Landmarks Preservation Commission
June 25, 1996, Designation List 273
LP-1933

EMPIRE BUILDING, 71 Broadway (aka 69-73 Broadway, 1-5 Rector Street, and 51-53 Trinity Place), Borough of Manhattan. Built 1897-98, [Francis H.] Kimball & [G. Kramer] Thompson, architects; Charles Sooysmith, foundation engineer; Marc Eidlitz & Son, builders.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 21, Lot 6, and the portions of the adjacent sidewalk on which the described improvement is situated.[1]

On September 19, 1995, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Empire Building and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 3). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. The hearing was continued to December 12, 1995 (Item No. 1). The hearing was subsequently continued to January 30, 1996 (Item No. 1). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Nineteen witnesses spoke in favor of designation, including Councilwoman Kathryn Freed and representatives of Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger, the Downtown Alliance, New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, Municipal Art Society, New York Landmarks Conservancy, Historic Districts Council, Fine Arts Federation, and Landmarks Committee of Community Board 1. A representative of the mortgagee attended the first hearing but took no position regarding the proposed designation. No one spoke in opposition to designation. The Commission has received several letters and other statements in support of designation, including a resolution by Community Board 1.

Summary

The richly decorative, neo-classical Empire Building was commissioned in 1895 by the Estate of Orlando B. Potter and constructed in 1897-98 to the design of Kimball & Thompson. Francis H. Kimball emerged in the forefront of early skyscraper design in New York City during his collaboration with G. Kramer Thompson in 1892-98. The building was erected by Marc Eidlitz & Son, noted builders, in collaboration with prominent foundation engineer Charles Sooysmith. The Empire Building is considered one of the finest of the surviving late-nineteenth-century office towers in New York City, and is also significant as one of the earliest, as well as one of the earliest extant, steel skeletal-frame curtain-wall skyscrapers set on pneumatic caissons in the city. Occupying a highly visible site in Lower Manhattan -- it is located between Broadway and Trinity Place, with a long facade along Rector Street across from Trinity Church and Graveyard -- it provides a handsome backdrop for the church. Clad in rusticated white granite above a polished gray granite base and originally 20 stories (plus basement), the design features the tripartite arrangement of base-shaft-capital common to many of New York's early skyscrapers, with a four-story base, arcaded on the long facade; a triumphal arch entrance on Broadway; a midsection ornamented by bandcourses and balconies; and an upper section with colonnaded loggias and a heavy projecting cornice. One of the first skyscrapers on the west side of lower Broadway, the building assisted in transforming the street into the "canyon" of masonry office towers familiar to this day. An additional story, faced in terra cotta, was constructed in 1928-30. The Empire Building served as the headquarters of the titanic United States Steel Corp. from its formation in 1901 until 1976, the corporation owning the structure from 1919 to 1973. Art Deco style alterations to the entrances were executed in stainless steel for the corporation by Walker & Gillette in 1937-38.

Orlando B. Potter[2]

The Empire Building was commissioned in 1895 by the Estate of Orlando B. Potter. A Massachusetts lawyer, Potter (1823-1894) moved to New York City in 1853 to assist in the development of a sewing machine business; he was president of the Domestic Sewing Machine Co. until 1876. A prominent figure in New York Democratic politics, he achieved recognition by developing a plan for a national banking system and currency that was adopted by Congress in 1863, served as a U.S. Representative in 1883-85, and was a member of the Rapid Transit Commission in 1890-94. Potter became extremely wealthy, due largely to his commercial real estate holdings in Manhattan (worth an estimated six million dollars at his death) upon which he concentrated after 1876. Besides purchasing existing structures, Potter commissioned a number of notable buildings, among them: 444 Lafayette St. (1875-76, Griffith Thomas); Astor Place Building (1881-83, Starkweather & Gibbs), 746-750 Broadway; Potter Building (1883-86, N.G. Starkweather), 35-38 Park Row; 808 Broadway (1888, Renwick, Aspinwall & Russell), adjacent to Grace Church; and 4-8 Astor Place (1890, Francis H. Kimball). Potter founded the New York Architectural Terra Cotta Co.[3] in 1886, with his son-in-law Walter Geer. At the time of his sudden death in January 1894, Potter was thought to have been the wealthiest man in New York City to have died intestate. Frederick Potter (1856-1923), a lawyer, became administrator of his father's estate and later served as president of O.B. Potter Properties. The elder Potter had purchased the predecessor building on the site at 71 Broadway in 1884.[4]

The Architects[5]

