

Borough Hall Skyscraper Historic District Designation Report

September 13, 2011



Cover Photograph:

Court Street looking south along Skyscraper Row towards Brooklyn City Hall, now Brooklyn Borough Hall (1845-48, Gamaliel King) and the Brooklyn Municipal Building (1923-26, McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin).

Christopher D. Brazeel, 2011

Borough Hall Skyscraper Historic District

Designation Report

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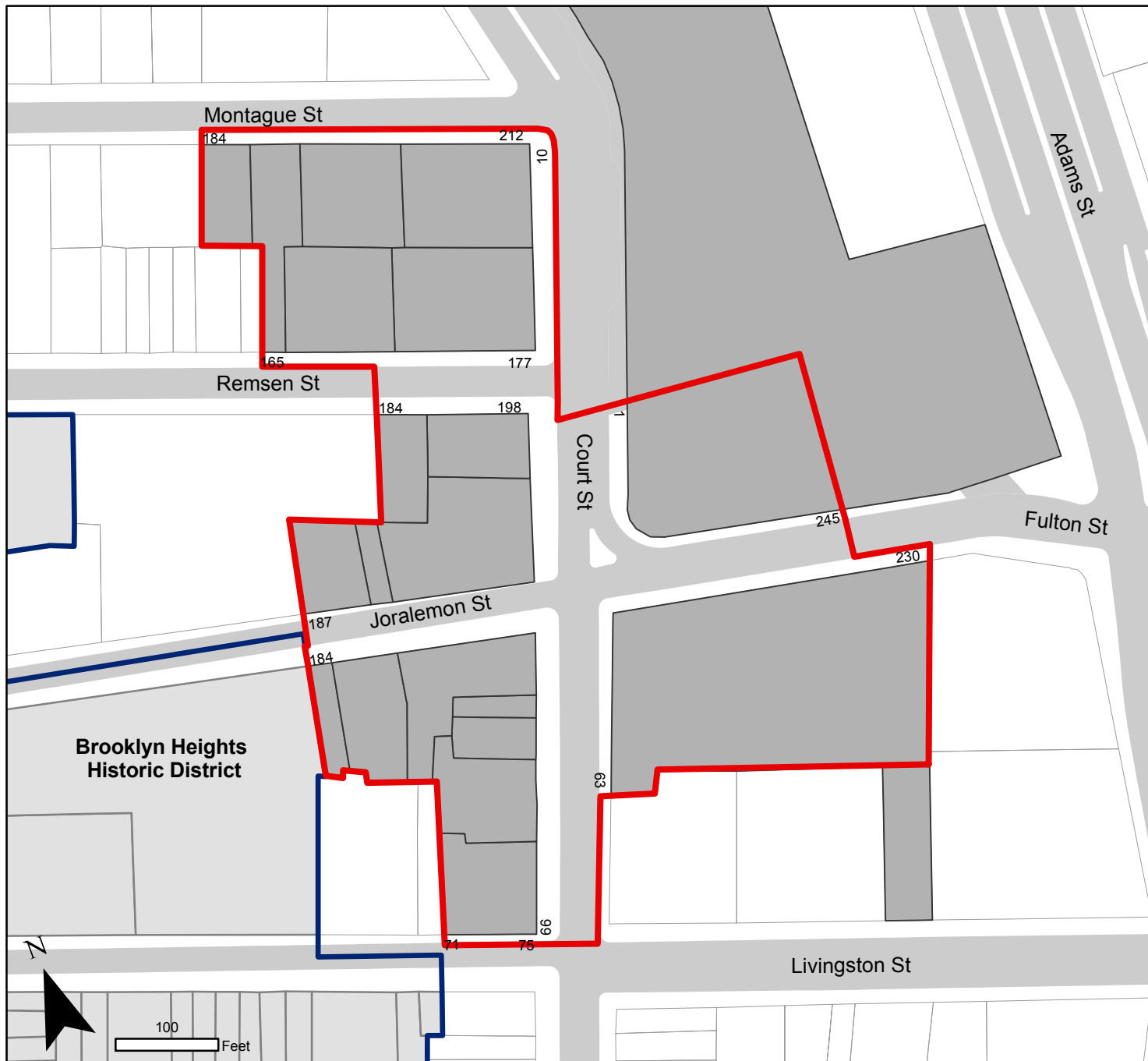
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

BOROUGH HALL SKYSCRAPER HISTORIC DISTRICT MAP	FACING PAGE 1
TESTIMONY AT THE PUBLIC HEARING	1
BOROUGH HALL SKYSCRAPER HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARIES	1
SUMMARY	3
THE HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOROUGH HALL SKYSCRAPER HISTORIC DISTRICT	5
Early History and Development of Brooklyn's Civic Center	5
Mid 19 th Century Development of Brooklyn's Civic Center.....	8
The Tall Office Building in Downtown Brooklyn during the Late 19 th Century	10
Early 20 th Century Development	14
Court Street as Skyscraper Row	16
Subsequent History	19
FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION	22
BUILDING PROFILES.....	25
Court Street (East Side, Odd Numbers)	25
Court Street (West Side, Even Numbers)	25
Joralemon Street (North Side, Odd Numbers)	33
Joralemon Street (South Side, Even Numbers).....	36
Livingston Street (North Side, Odd Numbers)	39
Montague Street (South Side, Even Numbers)	41
Remsen Street (North Side, Odd Numbers).....	44
Remsen Street (South Side, Even Numbers)	46
ARCHITECTS APPENDIX	47

Borough Hall Skyscraper Historic District

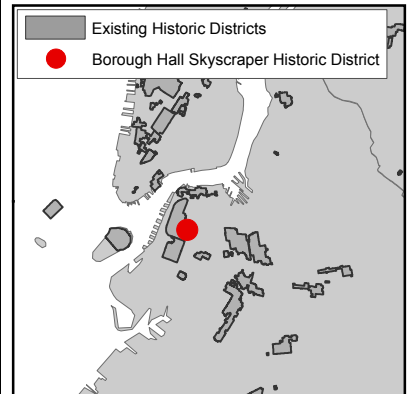


Landmarks Preservation Commission

Borough Hall Skyscraper
Historic District
Borough of Brooklyn, NY
[LP-2449]

Calendared: October 26, 2010
Public Hearing: December 14, 2010
Designated: September 13, 2011

- Boundary of Historic District
- Tax Map Lots in Historic District
- Existing Historic District
- Tax Map Lots in Existing District



NYCTM
**Landmarks Preservation
Commission**

TESTIMONY AT THE PUBLIC HEARING

On December 14, 2010, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the Borough Hall Skyscraper Historic District (Public Hearing Item No. 1). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Seven people spoke in support of designation, including representatives of the Brooklyn Heights Association, the Historic Districts Council, the New York City Landmarks Conservancy, and the Municipal Arts Society, and two owners of 75 Livingston Street; a representative of City Council Member Stephen Levin spoke in support of designation and asked the Commission to work with owners of 75 Livingston Street to address their concerns; Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz spoke in support of designation but expressed concerns about the inclusion of 75 Livingston Street and the Brooklyn Municipal Building; a representative of State Assembly Member Joan L. Millman spoke in support of designation but noted that she believed 75 Livingston Street should be excluded from the district. Five people spoke in opposition to designation including representatives of the Brooklyn Law School, the Court-Livingston-Schermerhorn Business Improvement District, the Real Estate Board of New York, a representative of the owner of 26 Court Street, and a representative of the property manager for 188 Montague Street and 175 Remsen Street; six owners of 75 Livingston Street, including the president of the Board of Directors, spoke in opposition to including their building in the district. A letter in support of designation from State Senator Daniel Squadron, and a resolution in support of designation from Brooklyn Community Board 2, were also entered into the record at the public hearing.

