), prepared by Marjorie Pearson. For the history of Federal style rowhouses, see: Elizabeth Blackmar, *Manhattan for Rent, 1785-1850* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Pr., 1989); Ada Louis Huxtable, *The Architecture*

of New York: Classic New York Georgian Gentility to Greek Elegance (Garden City, N.J.: Anchor Bks., 1964); Lockwood, *Bricks and Brownstone*; Montgomery Schuyler, "The Small City House in New York," *Architectural Record* (April-June, 1899), 357-388.

11. These include: Daniel Leroy House (1831), 20 St. Mark's Place; 25 St. Mark's Place (1831); 138 Second Avenue (c. 1831); 26 Bond Street (c. 1831); Seabury Treadwell House (1831-32), 29 East 4th Street; and 203 Prince Street (1834; surround restored).
12. The following Federal style houses are designated New York City Landmarks: Edward Mooney House (1785-89), 18 Bowery; James Watson House (1793, attrib. to John McComb, Jr.; 1806), 7 State Street; nine houses at 25-41 Harrison Street (1796-1828; two designed by John McComb, Jr.); Nicholas and Elizabeth Stuyvesant Fish House (1803-04), 21 Stuyvesant Street; Gideon Tucker House (1808-09), 2 White Street; Stephen van Rensselaer House (c. 1816), 149 Mulberry Street; James Brown House (c. 1817), 326 Spring Street; 480 Greenwich Street and 502-508 Canal Street (1818-41); 83 and 85 Sullivan Street (1819; third stories added 1880 and 1874); William and Rosamond Clark House (1824-25; two stories added in the 19th century), 51 Market Street; 265 Henry Street (1827; third story added 1895); 127, 129, and 131 MacDougal Street Houses (c. 1828-29); Isaac Ludlam House (c. 1829), 281 East Broadway; Daniel Leroy House (1831), 20 St. Mark's Place; Seabury Treadwell House (1831-32), 29 East 4th Street; 116 Sullivan Street (1832; third story added 1872); 131 Charles Street (1834); and 203 Prince Street (1834; third story added 1888).
13. *Note*: The address of this property was 31 St. Mark's Place until 1840, and was 160 St. Mark's Place in 1841-42. Susan De Vries conducted preliminary conveyance and tax assessment research on this property for the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation. New York County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances; New York Tax Assessments (1831-1863); *New York City Directories* (1805-1853); Matthew Gilmore, "Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton," h-net.msu.edu website; National Park Service, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, research notes on The Grange; Ron Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton* (N.Y.: Penguin Pr., 2004); New-York Historical Society, Hamilton family notes; "Col. Alexander Hamilton," *America's Successful Men of Affairs* 1, Henry Hall, ed. (N.Y.: N.Y. Tribune, 1896), 295; "Banking and Financial Advertisements," *NYT*, Mar. 9, 1859, 8.
14. New York County, Liber 309, p. 192-195 (Nov. 1, 1833).
15. The Grange, 287 Convent Avenue, is a designated New York City Landmark and National Monument.
16. Chernow, 728.
17. New York County; New York Tax Assessments (1863-1890); *New York City Directories* (1863-1900); *Perris & Browne Map* (1877); "New Publications," *NYT*, Sept. 27, 1874, 5; "Amusements," *NYT*, Nov. 15, 1874, 11; "Republicans Rejoicing," *NYT*, Nov. 13, 1880, 5; "Fought for a Photograph," *NYT*, May 8, 1896, 8; [John W. Miller] "Many Bequests for Charity," *NYT*, May 9, 1896, 2; "Business Troubles," *NYT*, Apr. 12, 1899, 11; "Petitions in Bankruptcy," *NYT*, Apr. 20, 1899, 11; "The Auction Room," *NYT*, Apr. 1, 1903, 14;
18. No. 29 St. Mark's Place became the Harmonie Club, a German-Jewish singing club, in 1856-59. Nos. 19-21 was the location of the Arion Singing Society, another German musical club from 1870 to 1887; these buildings, along with No. 23, became Arlington Hall, a ballroom-community center in 1887 with their purchase by brewer-real estate investor George Ehret. According to an 1877 map, Nos. 18-20 was the Tivoli Varieties Theater and No. 17 was a primary school. The Children's Aid Society's Girls' Lodging House (by 1871) and its offices (by 1891) were at Nos. 27 and 24. No. 12 was replaced by the German-American Shooting Society Clubhouse (1888-89, William C. Frohne), today a designated New York City Landmark.
19. Also in the vicinity were the Astor Place Opera House (1847; later Clinton Hall/Mercantile Library; demolished), Astor and Lafayette Places; Astor Library (1849-52 Alexander Saeltzer; 1856-69 Griffith Thomas; 1879-81 Thomas Stent), 425 Lafayette Street; Bible House (1852; demolished), home of the American Bible Society and other religious organizations, Astor Place and Third Avenue; and Metropolitan Savings Bank (1867, Carl Pfeiffer), 9 East 7th Street. All of the mentioned extant buildings are designated New York City Landmarks.
20. Surviving from the 1831 houses, in some form, are: No. 18 (re-faced and altered); No. 20 (Daniel LeRoy House); No. 28 (altered and four stories); four bays of Nos. 9-11 (altered and four stories); and No. 25 (re-faced and four stories), with its Gibbs surround entrance.

