

Landmarks Preservation Commission
November 22, 2016, Designation List 490
LP-2579

YALE CLUB OF NEW YORK CITY

50 Vanderbilt Avenue (aka 49-55 East 44th Street), Manhattan
Built 1913-15; architect, James Gamble Rogers

Landmark site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1279, Lot 28

On September 13, 2016, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the Yale Club of New York City and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with provisions of law. Six people spoke in support of designation, including representatives of the Yale Club of New York City, Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer, Historic Districts Council, New York Landmarks Conservancy, and the Municipal Art Society of New York. The Real Estate Board of New York submitted written testimony in opposition to designation. State Senator Brad Hoylman submitted written testimony in support of designation.

Summary

The Yale Club of New York City is a Renaissance Revival-style skyscraper at the northwest corner of Vanderbilt Avenue and East 44th Street. For more than a century it has played an important role in East Midtown, serving the Yale community and providing a handsome and complementary backdrop to Grand Central Terminal. Constructed on property that was once owned by the New York Central Railroad, it stands directly above two levels of train tracks and platforms. This was the ideal location to build the Yale Club, opposite the new terminal, which serves New Haven, where Yale University is located, and at the east end of “clubhouse row.” The architect was James Gamble Rogers, who graduated from Yale College in 1889 and attended the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris during the 1890s. Rogers, who settled in New York City in 1905, produced many significant institutional structures in the United States, including a large group of buildings for his alma mater, as well as at Columbia and New York Universities.



To make certain that the design would blend into “Terminal City” Rogers consulted regularly with the station’s architect Warren & Wetmore, choosing complementary materials and ornament. The base of the 22-story tripartite clubhouse is faced with Indiana limestone, the middle floors tan face brick and the uppermost floors, where the main dining room is located, glazed terra cotta. An impressively-detailed stone and copper cornice crowns both street elevations. For the base, which contains the club’s main lounge, library and grill room, Rogers may have drawn inspiration from the Palazzo Massimo alle Colonne in Rome, by architect-painter Baldassarre Peruzzi, which shares similar stonework and fenestration.

BUILDING DESCRIPTION

The Yale Club of New York City is a 22-story (plus four mezzanines¹) building at the northwest corner of Vanderbilt Avenue and East 44th Street. The street facades are clad with granite, limestone, tan brick, unglazed and glazed terra cotta; secondary facades are clad with red brick and limestone. Above the second floor, it has an L-shaped footprint, with a light court in the northwest corner. The west facade, partly visible from Madison Avenue and East 44th Street, has no windows. The light court is not visible from the street.

Vanderbilt Avenue facade

Historic features: Copper awning with classical-style details hung by metal poles, entrance step, five gridded bronze window grilles over double-hung windows, secondary (north) entrance with glazed door, bronze Nathan Hale plaque at south end, masonry (or concrete) pavers curve upward to meet granite water table, arched and rectangular multi-pane wood frame windows, second-story planters, cartouches, Latin text in metal letters, stone balustrades, keystones, metal balconies, stone balconies on 18th floor, projecting stone-and-copper roof cornice.

Alterations: Skirt hung from awning, awning above secondary (north) entrance, finials removed from awning, heaters and lighting beneath awning, revolving bronze glazed doors, transom and trim (c. 1975-94), handicap signage, railings at main entrance and widened front step (c. 1994), standpipe and awning adjacent to secondary entrance, some replacement windows behind window grilles, security cameras at north and south ends of base, two flagpoles relocated to project from third-story belt course, louvers in 4th (mezzanine), 5th and 6th-story window openings, aluminum double-hung windows on 7th to 19th floors.

East 44th Street facade

Historic features: Pilasters flanking service entrance, grille above service entrance; 2nd story arches incorporate small multi-pane windows; blind stone arches and knee walls on west side, convex glass panes in some 4th story windows; projecting stone balconies on 18th floor, projecting stone-and-copper roof cornice, west facade with brick and terra-cotta quoining on south side.

Alterations: Emergency lights and security cameras, standpipe, vents, upper floor balconies, metal-and-glass storefronts with recessed entrances and security gates, lighting fixture above service entrance, service entrance doors, horizontal louvers installed in window openings on various floors, some brickwork replaced, aluminum double-hung windows, 7th to 19th floors.

Roof

Historic features: One-story copper-clad solarium, three-story copper-clad passenger elevator bulkhead, three-story copper-and-brick-clad freight elevator bulkhead, wrought-iron railing with club logo surrounds roof terrace.