BOROUGH HALL SKYSCRAPER HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

The proposed Borough Hall Skyscraper Historic District consists of the property bounded by a line beginning at the intersection of the southern curblineline of Montague Street and the western curblineline of Court Street, continuing southerly along the western curblineline of Court Street to a point formed by its intersection with a line extending westerly from and parallel with the lowest stair riser of the front steps of Brooklyn Borough Hall at 209 Joralemon Street (aka 209-245 Joralemon Street, 1-43 Court Street, and 384 Adams Street), easterly along said line to a point formed by its intersection with a line extending northerly from and parallel to the eastern outside wall of Brooklyn Borough Hall at 209 Joralemon Street (aka 209-245 Joralemon Street, 1-43 Court Street, and 384 Adams Street), southerly along said line and across the roadbed of Joralemon Street to the southern curblineline of Joralemon Street, easterly along said curblineline to a point formed with its intersection with a line extending northerly along a portion of the eastern property line of 210 Joralemon Street (aka 208-230 Joralemon Street and 45-63 Court Street), southerly along a portion of said property line, easterly along a portion of the northern property line of 210 Joralemon Street (aka 208-230 Joralemon Street and 45-63 Court Street), southerly along a portion of the eastern property line of 210 Joralemon Street (aka 208-230 Joralemon Street and 45-63 Court Street) to a point formed by its intersection with a line extending easterly from a portion of the southern property line of 210 Joralemon Street (aka 208-230 Joralemon

Street and 45-63 Court Street), westerly along said line and a portion of the southern property line of 210 Joralemon Street (aka 208-230 Joralemon Street and 45-63 Court Street), southerly along a portion of the eastern property line of 210 Joralemon Street (aka 208-230 Joralemon Street and 45-63 Court Street), westerly along a portion of the southerly property line of 210 Joralemon Street (aka 208-230 Joralemon Street and 45-63 Court Street) to the eastern curbline of Court Street, southerly along said curbline to the northern curbline of Livingston Street, across the roadbed of Court Street and along the northern curbline of Livingston Street to a point formed by its intersection with a line extending southerly from the western property line of 75 Livingston Street (aka 71-75 Livingston Street and 66 Court Street), northerly along said property line and a portion of the western property line of 62 Court Street (aka 58-64 Court Street), westerly along a portion of the southern property line of 62 Court Street (aka 58-64 Court Street), a portion of the southern property line of 50 Court Street (aka 46-50 Court Street and 194-204 Joralemon Street), and a portion of the southern property line of 186 Joralemon Street (aka 186-190 Joralemon Street), northerly along a portion of the western property line of 186 Joralemon Street (aka 186-190 Joralemon Street), westerly along a portion of the southern property line of 186 Joralemon Street (aka 186-190 Joralemon Street) and along a portion of the southern property line of 184 Joralemon Street, southerly along a portion of the eastern property line of 184 Joralemon Street, westerly along a portion of the southern property line of 184 Joralemon Street, northerly along the western property line of 184 Joralemon Street, across the roadbed of Joralemon Street, and along the western property line of 191 Joralemon Street (aka 187-191 Joralemon Street), easterly along the northern property lines of 191 Joralemon Street (aka 187-191 Joralemon Street) and 193 Joralemon Street and a portion of the northern property line of 44 Court Street (aka 38-44 Court Street and 195-207 Joralemon Street), northerly along the western property line of 186 Remsen Street (aka 184-188 Remsen Street) and across the roadbed of Remsen Street to the northern curbline of Remsen Street, westerly along said curbline of to a point formed by its intersection with a line extending southerly from a portion of the western property line of 188 Montague Street (aka 188-190 Montague Street and 165 Remsen Street), northerly along said property line, westerly along a portion of the southern property line of 188 Montague Street (aka 188-190 Montague Street and 165 Remsen Street) and the southern property line of 186 Montague Street (aka 184-186 Montague Street), northerly along the western property line of 186 Montague Street (aka 184-186 Montague Street) to the southern curbline of Montague Street, easterly along said curbline to the point of the beginning.

SUMMARY

The urbanization of Brooklyn began in earnest in the first decades of the 19th century. The Village of Brooklyn was chartered in 1816, and the City of Brooklyn was created less than 20 years later in 1836. The newly-formed municipal government quickly set out to build a proper city hall, which was located on the outer edge of the existing settlement at the intersection of Court, Joralemon, and Fulton Streets. While construction on Brooklyn City Hall (now Brooklyn Borough Hall) was delayed by the Panic of 1837 and was not completed until 1848, the finished structure was an imposing monument to the growth of the new city and a masterpiece of the Greek Revival style of architecture.

The neighborhood surrounding Brooklyn City Hall (now Brooklyn Borough Hall) developed rapidly during the mid-19th century. A number of grand civic structures went up on Joralemon Street, while many cultural institutions established themselves on the nearby stretch of Montague Street. Stores and other commercial buildings began to rise on Court Street around the time a horsecar route opened on the road in the 1850s. The area became Brooklyn's true downtown office district in the post-Civil War period as a series of ever taller commercial buildings were erected on Court Street and in the immediate vicinity. The insurance companies, particularly the Continental and Phenix firms, came first. They were soon followed by speculative developments such as A. A. Low's Garfield Building, as well as financial institutions such as the Dime Savings Bank and the Title Guarantee & Trust Company. While most were later replaced by even taller skyscrapers, A. A. Low's other major investment in downtown commercial real estate, the Franklin Building, remains a significant survivor of this period of development.

The growth of Downtown Brooklyn was greatly aided by the planning and construction of the Brooklyn Bridge, which opened in 1883, as well as by the erection of a network of elevated railroads during the late 1880s. Building heights continued to increase throughout the 1890s. Particularly notable was the Temple Bar Building, the last and tallest of a series of early skyscrapers designed by George L. Morse. When it was completed in 1901 the Temple Bar Building was lauded as the largest office building ever constructed in Brooklyn.

The City of Brooklyn was consolidated into Greater New York as the Borough of Brooklyn in 1898, a move that was widely supported by the downtown real estate developers. Commercial structures continued to rise in the area during the early 20th century, although none would best the height of the Temple Bar Building for more than a decade and a half. Several were designed according to the so-called New York City "solution" to the problem of the tall office building, including 188 Montague Street, 184 Joralemon Street, and the Terminal Building at 50 Court Street. Under this scheme the facade was composed like a classical column, with a monumental base, a relatively simple shaft, and an ornamental capital, each distinguished by the use of color and materials.

New transportation improvements, including the opening of several important subway lines through Downtown Brooklyn, as well as the early planning efforts for a new Municipal Building, led many to speculate that the area was ready for a period of even greater commercial development. These predictions came to fruition in 1918 when the 22-story building at 32 Court Street was completed. Widely regarded as Brooklyn's first true skyscraper, the structure easily surpassed the height of the Temple Bar Building and helped initiate a local building boom that turned Court Street into Brooklyn's definitive skyscraper row. The 1920s saw the completion of the Municipal Building, followed soon after by the erection of the Remsen and Court Building, the Montague-Court Building, and the Court-Livingston Building (later renamed the Brooklyn

Chamber of Commerce Building). These structures show the clear influence of the 1916 zoning resolution, particularly in their use of setbacks and slender towers, and feature architectural detailing in the neo-Romanesque and neo-Gothic styles that rivals that of any skyscraper erected in Greater New York. Other notable, if shorter, commercial buildings were erected on the adjacent blocks, including a number designed in the neo-Gothic style such as 186 Joralemon Street, 191 Joralemon Street, and 56 Court Street.

The Great Depression brought a halt to skyscraper construction in Downtown Brooklyn and throughout the city. By the mid 20th century development in the area had shifted to government-sponsored urban renewal projects, which eventually led to the demolition of many of the borough's historic commercial buildings. The skyscrapers on Court Street and the business structures on the adjacent blocks were amongst the few survivors of this period. The ensemble of 21 buildings in the Borough Hall Skyscraper Historic District remain significant for their historic importance as the heart of Brooklyn's downtown office district, as notable examples of the skyscraper and tall office building typologies, and for their continuing existence in a neighborhood that has undergone radical changes to much of its built environment.

THE HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOROUGH HALL SKYSCRAPER HISTORIC DISTRICT

*Early History and Development of Brooklyn's Civic Center*¹

The first inhabitants of western Long Island were the Canarsee, the indigenous people Brooklyn who were members of the Algonquin linguistic group that occupied the Atlantic seaboard from Canada to North Carolina.² The Canarsees were an autonomous band of Delaware (Leni Lenape) Native Americans. They lived communally in several settlements in west Brooklyn, hunting and fishing in the low-lying marshes of Wallabout Bay (now the site of the Brooklyn Navy Yard). Europeans—at first primarily fur traders from England, the Netherlands, and Sweden—arrived in the early 17th century and began conducting business with the region's indigenous population. By the 1630s, Dutch settlers began taking control of the western end of Long Island from the Canarsee through the “purchase” of large tracts of land.³ Troubled relations between Dutch colonists and Native Americans inhibited organized settlement of the area for a while, although by the mid-17th century the Dutch colonial government had granted official charters for six towns in the region in order to promote permanent European occupation.⁴ The

¹ Information in this section is based on the following sources: Eugene L. Armbruster, *The Eastern District of Brooklyn* (New York, 1912); Reginald Pelham Bolton, *New York City in Indian Possession*, 2d ed. (New York: Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, 1920; reprint 1975); Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Clay Lancaster, *Old Brooklyn Heights: New York's First Suburb* (New York: Dover Publications, 1979); Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), *DUMBO Historic District Designation Report* (LP-2279) (New York: City of New York, 2007), prepared by Andrew S. Dolkart; LPC, *Vinegar Hill Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1952) (New York: City of New York, 1997), prepared by Donald G. Presa; David Ment, with Anthony Robins and David Framberger, *Building Blocks of Brooklyn: A Study of Urban Growth* (Brooklyn, NY: The Brooklyn Educational & Cultural Alliance, 1979); Brian Merlis and Lee A. Rosenzweig, *Brooklyn Heights and Downtown: Volume 1, 1860 to 1922* (Brooklyn: Israelowitz Publishing, 2001); Francis Morrone, *An Architectural Guidebook to Brooklyn* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith Publisher, 2001); New York Supreme Court, *Report of Cases Adjudged and Determined in the Supreme Court of Judicature and Court for the Trial of Impeachments and Corrections of Errors of the State of New York* (New York: The Layers' Co-operative Publishing Co., 1884); Ellen M. Snyder-Grenier, *Brooklyn!: An Illustrated History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996); Henry R. Stiles, ed., *History of Kings County Including the City of Brooklyn 1-2* (Brooklyn: W. W. Munsell & Co., 1884); Ralph Foster Weld, *Brooklyn Village, 1816-1834* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938); William Lee Younger, *Old Brooklyn in Early Photographs, 1865-1929* (New York: Dover Publications, 1978).

