



THE ADVOCATE FOR NEW YORK CITY'S HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS

March 5, 2025

Sarah Carroll, Chair  
Landmarks Preservation Commission  
1 Centre Street, 9th floor  
New York, NY 10007

**Re: Requests for Evaluation in Rose Hill and Kips Bay, Manhattan**

Dear Chair Carroll,

The Historic Districts Council partnered with the Rose Hill/Kips Bay Coalition via our 2024 Six to Celebrate program. HDC and the Coalition surveyed Manhattan's Rose Hill and Kips Bay neighborhoods in order to identify significant, undesignated properties that we believe merit designation as Individual or Interior Landmarks. Today, as a result of that survey work, we enclose 7 Requests for Evaluation for the following sites:

**Proposed for Individual Landmark Status:**

- **400 First Avenue** - The former "Institute for the Crippled and Disabled"
- **23 Lexington Avenue** - The former George Washington Hotel
- **346 Park Avenue South** - The Provident Loan Society
- **152 East 34th Street** - The Armenian Evangelical Church
- **207 East 32nd Street** - The former Milton Glaser Studio Building

**Proposed for Individual Landmark and Interior Landmark Status:**

- **149 East 23rd Street** - The Madison Square Post Office

Together, these buildings tell a diverse set of stories and reflect a variety of uses. We are excited to detail these histories in the enclosed RFEs, and look forward to working with you as the designation process continues.

Sincerely,

Frampton Tolbert  
Executive Director

## Request for Evaluation of 400 1st Avenue, Manhattan, as an Individual Landmark



### SUMMARY

400 First Avenue was built in 1931 as “The Institute for the Crippled and Disabled” (ICD). Designed as an industrial structure in the Art Deco - Art Moderne Style by the noted firm Voorhees, Gmelin and Walker, 400 First Avenue was purpose-built to provide vocational training, recreation, and employment services to disabled people. The building is notable for its early embrace of what we would now call universal design, and stands as a testament to disability history both nationally and locally. Today, the building remains an active part of that history as the current home of

721M Manhattan Occupational Training Center and offices for “District 75” a program within the New York City Public school system that offers specialized instructional support programs for students with disabilities and specific needs.

### INITIAL DEVELOPMENT

During WWI, the financier [Jeremiah Millbank](#) began funding “[The Institute for Crippled and Disabled Men](#)” via The American Red Cross. At the time, the Institute helped disabled servicemen re-enter civilian life through vocational training and job placement. [In 1928](#), the Institute broadened its scope to include women, and changed its name to “The Institute for the Crippled and Disabled.” [In 1931](#), Millbank, who had also helped found the Boys and Girls Club of America, and was active in the fight against diphtheria and polio, financed the building at 400 1st Avenue. This structure allowed ICD to expand its services 3-fold.

The building’s simple, industrial form and massing reflect its original focus on offering disabled people vocational training and



employment services, which corresponded with then-prevailing attitudes about disability, which held that “rehabilitation” referred specifically to “vocational rehabilitation,” so that disabled people could gain [“self respect and self-support”](#) by becoming “income producing” rather than “dependent.”



Accordingly, the building originally housed work rooms, vocational classrooms, recreation rooms, an employment bureau, and a dormitory floor consisting of 24 sleeping quarters for people traveling to the Institute from outside of New York City.

The building’s materials and design also reflect its role as an institutional building of the Art Deco - Art Moderne style. The

building is constructed in redbrick, and the brick itself forms the decoration and visual signature of the structure. Situated at the corner of 23rd Street and First Avenue, the building’s street facing facades are each divided into four bays by strong vertical piers of textured brick, punctuated by horizontal brick bands with recessed brick decoration. Each bay features horizontal ribbon windows.