Alterations: Freight elevator bulkhead enlarged to east, cooling equipment, steel pipe railings, mechanical equipment, solarium enlarged to east, built-in bar, awnings, pavers, non-historic lighting fixtures, emergency signage and conduits.

West facade

Historic features: Red brick, limestone and terra-cotta returns from East 44th Street facade.

Alterations: None.

Light court

Historic features: Tan brick, steel fire escape stairs.

Alterations: Mechanical units, metal ducts, replacement windows, brick repairs.

HISTORY

Evolution of East Midtown²

In 1831, the recently-established New York & Harlem Railroad signed an agreement with New York State permitting the operation of steam locomotives on Fourth (now Park) Avenue, from 23rd Street to the Harlem River. Five years later, in 1836, several important street openings occurred in East Midtown. These included 42nd Street, Lexington Avenue and Madison Avenue. Initially, trains ran at grade, sharing Fourth Avenue with pedestrians and vehicles. In 1856, locomotives were banned below 42nd Street – the site of a maintenance barn and fuel lot. Though rail passengers continued south by horse car, this decision set the stage for East Midtown to become an important transit hub.

Cornelius Vanderbilt acquired control of the New York & Harlem, Hudson River, and the New York Central Railroads in 1863-67. Under his direction, a single terminal for the three railroads was planned and built, known as Grand Central Depot (1868-71, demolished). It was a large structure, consisting of an L-shaped head-house inspired by the Louvre in Paris, with entrances on 42nd Street and Vanderbilt Avenue, as well as a 652-foot-long train shed. The area immediately north, mainly between 45th and 49th Streets, served as a train yard. Traversed by pedestrian and vehicular bridges, this busy facility occupied an irregularly-shaped site that extended from Lexington to Madison Avenue.

The earliest surviving buildings in midtown are residences in Murray Hill, directly south of 42nd Street. An 1847 covenant stipulated that all houses be built with brick and stone and many handsome ones survive, particularly east of Park Avenue. Following the Civil War, residential development continued up Fifth Avenue, transforming the area between St. Patrick's Cathedral (1853-88) and Central Park (begun 1857, both are New York City Landmarks). Though most of the large mansions – many owned by members of the Vanderbilt family – have been lost, other impressive residences survive on the side streets, between Park and Fifth Avenues. New York City Landmarks in the east 50s include: The Villard Houses (1883-85), William & Ada Moore House (1898-1900), Morton & Nellie Plant House (1903-05), and the Fiske Harkness House (1871/1906).

In 1902, 15 railroad passengers were killed in a rear-end collision in the Park Avenue Tunnel, near 56th Street. In response to this tragic accident, William J. Wilgus, chief engineer of the New York Central Railroad, proposed that not only should steam locomotives be eliminated from Manhattan but that the terminal be expanded and completely rebuilt. The city agreed and Grand Central Terminal (a New York City Landmark and Interior Landmark) was completed in February 1913.

Wilgus envisioned the terminal as part of a city-within-the-city, knitted together by more than two dozen buildings constructed above the newly-submerged rail tracks. Faced with tan brick and limestone, these handsome neo-classical style buildings formed an understated backdrop to the monumental Beaux-Arts style terminal. A key example is the New York Central Building, a New York City Landmark and Interior Landmark. Erected by the railroad in 1927-29, it stands directly above the tracks and incorporates two archways that direct automobile traffic towards the Park Avenue Viaduct (1917-19, a New York City Landmark).

The new terminal and subway attracted considerable commercial development to East Midtown, especially near 42nd Street, the original route of the IRT subway. Most of these buildings date to the 1910s and 1920s. In contrast to the aesthetics that shaped Terminal City, these distinctive skyscrapers frequently incorporate unusual terra-cotta ornamentation inspired

by medieval (and later, Art Deco) sources. Memorable examples include: the Bowery Savings Bank Building (1921-23, 1931-33) and the Chanin Building (1927-29, both are New York City Landmarks).

In 1918, subway service was extended up Lexington Avenue, north of 42nd Street. Though Terminal City had been planned with several hotels, such as the Biltmore and Commodore (both have been re-clad), additional rooms were needed. A substantial number of hotels would rise on Lexington Avenue, between 47th and 50th Streets, including the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel (1929-32) and the Summit Hotel (1959-61, both are New York City Landmarks).