The Empire Building was designed by Kimball & Thompson. Born in Maine, Francis Hatch Kimball (1845-1919) worked as a teenager in a relative's building firm, served in the Navy in the Civil War, and in 1867 entered the firm of the Boston architect Louis P. Rogers (who later joined with Gridley J.F. Bryant). Kimball became supervisor of this firm's work in Hartford, Conn. Appointed superintending architect (1873-78) of Trinity College, Hartford, for the construction of the new Gothic buildings designed by English architect and theorist William Burges, Kimball also received independent commissions in that city, including the Orphan Asylum (1876-78, demolished). He moved to New York City to work on the remodelling of the Madison Square Theater in 1879 and soon formed a partnership with the English-born architect Thomas Wisedell, which lasted until the latter's death in 1884. Their firm was responsible for the Moorish-style Casino Theater (1881-82, demolished), 1400 Broadway. Kimball practiced alone[6] until 1892, producing designs in a variety of styles and executed with notable terra-cotta ornament, including: the Catholic Apostolic Church (1885), 417 West 57th St.; Emmanuel Baptist Church (1886-87), 279 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn; Corbin Building (1888-89), 11 John St.; Montauk Club (1889-91), 1925 Eighth Ave., Brooklyn;[7] Harrigan's (later Garrick) Theater (1890-91, demolished), 65 West 35th St.; and the exterior of the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad Terminal headhouse (1891-93), Philadelphia. In the iron-and-steel-framed Fifth Avenue Theater (1185 Broadway, demolished) in 1891-92, Kimball developed a technique for constructing foundations with concrete cylinders sunk by mechanical means that was a precursor of the later pneumatic caisson system of skyscraper foundation construction.

Kimball emerged in the forefront of early skyscraper design in New York City during his collaboration from 1892 to 1898 with George Kramer Thompson. Born in Dubuque, Iowa, Thompson (1859-1935) arrived in New York City in 1879 to study with the English-born architect Frederick Clarke Withers. Three years later, he left to become a draftsman with Kimball & Wisedell for a year, and then formed a short-lived partnership with C.P.H. Gilbert. Independently, Thompson specialized in the design of country houses in New York and New Jersey. He was head of the architectural metal division of the National Lead Co. from 1917 to his retirement in 1932. Kimball & Thompson's seminal 17-story (plus tower) Manhattan Life Insurance Co. Building (64-66 Broadway, demolished) of 1893-94, designed as the result of a competition during which they formed their partnership, was the tallest building yet constructed in the city and is credited with being the first skyscraper with a full iron and steel frame, set on pneumatic concrete caissons.[8] Among the firm's other commissions were the Gertrude Rhinelander Waldo Mansion (1895-98), 867 Madison Ave., in the neo-French Renaissance style, and the Standard Oil Building addition (1896-97), 26 Broadway.[9]

Kimball became the favored architect of O.B. Potter and the Potter Estate from around 1890 until the end of Kimball's career; the Empire Building was the location of his office after 1898. Later skyscrapers in lower Manhattan designed by Kimball, in a variety of styles, include the neo-Gothic Trinity and U.S. Realty Buildings (1904-07), 111 and 115 Broadway, that flank Trinity Church on the north side and complement the

Empire Building; J. & W. Seligman & Co. Building (1906-07, with Julian C. Levi), 1 William St.;[10] Trust Co. of America Building (1906-07), 39 Wall St.; City Investing Co. Building (1906-08, demolished), Broadway and Cortlandt St.; and Adams Express Co. Building (1912-16), 61 Broadway. He formed a partnership with Frederick H. Roosa in 1915, but a petition was filed against the firm in 1917 which apparently led to involuntary bankruptcy. Upon his death in 1919, the *New York Times* referred to Kimball as "the father of the skyscraper,"[11] reflecting his technical innovations and involvement with many fine early skyscrapers in lower Manhattan. The Empire Building remains the earliest of Kimball's extant skyscrapers. It was erected by Marc Eidlitz & Son, builders, in collaboration with foundation engineer Charles Sooysmith.

The Engineer[12]

Charles Sooysmith (1856-1916), born in Buffalo, was the son of the noted civil engineer William Sooy Smith (1830-1916). Smith is credited with the first American use of the pneumatic process in 1859, for the foundation cylinders of the Charleston & Savannah Railroad Bridge, and he first employed the pneumatic caisson in 1867 for a lighthouse on the Straits of Mackinac. An expert in the foundations of bridges and tall buildings (he was involved in the latter particularly in Chicago from 1890 to 1910), he was a leading advocate for the construction of foundations sunk to bedrock. Sooysmith was educated at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and at the Polytechnic Institute in Dresden, Germany, and after working for a railroad in 1879, formed the engineering and contracting firm of William Sooy Smith & Son with his father in 1881. In 1887 he formed his own contracting firm, Sooysmith & Co., which specialized in the construction of bridges, including, in New York City, the Macomb's Dam Bridge (1890-95), Harlem River,[13] and of the foundations of important early skyscrapers, such as the Manhattan Life Insurance Co. Building, American Surety Co. Building, Empire Building, and Washington Life Building. Sooysmith became a consulting engineer in New York in 1898, working on subways, sewerage systems, and foundations. He is considered a pioneer in the use of the pneumatic caisson for skyscraper construction, and developed a freezing process for use in excavation in unstable soil conditions.