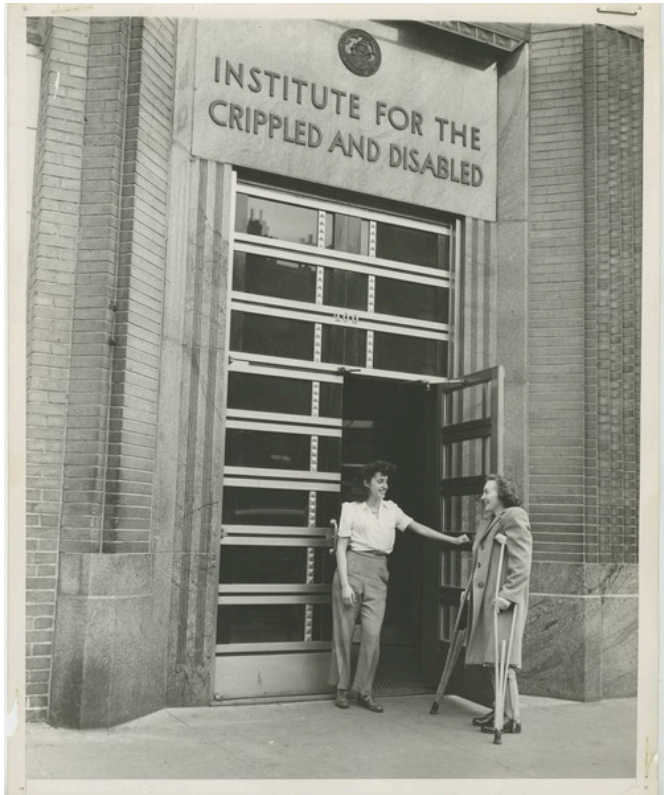
## ARCHITECTS

400 First Avenue was designed by Ralph Walker (1889-1973), of the noted firm Voorhees, Gmelin and Walker. Walker, one of the preeminent designers of Art Deco skyscrapers, was named [“Architect of the Century”](#) by the American Institute of Architects in 1957. His work includes the Barclay Vesey Building at 140 West Street (1923-26, Individual and Interior Landmark); the Western Union Building, at 60 Hudson Street (1928-30, Individual and Interior Landmark), an extension and rebuilding of the Long Distance Building of AT&T at 32 Sixth Avenue (1930-32, Individual and Interior





Landmark); and 1 Wall Street (1929- 31, Individual and Interior Landmark). During his career, Walker worked almost exclusively for corporate clients. This building stands out in his oeuvre for its non-profit purpose.



### THE “INSTITUTE FOR THE CRIPPLED AND DISABLED”

When the “Institute for Crippled Men” was established in 1917 to aid veterans of the First World War, it stood out as the [first “comprehensive rehabilitation agency” in the country](#). At the time, “rehabilitation” was a new field. Its [stated mission was](#) “to assist crippled persons to become self-supporting; to prevent dependence on public charity, and to promote general interest in the problem of the disabled.”

By the Second World War, the Institute was affiliated with New York University, and had added medical and physical rehabilitation services to its purview. The Army and the VA, aware that the scope of the war would injure and disable a large number of veterans, [asked](#) the Institute to help train doctors, nurses and other specialists in

rehabilitation services. Accordingly, the Institute ran courses for doctors, nurses, psychologists, and guidance workers. This training brought rehabilitation services to hospitals and clinics across the country, and helped lay the foundation for rehabilitation services in the United States more broadly.

In this period, ICD was already advocating for legislation in support of people with disabilities, (an effort the Milbank family would [continue to pursue](#) up to and including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.)

In 1962 ICD and NYU Medical Center created [ICD Research Laboratories](#) at 340 East 24th Street. The lab was dedicated to research in a broad spectrum of topics related to disability including neurology, artificial limbs and sensory perception.

By the early 1970s, ICD changed its name to [“The ICD Research and Rehabilitation Center,”](#) then to the [“International Center for the Disabled”](#) and finally to the [“Institute for Career Development,”](#) harkening back to its original focus on vocational training and job placement.

The Institute for Career Development, located most recently on William Street in Lower Manhattan, offered high school transition services, fully accessible GED preparation and testing, certification-based career training,



and employment services until September 27th, 2024, when it was forced to close its doors due to insufficient funding.

## TODAY

Today, 400 First Avenue is City-owned, and serves as the home of office space for [“District 75”](#) a program within the New York City Public school system that offers specialized instructional support programs for students with disabilities and specific needs. The District 75 school 721M Manhattan Occupational Training Center is also located in the building.



## CONCLUSION

As a physical testament to disability history, and an early example of accessible design, 400 First Avenue deserves designation not only for its architectural merit, but also for its role in the ongoing history of disability advocacy and equitable design in America.

Given that the Institute’s most recent iteration, The Institute for Career Development, was forced to close its doors in Fall 2024, this Winter of 2025 is a particularly meaningful time to designate 400 First Avenue. The designation would honor ICD’s 107 years of service, and make this vital but under-represented history available to the public.

## Request for Evaluation of 23 Lexington Avenue, Manhattan, as an Individual Landmark



### SUMMARY

The George Washington Hotel, located at 23 Lexington Avenue (between 23rd and 24th Streets) in Manhattan's Gramercy/Flatiron district, stands as an example of New York City's storied past and evolving architectural heritage. Built in 1930 and ultimately listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2019, the building has served many roles over the decades: from a residence for young New Yorkers, to a haven for artists and writers, to student housing, and finally to its current form as the Freehand New York Hotel. Its French Renaissance Revival design, rich history of celebrated residents, and cultural impact make a strong case for preserving this significant piece of Manhattan's architectural and social legacy.

### INITIAL DEVELOPMENT

Originally announced in 1929 by hotelier Harry Barth, who had formed the Barth Hotels Corporation and the Club Hotel Corporation, the George Washington Hotel was completed in 1930 during a tumultuous economic period. Despite the onset of the Great Depression, construction continued on this 16-story building. Designed to offer relatively affordable yet comfortable accommodations primarily for young men and women, the hotel also housed shops on the ground floor and a range of public and club rooms on the second floor. These spaces were intended to enrich both short-term and long-term guests' experience, fostering a sense of community in the heart of Manhattan.

### ARCHITECT

The George Washington Hotel was designed jointly by two architects, Frank Mills Andrews and John B. Peterkin. Andrews was a prolific American architect known for notable works such as the Hotel McAlpin in New York City, the Dayton Arcade in Ohio, and the Kentucky State Capitol in Frankfort. Their collaboration on the George Washington Hotel reflects the French Renaissance Revival style popular in the late 1920s, marked by ornate detailing, classical references, and a focus on craftsmanship. This partnership allowed both architects to incorporate a sense of urban sophistication and functional design into what would become a major presence on Lexington Avenue.