² This on the Native American occupants of Brooklyn was adapted from LPC, *Vinegar Hill Historic District Designation Report* and LPC, *Fillmore Place Historic District Designation Report*.

³ The Dutch West India Company's Charter of Freedoms and Exemptions of 1629 (also known as the Charter of Liberties) gave official sanction to the colonization of New Netherland; previously the Company had limited wholesale settlement of the area in favor of maintaining a few minimally populated trading posts. The first three large tracts of land on Long Island were acquired between 1636 and 1638 by William Adriaense Bennett and Jacques Bontyn in the Gowanus area, Joris Jansen Rapalje around Wallabout Bay, and Wouter van Twiller, Jacob van Corlear, Andries Hudde, and Wolphert Gerritsen near Jamaica Bay. Burrow and Wallace, 29-30. The Native American “system of land tenure was that of occupancy for the needs of a group” and those sales that the Europeans deemed outright transfers of property were to the Native Americans closer to leases or joint tenancy contracts where they still had rights to the property. Bolton, 7.

⁴ A number of individuals had established homesteads on western Long Island even before Kieft's purchase, but they were widely spaced across the region and had no official government of any sort (see Ambruster [1912], 18-19 for a list of these early residents). The six towns were Brooklyn (Breuckelen); Bushwick (Boswijk); Flatbush (Midwout); Flatlands (New Amersfoort); Gravesend; New Utrecht.

closest to the colonial capital of New Amsterdam, located just across the East River from Lower Manhattan, was that of Breuckelen. Regular ferry service between the two was established in the 1640s, and a small group of buildings grew up around the landing at the foot of what came to be known as the Jamaica Turnpike (later Fulton Street). Following the English conquest of New Netherlands the six towns were organized in 1683 as Kings County within the Province of New York. In 1706, much of the land in the southern portion of what is now the neighborhood of Brooklyn Heights was acquired by Joris Remsen.⁵ Over the course of the 18th century the Remsen family divided the property into smaller estates that were sold to families with names such as Joralemon and Livingston that are still used to identify the streets of the area.

By the close of the 18th century it became apparent to several of these large estate holders that the rural hamlet of Brooklyn would soon be ripe for urban development. The first to make a move into the speculative real estate market were the brothers Comfort and Joshua Sands, who had acquired much of the old Rapalje family land east of the ferry landing following the Revolutionary War. They hired surveyor Casimir Theodore Goerck in 1788 to lay out a series of building lots organized around a regular street grid, calling the new neighborhood Olympia.⁶ The property south of the ferry landing was first mapped into urban blocks and lots nearly two decades later in 1806 when John and Jacob Hicks employed Jeremiah Lott to survey their estate in order to resolve a boundary dispute with the neighboring Middagh family.⁷ The plan produced by Lott established the first street grid in Brooklyn Heights, covering the area north of Clark Street with blocks approximately 200 feet square.

The job of enticing people to buy and build on the newly-mapped lots of Brooklyn was made considerably easier after 1814, when Robert Fulton and William Cutting leased the franchise rights to the primary ferry route between Brooklyn and Manhattan and introduced steam-powered service on the line. Two years later in 1816, the Village of Brooklyn, with an initial population of approximately 4,000 citizens, was incorporated within the existing Town of Brooklyn. The fledgling municipal government soon commissioned Jeremiah Lott to produce an official map of the village—which closely followed his earlier survey of the Hicks estate—to guide development in the area.⁸ This plan was modified somewhat in 1819 when prominent landowner Hezekiah B. Pierpont commissioned Lott and Thomas Poppleton to resurvey the section of the Heights south of Clark Street to include larger blocks and wider streets, which he believed would better attract wealthy New Yorkers looking to settle across the East River.⁹

⁵ Much of the southern section of Brooklyn Heights was patented to Andries Hudde by West India Company Director-General Willem Kieft in 1645. This property was later sold to Lodewyck Jongh in 1650, whose wife in turn sold a portion of the land to Dirck Janse Woertman in 1679. Joris Remsen, Woertman's son-in-law, acquired his estate in 1706. Stiles 1, 128-130.

⁶ Goerck was also responsible for surveying the Common Lands in Manhattan in 1785 and 1796, which provided the basis for that city's street grid (later expanded and canonized in the Commissioner's Plan of 1811).

⁷ Stiles 1, 111. New York Supreme Court, 659. The Hicks both owned slaves according to the 1790 census, while an article in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* noted that the Middagh family had at least one.. 1790 United States Census, Kings County, Brooklyn, 2-3; "Slavery Here," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (December 29, 1891), 2.

⁸ Many sources claim the official map of the Village of Brooklyn was produced in 1816, although Stile's chronology seems to indicate it was not completed until 1818. Stiles 1, 139; Weld, 20.

⁹ Burrows and Wallace, 449-450. Pierpont used the Anglicized spelling of the family name while his descendants reverted back to the original.

Many of the early residents and developers of Brooklyn were slave owners. Records indicate that the Hicks, Joralemons, Middaghs, Pierreponts, Rapaljes, Remsens, and Sands families all had slaves in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.¹⁰ An early history of Brooklyn notes that many of these same families began manumitting their slaves in early 1800s in accordance with the gradual emancipation laws passed by the State of New York in 1799 and 1817.¹¹ Brooklyn Heights and the adjacent neighborhood east of Fulton Street later became an important center for the abolitionist movement and an active part of the Underground Railroad in the years prior to the Civil War—although none of the properties within the Borough Hall Skyscraper Historic District have known associations with this history.¹²

By the 1820s residential buildings were being erected in significant numbers on both sides of the ferry landing as street openings and other civic improvement projects transformed the old country estates into a viable urban neighborhood.¹³ The population of the area continued to increase during the 1830s and in 1834 the City of Brooklyn was incorporated with a population of nearly 25,000 residents.¹⁴ One of the first acts of the newly formed city government was to purchase a plot of land for the construction of a proper city hall.¹⁵ It chose a site on what was then the outer edge of the settled neighborhood of Brooklyn Heights, at the intersection of Fulton, Joralemon, and the recently-opened Court Street—well removed from the existing town center clustered around the ferry landing at the foot of Fulton Street.¹⁶ Architect Calvin Pollard was commissioned to design the imposing structure and its cornerstone was laid in 1836.¹⁷ The Panic of 1837 and the subsequent economic recession, however, halted construction at the site for nearly a decade.

¹⁰ 1790 United States Census, Kings County, Brooklyn; 1800 United States Census, Kings County, Brooklyn; Peter Ross, *A History of Long Island: From its Earliest Settlement to the Present Time* (New York and Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1902), 119-138.

¹¹ Ross, 129-133. A transcript of the legal instrument by which Jacob and John Hicks manumitted a female slave named Gin or Jane is transcribed in full in the history. Pierpont, as well as members of the Middagh and Remsen families, were also among those recorded as manumitting slaves during this period. For a description of the gradual abolition of slavery in New York see Patrick Rael, “The Long Death of Slavery” in *Slavery in New York*, ed. Ira Berlin and Leslie M. Harris (New York and London: The New Press, 2005).

¹² All of the buildings within the district aside from Brooklyn City Hall post-date the Civil War. For a detailed description of Brooklyn sites associated with abolitionist movement and the Underground Railroad, see “Research Report on the Portential Underground Railroad Associations of the Duffield Street and Gold Street Properties in Downtown Brooklyn,” prepared by AKRF, Inc. (February 2007).

¹³ A map of the village published in 1827 shows the extent of urban development stretching over much of the northern section of Brooklyn Heights, as well as many of the blocks to the east of Fulton Street laid out by the Sands brothers. *Hooker’s New Pocket Plan of the Village of Brooklyn* (Brooklyn: William Hooker, 1827).

¹⁴ Stiles 1, 528.

¹⁵ The municipal functions of Brooklyn were initially housed in a small commercial building near the ferry landing; they later moved to the Apprentices’ Library and other nearby facilities (later renamed the City Buildings) until City Hall was completed. Stiles 1, 534.

¹⁶ This decision was heavily influenced by Pierpont, who owned a portion of the land purchased by the city and who believed a grand civic building would help promote the development of his vast estate as an elite enclave. Burrows and Wallace, 581-582.

¹⁷ A description of this design can be found in Stiles 1, 534-35.