21. 17th Ward Tax Assessments (1865-67).
22. "Real Estate at Auction," *NYT*, Mar. 15, 1903, 19.
23. Harris; Beard and Berlowitz; Ramirez, in Jackson; Terry Miller, *Greenwich Village and How It Got That Way* (N.Y.: Crown Publr., 1990); "The Eclectic Life of a Row of East Village Houses," *NYT*, Nov. 8, 1998, real est. 7; Fred W. and Patrick J. McDarragh, *The Greenwich Village Guide* (N.Y.: a cappella Books, 1992), 156.
24. Jan S. Ramirez, "The Tourist Trade Takes Hold," in Beard and Berlowitz, 388.
25. Ramirez, in Jackson, 508.
26. Harris, 210.
27. After the 1894 decision by the university's trustees to remain at the Square, a new Main Building (1894-95, Alfred Zucker) was constructed on the site of its original structure. Over the next four decades, the campus expanded mainly into converted loft buildings to the east and southeast, though the School of Education (1929) was built on East 4th Street east of the Square.
28. Miller, 258.
29. This building is a designated New York City Landmark and Interior Landmark.
30. New York County; NYC, Dept. of Buildings; *New York City Directories* (1900-33); *Manhattan Address Directories* (1929-93); [C. Meisel, Inc.], William T. Bonner, *New York The World's Metropolis 1623-4 -- 1923-4* (N.Y.: R.L. Polk & Co., Inc., 1924), 643; "Real Estate Transfers," *NYT*, May 1, 1903, 14; *The Biographical Encyclopedia and Who's Who of the American Theatre*, Walter Rigdon, edit. (N.Y.: James H. Heineman, Inc., 1966); Julia S. Price, *The Off-Broadway Theater* (N.Y.: Scarecrow Pr., 1962); Daniel Blum, *Theatre World* (1955-65) (N.Y.: Greenburg); [Tempo Playhouse], *NYT*, Apr. 25, 1955, 20, May 18, 1955, 20, June 27, 1955, 18, July 27, 1955, 14, July 29, 1955, 8, Oct. 31, 1955, 31, Nov. 1, 1955, 27, Nov. 2, 1955, 11 and 41, Mar. 21, 1956, 32, May 9, 1956, 37, May 18, 1956, 20, May 22, 1956, 29, June 1, 1956, 27, June 18, 1956, 20, June 19, 1956, 25, Sept. 19, 1956, 33, Oct. 3, 1956, 29, Dec. 13, 1956, 49, Feb. 18, 1957, 22, Feb. 19, 1957, 35, Feb. 27, 1957, 22, Feb. 28, 1957, 18; and Nov. 7, 1999, arts 10; [Pyramid Gallery], *NYT*, Dec. 22, 1957, 9; [Pyramid Theater], *NYT*, Feb. 15, 1958, 15, Mar. 18, 1958, 32, and Apr. 22, 1958, 