## NOTABLE HISTORY, PEOPLE AND FEATURES

An important aspect of the George Washington Hotel's history is its distinctive architectural character. Characteristic of the French Renaissance Revival style, the structure features a three-story stone base accented by polychrome terracotta window frames, offering a vibrant interplay of color and texture. Its arch entrance, supported by free-standing Doric columns and layered pilasters, creates a grand focal point that underscores the hotel's early commitment to both elegance and accessibility.

Within, the original communal areas, including a gallery, a library, and a lounge, were designed in an assortment of historical motifs that lent the space a warm, home-like atmosphere suited to long-term occupants.

Over the decades, the hotel has been home to a remarkable roster of residents who helped shape New York's cultural history. In 1939, British poet W. H. Auden and novelist Christopher Isherwood briefly took up residence. Architect Minoru Yamasaki, renowned for his work on the original World Trade Center, also spent time drafting designs here in the late 1960s. As a student at the School of Visual Arts, pop artist Keith Haring lived on the premises, while Dee Dee Ramone, founder of the iconic punk band the Ramones, became a tenant in the 1990s.

Beyond its architectural significance and famous guests, the George Washington Hotel has witnessed dramatic moments in American history. During the 1930s, pro-Nazi organizations reportedly held meetings within its walls, a reminder of how the building's narrative intertwines with shifting political currents. By 1941, it had taken on a very different role, serving as temporary lodging for German Jewish refugee children arriving in the United States. In subsequent decades, it emerged as a vibrant cultural hub, where incidents like artist Tony Shafrazi's defacement of Picasso's *Guernica* and the colorful presence of Andy Warhol associate Brigid Berlin underscored the hotel's continued connection to New York City's eclectic and ever-evolving creative scene.





## TODAY

After changing hands and narrowly avoiding demolition in the 1980s, the building was ultimately acquired by an investment firm in 2016 and transformed into the Freehand New York Hotel in 2018. The design firm Roman and Williams spearheaded interior renovations, focusing on maintaining an artist-friendly atmosphere. A restored portrait of George Washington, believed to be based on a Gilbert Stuart original, remains on display in the George Washington Bar, further connecting the hotel's storied past to its present-day identity. The building's inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places in 2019 signifies formal recognition of its cultural and architectural worth.

## CONCLUSION

The George Washington Hotel's layered history, architectural finesse, and notable contributions to New York's cultural fabric make it a prime candidate for continued preservation. From its origins as an affordable residence for young people during the Depression era, to its role as a meeting place for political groups, to its place as a creative haven for eminent artists, this building captures the multifaceted spirit of New York City. By preserving the George Washington Hotel, LPC will honor the achievements of architects Frank M. Andrews and John B. Peterkin, safeguard the memories of its famous occupants, and ensure that future generations can experience a piece of NYC's dynamic cultural and political history.

## Request for Evaluation of 346 Park Avenue South, Manhattan, as an Individual Landmark



### SUMMARY

The Provident Loan Society Building, located at 346 Park Avenue South on the corner of East 25th Street in Manhattan, stands as a significant piece of New York City's architectural and philanthropic history. Constructed in 1908–1909 for the Provident Loan Society of New York, a pioneering not-for-profit collateral lending institution, this marble-clad structure is a striking example of early 20th-century Italian Renaissance-inspired design. Its continued use by the Provident Loan Society reflects the enduring importance of the Society's mission and the building's suitability to its purpose. Preservation

of this site will honor its historic role as a socially minded alternative to traditional lenders and its significance as an architectural treasure.

### INITIAL DEVELOPMENT

In the aftermath of the financial Panic of 1893, prominent financiers such as J.P. Morgan and Cornelius Vanderbilt II established the Provident Loan Society in 1894, seeking to offer short-term loans at fair interest rates. By 1907, the organization's rapid expansion required a dedicated headquarters, prompting construction at the prime corner site on Park Avenue South and East 25th Street. Completed in 1909, this grand building gave the Society a permanent, dignified space to further its mission of lending money responsibly to those in need.



### ARCHITECT

The building at 346 Park Avenue South was designed by the firm Renwick, Aspinwall & Tucker, led by J. Lawrence Aspinwall, who applied the Italian Renaissance Revival style. His use of white marble, pink Milford granite, and classically inspired ornamentation gave the headquarters both an imposing and welcoming presence.

The firm also executed the Provident Loan Society former East Houston Street Branch Office, located on

the corner of East Houston Street and Essex Street. The branch office, which reflected the same refined, civic-minded aesthetic as the main Park Avenue South building, demonstrated how the Provident Loan Society executed “branding” through architecture.

#### NOTABLE HISTORY, PEOPLE AND FEATURES

From its inception, the Provident Loan Society was supported by some of New York’s most influential leaders, including J.P. Morgan and Cornelius Vanderbilt II who offered capital to launch the organization. They aimed to offer a dignified alternative to the exploitative loan practices of the time. The society provided low-interest, short-term loans secured by personal property, a model inspired by similar European institutions. This approach not only offered immediate financial relief but also helped to stabilize the lives of many New Yorkers by providing them with a respectable means to address their financial emergencies.