The Builders[14]

The designs of such innovative architects as Kimball would not have been realized without the collaboration of skilled builders. The construction firm of Marc Eidlitz & Son, known for work in New York City of the highest quality, was responsible for many notable commercial and institutional buildings and skyscrapers, as well as private residences of the wealthy. Marc Eidlitz (1826-1892), born in Prague, Bohemia, emigrated to New York in 1847, was apprenticed to a mason/builder, and started his own building firm in 1854. He was the brother of the noted architect Leopold Eidlitz. Marc Eidlitz's firm built such important structures as the Metropolitan Opera House, Steinway Hall, Astor Library addition, Broadway Tabernacle, Presbyterian and German Hospitals, and the residences of J.P. Morgan and Ogden Goelet. Eidlitz is said to have "practically retired"[15] in 1888, and upon his death in 1892, his son Otto Marc Eidlitz (1860-1928) became president of the company, a position he held until his death. Otto Eidlitz received civil engineering degrees from Cornell University in 1881 and 1890, entered his father's business after the first, and assumed a prominent role in the firm by 1884. Robert James Eidlitz, his brother, was educated as an architect at the Royal Polytechnic in Berlin and became an associate in the company. Among the later buildings constructed by the firm in New York City were the St. Regis Hotel, B. Altman's, Arnold Constable & Co., Lord & Taylor, J.P. Morgan Building on Wall Street, American Telephone & Telegraph Building (130 Broadway), and Bankers' Trust Building (14 Wall Street).

The New York Skyscraper of the 1890s

During the nineteenth century, commercial buildings in New York City developed from four-story structures modeled on Italian Renaissance *palazzi* to much taller skyscrapers. Made possible by technological advances, tall buildings challenged designers to fashion an appropriate architectural expression. Between 1870 and 1890, nine- and ten-story buildings transformed the streetscapes of lower Manhattan between Bowling Green and City Hall. During the building boom following the Civil War, building envelopes continued to be articulated largely according to traditional *palazzo* compositions, with mansarded and towered roof profiles. New York's tallest buildings — the seven-and-a-half-story Equitable Life Assurance Co. Building (1868-70, Gilman & Kendall and George B. Post) at Broadway and Cedar Street, the ten-story Western Union Building (1872-75, George B. Post) at Broadway and Liberty Street, and the ten-story Tribune Building (1873-75, Richard M. Hunt) on Park Row, all now demolished — incorporated passenger elevators, iron floor beams, and fireproof building materials. Beginning in the later 1870s, tall buildings were characterized by flat roofs and a free,

varied grouping of stories, often in the form of multi-storied arcades, within the facades. Ever taller skyscrapers were permitted by the increasing use and refinement of metal framing. In 1888-89 New York architect Bradford Lee Gilbert used iron skeleton framing for the first seven stories of the eleven-story Tower Building at 50 Broadway (demolished). Beginning around 1890, architects began producing skyscraper designs that adhered to the tripartite base-shaft-capital arrangement associated with the classical column, a scheme that became commonly employed in New York. As steel skeleton framing was adopted for tall buildings in New York, architects and engineers introduced caisson foundations which carried the weight of the skeleton frame down to bedrock. As previously mentioned, Kimball & Thompson and Sooysmith were leaders in this effort with the Manhattan Life Insurance Co. Building (1893-94). This was followed by the American Surety Co. Building (1894-95, Bruce Price), 100 Broadway, also with Sooysmith, which was the first New York skyscraper with a full steel frame, set on pneumatic concrete caissons.[16] The Empire Building utilized the successful design and construction techniques of these earlier buildings.

Empire Building[17]

Architects Kimball & Thompson filed for the construction of the Empire Building, then expected to cost one million dollars, in December of 1895, the initial plans calling for the structure to be clad in limestone, brick, and terra cotta.[18] Orlando B. Potter's daughter, Blanche, reminisced that Potter's four children

> *decided to rebuild the Empire Building in 1897-98, replacing the old structure with a building of which we might always be proud. . . . To Mary Geer belongs special credit for her decision to participate, for we decided not to use terra cotta on the building, feeling that granite was more suitable. We, I think, looked on it as a sort of memorial to Father's name, and were justly proud of it when finished. It was considered a splendid building, leading for some years in its type as to construction and height, and it soon began to bring in a large rental.*[19]

Construction was not begun until June 1897, and was completed in November 1898. One of the first steel skeletal-frame[20] curtain-wall skyscrapers in New York, the Empire Building is set on pneumatic concrete caissons and grillage. It nearly fills its narrow, quadrilateral lot except for two small light courts provided on the southern elevation (not visible because of the adjacent 65 Broadway); the interior plan had the elevators and hallways also to the south, so that all offices faced Trinity Church. The exterior of the richly decorative, neo-classical Empire Building, originally 20 stories facing Broadway (with a full basement story on Trinity Place), is clad in rusticated white granite above a polished gray granite base. The design features the tripartite arrangement of base-shaft-capital common to many of New York's early skyscrapers, with a four-story base, which is arcaded on the long facade and is capped by another transitional story having paired arched windows; a triumphal arch entrance on Broadway with eagles on globes surmounting the columns; a midsection ornamented horizontally by bandcourses and vertically by balconies; and an upper section with colonnaded loggias and a heavy projecting cornice. Because of the visibility of the Rector Street facade with its location across from Trinity Graveyard, Kimball was able to fully articulate it, adding to the distinction of the building as well as providing a handsome backdrop for Trinity Church. When constructed, the building was connected to a platform of the elevated railway on Trinity Place; entrances to the subway still exist on Broadway.