40; [Little Theater], *NYT*, June 26, 1958, 22, and Aug. 26, 1958, 35, [Key Theater], *NYT*, Oct. 23, 1959, 25, Oct. 28, 1959, 40, Feb. 19, 1960, 24, Sept. 14, 1960, 51, Jan. 23, 1961, 20 and 34, Jan. 25, 1961, 53, Apr. 16, 1961, xi, Apr. 21, 1961, 26, and Sept. 4, 1961, 10; "Theodora Bergery," theodorabergery.free.fr website; [Bowery Theater], *NYT*, Dec. 21, 1961, 23, Feb. 25, 1962, SM 24, June 17, 1962, 85, and June 19, 1962, 27; [The Howff], June 5, 1963, 32, June 8, 1963, 15, June 27, 1963, 23, and Aug. 8, 1963, 19; [New Bowery Theater], *NYT*, Dec. 26, 1963, 36, Jan. 2, 1964, 33, Jan. 10, 1964, 18, "Avant-Garde Movie Seized as Obscene," Mar. 4, 1964, 33, and Apr. 25, 1964, 17, Jonas Mekas, *Movie Journal: The Rise of the New American Cinema 1959-1971* (N.Y.: Macmillan Co., 1972); Jason Anderson, "The Perfect Queer Appositiveness of Jack Smith," www.eye.net website, "The Life and Cinema of the Brothers Kuchar," www.brightlightsfilm.com website, and Steven Watson, "Chronology: Factory Made: Warhol and the Sixties," www.factorymade.org website; [Bridge Theater], *NYT*, Apr. 1, 1965, 31, Apr. 4, 1965, X13, Apr. 11, 1965, X4, May 23, 1965, X11 and X23, June 20, 1965, X12, Oct. 24, 1965, X16, Oct. 26, 1965, 48, Oct. 31, 1965, X26, Nov. 21, 1965, X15, Nov. 28, 1965, X9 and X17, Nov. 29, 1965, 46, Dec. 5, 1965, X31, Dec. 12, 1965, X15, Dec. 19, 1965, X19, Dec. 21, 1965, 48, Jan. 1, 1966, 46, Jan. 2, 1966, 95, Jan. 16, 1966, X18, Jan. 23, 1966, 105, Feb. 20, 1966, X15, Feb. 24, 1966, 29, Mar. 6, 1966, X15, Mar. 20, 1966, 127, Mar. 26, 1966, 14, Mar. 27, 1966, 125, Apr. 12, 1966, 11, Apr. 13, 1966, 18, Apr. 19, 1966, 32, May 19, 1966, 52, Jun. 12, 1966, 145, July 10, 1966, 182, and Dec. 2, 1966, 45, and David Hinckley; "Spaghetti Death: The Fugs," www.dailynews.com website; Robert Palmer, "On Thin Ice: the Music of Yoko Ono," www.rykodisc.com website; [Headquarters], *NYT*, Jan. 23, 1967, 30, Apr. 19, 1967, 52, and Jun. 2, 1967, W6; [Limbo], *NYT*, Aug. 31, 1969, SM20, Jun. 10, 1971, 38, and Jan. 12, 1973, 41; [Saul Arons], *NYT*, May 17, 1971, 30, Oct. 1, 1974, 47, and Mar. 3, 1975.
31. "Syndicate Buys 57th St. Building," *NYT*, July 2, 1952, 44.
32. Oct. 23, 1959, 25.