#### TODAY

More than a century since its completion, the main building at 346 Park Avenue South remains the Provident Loan Society’s headquarters, continuing to offer short-term loans secured by precious metals, jewelry, and other valuables. 346 Park Avenue South stands as a testament to the Society’s enduring commitment to architectural elegance and community service.

#### CONCLUSION

The Provident Loan Society Building at 346 Park Avenue South exemplifies an important confluence of New York City’s philanthropic, financial, and architectural heritage. Designed to deliver practical services undergirded by fairness and respect, its striking façade, interior grandeur, and continued operation embody a unique legacy of civic-minded

innovation. We respectfully request a thorough evaluation of this remarkable structure for preservation, ensuring it remains both a vital part of the city’s built environment and a beacon of socially responsible lending for generations to come.



## Request for Evaluation of 152 East 34th Street, Manhattan, as an Individual Landmark



### SUMMARY

The Armenian Evangelical Church at 152 East 34th Street was originally designed as a bank building in 1907 by William Emerson. The Armenian Evangelical Church purchased the building in 1921, dedicated it on Christmas Sunday 1923, and continues to maintain an active congregation in the building. The church's stained glass windows, designed by the renowned Armenian-American artist Hovsep Pushman, are of special note.

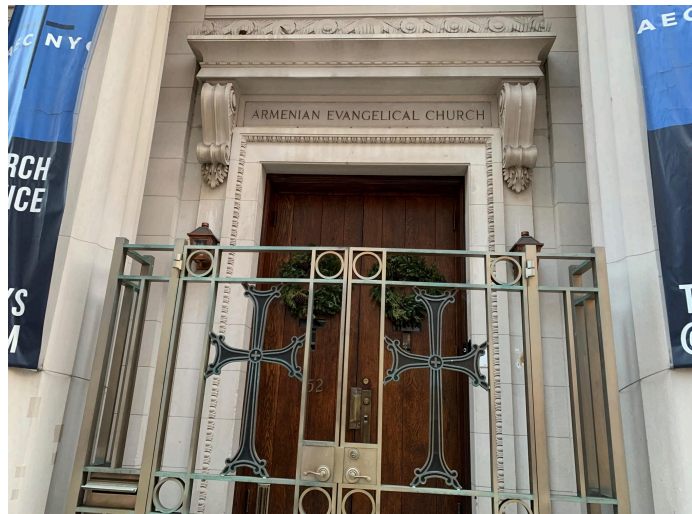
### INITIAL DEVELOPMENT

152 East 34th Street was initially constructed as a branch of the 19th Ward Bank, headquartered at 953 3rd Avenue. Designed by William Emerson as a Greek Revival temple, the facade features four doric columns supporting a pediment.

The building was completed just as the economy descended into the Panic of 1907, rendering the bank branch unnecessary. The under-utilized bank building was sold to the Armenian Evangelical Church in 1921, which adapted the interiors to make them fit for worship. On the building's facade, the church added a cross within the pediment, and carved its name above the entrance door. The church completed a restoration of the building in 1988. Today, a non-historic gate stretches across the building's portico, featuring symmetrical crosses and church signage.

### ARCHITECT

William Emerson (1873-1957) was a great-nephew of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Born in New York City, educated at Harvard and trained in architecture at Columbia and L'Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Emerson practiced in New York from 1901-1917 and specialized in bank buildings and model tenements. He served as Director of Construction for the American Red Cross in Paris from 1917-1919, for which he earned the French Legion of Honor. In 1919, he returned to the United States and joined the



faculty of the MIT Department of Architecture. He served as the first Dean of the MIT School of Architecture from 1932-1939 and established the school's Department of City Planning. His students at MIT included IM Pei and Robert Van Nice.



### ARMENIAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH

The Armenian Evangelical Church arose in Istanbul in 1846 as a reform movement within the Armenian Apostolic Church, one of the world's oldest branches of Christianity.

The Armenian Evangelical Church of New York is the oldest Armenian institution in the New York metropolitan area. Prayer meetings began informally in 1881 when Rev. Garabed Nergararian arrived in New York City from the Ottoman Empire and held worship in his home.

The Armenian population in New York City grew throughout the 1890s as Armenians faced persecution and repeated massacre within the Ottoman Empire. As the need for worship and community grew, The Armenian Evangelical Church held its first official services in 1896 at Adams Memorial Presbyterian Church (207-215 East 30th Street, demolished).

Following the disastrous rupture of the Armenian Genocide (1915-1916), worship united the Armenian diaspora. The community in New York outgrew Adams Memorial, and purchased 152 East 34th Street in 1921. After two years of mostly interior renovation, the church was dedicated on Christmas Sunday, 1923, and has served the Armenian community for over 100 years.

### HOVSEP PUSHMAN

The Armenian-American Artist Hovsep Pushman designed the church's stained glass windows. Though these windows are not visible from the public right of way, Pushman and his work are of special note.