Following the end of the Second World War, the New York Central Railroad struggled with debt and entered a significant period of decline. In response, it began to terminate lot leases and sell off real estate properties. The impact of the situation was most powerfully felt on Park Avenue. Apartment buildings and hotels were quickly replaced by an influx of glassy office towers, with such pioneering mid-20th century Modern works as Lever House (1949-52, a New York City Landmark) and the Seagram Building (1954-56, a New York City Landmark and Interior Landmark). The success of these and other projects helped make Park Avenue (and East Midtown) one of Manhattan's most prestigious corporate addresses.

The Yale Club of New York City

The first social club in New York City to commission its own building was the Union Club (now demolished) in 1855. Designed by T. Thomas & Son, it stood on the northwest corner of Fifth Avenue and 21st Street until about 1903. Italianate in design, this free-standing three-story structure resembled the Travelers (1830) and Reform Clubs (1837) in London. Subsequent Manhattan clubhouses included the Harmonie Club (1867, demolished), the first building erected for the Century Association (1869, a New York City Landmark), and the Union League (1879-81, demolished).

Many Yale alumni were involved in the founding of the University Club in 1865, which, for a short time, leased a furnished house on East 10th Street, between University Place and Broadway.³ The Yale Alumni Association of New York was founded three years later in March 1868. It was succeeded by the Yale Club of New York City in 1897, which met in a row house (formerly the Lambs club) on the north side of Madison Square at 17 East 26th Street (demolished). This new organization grew quickly and in 1900 the membership voted to acquire a mid-block site on West 44th Street, in the heart of the developing clubhouse district.

Manhattan's clubhouse district began to form in the late 1880s. On West 43rd and 44th Streets, mainly between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, clubs that catered to Manhattan's male elite began to replace stables and row houses, such as the Berkeley Athletic Club (1887-88, demolished) and the Century Association (1889-91, a New York City Landmark). Subsequent clubs included the Harvard Club (begun 1893-94, a New York City Landmark), Association of the Bar of the City of New York (1895-96, a New York City Landmark), New York Yacht Club (1899-1900, a New York City Landmark), City Club (1902-04), and the Lambs (1904-05, 1915, a New York City Landmark). These organizations transformed the area's character, attracting many fashionable restaurants and hotels.

The Yale Club moved to 30-32 West 44th Street (now the Penn Club of New York, a New York City Landmark) in May 1901. Faced with red brick and limestone, the 11-story, 50-foot-wide structure was designed in the Beaux-Arts style by Evarts Tracy and Edgerton Swartwout, both Yale graduates. As one of the first high-rise clubhouses in New York City, it stood taller than any structure on the block. About half the floors were leased to alumni as bachelor

apartments, which was viewed as a “wise means of meeting the expenses of the new building.”⁴ The upper floors, like the current Yale Club, contained various dining rooms. In 1912, the *Yale Alumni Weekly* observed: “It is a story of success, increasing in importance as the club has grown into its present and third stage. Taking the place, as a social club, of the original Alumni Association of New York, the Yale Club has become a permanent and all-the-year-round necessity.”⁵

Site

The West 44th Street building had a significant impact on the Yale Club. Over the next decade, membership nearly tripled, from 1,270 to 3,250. *The New York Times* reported in 1912 that the building was too small and “the prospect of removal has been discussed informally for some time.”⁶

A building committee, initially headed by insurance executive George E. Ide, was organized in 1910.⁷ Several sites in midtown Manhattan were considered, with the most promising one offered by the New York Central Railroad, on the northwest corner of Vanderbilt Avenue and East 44th Street.⁸ Not only was this location steps from the trains that serve New Haven, where Yale University is located, but it could also be viewed as a gateway to the club district. Franklin D. W. Glazier, a Yale alumnus, would later comment: “A Yale man in New York could scarcely avoid passing the Yale Club if he wanted to. This is the advantage of the location. The disadvantages are not important, since they have been overcome; they are worthy of note only in so far as they have influenced the design of the building.”⁹

Negotiations with the railroad were mostly finalized by May 1912 but the lease was not signed until June 1913. It was a 21-year agreement, with multiple options for renewal. According to William H. Newman, the railroad’s former president, Yale would become part of “a hotel, club and semi-public building centre” adjoining the new terminal.¹⁰ To attract “proper” tenants to “Terminal City” the railroad had purportedly kept rents “notably low.”¹¹ Described in the *Evening Post* as “surplus property,” the new clubhouse would stand directly above two sunken levels of active railroad tracks and platforms. Like the Biltmore Hotel (demolished), which began construction in 1912, the lease required that “that there be no projections of any kind below a certain given level. This condition necessitated designing special steel and providing many holes in structural members to accommodate the plumbing pipes for drainage of the basement.”¹² The New York Central Railroad also agreed to supply the club’s heat, electricity, and water.¹³