33. Dec. 21, 1961, 23.
34. June 8, 1963, 15.
35. Davidson Gigliotti, "Interview with Rudi Stern" (Dec. 1999), 208.55.137.252/rudisterninterview.html website.
36. Others were Elaine Summers, Aileen Passloff, Sally Gross, Judith Dunn, Remy Charlip, Jenny Workman, Arlene Rothlein, Viola Farber, Liz Keen, Carolee Schneemann, Beverly Schmidt, Margot Colbert, Laura Foreman, Christine Loizeaux, Rudy Perez, Tony Holder, Steve Paxton, Mimi Garrard, and Carol Ritter.
37. "Hearing is Delayed on Burning of Flag," *NYT*, Apr. 13, 1966, 18.
38. "Avant Garde Group Charges Harassment by City," *NYT*, Apr. 19, 1966, 32.
39. "Antique Shop Closeout Sale," *NYT*, Apr. 24, 1966, S23.

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 Hamilton-Holly 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 Hamilton-Holly House, a large town house at 4 St. Mark's Place in the East Village section of Manhattan, was constructed in 1831 in the Federal style, characterized and made notable by its unusual 26-foot width and 3-1/2-story height, Flemish bond brickwork, high stoop, long parlor-floor windows, Gibbs surround entrance with triple keystone and vermiculated blocks, white marble base with openings also with Gibbs surrounds, molded pediment lintels, peaked roof, and double segmental dormers; that the entire block of St. Mark's Place (East 8th Street) between Third and Second Avenues was built by English-born real estate developer Thomas E. Davis, who sold this house in 1833 to Col. Alexander Hamilton, son of the late first U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, and that this was the home during the next nine years of Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton, the senior Hamilton's widow, her daughter, Eliza Hamilton Holly, and her husband Sidney, and Col. Hamilton and his wife Eliza; that, in 1843-49, it was the home of Isaac C. Van Wyck and his son Cornelius, oil and candle merchants, the Van Wyck family retaining ownership until 1863 but, by the 1850s, houses on this formerly fashionable block were no longer single-family dwellings; that No. 4 was owned from 1863 to 1903 by butter merchant John W. Miller, who in the 1860s built a large two-story rear addition with a first-story meeting hall, and that, from 1901 to 1952, the house was owned and used in part by the musical instruments firm of C. Meisel, Inc.; that the building had a significant and colorful theatrical history from 1955 to 1967, reflecting its location on St. Mark's Place during the cultural ascendancy of the East Village, and that, among other uses, it was the Tempo Playhouse, New Bowery Theater, and Bridge Theater, noted venues for experimental theater, contemporary music and dance, and early underground films; and that, despite the loss of some architectural details, the Hamilton-Holly House is among the rare surviving and significantly intact large Manhattan town houses of the Federal style, period, and 3-1/2-story, dormered peaked-roof type.

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 Hamilton-Holly House, 4 St. Mark's Place, Borough of Manhattan, and designates Manhattan Tax Map Block 643, Lot 11, as its Landmark Site.



Hamilton-Holly House, 4 St. Mark's Place, Manhattan
Photo: Carl Forster



No. 24 St. Mark's Place, showing original architectural details of the houses on this block
Source: *King's Handbook of New York* (1893)



Hamilton-Holly House

Photo: NYC Dept. of Taxes (c. 1939)