Hovsep Pushman (1877 - 1966) was born in the Ottoman Empire, and at age 11, was the youngest student ever to be admitted to the Imperial School of Fine Art in

Constantinople. Best known for his still lifes and portraiture, Pushman's work is noted for its expressive use of color and technical precision.



Pushman continued his studies in Chicago and Paris, where he won several prizes, then settled in New York in 1923. Pushman was a notable New Yorker. He lived on Central Park West, maintained a studio at Carnegie Hall,

and was one of the first artists represented by Grand Central Galleries, which had a special exhibition space, “The Pushman Room,” devoted to his work. Pushman’s work was notably popular with the public. During a solo show of his work at Grand Central Galleries in 1932, all 16 pieces on display sold within 24 hours.



Pushman made a tangible impact on the rights of artists across the United States: In 1940, he sued the New York Graphic Society for copyright infringement. The New York Court of Appeals initially decided against Pushman in 1942, but the decision was criticized and ultimately overturned by the United States Copyright Act of 1976.

When Pushman died in 1966, funeral services were held here at the Armenian Evangelical Church at 152 East 34th Street. Today, Pushman’s work is in collections across the country, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

## CONCLUSION

As the oldest Armenian institution in the New York Metropolitan Area, the Armenian Evangelical Church at 152 East 34th Street is a meaningful site of cultural heritage for the city’s Armenian community. Thanks to Armenian Evangelical’s conversion, restoration and

stewardship of the building, 152 East 34th Street also stands out as an early and enduring example of adaptive reuse. Designating this building would celebrate the Armenian community, uplift adaptive reuse at a time when conversion of the city’s historic assets has never been more necessary, and show how New York’s historic structures can serve as both community anchors and adaptable assets.



## Request for Evaluation of 207 East 32nd Street, Manhattan, as an Individual Landmark



### SUMMARY

207 East 32nd Street, which the *New York Times* has referred to as an “exuberant” Beaux Arts ‘extravaganza,” and [which the LPC itself has rated “outstanding” since 1985](#), is not only architecturally exciting, but also profoundly culturally significant, having served as the headquarters of Tammany Hall, the studio of famed graphic designer Milton Glaser, the first home of both *New York* and *Ms.* magazines, and the current home of the *New York Review of Books*.

### INITIAL DEVELOPMENT

207 East 32nd Street is a Beaux Arts townhouse designed by Robert T. Lyons and built 1901-1902 under the auspices of the Tammany Central Organization.

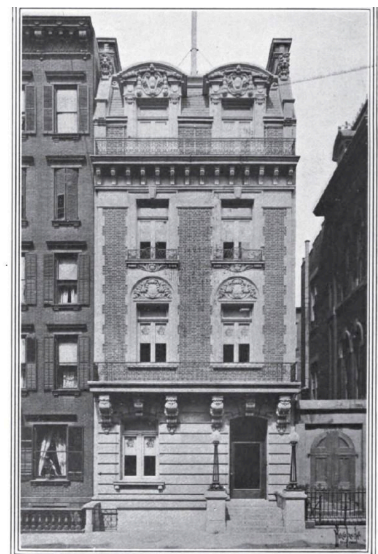
Tammany was a political organization that controlled Democratic party politics in New York City for over 100 years, from the mid-19th Century to the mid-20th Century. Tammany was well known for corruption and patronage; its most notorious operative, Boss Tweed (1823-1876), enriched himself exponentially by graft, amassing wealth through myriad municipal contracts including those for the construction of several New York City Landmarks such as the Tweed Courthouse and the Brooklyn Bridge.

This building’s plush Beaux Arts exterior communicates Tammany’s wealth and power, and makes clear in the streetscape the way that real estate itself helped enrich Tammany’s members.

The four story brick and limestone building features a rusticated limestone base, limestone balconies at the second and fourth floors, carved limestone window surrounds and a mansard roof with ornamented limestone dormers. The exterior is almost entirely intact, except for the original limestone stoop, which has been removed; in the absence of the stoop, the entry door has been extended to meet the street.

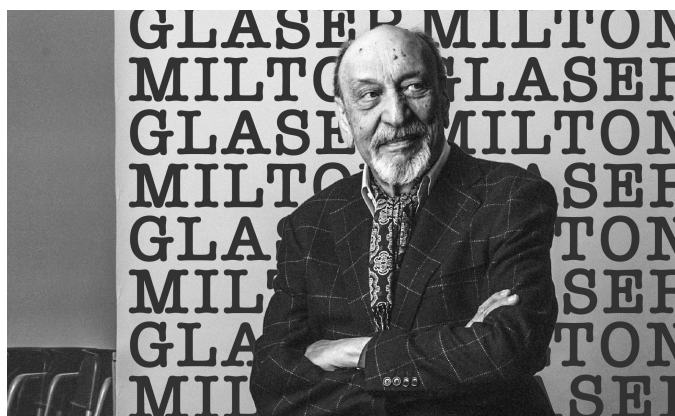
### ARCHITECT

Robert T. Lyons (1873–1956) was born in New York City, and established as an architect by 1897. The Landmarks Preservation Commission itself has identified this building, the Tammany Central Association Club House, as “among his more important commissions.” Others include the St. Urban at 285 Central Park West, part of the Upper West Side / Central



\* CLUB HOUSE OF THE TAMMANY CENTRAL ASSOCIATION.  
No. 207 East 32d Street, New York City. Robert T. Lyons, Architect.