*Mid 19th Century Development of Brooklyn's Civic Center*¹⁸

While construction on **Brooklyn City Hall** (now Brooklyn Borough Hall) was temporarily stalled, the city's population continued to grow rapidly in the late 1830s and especially through the 1840s. During this period the remaining large estate owners in Brooklyn Heights increased their efforts to partition and sell off buildings lots.¹⁹ Work on City Hall finally resumed in 1845, albeit at a diminished size from what had originally been proposed. The commission for the revised design was given to architect Gamaliel King, who produced what is widely considered one of the finest Greek Revival-style buildings in the city (it was designated a New York City Landmark in 1966).

In the decade following the opening of City Hall, the population of Brooklyn more than doubled—propelled not only by in-migration and immigration, but also through the annexation of the neighboring City of Williamsburgh and Town of Bushwick in 1855.²⁰ At the beginning of the 1860s Brooklyn had more than a quarter million residents and was counted as the third most populous urban center in the nation. The needs of this enlarged population soon exceeded the facilities available in City Hall and over the next few decades a number of new governmental structures were erected in the immediate vicinity. The Kings County Courthouse was erected on Joralemon Street across from City Hall in 1862-65.²¹ It was soon flanked to the west by the Brooklyn Municipal Building and to the east by the Hall of Records.²² The federal government also turned its attention to Brooklyn during this period, erecting the United States Post Office and Court House, Brooklyn Central Office (1885-91, Mifflin E. Bell, a New York City Landmark) a few blocks away at the northeast corner of Washington and Johnson Streets just off Fulton Street.

As the stretch of Joralemon Street surrounding City Hall was developing into the center of Brooklyn's civic life, many of the city's newly-established cultural institutions were establishing themselves on the adjacent side streets. One of the earliest was Montague Hall (1845, Gamaliel King, demolished) on Court Street just south of Montague Street, which was an

¹⁸ Information in this section is based on the following sources: Kenneth Turney Gibbs, *Business Architectural Imagery in America, 1870-1930* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1984); Sarah Bradford Landau and Carl W. Condit, *The Rise of the New York City Skyscraper, 1865-1913* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1996); Ment; Merlis and Rosenzweig; Morrone; Stiles; Younger.

¹⁹ In 1840 the Pierrpont heirs commissioned another survey of their lands that resulted in the creation of Montague Place, and in 1846 the removal of their family manor from the projected path of Remsen Street facilitated the opening of that road. Ment, 32-33.

²⁰ The population of Brooklyn in 1848 stood at 90,000, increasing to more than 200,000 in 1855. Stiles 1, 535.

²¹ The Kings County Courthouse (demolished, original location immediately outside the boundaries of the Borough Hall Skyscraper Historic District) was designed by Gamaliel King—architect of Brooklyn City Hall—and Herman Teckritz. (In an interesting twist of history, King's former partner, John Kellum, was the architect for the nearly contemporaneous New York County Courthouse, also known as the Tweed Courthouse, [1861-81, a New York City Landmark], in Manhattan.) Plans for the new building were begun as early as the 1850s, although an early historian of Brooklyn notes, "the usual delays, embarrassments and contentions incident to the erection of a great public building prevented its erection, and it was not till May 20, 1862, that its corner-stone was laid." Stiles 1, 535. See also "Kings County Court-House, Opinion of Hon Greene C. Bronson," *New York Times* (September 20, 1854).

²² The original Brooklyn Municipal Building (1876-78, Ditmars & Mumford, demolished) was an imposing Mansard-roofed, French Second Empire-style structure. The Hall of Records (1885-87, William A. Mundell, demolished, original location outside the boundaries of the Borough Hall Skyscraper Historic District) was a classically-inspired design whose prominent triangular pediment complimented the earlier civic buildings.

important early place of assembly not just for the regular concerts and dances held there but also for the meeting rooms that were used by many of the city's early societies.²³ The Packer Collegiate Institute for Girls was established in 1844 on Joralemon Street west of Court Street; following a fire in 1853 it moved into an impressive new structure on the same site (1853-56, Minard Lafever, within the Brooklyn Heights Historic District). A similar institution for boys, the Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute, opened its building in 1854 on Livingston Street on the south side of the block that would eventually be home to the Courthouse, Municipal Building, and Hall of Records. The stretch of Montague Street west of Court Street became the primary center of Brooklyn's cultural organizations during the 1860s when a group of three Gothic Revival-style buildings were erected in close proximity. The Brooklyn Academy of Music opened on the south side of the street in 1861, the Mercantile Library Association of the City of Brooklyn across the street in 1868, and the Brooklyn Art Association adjacent to the Acedmy of Music in 1872.²⁴ The area near Brooklyn City Hall perhaps reached its apogee as a cultural center when the Long Island Historical Society moved into its new headquarters at the corner of Clinton and Pierrepont Streets (1878-81, George B. Post, within the Brooklyn Heights Historic District).

Commercial development in mid-19th century Brooklyn was more widely dispersed, initially growing outward from the Fulton Ferry landing and later along other important transportation corridors such as Atlantic Avenue east of the South Ferry landing. Stores and other business buildings began to appear on Court Street during the 1850s following the completion of City Hall and coincident with the opening of horsecar service along the road in 1854.²⁵ Most were low in scale, reaching at most four stories, and were designed in the Italianate palazzo style that had become prevalent for commercial structures following the opening of the A. T. Stewart Store near New York's City Hall in Manhattan.²⁶ A notable block of four-story, marble-fronted stores was erected at the southwest corner of Court and Joralemon Streets around 1852 (heavily-altered traces of the Marble Buildings, as they were often called, remain at 52 Court Street and 62 Court Street within the boundaries of the Borough Hall Skyscraper Historic District), while the opposite side of Court Street was home to the Washington Building (c. 1851, demolished) and other smaller commercial structures.

Banks and other important businesses also began to establish their headquarters in the vicinity of Brooklyn City Hall during this period. The Mechanics Bank erected a handsome Italianate-style building on the northwest corner of Court and Montague Streets in 1857, and the same year the Brooklyn Gas Light Company built its own offices on the south side of Remsen

²³ "Montague Hall," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (April 1, 1879), 4. Montague Hall's major rival during the 1850s was the Brooklyn Atheneum, located on the northeast corner of Atlantic Avenue and Clinton Street. Ment, 36.

²⁴ The historic homes of the Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute, the Brooklyn Academy of Music (1861, Leopold Eidlitz); the Mercantile Library (1865-68, Peter B. Wright); the Brooklyn Arts Association (1869-72, J. C. Cady) were all subsequently demolished; all but a portion of the Brooklyn Academy of Music were located outside the boundaries of the Borough Hall Skyscraper Historic District. See Ment, 36-44 for a discussion of Montague Street as Brooklyn's cultural center.

²⁵ The Brooklyn City Railroad Company began service on it Fulton Street, Court Street, Myrtle Avenue, and Flushing Avenue routes on July 3, 1854. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle Almanac* (1916), 444.

²⁶ A. T. Stewart Store (a New York City Landmark) was built in 1845-46 with later additions, designed by Joseph Trench & Co. The first palazzo-style building in Brooklyn is widely believed to have been the Brooklyn Savings Bank (1846-47, Minard Lafever, demolished) that stood at the corner of Fulton and Concord Streets.

Street just west of Court Street.²⁷ Perhaps the most conspicuous commercial structure erected on Court Street during the mid 19th century was the four-story, palazzo-style Hamilton Building at the northwest corner of Court and Joralemon Streets.²⁸ It was commissioned by Abiel Abbot Low, a prominent merchant in the China trade who was deeply involved in the development of Brooklyn in general and the City Hall neighborhood in particular.²⁹

*The Tall Office Building in Downtown Brooklyn during the Late 19th Century*³⁰

The Panic of 1857 and the subsequent economic depression, followed soon afterwards by the Civil War, significantly inhibited development in Brooklyn for a number of years. By the 1870s, however, construction activity had picked up again on the streets surrounding City Hall. The stretch of Court Street from Montague to Livingston Streets in particular experienced rapid commercial growth, transforming the area from a minor shopping street into Brooklyn's true downtown office district. The buildings erected during this period were a significant departure from the earlier low-scale, Italianate palazzos typified by the Hamilton Building. In addition to employing a growing range of architectural styles—including the French Second Empire, neo-Grec, Romanesque Revival, and eventually Beaux-Arts Classicism—these structures also adopted a number of technical advancements that allowed them to grow ever larger and taller, in many ways making them the direct predecessors of the skyscrapers that would eventually replace them in the early 20th century.

As in Manhattan, the rivalry between insurance companies in Brooklyn provided the initial motivation that pushed building heights upwards along Court Street.³¹ In 1873-74 the Continental Insurance Company of New York, a Manhattan-based firm dealing in fire insurance, erected one of the first of the new class of office buildings at the southwest corner of Court and Montague Streets.³² A few years later, a local firm, the Phenix Fire Insurance Company of

²⁷ The Mechanics Bank and the Brooklyn Gas Light Company Building (both demolished, located outside the boundaries of the Borough Hall Skyscraper Historic District) were designed as Italianate style palazzos.

²⁸ The design of the Hamilton Building (1860-61, attributed to William Field & Son, demolished) closely resembled other palazzo-mode commercial buildings in New York, particularly the earlier Bank of the State of New York (1855-56, James Renwick, Jr., demolished) erected at William Street and Exchange Place in Manhattan.