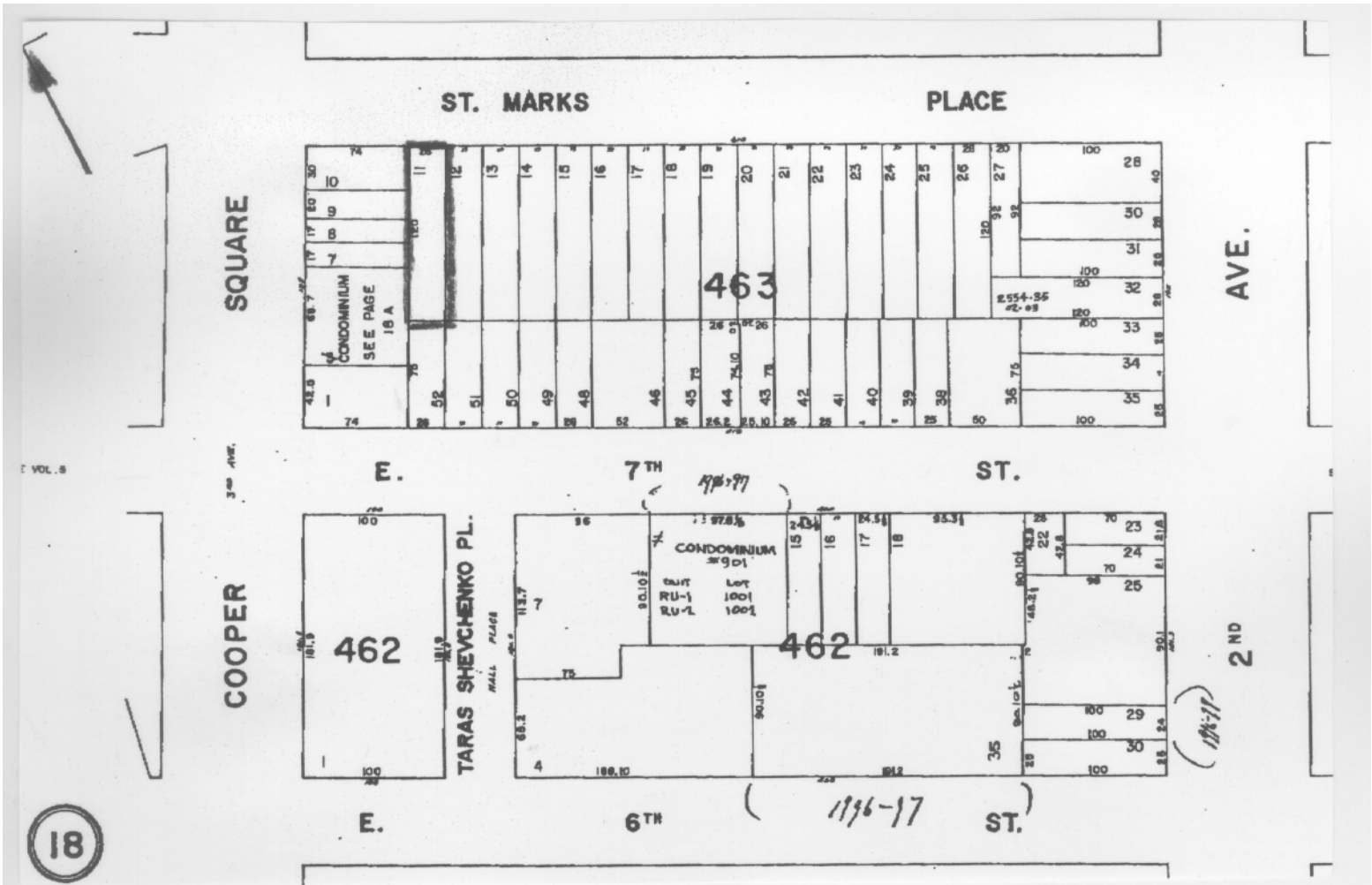
Hamilton-Holly House, base and first story
Photo: Carl Forster