Park West Historic District, 903 Park Avenue in the Park Avenue Historic District and 2 Horatio Street in the Greenwich Village Historic District.



#### MILTON GLASER ERA

Tammany's fortunes faded in the area by 1911, and 207 East 32nd Street was leased as a courthouse before being converted to office space. In 1965, the graphic designer Milton Glaser purchased the building.

Milton Glaser (1929-2020), a native New Yorker born in the Bronx and educated at Cooper Union, was the first graphic designer to receive the National Medal of Arts. His work helped

define American visual culture in the second half of the 20th Century, and left an indelible mark on New York City. Globally, his 1976 I ❤️ NY logo became synonymous with the city; projects such as the Brooklyn Brewery logo evoked the history of the borough by referencing the Brooklyn Dodgers; his logo for LaGuardia High School for Music, Art and the Performing Arts (from which he graduated) gave a visual identity to nation's first free, publicly funded high school dedicated to the arts.

We note as part of this RFE that Glaser also designed the logo for PS 116, which stands immediately adjacent to this building. His work for PS 116 includes the site-specific apple tree design which adorns the schoolyard fence. While the fence stands on a separate tax lot from 207 East 32nd Street, we feel that the fence is not only a significant piece of art, but also particularly meaningful as an in situ installation directly abutting Glaser's studio. We hope LPC will consider its designation.



Glaser's influence is also physically present at 207 East 32nd Street. His maxim, "Art is

Work" is etched in the glass transom of the building's entrance door. Indeed, much work was done here, both by Glaser and the artists he collaborated with. In 1954, Glaser founded Pushpin Studios with Edward Sorel, Reynold Ruffins and Seymour Chwast. In 1974, he established Milton Glaser, Inc., and in 1983, he formed the firm WBMG with Walter Bernard.



### NEW YORK AND MS. MAGAZINES

In April 1968, Glaser and Clay Felker co-founded *New York* magazine, headquartering the publication here at 207 East 32nd Street. *New York* remained in this building until 1974. During that time, its roster of writers included leaders of New Journalism such as Tom Wolfe, Jimmy Breslin and Gloria Steinem.

In 1971, Steinem co-founded *Ms. Magazine* with Letty Cottin Pogrebin, Mary Thom, Patricia Carbine, Joanne Edgar, Nina Finkelstein, Mary Peacock and Margaret Sloan-Hunter. *Ms.* is

the nation's first periodical to be created, owned and operated entirely by women. It began here at 207 East 32nd Street, as an insert in *New York*, then started publishing independently in 1972. In 2017, East 32nd Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenue, where 207 East 32nd is located, was Co-named *Ms. Magazine* way, to celebrate this pioneering publication.

### TODAY

Today, 207 East 32nd Street continues its cultural legacy as an epicenter of art, publishing, journalism and local pride as the headquarters of the *New York Review of Books*. Founded by Robert Silvers and Barbara Epstein in 1963 during the 1962-1963 New York City Newspaper Strike, *The New York Review of Books* has been called, "the most respected intellectual journal in the English language." The Review purchased 207 East 32nd Street in 2020, following Glaser's death, and moved into the building in 2023.

### CONCLUSION

Since its origins as a Tammany Clubhouse, 207 East 32nd Street has been home and headquarters to people and publications that are synonymous with this great city. Landmarking the building would help ensure that the building remains standing so that many more people who ❤️ NY can continue creating inside it.



## Request for Evaluation of 149 East 23rd Street, Manhattan, as an Individual Landmark



### SUMMARY

The Madison Square Station Post Office, located at 149 East 23rd Street in Manhattan is an architectural gem built during the 1930s under the New Deal initiatives. This post office is not only a key piece of New York City's infrastructure but also a stellar example of Classical Revival architecture, which was popular during that era.

### INITIAL DEVELOPMENT

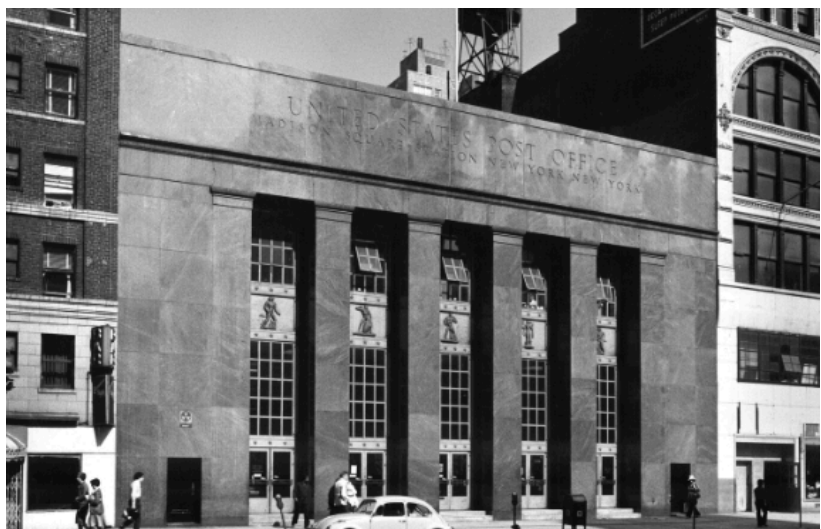
Constructed in 1937 as part of the broader New Deal initiatives by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Madison Square Station Post Office was designed to meet the increasing demands for postal services in a rapidly urbanizing New York City. This project was part of a national effort under the New Deal, which aimed to address the economic devastations of the Great Depression through massive public works projects, and providing jobs and revitalizing the economy.