Architect

James Gamble Rogers (1867-1947) received the commission in May 1912.¹⁴ Like the designers of Yale’s previous clubhouse, he was an alumnus, having graduated from the college with a Bachelors of Arts degree in 1889.¹⁵ Rogers had worked briefly with the Chicago architect-engineer William Le Baron Jenney, a pioneer in skyscraper construction, and later attended the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris during 1892-98. Upon his return, Rogers established an office in Chicago. Though he initially specialized in residential work, he received several school commissions, as well as his first clubhouse, a Medieval Revival style design for the McCormack Reaper Works (1904). Rogers settled in New York City about 1905, partnering briefly with architect Herbert D. Hale (1866-1908).¹⁶ At the time, Hale was overseeing two projects in midtown Manhattan: the 10-story James McCreery & Company Stores Building (1907) on West 34th Street and the 12-story Engineering Societies Building (1907) at 29 West 39th Street.

Following Hale's unanticipated retirement, Rogers worked on a number of high-profile projects, including a Renaissance Revival style mansion for philanthropist Edward S. Harkness (1908, part of the Upper East Side Historic District), who would become his most important client, as well as a group of monumental civic structures in Memphis (1909), New Orleans (1913) and New Haven (1914). In Memphis, he also designed the 18-story Central Bank and Trust Company Building (1910-12).

The Yale Club was Gamble's first commission related to his alma mater. In subsequent years, he designed numerous buildings on the school's campus, such as the Harkness Memorial Quadrangle (1921), School of Law (1931), University Theatre (1931) and Sterling Memorial Library (1931), as well as buildings at Northwestern University in Illinois. In New York City, where he maintained an office for four decades, he designed the Mannes College of Music (1919), School of Education at New York University (1929-30) and Butler Library at Columbia University (1934), as well as various buildings at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center (1921-28). These educational structures are generally variations of the Renaissance and Gothic Revival styles. According to historian Aaron Betsky, Rogers "appropriated historical types and transformed them into lucid representations of the institutions they housed."¹⁷

Construction

Plans for the new clubhouse were developed during 1912. Though illustrations of the various floors were published in the *Yale Alumni Weekly* in November 1912, Rogers was not officially identified as the building's architect until late December. With the drawings "practically complete," *The Sun* reported that his design would be a building of "comparatively simple style which marks it distinctively as a clubhouse as well as a building of great artistic merit."¹⁸

Rogers filed plans with the Bureau of Buildings in July 1913 (NB 342-13) and ground was broken in March 1914. The railroad built the foundations¹⁹ and Marc Eidlitz & Sons, who worked on the previous Yale clubhouse and many notable Manhattan structures, served as general contractor. At this time, Otto and Robert J. Eidlitz headed the firm. By July 1914, the steel had been erected, as well as about half the masonry.²⁰ The exterior, including the elaborate cornice, was mostly complete by October 1914.²¹ Geo. Brown & Co., Newark, New Jersey, supplied the cut stone and Wells Architectural Ironworks Co., the Bronx, produced the decorative metalwork, such as the balconies.²² The Atlantic Terra-Cotta Company, Staten Island, manufactured the window trim, entablature, and possibly the decorative panels that embellish the uppermost floors.

The clubhouse opened in June 1915. Twenty-two stories tall, the \$1.25 million fireproof structure contained 140 single rooms, as well as 11 suites. *The Hartford Courant* called it "splendid . . . it surpasses in architecture the much-admired University Club."²³ Journalists paid considerable attention to the size of the building and its height. Some writers, perhaps correctly, reported that Yale was the largest clubhouse in the world. *The New York Tribune* called it a "high class oasis" and *The New York Times* reported:

. . . New York has once more found satisfaction for its passion for superlatives. This splendid new home of the Yale Club of New York City, which will prove, it is hoped, a sort of focal point for the sons of Eli from all parts of the country, is the largest building in the world devoted to club purposes. With its twenty-one stories it can justly lay claim to the rather overworked title of skyscraper.²⁴

Design

As an early part of “Terminal City,” the Yale Club’s design complemented the new railroad station. Contemporary descriptions not only viewed the site as part of the yard, but as located in “Grand Central Plaza” or “Terminal Plaza.” To make certain Rogers’ design would fit into the developing streetscape, he consulted regularly with the architects Warren & Wetmore, the firm that designed the terminal and the neighboring Hotel Biltmore (1913-14, re-clad).