²⁹ Low was instrumental in establishing many of the cultural institutions that made their home in downtown Brooklyn. He assisted in founding the Brooklyn Public Library system, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Brooklyn Art Association, and the Long Island Historical Society (now Brooklyn Historical Society), as well as serving as president of the board of trustees of the Brooklyn Female Academy (later the Packer Collegiate Institute).

³⁰ Information in this section is based on the following sources: Burrows and Wallace; Gibbs; Landau and Condit; Ment; Merlis and Rosenzweig; Morrone; Snyder-Grenier; Stiles.

³¹ The rivalry in Manhattan was between life insurance companies, notably the Equitable, Metropolitan, Mutual, and New York firms. In Brooklyn it was the fire insurance firms that predominated.

³² The Continental Building (demolished) was designed by George L. Morse, who would become perhaps the most important architect of commercial structures in Downtown Brooklyn during the late 19th century. The five-story French Second Empire-style structure featured a cast-iron facade, a mansard roof with a corner pavilion, and a large tower rising a reported 120 feet above the main entrance along Montague Street. "Continental Insurance Company," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (September 26, 1873), 4. The Arbuckle Building (demolished) on Fulton Street between Myrtle and Willoughby predated the Continental Building by a few years and was called the first modern office building in Brooklyn by the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*. The Continental Insurance Company's headquarters at 100 Broadway in Manhattan (1862-63, Griffith Thomas, demolished) also had a cast-iron front with a prominent

Brooklyn, commissioned an even taller structure immediately to the south of the Continental Building on the site of the old Montague Hall.³³ The Phenix Building employed a number of notable technical innovations, including the large expanses of glass on its facade, the inclusion of rental office space beyond what was necessary for the owners, and the presence of two steam-powered elevators—features that are widely considered hallmarks of the early skyscraper.³⁴

Abiel A. Low, developer of the Hamilton Building, increased his investment in downtown commercial real estate during this period by commissioning a pair of tall office buildings of his own. His most visible contribution was the seven-story Garfield Building at northwest corner of Court and Remsen Streets adjacent to the Phenix Building.³⁵ Following its completion, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* enthusiastically noted that “the locality of [City] Hall...is considered THE COMMERCIAL HEART of the city,” and claimed that the concentration of the “Low [Garfield] Building, with the Phoenix Building and the Continental Building, all on the same block, will make it decidedly the finest in the town for business purposes.”³⁶ Low also developed the seven-and-a-half-story **Franklin Building** around the corner at 186 Remsen Street in 1886-87.³⁷ It was designed by the Parfitt Brothers, whose prior experience with tall buildings included a set of three apartment buildings on Montague Street several blocks to the west.³⁸ The structure shows the growing influence of the Romanesque Revival and incorporates many elements typical of the style, such as the heavy round-arched entrance at the ground floor, the rock-faced stonework covering the lower stories, and the vertical organization of the facade into a regular series of arcades articulated under the round-arched window openings at the sixth story.³⁹ The Franklin Building, although losing its upper story and a half around 1950, is

mansard roof, and is widely considered to be the first Second Empire-style commercial building in New York. Landau and Condit, 57.

³³ The Phenix Building (1879-80, Ebenezer L. Roberts, demolished) incorporated elements of the neo-Grec style and featured strong vertical piers, decorative beltcourses, and a central cupola. “Coming Down,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (March 21, 1879), 4. The Phenix Building predated by a few years the architect’s similar, if more famous, commission for the Standard Oil Company Building on Lower Broadway in Manhattan.

³⁴ Architectural historians Sarah Bradford Landau and Carl W. Condit spell out the elements that distinguished early skyscrapers in their description of the Equitable Life Assurance Society Building in Manhattan (1868-70, Dilman & Kendal, demolished), noting that, “the exceptional features of the Equitable Building—its elevator-predicated height, ‘fireproof’ construction, extensive iron framing, large window area, and rent-free owner quarters—justify the title ‘first skyscraper.’” Landau and Condit, 71.

³⁵ The Garfield Building (1881, J. C. Cady, demolished) featured a double-height pitched roof and prominent corner clock tower whose height well outstripped the earlier buildings on Court Street. “Immense,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (April 4, 1881), 4.

³⁶ “The High Low Building,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (July 29, 1881), 3.

³⁷ The Franklin Building may have been named after the Franklin Trust Company, which was founded by Low around 1888 and was an early tenant in the building. The Franklin Trust later moved to the larger Franklin Trust Company Building at 164 Montague Street (1891, George L. Morse, within the Brooklyn Heights Historic District). “A Famous Firm,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, September 2, 1887, 2; “New Trust Company,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, April 4, 1888, 6.

³⁸ These apartment buildings were the Berkley, the Grosvenor, and the Montague (all 1885-86)—the latter of which especially resembles the Franklin. Low may have selected the Parfitt Brothers at the recommendation of his son Seth Low, who had hired the firm in 1882 to design his house in Brooklyn Heights.

³⁹ The design of the Franklin Building is also notable for the use of color and materials, particularly the red pressed brick and terra cotta that comprise the upper stories. The terra cotta on the Franklin Building was manufactured by

significant as one of the few surviving late-19th-century tall office buildings in Downtown Brooklyn.

Banks and other financial institutions continued to cluster around City Hall during the late 19th century. The Dime Savings Bank erected a new headquarters at the southwest corner of Court and Remsen Streets in 1883-84.⁴⁰ A decade later the Title Guarantee and Trust Company built their own offices across Remsen Street adjacent to the Garfield Building in 1896-97.⁴¹ The development of these and other commercial buildings in Downtown Brooklyn coincided with, and in some instances preceded, the planning and construction of a pair of massive transportation projects that further reoriented commercial activity away from the Fulton Ferry landing and towards the City Hall area.⁴² The first to open was the Brooklyn Bridge, preparations for which had begun in the 1860s and for which foundations were laid starting in 1870—just a few years before the Continental Building went up. The bridge was opened to pedestrian traffic on May 24, 1883, while cable car service across the span began in September of that year. The Brooklyn terminus for the route was located at Sands Street a few blocks north of City Hall. The second project was the development of a network of elevated railroads that fanned out from the City civic center into the rapidly expanding residential neighborhoods of Brooklyn. The Brooklyn Elevated Railroad opened the first line serving Downtown Brooklyn in 1885, running east into the Fort Greene, Clinton Hill, and Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhoods from a terminal at Washington and Adams Street just north of the Brooklyn Bridge cable car station.⁴³ The allied Union Elevated Railroad opened another line in 1888 running along Myrtle Avenue with its main terminal at Adams Street a block east of City Hall.⁴⁴ That same year a rival company, the Kings County Elevated Railway, completed its own route running along Fulton Street with a major station stop located directly in front of Brooklyn City Hall and the Kings County Court House.

Building heights in Downtown Brooklyn continued to increase in the 1890s, starting with the nine-story Real Estate Exchange Building that ran through the block between Montague and

the Boston Terra Cotta Company, while the brickwork is composed of Philadelphia pressed brick laid in stretcher bond—which at the time was characteristic of high quality construction.

⁴⁰ The design of the Dime Savings Bank (1883-84, Mercein Thomas, demolished) was the result of an architectural competition. At four stories—which actually read as only two—it was shorter than the speculative office buildings that surrounded it, yet contemporary accounts noted that, “the general character of the structure is massive” and praised the novel use of light-colored limestone and its Classically-detailed facade. “To Loom Up,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (April 13, 1883), 4; “The Dime Bank,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (December 24, 1884), 1. Another of Brooklyn’s great Classical banks, the Brooklyn Savings Bank (1892-94, Frank Freeman, demolished) was located a few blocks to the north at Pierrepont and Clinton Streets.

⁴¹ The original design for the Title Guarantee and Trust Company Building by Holland C. Anthony called for a three-story structure, with framing strong enough to support an additional five stories, “should an increased demand for offices in the neighborhood warrant.” As completed, the Romanesque Revival-style building had six stories—shorter than was technically feasible but still a testament to the continuing interest in commercial real estate in the City Hall area. “Title Company’s New Home,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (June 7, 1896), 7.

⁴² While Court Street and the blocks west of City Hall developed into Brooklyn’s premiere location for office buildings, the stretch of Fulton Street to the east evolved into the city’s major shopping district. Several of historic stores remain, including the Offerman Building (1890-93, Peter J. Lauritzen, a New York City Landmark) that once housed the S. Wechsler & Brother department store and later Martin’s Department Store.

⁴³ The Lexington Avenue line, as it was commonly called, was soon extended northwards to the Fulton Ferry landing and eastwards into East New York.

⁴⁴ The Myrtle Avenue line was later extended northwards to connect with the Brooklyn Bridge terminus.