The New Deal was a transformative period in American history, launching numerous public work projects like the Madison Square Station Post Office to modernize infrastructure and enhance public services across the country. From 1933 to 1938, these initiatives not only provided immediate employment but also left a lasting legacy on the U.S. architectural landscape by embracing styles such as Classical Revival and Art Deco in new constructions. Significant examples include iconic infrastructure projects like the Triborough Bridge and LaGuardia Airport in New York City, which were also funded and built during this era

This context underscores the Madison Square Station Post Office not just as a utilitarian structure, but as a piece of broader historical and economic significance, reflecting the era's architectural ambition and the federal government's commitment to public welfare.

### ARCHITECT

Lorimer Rich, the architect responsible for the Madison Square Station Post Office, was an accomplished designer whose architectural contributions extend beyond this single project. Rich, a



graduate of Syracuse University, is most famously known for his design of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery, a testament to his ability to create spaces of profound significance and lasting impact.

Throughout his career, Rich was involved in various projects that demonstrate his versatility and commitment to architectural excellence. His work includes not only post offices but also military facilities and educational buildings, reflecting a range of styles and functions. His designs often emphasized classical elements, which can be seen in the symmetrical facades and grand columns of the buildings he worked on, including the post offices in Forest Hills and Morris Heights, New York.

Rich's work on the Madison Square Station Post Office showcases his signature style of integrating functionality with aesthetic grandeur. This project, like many of his others, was marked by a focus on creating a public space that was both beautiful and practical, serving the community's needs while enhancing the urban landscape.

#### NOTABLE HISTORY, PEOPLE AND FEATURES

The Madison Square Station Post Office is renowned not only for its architectural significance but also for its artistic contributions that celebrate the spirit of the community and the functionality of the postal service. The building is adorned with eight interior murals by Kindred McLeary, which depict various iconic New York neighborhoods, providing a visual representation of the city's diverse cultural landscape. These murals were part of a broader initiative under the

New Deal to incorporate art into public buildings, enhancing their aesthetic appeal and cultural significance.

Additionally, the exterior of the building features five bronze relief sculptures created by Edmond Amateis and Louis Slobodkin. These reliefs symbolize various aspects of communication, linking the building's functional role as a post office with its architectural narrative. Such artistic endeavors were typical of the era, reflecting a commitment to not only improving public infrastructure but also enriching it with cultural and artistic elements.

These features make the Madison Square Station Post Office a standout example of how architecture and art can coalesce to serve both practical and inspirational purposes. The building's ability to combine utility with grandeur has made it a key landmark in the neighborhood, bridging the past with the present through its enduring design and artistic heritage.

#### TODAY

Today, the Madison Square Station Post Office remains a vital postal hub for the Midtown/Gramercy area. It is strategically located near



Madison Square Park, enhancing the mixed-use character of the neighborhood and continuing to serve as a critical component of the city's postal network.

## CONCLUSION

Recognizing and preserving the Madison Square Station Post Office would safeguard its architectural integrity and historical significance as New York City continues to evolve. As a representative of the Classical Revival style and a product of the New Deal era, the building is a tangible connection to the city's architectural history and civic developments, warranting its status as a landmark to honor its past and ensure its story remains relevant in the urban landscape.



## Request for Evaluation of 149 East 23rd Street, Manhattan, as an Interior Landmark



### SUMMARY

The Madison Square Station Post Office, located at 149 East 23rd Street in Manhattan, is a prime example of New Deal architecture, distinguished by its elegantly designed and expansive lobby. This space serves as more than just a functional area for postal services; it is an expression of the era's architectural and artistic aspirations.

### INITIAL DEVELOPMENT

The lobby's design is characterized by a large, rectangular layout typical of the period, aimed at efficient public service while displaying the era's distinctive aesthetic.

### ARCHITECT

Lorimer Rich was the architect behind the Madison Square Station Post Office. A Syracuse University alumnus, Rich is renowned for designing the iconic Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery, highlighting his ability to craft spaces of deep significance. His architectural career was marked by a versatility that spanned various types of buildings, including post offices, military facilities, and educational institutions. Rich's designs often featured classical elements, such as symmetrical facades and grand columns, which are evident in his projects like the post offices in Forest Hills and Morris Heights, New York. The Madison Square Station Post Office exemplifies his characteristic approach of blending functionality with aesthetic grandeur, creating public spaces that were both utilitarian and visually impressive, thereby enriching the urban landscape.