Hamilton-Holly House, entrance surround
Photo: Carl Forster

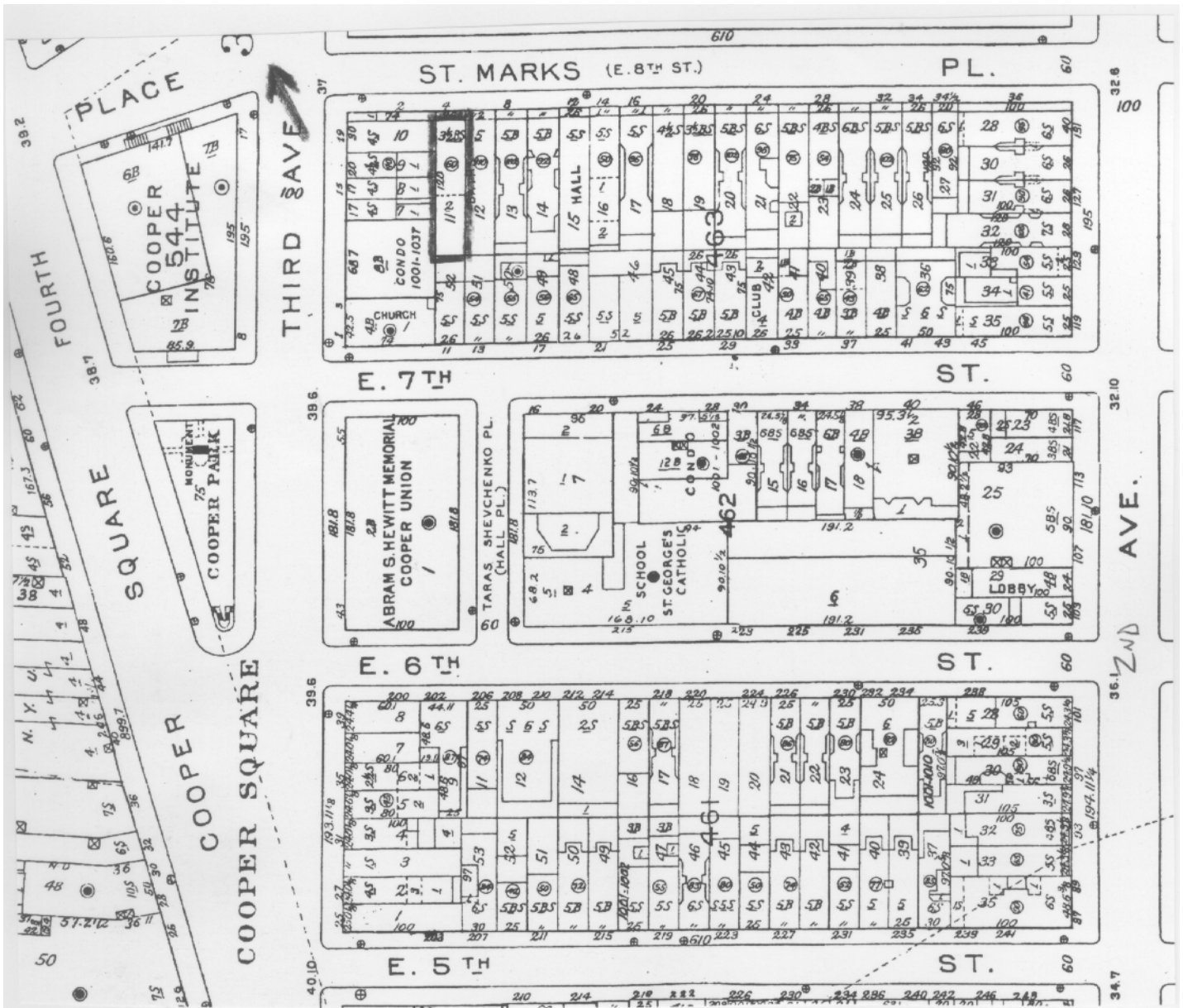


Hamilton-Holly House, third story and dormers
Photo: Carl Forster



Hamilton-Holly House

Landmark Site: Manhattan Tax Map Block 463, Lot 11
 Source: Dept. of Finance, City Surveyor, Tax Map



Hamilton-Holly House

Source: Sanborn, *Manhattan Land Book* (2003-2004), pl. 23