The Chicago Tribune reported in January 1914 that the design was “approved by the architects of the Grand Central, to make sure that the new building would not be out of harmony with the Grand Central station, the Biltmore hotel, and other surrounding structures.”²⁵ Likewise, the *Brooklyn Eagle* remarked, the group of structures “will form a dignified and attractive commencement of the development of this new plaza.”²⁶ As construction progressed, *The New York Times* praised the “attractive facade,” particularly how it “harmonizes sufficiently in color and dignity to preserve an architectural unity in the appearance of the block front.”²⁷ In September 1915, journalist Marrion Wilcox published an illustrated essay about the structure in *The Architectural Record*. He wrote: “we appreciate the Yale Club building as a well-designed part, eventually a small part, of an architectural unit that may prove to be of the very first importance in the harmonious development of the city.”²⁸

To accomplish such goals, Rogers chose similar ornament and materials. Like many early 20th century high-rises, especially those built before the First World War, the club was designed in the Renaissance Revival style. It has tripartite elevations: the base is faced with Indiana limestone, the middle floors with tan face brick and terra-cotta trim,²⁹ the uppermost floors with mainly terra cotta. Wilcox called it “a simple and dignified neo-classical design, decidedly Italian in spirit, with colonial modifications.”³⁰ Rogers may have drawn inspiration from the Palazzo Massimo alle Colonne (1532-36) in Rome, a late Renaissance or early Mannerist work by the architect-painter Baldassarre Peruzzi. Though the palazzo was hardly tall, both structures incorporate Tuscan pilasters laid over shallow rusticated stonework, as well as fenestration that differs on each floor. Furthermore, some of the windows with a horizontal orientation have similar surrounds.³¹

The club’s primary facade faces Vanderbilt Avenue. It has a symmetrical arrangement, with the main entrance originally covered by a glass awning with copper trim. The second floor, containing the main lounge, has seven bays with large, deeply-recessed, arched windows. Above the center window, aligned with the entrance, is a cartouche inscribed with the university logo, a book with Hebrew words. Between the second and third floors is a simple cornice engraved with the school motto, a Latin phrase, LVX ET VERITAS, translated as truth and light. The third, fourth and fifth floors have triple-height pilasters that alternate with rectangular windows, some with balustrades and metal balconies. These floors contain the grill room, billiard room, library, and athletic facilities.

A projecting stone cornice, with denticulated moldings and lion heads at the far ends, divides the base from the middle floors, where the bedrooms were described as having “undisputed control of all the floors from the seventh to the seventeenth, inclusive.”³² The height of the cornice, 80 feet above the sidewalk, was, purportedly, a requirement and aligns with that of the neighboring Vanderbilt Concourse Building.³³ To connect these floors visually to the base, the lowest windows display slightly more ornament, including more elaborate surrounds, rectangular relief panels, and pediments. In contrast to the unassuming treatment of the middle floors, the top is richly decorated with glazed terra cotta. Crowned by a substantial copper cornice, the 20th floor, where the main dining room is situated, has arched windows and fluted

Corinthian columns. Glazier commented: “The general effect is pleasing. It is quiet and in good scale. The detail is excellent and the ornament is well modelled.”³⁴ These upper rooms, as well as a roof-garden (solarium), were described as offering a “superb view over all the island, the rivers, the surrounding country.”³⁵

Along East 44th Street, the first story also contains several stores, as well as, at the west end, the club’s service entrance. This arrangement was stipulated in the original lease, to reduce deliveries and “teaming traffic on Vanderbilt Avenue.”³⁶ Flanked by fluted metal pilasters, this entrance leads to the west side of the first floor and towards the service and freight elevators.

Later History

A week of “house warming” events took place in early November 1915, including a “Ladies Day,” when an estimated “2,500 women – debutantes, wives and grandmothers – inspected it from the ground floor to the roof garden. The unanimous verdict was described in *The New York Tribune* as “perfectly adorable.”³⁷

In 1939, a separate “women’s dining room and service bar” was established on the 22nd floor but three decades would pass before membership was opened to women in summer 1969 – the year that Yale College went coed.³⁸ At the time, the club had 6,000 members and the board’s vote was 35 to 15. Wider privileges, however, including use of the main dining room, bar and some athletic facilities remained limited until 1974.