Although today the Empire Building is considered one of the finest of the surviving late-nineteenth-century office towers in New York City, in the 1890s the new skyscrapers of lower Manhattan were controversial for their height and exterior design. In that context, the Empire Building was not universally admired. Critic Eliot Gregory, not even naming the building, wrote in 1899 that it had a "grotesque resemblance to a waffle iron" and had "the impression of instability."[21] However, in 1898, prominent architectural critic Montgomery Schuyler called the Empire Building "one of the best of our commercial buildings":

> *The dimensions and the site opened a very unusual opportunity for a commercial building... Trinity churchyard itself secures a much ampler lighting and outlook to the huge pile of white granite that is rising to overlook it... And the design makes the most of the horizontal dimension... The long arcade of the basement is one of the stateliest features of our street architecture, the more effective for being confined to the centre and flanked by the more massive pavilions. The detail is excellent in its kind, and as appropriate to the intractable granite in which it is executed, as are its author's designs for terra cotta to that more plastic medium.*[22]

The building also played an important role as one of the first skyscrapers on the west side of Broadway, north of the contemporary Bowling Green Offices Building

(No. 5-11, 1895-98).[23] Thus, the Empire Building assisted in transforming lower Broadway into the "canyon" of masonry office towers familiar to this day. Today it is recognized as one of the earliest extant steel skeletal-frame curtain-wall skyscrapers set on pneumatic caissons in New York City.

United States Steel Corp.[24]

For seventy-five years the major tenant[25] of the Empire Building was the titanic United States Steel Corp., which had its headquarters there from its formation in 1901 until 1976. The 71 Broadway Corp., an entity of U.S. Steel, purchased the building from O.B. Potter Properties in 1919 for five million dollars.[26] U.S. Steel Corp., the "first billion dollar enterprise in America"[27] and the world's largest industrial concern at the time, was the result of the merger of leading American steel-related manufacturing, mining, and shipping firms into one gigantic corporation under central management, which controlled two-thirds of the nation's output of steel within its first year. The nucleus of U.S. Steel was the Carnegie Steel Co., built up by Andrew Carnegie (with the combined interests of Henry C. Frick) into the foremost American producer of steel. After Carnegie sought to sell his company in order to retire, J.P. Morgan provided the financing in 1901 to purchase Carnegie Steel for nearly $500 million and to accomplish its merger into a huge trust with seven (later nine) other companies,[28] for an initial capitalization of $1.4 billion. Charles M. Schwab, Carnegie's director, served as first president in 1901-03. Elbert H. Gary, a founder and president of the Federal Steel Co., the largest Midwestern steel concern (also financed by Morgan in 1898 and absorbed into U.S. Steel), was president of U.S. Steel from 1903 until his death in 1927. Gary drew up the plan of organization of the new corporation and is largely credited with its initial success. Though it was the subject of an intensive investigation under the Sherman Anti-Trust Act in 1905-11 and monopoly charges in 1911 (U.S. Steel prevailed in 1920 when the Supreme Court upheld a 1915 U.S. District Court dismissal), the corporation concentrated on efficiency, consolidation of its companies, and the expansion of steel exports. U.S. Steel developed the world's largest "single integrated steel mill" and model company town (named after Elbert Gary) in Indiana (1905-11); purchased the Tennessee Coal, Iron & Railroad Co., the South's largest steel company, in Birmingham, Alabama (1907); spent over half a billion dollars in plant disposal, modernization, and construction (1928-38); acquired the Columbia Steel Co. in California (1930); and constructed a new steel mill in Pennsylvania (1949). In the 1950s-60s the corporation undertook a series of reorganizations, including the creation in 1951-53 of the U.S. Steel Co. from its four leading subsidiaries, and reincorporation in Delaware in 1966. U.S. Steel's market share of steel, as well as its profits, continued to shrink as the American steel industry fell into sharp decline, and the company lost $293 million by 1979. After the corporation purchased Marathon Oil Co. in 1982 for $6.2 billion, steel accounted for less than half of its business. By 1986 over 150 plants had been closed and U.S. Steel Corp. was restructured as a holding company, with its name changed to USX Corp. Executive offices were operated both in New York (71 Broadway) and in Pittsburgh from 1968 to 1976, and in Pittsburgh thereafter; the corporation continued to maintain office space at 71 Broadway until the 1980s.

Empire Building: Later History[29]

Blanche Potter stated about the transfer of the property from the Potter family that 1919 "was a year of financial worry for us, and under the stress of anxiety we had contracted to sell the Empire Building. . . . The sale of the building relieved us from financial worry and increased our incomes, but depressed our personal prestige. . . [Frederick Potter] had built this great building and hated to let it go, even to the United States Steel Company."[30] An additional (21st) story (with an elevator machinery tower), clad in terra cotta, was constructed in 1928-30, to the design of architect John C. Westervelt, and the original roof parapets were removed. Alterations to the base of the building[31] (at the time of interior lobby alterations) included remodelling of the main Broadway entrance and Trinity Place basement entrance, as well as closing the entrance to the elevated railway on Trinity Place; these alterations in the Art Deco style by Walker & Gillette in 1937-38 were executed in stainless steel, a material appropriate to the client, U.S. Steel. The building was transferred by 71 Broadway Corp./U.S. Steel Corp. to Realopco/71 Broadway Co. in 1973, and was acquired in 1984 by Broadway West Street Assocs. Worldwide Partners acquired the mortgage in 1996.