Pierrepont Streets west of Court Street.⁴⁵ Widely denounced in the architectural press as an “aberration” and a “juggernaut” amidst the low-scale cultural institutions from the mid 19th century, it was nevertheless soon surpassed by even larger buildings in the following years.⁴⁶ Perhaps more distinguished was a group of four early skyscrapers designed by George L. Morse, architect of the earlier Continental Building. The ten-story Franklin Trust Company Building was completed in 1891 at the southwest corner of Montague and Clinton Streets (within the Brooklyn Heights Historic District). A year later, in 1892, the eight-story Brooklyn Daily Eagle Building (demolished) opened at the southeast corner of Washington and Johnson Street just east of City Hall.⁴⁷ Both were completed before the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893 helped popularized the Beaux-Arts classicism that characterized the design of the slightly later Mechanics Bank Building (1896, demolished) that towered ten stories over the northwest corner of Court and Montague Streets.⁴⁸ The last and largest of the Morse-designed skyscrapers was the **Temple Bar Building**, a massive 13-story structure that replaced the old Hamilton Building at 44 Court Street. A speculative investment with over 300 offices, the name derived from owner David G. Leggett’s intention that many of the borough’s lawyers would take up quarters in the building. The Temple Bar Building was distinguished not only by its sheer height and bulk but also by its skillfully-executed Beaux-Arts-style design. The main elevation facing Court Street was divided vertically with a pair of heavy corner piers flanking a more open central section, while a series of beltcourses separated the facade into a number of horizontal layers. The rusticated base originally had a columned portico, while balconies projected from the upper stories. The most prominent features of the building were the elegantly curving green cooper cupolas at the three visible corners of the building.⁴⁹

Construction on the Temple Bar Building commenced in 1899, a year after the independent City of Brooklyn was consolidated into Greater New York as the Borough of Brooklyn. Most of the city’s business leaders—including Abiel A. Low and other real estate developers active in Downtown Brooklyn—had strongly supported unification, believing that the merger would increase property values and bring additional demand for office space.⁵⁰ As the 19th century came to a close, optimism remained high that the prosperity of the business district surrounding the recently-renamed Brooklyn Borough Hall would continue unabated.

⁴⁵ The Real Estate Exchange Building (1890, George E. Edbrooke, altered) is located outside the boundaries of the Borough Hall Skyscraper Historic District.

⁴⁶ *Architectural Record* 1 (1892), 401-403, quoted in Ment, 48.

⁴⁷ An addition, with prominent cupola, was added to the Brooklyn Daily Eagle Building in 1903. The complex was located outside the boundaries of the Borough Hall Skyscraper Historic District.

⁴⁸ The Mechanics Bank Building was enlarged in 1904, following the curve of Fulton Street. It was located outside the boundaries of the Borough Hall Skyscraper Historic District.

⁴⁹ The design of the Temple Bar Building may have been influenced by the Park Row Building (1896-99, R. H. Robertson, a New York City Landmark) in Manhattan, which also featured a rusticated base with portico, regular horizontal beltcourses, and a vertical division of the facade into heavy corner piers—topped with prominent cupolas—flanking a more open center section.

⁵⁰ In 1893 the Brooklyn Consolidation League was formed by members of Brooklyn’s business community at a meeting held in the Real Estate Exchange Building on Montague Street. Burrows and Wallace, 1228.

*Early 20th Century Development*⁵¹

When it was completed in 1901, the Temple Bar Building was lauded as the tallest office building ever constructed in Brooklyn.⁵² In spite of the enthusiasm of the borough's real estate investors engendered by consolidation and the turn of the new century, it retained that title for more than a decade a half. Yet while no legitimate challengers to its height were raised in the first decades of the 20th century, commercial development continued to progress on the blocks surrounding Borough Hall. Montague Street in particular became a favored location for financial institutions. A large parcel on the south side of the street became available in 1903 when the old Brooklyn Academy of Music burned to the ground. Most of the site was redeveloped with a series of two-story bank buildings designed in the neo-Classical mode. Helmle, Huberty & Hudswell were responsible for a long block of offices at 176-186 Montague Street, erected for the Lawyers Mortgage Company—part of which remains, in an altered form, at **186 Montague Street** within the Borough Hall Skyscraper Historic District.⁵³ Another pair of bank buildings was constructed at nos. 192 and 196 Montague Street, the latter designed by Frank Freeman as an addition for the Title Guarantee & Trust Company (both later replaced).⁵⁴ Helmle, Huberty & Hudswell also created a ten-story office building for the Lawyers Title Insurance Company on a portion of the Academy site at **188 Montague Street**, constructed in 1904-06. The column-like appearance of the structure—with a classic tripartite form comprising a two-story base, a relatively simple brick-clad shaft, and an elaborate capital, each distinguished by the use of color and materials—is typical of the New York City “solution” to the design of tall office buildings that had come to dominate by the early 1900s.⁵⁵

A similarly-composed 12-story office building was erected a few years later around 1909-11 at **184 Joralemon Street**. It also features a rusticated base, a uniform middle section, and a prominent capital—although the more exuberant use of ornament, as well as the mixing of the Beaux-Arts and Colonial Revival styles, may be attributed to the individualism of architect George Keister, who was widely known for his flamboyant theater designs. The 12-story **Terminal Building** at 50 Court Street, which replaced a few of the 1850s-era Marble Buildings,

⁵¹ Information in this section is based on the following sources: Gibbs; Landau and Condit; LPC, *Broadway-Chambers Building Designation Report* (LP-1753) (New York: City of New York, 1992), prepared by James T. Dillon; Ment; Public Design Commission of the City of New York, Archives.

⁵² According to the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, “the structure will be the highest of any building in Brooklyn devoted exclusively to office purposes,” and was surpassed in height only by a couple of church steeples—including the Morse-designed First Reformed Church at 7th Avenue and Carroll Street in Park Slope (1893). “Will be 14 Stories High,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (January 12, 1900), 7.

⁵³ The building at 176-186 Montague Street was damaged by fire in 1939, although the portion at nos. 184-186 was renovated and two floors subsequently added in 1941 to the designs of Slee & Bryson.

⁵⁴ In 1907 the Title Guarantee & Trust Company constructed a second, seven-story, addition at 167-169 Remsen Street adjacent to their main headquarters dating from 1896-97.

⁵⁵ This design scheme was exemplified by Cass Gilbert's Broadway-Chambers Building in Manhattan (1899-1900, a New York City Landmark), which architectural critic Montgomery Schuyler called, “the summation of that type of design of a tall building, the ‘last word’ in the prosecution of the analogy of the classical column.” Montgomery Schuyler, *The Woolworth Building* (New York: the Woolworth Company, 1913), cited in William Jordy and Ralph Coe, *American Architecture and Other Writings of Montgomery Schuyler* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1961), 614. See also Landau and Condit, 271-273; LPC, *Broadway-Chambers Building Designation Report*.

was another notable example of the type. It was constructed in 1913 and was the first major structure to be completed on Court Street after the Temple Bar Building. Designed by New Jersey architect William E. Lehman, the building was particularly notable for the use of white- and cobalt-colored glazed terra cotta on the upper stories.⁵⁶

At the same time as these tall office buildings were going up, the city government was engaged in a protracted planning effort for a new Municipal Building to replace the older structure erected in the 1870s. The first attempts were initiated in 1903 when Borough President J. Edward Swanstrom presided over an architectural competition for the commission. The winning entry, by Washington Hull, was for a boldly detailed, eight-story Beaux-Arts structure with a double-height pitched roof and corner pavilions. Swanstrom's successor, Martin W. Littleton, subsequently rejected Hull's design and in 1905 commissioned the firm of McKim, Mead & White to create its own proposal. Their four-story structure was shorter than Hull's, but was to occupy a larger lot stretching the full block front along Court Street from Joralemon to Livingston Streets.⁵⁷ Littleton in turn was replaced in office by Bird S. Coler and yet another set of designs for the Municipal Building was commissioned—this time by Lord & Hewlett, who in 1906 submitted a scheme for a ten-story structure in a restrained Beaux-arts style.⁵⁸ A fourth successive Borough President, Alfred E. Steers, engaged his own architects for the project, awarding the commission to McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin. The firm filed its initial designs in 1911, but these were rejected by the city's Art Commission, which objected to the inclusion of a dome over the central tower that it believed would compete too closely with that of Borough Hall.⁵⁹ Revised drawings won preliminary approval from the commission in 1912, with additional approvals in 1913.⁶⁰ The final scheme created by McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin called for an H-plan building, with a pair of wings flanking a central tower recessed above a street-level arcade. The structure was topped with steeply pitched roofs and surmounted by a tall cupola. Actual work on the building proceeded as far as the demolition of the old Municipal Building in 1915, but further construction on its replacement was suspended and did not resume for nearly a decade.

Transportation facilities also continued to improve through the turn-of-the-century, bringing ever greater numbers of people to Downtown Brooklyn. The terminal at the foot of Brooklyn Bridge was substantially improved in 1895, linking the bridge's cable car system with the elevated tracks of both the Brooklyn Elevated Railroad and the Kings County Railway. A few years later Brooklyn's transit system was further consolidated when the newly-formed Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company (BRT) gained control of the elevated lines in 1899 and most of the streetcar and surface railroads by 1900. The BRT's Manhattan-based rival, the Interborough Rapid Transit Company (IRT), opened the first subway station in Brooklyn in 1908 at Borough Hall, and soon extended the line into the residential neighborhoods to the east. The

⁵⁶ The terra cotta was manufactured by the Federal Terra Cotta Company.