Few changes have been made to the understated exteriors. In 1963, as part of the Historic American Buildings Survey, architect John Barrington Bayley described the structure as “A chief example of an American plan type – the skyscraper [sic] club house – executed with the highest distinction in the elegant and refined taste of the epoch.”³⁹ Author John Tauranac included the Yale Club in his 1979 book *Essential New York*. He observed that it was “topped by one of New York’s greatest cornices” and was the “best preserved” of various “modernized Italian Renaissance” structures in Terminal City.⁴⁰ Architectural historian Henry Hope Reed wrote in 1988: “Yale alumni obtained a beautiful building by Rogers, the architect who came to design many of the buildings at Yale . . . Certainly this club building is among his best work.”⁴¹

During the early 1970s, the bankrupt Penn Central Transportation Company, successor to the New York Central and Pennsylvania Railroads, which merged in 1968, sought permission to sell 24 properties in Manhattan. Though many bids were rejected by the United States District Court because the “price of liquidation was too great,” in 1976 the club was able to purchase the land beneath the building for \$1.25 million.⁴²

The Yale Club of New York presently has more than 11,000 members. Mostly Yale graduates, it also welcomes alumni from Dartmouth College (since 1974) and the University of Virginia (since 1995), as well as members of the Delta Kappa Epsilon Fraternity (since 1932).

Researched and written by
Matthew A. Postal
Research Department

NOTES

-
- ¹ See “History of Yale Club of New York City,” (New York: Yale Club, 1914), 51.
- ² This section is mostly based on designation reports prepared by members of the research staff at the Landmarks Preservation Commission. Also see Kurt C. Schlichting, *Grand Central Terminal* (John Hopkins University Press, 2003), Robert A. M. Stern and others, *New York 1880: Architecture and Urbanism in the Gilded Age* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1999), Robert A. M. Stern and others, *New York 1900: Metropolitan Architecture and Urbanism* (New York: Rizzoli Books, 1983) and Robert A. M. Stern and others, *New York 1930: Architecture and Urbanism Between Two World Wars* (New York Rizzoli Books, 1987).
- ³ James W. Alexander, “A History of the University Club,” (New York: Charles Scriber & Sons, 1915), 12, 16, viewed at googlebooks.com
- ⁴ Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Yale Club of New York City Building (now Penn Club of New York)*, (LP-2379), prepared by Jay Shockley (New York: City of New York, 2010), 5.
- ⁵ “The New York Yale Club Clubhouse,” *Yale Alumni Weekly*, November 1, 1912, 152, viewed at googlebooks.com
- ⁶ “Yale Club Offered New Plot,” *The New York Times*, February 21, 1912, 16.
- ⁷ “Yale Club to Have New 20-Story Home,” *The New York Times*, May 4, 1912, 6.
- ⁸ “Yale Club Offered New Plot;” “Yale Club About To Move,” *The Evening Post*, February 20, 1912, 3; “New Site for Yale Club,” *The Brooklyn Eagle*, February 21, 1912, 22. The Yale Club also considered purchasing the site the Racquet & Tennis Club building (demolished) on West 43rd Street. See “Yale Club Would Move,” *The New York Tribune*, February 21, 1912, 5.
- ⁹ Franklin D. W. Glazier, “The New Yale Club,” *The Yale Alumni Weekly*, October 29, 1915, 165.
- ¹⁰ “Yale Club To Have New \$1,000,000 Home,” *The Sun*, May 4, 1912, 3.
- ¹¹ “Gotham Terminal, Using Electricity, Model for Cities,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 30, 1914, 1.
- ¹² “Yale Club Plumbing Work,” *Architecture and Building*, Vol. XLVII (December 1915), 428.
- ¹³ “Notable Improvements in Terminal Zone,” *Record and Guide*, April 11, 1914, 658.
- ¹⁴ Glazier, 179.
- ¹⁵ “James G. Rogers, Architect, Is Dead,” *The New York Times*, October 2, 1947, 27.
- ¹⁶ “Herbert D. Hale Dead,” *The New York Times*, November 11, 1908, viewed at nytimes.com
- ¹⁷ Aaron Betsky, *James Gamble Rogers and the Architecture of Pragmatism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 39.
- ¹⁸ “Yale Club’s New Home Will Be A Model Building,” *The Sun*, December 29, 1912, RE1.
- ¹⁹ “Gotham Terminal, Using Electricity;” also see “Grand Central Terminal,” *The Wall Street Journal*, June 8, 1912, 2. This brief article reported that the club would be “the next important structure with which the Central will utilize its “air rights.””
- ²⁰ Photograph, *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, July 12, 1914, 15.
- ²¹ Photograph, *Atlantic Terra Cotta Co.*, October 1914, not paginated, viewed at googlebooks.com
- ²² “Yale Club,” *Architecture and Building* (December 1915), 455, viewed at googlebooks.com
- ²³ “New York’s Yale Club,” *Hartford Courant*, July 11, 1915, x1.
- ²⁴ “Yale Men in Skyscraper Class,” *The New York Tribune*, June 6, 1915, 6; “Yale’s New Skyscraper Club,” *The New York Times*, July 11, 1915, SM12.
- ²⁵ “Gotham Terminal, Using Electricity.”
- ²⁶ “Yale Club’s New Home,” *The Brooklyn Eagle*, June 16, 1913, 2.