Description

The richly ornamented, neo-classical Empire Building, located between Broadway and Trinity Place with a long facade along Rector Street across from the south side of Trinity Church and Graveyard,[32] features a tripartite arrangement of base-shaft-capital. Originally 20 stories facing Broadway (now 21), with an additional full basement story on Trinity Place, it is built of steel skeletal construction and clad in rusticated white granite above a polished gray granite base. Ornament includes

pedimented window surrounds and cartouches. The original windows, some of which survive, are of the one-over-one double-hung wood sash variety (replacements are double-hung anodized aluminum). [None of the building's interior spaces is included in this designation].

Base The four-story (plus basement) base has a tripartite horizontal articulation with a cornice above the first story and projecting balconies above the second story, is battered on the Rector Street and Trinity Place facades, and is capped by a dentilled cornice. **Base: Broadway** The main entrance is a two-story triumphal arch with paired polished granite columns surmounted by eagles on globes. Broad central stairs lead to a recessed central entrance "portico" (outer vestibule), as well as to two flanking smaller arched entrances, that are set between the columns and lead to commercial spaces.[33] The portico originally had an open barrel-vaulted ceiling, a window on each side, and three pairs of entrance doors. The main entrance was remodelled in the Art Deco style (1937-38, Walker & Gillette [Alt.622-1937]): two granite columns separating the doorways were replaced with stylized stainless steel columns; three pairs of glass doors and a tripartite transom, all framed in stainless steel; stainless steel letters and numbers "71 Broadway 71" in the band above the doors; side portico windows with stainless steel frames; patterned granite portico floor; and a second floor level was inserted into the main arch, with a round-arched tripartite transom with stainless steel frame and stainless steel spandrel panel with the numbers "71" (the stucco portico ceiling with inset canister lights is a more recent alteration). Both arched commercial entrances have stainless steel frames, revolving doors, and transom, probably dating from c. 1938-46 (the southern one has a louver in the transom). At each end of the facade are stairs leading to basement entrances to the subway (with iron railings on one side each, iron gates at the bottom of the steps, steel handrails, and commercial sign bands). The north corner of the base is angled on the lower three stories and rounded above; the first-story corner window was altered into a doorway with steps by 1908, but was restored back to a window in 1937-38. Two flagpoles are located above the second story. **Base: Rector Street** The base has a tripartite vertical articulation, with an arcade in the center section of the third-fourth stories. The basement story (visible as a full story at the Trinity Place end due to the sloping site) originally had windows, and the central bay had a building entrance (above the segmental arch of this bay is the inscription "Empire Building A.D. 1897") with steps. The eastern side of the basement has small metal-framed display windows, except for the bay just east of the center, which has a shop (with an anodized aluminum door and steps). The western half of the basement was reconfigured with new "show windows" and shop entrances (granite mullions were removed and some openings widened), all with molded metal surrounds (which survive) (1915-16, Kimball & Roosa [Alt. 2815-1915]) -- from east to west: 3 shopfronts with a show window (with transom) and door (with transom) [later alterations: the first bay was filled with granite; the second bay was altered to a show window only]; a single door (with transom); a show window (with transom); a single door (with transom); and a show window (with transom) above a granite base. The central basement entrance was replaced with a shop window in 1937-38, now a stainless steel louver. All western bays have exterior rolldown gates. On the first story, the third bay from each corner has a molded metal window frame flanked by granite columns; that at the west end has its original decorative wrought-iron railing. **Base: Trinity Place** The full basement story originally had two windows at the north end, one shop entrance with steps, and a building entrance with steps at the south end. A shop entrance was inserted into the northernmost bay and the other two bays were converted to show windows, with the granite cut down in the two northern bays and built up on the southern one (1915-16, Kimball & Roosa [Alt. 2815-1915]). A new recessed building entrance was installed (1937-38, Walker & Gillette) that combined the southern two bays with a granite surround; three stainless steel and glass doors similar to those on Broadway, with a stainless steel frame and transom; stainless steel ceiling; steps; and a patterned granite floor. A new shop entrance was cut into the south end of the facade [BN 4482-1982]. All shop openings have exterior rolldown gates. The first story originally had three windows and an exit to the elevated railroad platform in the southernmost bay; the elevated entrance was closed and a molded and bossed steel surround was installed (1937-38, Walker & Gillette) in the combined southern two bays (now with louvers); a steel sign band with the letters "Seventy-One Broadway" is located below this surround.

Midsection The lowest (fifth) story of the 12-story midsection is a transition from the base, having paired arched windows. The rest of the midsection is ornamented horizontally by bandcourses and vertically by projecting balconies, and is capped by a modillioned cornice. The Broadway corner is rounded.