⁵⁷ "Borough Hall Planned," *New-York Daily Tribune* (November 11, 1905), 4. The firm's proposal for the Brooklyn Municipal Building closely resembled their later design for the United States General Post Office in Manhattan (1908-13, a New York City Landmark). It also preceded by a couple of years its executed design for the skyscraping Manhattan Municipal Building (1907-14, a New York City Landmark).

⁵⁸ "New Borough Building," *New-York Daily Tribune* (January 5, 1908), 3; "Three Architect, Not a Brick Laid," *New-York Daily Tribune* (October 29, 1909), 4.

⁵⁹ "Reject Designs for Brooklyn City Hall," *New York Times* (December 20, 1911), 9.

⁶⁰ Public Design Commission Archives.

IRT completed a second line through Downtown Brooklyn in 1919 with a major station at the intersection of Court and Montague Street, while the BRT opened its own subway in the area in 1920 with a stop located just down the block at Montague Street between Clinton and Court Streets.

*Court Street as Skyscraper Row*⁶¹

The anticipation surrounding the construction of a new Municipal Building, as well as the consolidation of Brooklyn's transit facilities and the construction of several important subway lines through Downtown Brooklyn, lead many to speculate that the area was ready for a period of even greater development. The *New York Times* correctly predicted the coming growth, noting in 1911 that "Court Street is the logical centre for new and larger buildings to meet the demands of increasing business activity."⁶² The first of these new and larger buildings to be completed in the vicinity was the 22-story building at **32 Court Street**, which replaced the old Dime Savings Bank Building. When it was completed in 1918 it easily surpassed the Temple Bar Building as the tallest commercial structure in Brooklyn and was called "Brooklyn's first real sky-scraper" by *Rider's New York City* guidebook in 1923. Designed by the firm of Starrett & Van Vleck, the structure was developed by the Court and Remsen Company, of which Goldwin Starrett, partner in Starrett and Van Vleck, was president.⁶³ Like the earlier Terminal Building, 32 Court Street follows the traditional column-like design scheme with a clearly defined base, shaft, and capital. Plans for the new building were submitted in 1916 just before the city's first comprehensive zoning resolution went into effect and the structure rises straight up from the sidewalk for 20 stories before setting back with a two-story penthouse and pitched roof. The ornamentation of the upper stories, particularly the elaborate treatment of the penthouse with balustrades and urns (since removed), suggest the influence of the Colonial Revival style, while the middle section of the building is arranged with a regular grid of paired window openings separated horizontally by beltcourses every second story.

Planning efforts for a new **Municipal Building** were revived yet again in 1923 when the city commissioned McKenzie, Voorhees, and Gmelin to update the design they had initially submitted in 1911-13. The plan and massing of the new proposal was very similar to the earlier scheme, although the ornamentation was somewhat simplified, particularly in the lowering of the roofline and in the treatment of the central tower.⁶⁴ As had happened the previous decade, the Art Commission requested a number of refinements to the design; the entrance colonnade, perhaps the most distinctive feature of the building, received particular scrutiny. In 1924 the architects submitted a revised set of renderings and a scale model of the colonnade, which did away with the central sculptural element seen in the original drawings and instead presented a more austere

⁶¹ Information in this section is based on the following sources: Gibbs; Landau and Condit; Ment; Morrone; Public Design Commission Archives; Carol Willis, *Form Follows Finance: Skyscrapers and Skylines in New York and Chicago* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1995).

⁶² "Interesting Contrast in Development Around the Borough Hall of Brooklyn," *New York Times* (May 28, 1911), XX2.

⁶³ "Skyscraper for Brooklyn," *New York Times* (August 13, 1916), XX2..

⁶⁴ A letter from the architects to the Art Commission noted that the building, "occupies the same area and is of the same general structure as the plans which received preliminary approval some time ago from your Commission." Public Design Commission Archives.

series of columns with just a hint of emphasis on the central bays provided by a raised parapet. Construction work began in August of that year, while the building's crowning element, the cupola, won final approval from the Art Commission in the summer of 1925. The completed structure opened in 1926.

While the Municipal Building was not the tallest in Downtown Brooklyn, being easily surpassed by the earlier skyscraper at 32 Court Street, its planning and construction had a profound impact on the neighborhood by renewing development interest in the surrounding blocks. An article in the *New York Times* in 1926 noted that, "private enterprise has been quick to follow the example set by the city in erecting the new Brooklyn Municipal Building."⁶⁵ Within a couple of years of its completion a distinguished group of increasingly tall office buildings were erected on the west side of Court Street facing the civic center, definitively earning for the area the title of Brooklyn's skyscraper row. These structures were built as speculative investments and, as with many such ventures, were named for the streets on which they were located: the Montague-Court Building, the Court and Remsen Building, and the Court-Livingston Building (soon renamed the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce Building after its most influential tenant).⁶⁶ The designs of the three buildings show the clear influence of the 1916 zoning ordinance, which required the building envelope to step back from the street wall as it rose to allow light and air to filter downwards. An important provision of the law permitted unrestricted height on a quarter of the building site, which gave developers the option of building slender towers to whatever elevation would prove profitable.

The first of the 1920s skyscrapers to be completed was the **Court and Remsen Building** at 26 Court Street, which replaced the Garfield Building. It was built in 1925-26 to the designs of Schwartz & Gross, and at 30 stories and approximately 350 feet high it was for a brief time the tallest building in Brooklyn, well surpassing 32 Court Street in both height and bulk. The structure was constructed without the slender tower allowed under the zoning resolution, instead rising 18 stories above the sidewalk before stepping away from the street wall in a complex series of setbacks topped with a pitched tile roof.⁶⁷ A skyscraper for the site had been proposed earlier by the Chanin Construction Company in 1924, but the property was ultimately sold to a partnership lead by Abraham Bricken and developed by the Bricken Construction Company. Bricken was a major Manhattan real estate developer, particularly active in Manhattan's Garment Center, who frequently worked with architects Schwartz & Gross on large projects such as this. The neo-Romanesque detailing of the building was skillfully handled by the designers, with projecting corbelled cornices emphasizing the complex massing of the setbacks, and elaborate spandrel panels recessed between continuous brick piers accentuating the verticality of the structure.

⁶⁵ "Brooklyn's Great Financial Center," *New York Times* (April 4, 1926), RE2.

⁶⁶ "Building is Renamed," *New York Times* (April 9, 1927), 35. Other notable speculative office buildings also named for their locations include the Broadway-Chambers Building, the West Street Building (1905-07, Cass Gilbert), and the Nassau-Beekman Building (formerly the Morse Building, 1878-80, Sillman & Farnsworth; 1901-02, Bannister & Schell), all New York City Landmarks. For a discussion of speculative office buildings named after their locations, see Gibbs, 83-86.

⁶⁷ Early renderings of the building showed a more traditional scheme, with a rectangular block rising sheer from the sidewalk to the upper stories, topped by a triple-height, cross-plan penthouse and a hipped roof. *Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide* 115 (March 7, 1925), 9. The elevations of the building as built are not exactly symmetric, as the north and west corners have additional bays since setbacks were not required along the interior lot lines. These additional bays are minimally ornamented to enhance the visual sense of symmetry.

The adjacent **Montague-Court Building** at 16 Court Street, on the site of the Continental and Phenix Buildings, was also commenced in 1925 and was completed in 1927. It was designed by H. Craig Severance with David M. Oltarsh as associate and was developed by the Court and Montague Streets Realty Company syndicate headed by Saul Singer, who was also a very active investor in real estate in Manhattan's Garment Center.⁶⁸ Unlike the Court and Remsen Building, the Montague-Court Building exercised the tower option permitted by the zoning resolution. At 35 stories it was in turn Brooklyn's newest tallest building, and the prominent site at the curve of Fulton street further enhanced its visual dominance of the neighborhood. The massing of the Montague-Court Building was simpler than its neighbor, with a single deep setback along the Court Street facade and two on the Montague Street frontage. The architectural ornament was deftly executed in the neo-Romanesque style, including the intricately patterned terra cotta at the transitions between each building level and the brickwork in the recessed spandrel panels of the upper stories.⁶⁹ The detailing of the upper cornice and the setback penthouse is particularly fine and remains notably intact.