- ²⁷ “Clear Site For Brooks Building,” *The New York Times*, November 8, 1914, XX1.
- ²⁸ Marrion Wilcox, “The Yale Club’s New House,” *Architectural Record* (September 1915), 338, viewed at googlebooks.com
- ²⁹ “Structural Substitution,” *Atlantic Terra Cotta* (October 1914), not paginated, fig. 11, viewed at googlebooks.com
- ³⁰ Wilcox, 311.
- ³¹ Wilcox claimed this Roman palace supplied a “model” for the lounge interior, 315.
- ³² “New Home of New York’s Yale Club,” *The Real Estate Magazine* (November 1915), 65.
- ³³ Glazier, 168.
- ³⁴ Glazier, 168.
- ³⁵ Wilcox, 318.
- ³⁶ Lease, New York Central and Harlem River Railroad Company and Yale Leasing Corp, June 1, 1913, New York City Surveyor’s Office.
- ³⁷ “No. 2’s Tap Rail In Yale Club Bar,” *The New York Tribune*, November 17, 1915, 6.
- ³⁸ John Steinbreder, *The History of the Yale Club of New York City* (Legendary Publishing Group, 2014), 82.
- ³⁹ HABS, Yale Club files, New York Landmarks Preservation Commission.
- ⁴⁰ John Tauranac, *Essential New York* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), 144.
- ⁴¹ Edmund V. Gillon Jr. and Henry Hope Reed, *Beaux-Arts Architecture in New York: A Photographic Guide* (New York: Dover Publications, 1988), 44.
- ⁴² “Pennsy Seeks Permission to Sell Yale Club Building,” *The New York Times*, October 9, 1976, 29.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, architecture, and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Yale Club of New York City has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, history, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