Upper Section The four-story upper section has

colonnaded loggias on the 18th-19th stories of each facade (with molded metal window frames and ornamental spandrel panels), a top story with ornamental panels (some having an "E" design), and a heavy projecting bracketed metal cornice. The Broadway corner has a setback angle. The 21st story (with an elevator machinery tower on the south side), clad in terra cotta, was added and the original roof parapets were removed (1928-30, John C. Westervelt [Alt. 1974-1928]).

Report prepared by
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NOTES

1. Records at the Dept. of Buildings, in connection with alterations of the Empire Building in the 1930s, indicate that part of the Broadway entrance "portico" and steps extend beyond the lot line.

2. O. B. Potter obit., *New York Times* [hereafter *NYT*], Jan. 3, 1894, 1; "Orlando B. Potter," *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* 1 (New York: James T. White & Co., 1898), 186-187, and *Who Was Who in America*, histl. vol. (Chicago: A.N. Marquis Co, 1963), 421; Moses King, *King's Photographic Views of of New York* (Boston: Moses King, 1895); "Orlando B. Potter Left No Will," *NYT*, Jan. 10, 1894, 12; "Transfer of the Potter Estate," *NYT*, Feb. 1, 1894, 1; F. Potter obit., *NYT*, Mar. 24, 1923, 13; New York County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances; Margot Gayle and Edmund Gillon, Jr., *Cast-Iron Architecture in New York: A Photographic Survey* (New York: Dover Publics., 1974); LPC, *New York Architectural Terra Cotta Works Building* (LP-1304) (New York: City of New York, 1982), report prepared by Patricia Florio.

3. The N.Y. Architectural Terra Cotta Works Building (1892, Francis H. Kimball), 42-10 -- 42-16 Vernon Blvd., Queens, the plant office of the firm, is a designated New York City Landmark.

4. In an attempt to extort funds from Russell Sage, this building (known as the Empire or Arcade Building) was the site of a bombing in 1891. Moses King, *King's Handbook of New York* (Boston: Moses King, 1892), 706; "Russell Sage," *Dictionary of American Biography* 8 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), 293.

5. Record and Guide, *A History of Real Estate, Building and Architecture in New York City* (New York: Arno Press, 1967), reprint of 1898 edition, 698-699; Montgomery Schuyler, "The Works of Francis H. Kimball," *Architectural Record* 7 (Apr.-June 1898), 479-518; LPC, architects files; LPC, *Trinity Building Designation Report* (LP-1557) (New York: City of New York, 1988), prepared by Elisa Urbanelli; LPC, *Upper East Side Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1051) (New York: City of New York, 1981); "Francis H. Kimball," *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* 15, 79; Andrew S. Dolkart, *Lower Manhattan Architectural Survey Report* (New York: Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, 1988); Thompson obit., *NYT*, Aug. 4, 1935, 29; "F.H. Kimball A Bankrupt," *NYT*, Apr. 4, 1917, 20.

6. This was aside from a brief partnership with Henry S. Ihnen in 1886. Their firm designed a notable warehouse at 135 Hudson Street for Edward M. Cary in 1886-87, now located in the Tribeca West Historic District.

7. Emmanuel Baptist Church is a designated New York City Landmark and the Montauk Club is located in the Park Slope Historic District.

8. The front masonry wall was loadbearing: Sarah B. Landau and Carl Condit, *Rise of the New York Skyscraper, 1865-1913* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1996), 224.

9. The Waldo Mansion and Standard Oil Building are designated New York City Landmarks. A portion of the firm's design for Standard Oil is still visible on the New Street elevation.

10. The Trinity, U.S. Realty, and Seligman Buildings are designated New York City Landmarks.

11. Kimball obit., *NYT*, Dec. 29, 1919, 9.

12. "William Sooy Smith" and "Charles Sooysmith," *Dictionary of American Biography* 9, Dumas Malone, ed., (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), 367-368, 397; "William Sooy Smith," *A Biographical Dictionary of American Civil Engineers* (New York: American Society of Civil Engineers, 1972), 107-108, and *National*

Cyclopaedia of American Biography 4 (New York: James T. White & Co., 1902), 498-499; Charles Sooysmith, "Foundation Construction for Tall Buildings," *Engineering Magazine* 13 (Apr. 1897), 20-33.

13. The bridge (and 155th Street Viaduct) is a designated New York City Landmark.

14. "An Historic Firm," *Architectural Record* 5 (Apr.-June 1896), 454-455; M. Eidlitz obit., *American Architect and Building News* 36 (1892), 77; O. Eidlitz obit., *NYT*, Oct. 31, 1928, 31; "Otto Marc Eidlitz," *Who Was Who in America* 1 (Chicago: A.N. Marquis Co., 1943).

15. "An Historic Firm."

16. The building employed both curtain walls and masonry bearing walls: Landau and Condit, 231.

17. Record and Guide; Schuyler; New York City, Dept. of Buildings, Manhattan, Plans, Permits and Dockets (NB 2179-1895); Charles O. Brown, "Engineering Problems of the Tall Building," *Engineering Magazine* 13 (June 1897), 406-418; Francis H. Kimball, "The Architectural Relations of the Steel-Skeleton Building," *Engineering Magazine* 13 (July 1897), 551-566.