### NOTABLE HISTORY, PEOPLE AND FEATURES

Particularly noteworthy are the lobby's eight murals by Kindred McLeary, which depict people reading letters or carrying out mail-related activities in various New York neighborhoods. Featuring scenes from iconic locations such as Central Park and the Lower East Side, they offer a stylistic, cultural and historical look at New York life during the 1930s.

McLeary (1901-1949) taught architecture at Carnegie Tech (later Carnegie Mellon University) and gained renown as a muralist for several works he created via New Deal agencies including the Treasury Section of Fine Arts and the Federal Works Agency. In addition to his eight murals here at the Madison Square post office, he also created murals for the Norwalk Post Office in Norwalk, CT, the US Post Office and Courthouse in Pittsburgh, PA and the Truman Federal Building in Washington, DC.



Key features of the lobby include service windows along one wall, complemented by intricate metalwork and marble wainscoting that provide a durable and visually appealing foundation. Original lighting fixtures, which may include pendant or globe styles, illuminate the grandeur of the space. The detailing in the metalwork at the service counters, which may include brass or bronze elements, showcases the period's meticulous attention to detail and the integration

of art into functional spaces.

#### TODAY

Preserving the interior of the Madison Square Station Post Office is essential to maintain a tangible connection to the New Deal era of the 1930s, reflecting its artistic significance. Currently, the building's original murals and paintings are carefully preserved, ensuring the continued appreciation of this historic site by the community.

#### CONCLUSION

The interior of the Madison Square Station Post Office deserves recognition and preservation as a vital part of New York City's cherished architectural and cultural heritage. Its thoughtful design and decoration not only highlight the functional aspects of public buildings but also emphasize their roles as spaces of beauty, community interaction, and historical reflection.

## **Acknowledgements:**

HDC wishes to thank Yuhan (Judy) Wang for sharing her research on 400 1st Avenue, which she prepared for Andrew Dolkart and Kate Reggev's Fall 2024 Historic Preservation Studio I at Columbia University GSAPP.

## **Historic Photo Credits:**

All contemporary photos are copyright of HDC. Historic photo credits are listed in the order they appear.

### 400 1st Avenue:

"Exterior of ICD building and construction site, 1960?." International Center for the Disabled Records (MS 792). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

<https://credo.library.umass.edu/view/full/mums792-b027-i209>

"Norman Labelle teaching an optical mechanics training class, 1955?." International Center for the Disabled Records (MS 792). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

<https://credo.library.umass.edu/view/full/mums792-b027-i287>

"Two women, one using crutches, at the front door of an ICD building, ca. 1948." International Center for the Disabled Records (MS 792). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries. <https://credo.library.umass.edu/view/full/mums792-b027-i230>

### 23 Lexington Avenue

Wurst Bros. "23rd Street and Lexington Avenue. George Washington Hotel." 1950. MCNY Digital Collections. <https://collections.mcny.org/Collection/23rd%20Street%20and%20Lexington%20Avenue.%20George%20Washington%20Hotel.-2F3XC577KKW.html>

### 346 Park Avenue South

"In 1909, the main branch opened on Fourth Avenue (now Park Avenue South) and 25th Street, where Provident Loan is still headquartered today." Provident Loan Society. <https://providentloan.com/en/history/>

"Behind the customer counter in the loan office at 346 Park Avenue. (Picture 1928)." Provident Loan Society. <https://providentloan.com/en/history/>

### 152 East 34th Street



Irma and Paul Milstein Division of United States History, Local History and Genealogy, The New York Public Library. "Manhattan: 34th Street (East) - Lexington Avenue" The New York Public Library Digital Collections. 1928. <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/7e5a7a50-c541-012f-d10b-58d385a7bc34>

"Hovsep Pushman 2002 Armenia stamp." Wikimedia Commons. 2002  
[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hovsep\\_Pushman\\_2002\\_Armenia\\_stamp.jpg](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hovsep_Pushman_2002_Armenia_stamp.jpg)

207 East 32nd Street

"Club House of the Tammany Central Association." The Architectural Record 12.7 (December 1902). Internet Archive. [https://archive.org/details/sim\\_architectural-record\\_1902-12\\_12\\_7/page/758/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/sim_architectural-record_1902-12_12_7/page/758/mode/2up)

"Milton Glaser." Graphene. June 2020.  
<https://www.graphene.com/en/history-of-graphic-design/milton-glaser-graphic-design>

149 East 23rd Street (Exterior)

Spearman, Jerry. "Manhattan 93, Madison Square Station, 149 E. 23rd St." New York Landmarks Conservancy. Urban Archive. <https://www.urbanarchive.org/sites/oj8umhUfcRc/NSAJpu4xNiN>

Irma and Paul Milstein Division of United States History, Local History and Genealogy, The New York Public Library. "Manhattan: 23rd Street (East) - 3rd Avenue" The New York Public Library Digital Collections. 1938. <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/a714c3b0-c540-012f-6672-58d385a7bc34>

149 East 23rd Street (Interior)

"Madison Square Post Office." Flatiron Nomad Partnership. 2019  
<https://flatironnomad.nyc/history/madison-square-post-office/>