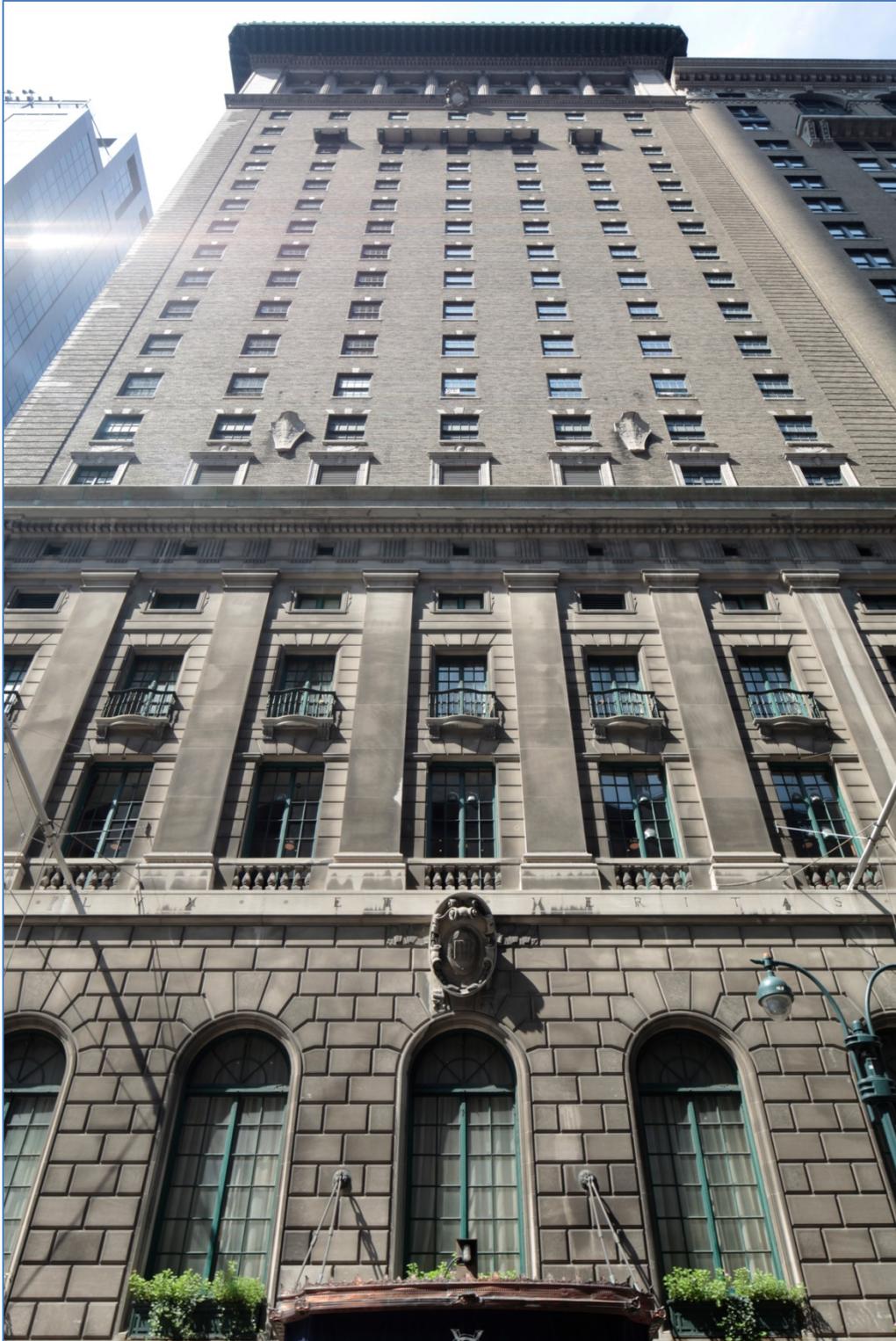
The Commission further finds that the Yale Club of New York City is a Renaissance Revival-style skyscraper; that for more than a century it has played an important role in the East Midtown section of Manhattan; that it serves the Yale community and provides a handsome and complementary backdrop to Grand Central Terminal; that it was constructed on property that was once owned by the New York Central Railroad; that it stands directly above two levels of train tracks and platforms; that this site was the ideal location to build the Yale Club, opposite Grand Central Terminal, which serves New Haven, where Yale University is located, and at the east end of clubhouse row; that the architect was James Gamble Rogers, who graduated from Yale College in 1889 and attended the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris during the 1890s; that Rogers, who settled in New York City in 1905, produced many significant institutional structures in the United States, including a large group of buildings for his alma mater, as well as at Columbia and New York Universities; that to make certain the design would blend into “Terminal City” Rogers consulted regularly with Warren & Wetmore, the station’s architect, choosing complementary materials and ornament; that the base of the 22-story tripartite clubhouse is faced with Indiana limestone, the middle floors with tan face brick, and the uppermost floors, where the main dining room is located, glazed terra cotta; that an impressively-detailed stone and copper cornice crowns both street elevations; and that for the base, which contains the club’s main lounge, library and grill room, Rogers may have drawn inspiration from the Palazzo Massimo alle Colonne in Rome, by the 16th-century architect-painter Baldassare Peruzzi, which shares similar stonework and fenestration.

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 Yale Club of New York City, 50 Vanderbilt Avenue (aka 49-55 East 44th Street), and designates Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1279, Lot 28, as its Landmark Site.

Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair
Diana Chapin, Wellington Chen
Michael Devonshire, Michael Goldblum, John Gustafsson
Adi Shamir-Baron, Kim Vauss, Commissioners



Yale Club of New York City
50 Vanderbilt Avenue (aka 49-55 East 44th Street)
Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1279, Lot 28
Photo: Sarah Moses, 2016



Yale Club of New York City
Vanderbilt Avenue facade
Photo: Sarah Moses, 2016



Yale Club of New York City
Vanderbilt Avenue facade
Photo: Sarah Moses, 2016



Yale Club of New York City
East 44th Street storefronts | Vanderbilt Avenue base
Photos: Sarah Moses, 2016



Graphic Source: MapRUTO, Edition 10v1, Author: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, DHW, Date: 11.22.2016