18. Drawings indicate that the preliminary design for the building, which was similar in general conception, was different in detail from that built.

19. Blanche Potter, *Recollections of a Little Life* (New York, William F. Rudge, 1927), 98-99.

20. See also Landau and Condit, 264-265, for elevations of the steel framing, including wind bracing, from *Engineering Magazine* (1897).

21. Eliot Gregory, "Down-town Architecture," *NYT*, Jan. 14, 1899, suppl. 17-18.

22. Schuyler, 511-513, 518.

23. The building is a designated New York City Landmark.

24. Douglas A. Fisher, *Steel Serves the Nation 1901-1951: The Fifty Year Story of United States Steel* (New York: U.S. Steel Corp., 1951); Irving S. Olds, *Half a Century of United States Steel* (New York: Newcomen Society in North America, 1951); U.S. Steel Corp., *Final Study Summarizing the Survey: U.S. Steel Corp. and Subsidiaries* (New York: Ford, Bacon & Davis, 1938), *Twenty Fifth Anniversary* (New York: 1926), *U.S. Steel Quarterly* (1958-68), and *Annual Report* (1969-1979); *New York Times Index*; *International Directory of Company Histories* 9, Paula Kepos, ed. (Washington, D.C.: St. James Press, 1994); *Notable Corporate Chronologies* 2, Susan Martin, ed. (New York: Gale Research Inc., 1995), 1827-1829; *Manhattan Address Directory* (1980, 1986); *Manhattan Office Buildings* (1978, 1983).

25. Among the tenants in the building were a number of transportation companies, including American and Red Star Lines (1901), merged into the International Mercantile Marine Co. in 1902; and in the 1920s-60s, Atlantic Coast Line Railroad Co.; Louisville & Nashville Railroad Co.; and Isthmian Steamship Lines Co. *Manhattan Address Directory* (1929-1986).

26. Fremont Rider, *Rider's New York City: A Guide-book for Travelers* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1923), 159; Henry C. Brown, *Valentine's City of New York: A Guide Book* (New York: Chauncey Holt Co., 1920), 72.

27. Olds, 7.

28. Federal Steel, American Steel & Wire, National Tube, National Steel, American Tin Plate, American Steel Hoop, and American Sheet Steel Companies (and later, American Bridge Co. and Lake Superior Consolidated Iron Mines). American Bridge Co. had significance in New York City in the fabrication (and sometimes construction) of the steel in some of the most famous and prominent structures of the city, including the Hell Gate, Bronx-Whitestone, and Henry Hudson Bridges; Pennsylvania and Grand Central Stations; Yankee Stadium; Marine Air Terminal, LaGuardia Airport; and the United Nations, Empire State, Chrysler, Equitable, Metropolitan Life, Rockefeller Center, Flatiron, Woolworth, and Irving Trust Co. Buildings. U.S. Steel acquired the Shelby Steel Tube, Bessemer Steamship, Union Steel, and Clairton Steel Companies in 1901-04.

29. NYC (Alts. 1974-1928 and 622-1937); N.Y. County; *Crain's New York Business*, Feb. 12, 1996.

30. Blanche Potter, 240.

31. A proposal to reclad the building and replace the windows below the fifth floor was abandoned.

32. The building frontages are 78 feet on Broadway, 50 feet on Trinity Place, and 223 feet on Rector Street.

33. Records at the Dept. of Buildings, in connection with alterations of the Empire Building in the 1930s, indicate that part of the Broadway entrance "portico" and steps extend beyond the lot line.

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 Empire Building has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the richly decorative, neo-classical Empire Building was commissioned in 1895 by the Estate of Orlando B. Potter, designed by [Francis H.] Kimball & [G. Kramer] Thompson, architects in the forefront of early skyscraper design in New York City, and built in 1897-98 by Marc Eidlitz & Son, a noted New York construction firm, in collaboration with prominent foundation engineer Charles Sooysmith; that it is considered one of the finest of the surviving late-nineteenth-century office towers in New York City, and is also significant as one of the earliest, as well as one of the earliest extant, steel skeletal-frame curtain-wall skyscrapers set on pneumatic caissons in the city; that the building, originally 20 stories (plus basement) and clad in rusticated white granite above a polished gray granite base, features the tripartite arrangement of base-shaft-capital common to many of New York's early skyscrapers, with a four-story base, arcaded on the long facade, a triumphal arch entrance on Broadway, a midsection ornamented by bandcourses and balconies, and an upper section with colonnaded loggias and a heavy projecting cornice; that it occupies a highly visible site in Lower Manhattan, located between Broadway and Trinity Place, with a long facade along Rector Street, across from Trinity Church and Graveyard, that adds to the distinction of the building and provides a handsome backdrop for the church; that it was one of the first skyscrapers on the west side of lower Broadway and assisted in transforming the street into the "canyon" of masonry office towers familiar to this day; and that the Empire Building served as the headquarters of the titanic United States Steel Corp. from its formation in 1901 until 1976, the corporation owning the structure from 1919 to 1973, and that alterations to the entrances in the Art Deco style were executed in stainless steel for the corporation by Walker & Gillette in 1937-38.

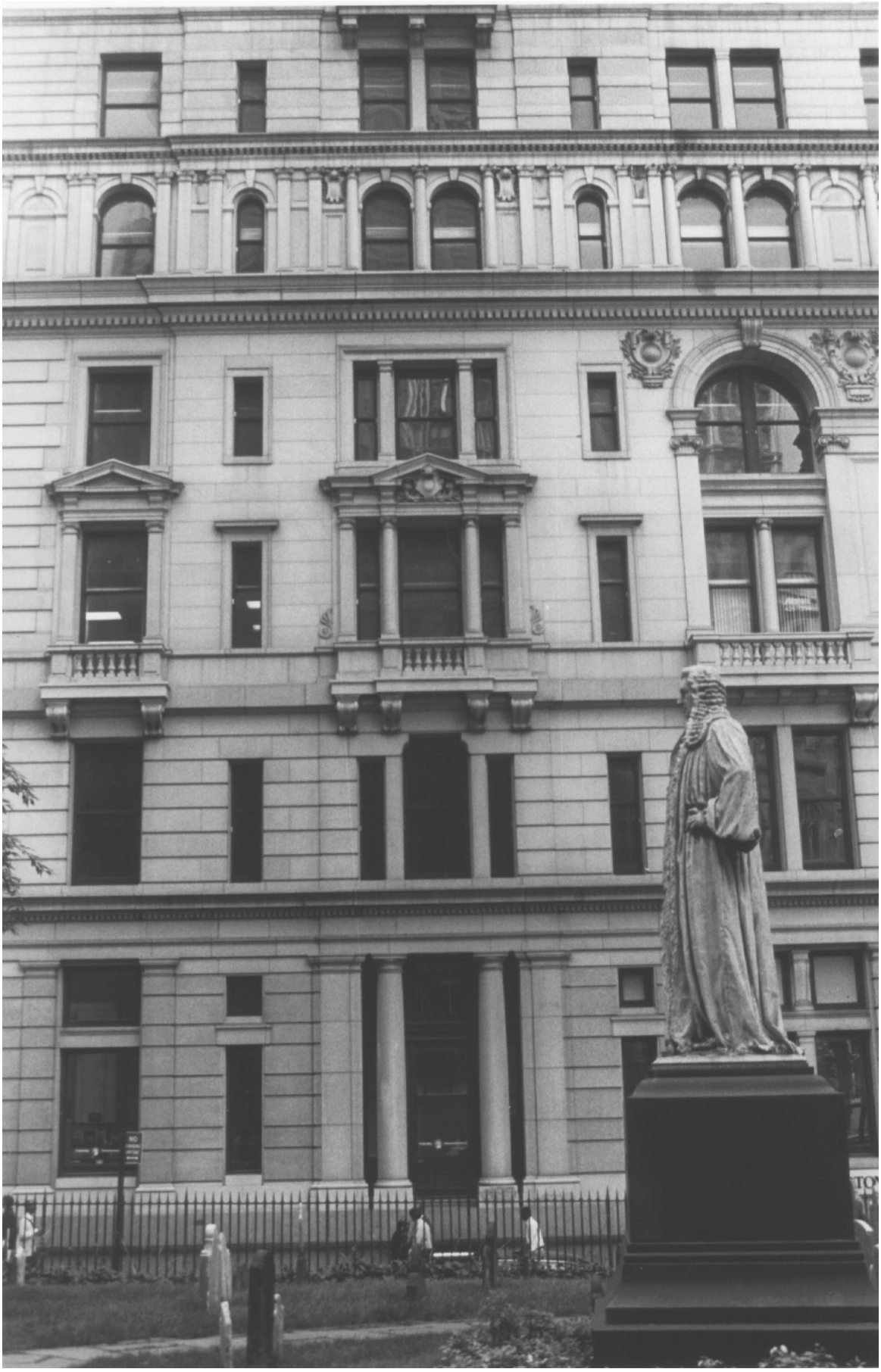
Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Empire Building, 71 Broadway (aka 69-73 Broadway, 1-5 Rector Street, and 51-53 Trinity Place), Borough of Manhattan, and designates Manhattan Tax Map Block 21, Lot 6, and the portions of the adjacent sidewalk on which the described improvement is situated, as its Landmark Site.

Empire Building, Broadway facade
Photo: Carl Forster

Empire Building, Broadway entrance
Photo: Carl Forster

Empire Building, Rector Street facade
Photo: Carl Forster

Empire Building, corner detail at Broadway and Rector Street
Photo: Carl Forster



Empire Building, detail of Rector Street facade
Photo: Carl Forster

Empire Building, detail of upper section
Photo: Carl Forster

Empire Building, Trinity Place facade
Photo: Carl Forster

Empire Building
Landmark Site: Manhattan Tax Map Block 21, Lot 6
Source: Depart of Finance, City Surveyor, Tax Map

Empire Building
Source: Sanborn, *Manhattan Land Book*, (1995-96), pl. 2