The third great skyscraper to be completed in the Borough Hall area was the **Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce Building**, originally known by the street address 66 Court Street and now referred to as 75 Livingston Street. Unlike most of the business buildings on Court Street—which were developed by large Manhattan firms and designed by established architects—the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce Building was constructed for a relatively small Brooklyn real estate company working with a recently-licensed architect. The owner of record for the building, 66-74 Court Street Realty Corporation, was headed by Jacob Adelman whose J. F. I. Construction Company apparently specialized in apartment house construction on Ocean Parkway and in other parts of Brooklyn. Articles in the *New York Times* indicate that the building's designer, Abraham J. Simberg, also worked primarily on low-scale apartment houses during the mid 1920s, and it is likely that he met Adelman on one of these projects.⁷⁰ The Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce Building was by far the largest project that either the developer or the architect had yet undertaken; yet despite their inexperience with skyscraping office towers they produced a building of considerable elegance and sophistication. The massing of the structure was quite complicated, with five primary setbacks above the 13-story base. These setbacks in turn were refined with projecting pavilions, chamfered corners, and secondary setbacks that give the building visual interest well beyond what was required by the zoning regulations and equal to that of any skyscraper in Greater New York. The neo-Gothic ornament of the building is also notable. The lower stories are clad with delicate limestone tracery framing large triple-height openings set with elaborate metal spandrels. The upper stories feature well-executed patterned brick work—particularly in the recessed spandrel panels and projecting piers

⁶⁸ A few years after the Montague-Court Street Building was completed, Singer was implicated in the controversial failure of the Bank of United States in 1930 at the beginning of the Great Depression.

⁶⁹ The terra cotta was manufactured by the New York Architectural Terra Cotta Company.

⁷⁰ An article on the Court-Livingston Building in the *Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide* notes that Adelman developed the Parkway Apartments at Ocean Avenue and Avenue R. A rendering in the *New York Times* Real Estate section lists Simberg as the architect of an apartment house on the south side of Avenue R between Ocean Parkway and East 5th Street, which is likely the same building. "Brooklyn's Newest Skyscraper Will be 430 Feet High," *Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide* (July 3, 1926), page unknown; Photo Standalone, *New York Times* (December 27, 1925), RE2.

that enhance the building's vertical emphasis—and sumptuous terra-cotta ornament at each setback that highlights the complicated massing.⁷¹

The skyscrapers on Court Street were well received in the contemporary press. Both the Court and Remsen Building and the Montague-Court Building were featured in photographic spreads in *Architecture and Building*, while the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce Building appeared in Francisco Mujica's early treatise *The History of the Skyscraper*. During the late 1920s, at the peak of skyscraper construction throughout the city, the *New York Times* ran a regular feature on the front page of its real estate section titled "New Building Peaks," which occasionally read as "New Building Peaks on Brooklyn's Changing Skyline" in order to feature the recently-completed structures on Court Street.⁷² Another large headline on the front page of the real estate section of the *New York Times* in 1929 proclaimed, "Towering Buildings Give Brooklyn a New Skyline," and prominently depicted a photograph of the Court Street skyscrapers⁷³

While skyscraper construction centered on Court Street during the 1920s, a number of notable tall office buildings were erected in the immediate vicinity during the same period. The 12-story office tower at **186 Joralemon Street** was built in 1921-22 as a speculative investment for Pincus Glickman. It was designed in the neo-Gothic style, with a limestone base, a buff-brick shaft, and an ornamental capital clad in white-glazed terra cotta. The lot directly across the road, at **191 Joralemon Street**, was redeveloped a few years later in 1925 when the Dworman Realty Company commissioned the 14-story Central Building from architect Henry I. Oser. A more elaborate example of the neo-Gothic style, the facade features delicate terra-cotta tracery at the transitional third and fourth stories and on the upper stories and cornice. The vertical emphasis of the design is enhanced by the division of the facade into four bays separated by projecting piers, within which are set groups of four windows separated in turn by continuous vertical mullions. Though smaller in scale, the seven-story building at **56 Court Street** (1926-27) also features a well-designed neo-Gothic facade with ornament executed in white-glazed terra cotta. More modest was the three-story building at **165 Remsen Street**, erected c. 1922-24 and designed in a simple neo-Classical mode.

*Subsequent History*⁷⁴

The Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce Building was the last of the great skyscrapers to be built on Court Street. A few others were erected in Brooklyn before the Great Depression brought a virtual halt to construction throughout the city—including the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Building (1927-29, Halsey, McCormak & Helmer), which took the title of tallest building in Brooklyn away from downtown; the tower section of the Hotel St. George (1928-30, Emery Roth); and the Long Island Headquarters of the New York Telephone Company (1929-30, Ralph

⁷¹ The terra cotta was manufactured by the New Jersey Terra Cotta Company.

⁷² "New Building Peaks on Brooklyn's Changing Skyline," *New York Times* (April 3, 1927), RE1; "New Building Peaks on Brooklyn's Changing Skyline," *New York Times* (April 1, 1928), RE1.

⁷³ "Towering Buildings Give Brooklyn a New Skyline," *New York Times* (April 7, 1929), RE1.

⁷⁴ Information in this section is based on the following sources: Robert A. M. Stern, Thomas Mellings, David Fishman, *New York 1960: Architecture and Urbanism Between the Second World War and the Bicentennial* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1995); Robert A. M. Stern, David Fishman, Jacob Tilove, *New York 2000: Architecture and Urbanism Between the Bicentennial and the Millennium* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 2006).

Walker of Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker); all New York City Landmarks or within designated Historic Districts—but they were scattered around the borough rather than concentrated in a cohesive area as were the Court Street buildings. The lone structure within the Borough Hall Skyscraper Historic District that dates from the 1930s is the small, four-story commercial building at **193 Joralemon Street**, which in fact was created through the remodeling of an existing row house.

Instead of private development of office buildings, the 1930s saw the beginnings of massive government intervention in Downtown Brooklyn that would eventually result in the loss of much of the neighborhood's historic fabric. The blocks north of Borough Hall were the first to be affected. Construction of the elevated trains in the 1880s and the immense Brooklyn Bridge terminal in 1895 had turned the area into a confusing warren of railroad tracks. In 1935 the city announced plans for a redesigned approach to the bridge, focused on the automobile rather than rapid transit, and it acquired all of the property between Fulton and Washington Streets through condemnation. The following year the city demolished more than 90 buildings that stood on the site. In 1939 the improved approach to the Brooklyn Bridge opened under the new name S. Parks Cadman Plaza.

The city greatly increased its involvement in Downtown Brooklyn during the 1940s when the City Planning Commission—at the behest of Robert Moses and Borough President John Cashmore—developed a comprehensive Master Plan for the Brooklyn Civic Center and Downtown Area. The scale of the project far exceeded the earlier improvements to the Brooklyn Bridge approach, covering nearly the entire area north of Atlantic Avenue and west of the Navy Yard.⁷⁵ The plan was initially proposed in 1941 and went through a number of revisions before being adopted in 1945.⁷⁶ The official map produced by the commission classified the structures on Court Street west of Borough Hall as “existing private buildings of importance.” They were among the few properties in downtown to receive this designation, while most of the area was labeled “suitable for replanning, clearance & redevelopment.”⁷⁷ During the course of the 1950s and 1960s, many components of the city's master plan were implemented and more than 300 buildings—including the Kings County Court House, the Hall of Records, the Mechanics Bank Building, and the Brooklyn Daily Eagle Building—were demolished as a direct result of these urban renewal activities.⁷⁸ In their place rose superblock developments of housing projects, government buildings, and a Cadman Plaza reworked into a large public park.

An implicit goal of the master plan was to stimulate private investment in the area. While this objective may have largely remained unfulfilled, two buildings within the boundaries of the Borough Hall Skyscraper Historic District date from this period. In 1959-60 the Lafayette National Bank constructed a Modernist two-story building at **200 Montague Street** designed by

⁷⁵ The project is widely cited as the largest post-war city center renewal project in the country. New York 1960, 905; Morrone, 59.

⁷⁶ Perhaps the most controversial component was the provision for the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway to pass through Brooklyn Heights. Adoption of the plan was only secured the highway was changed to its current cantilevered configuration.

⁷⁷ “New Post-War Civic Center Proposed for the Borough of Brooklyn,” *New York Times* (March 22, 1945), 25. Several of the blocks on Fulton Street, as well as much of the industrial neighborhood now known as DUMBO, were also determined to have private buildings of importance. Many have been designated New York City Landmarks or are within designated historic districts.

⁷⁸ New York 1960, 905.

Philip Birnbaum. An associated 12-story office tower went up on the lot behind it at **175 Remsen Street** in 1960-62 on the site of the Title Guarantee & Trust Company headquarters and annex, also designed by Birnbaum. An article in the *New York Times* from 1961 noted, “the structure is the first offering new rentable space in the Civic Center-Borough Hall area in many years.”⁷⁹ The article also outlined an unusual design feature—a ground-floor easement through the building that allowed drive-through automobile service for the bank on Montague Street—a rather suburban touch for the borough’s downtown neighborhood. Birnbaum received a third commission from the bank in 1967-68, this time for a two-story addition on top of the existing two-story structure.

The Court Street skyscrapers continued to dominate the Brooklyn skyline throughout the urban renewal period and into the present.⁸⁰ As an ensemble, the buildings within the Borough Hall Skyscraper Historic District remain significant for their historic importance as the heart of Brooklyn’s downtown office district, as notable examples of the skyscraper and tall office building typologies, and for their continuing existence in a neighborhood that has undergone radical changes to much of its built environment.

⁷⁹ “Brooklyn to Get New Office Unit,” *New York Times* (May 6, 1961), 49.

⁸⁰ The grouping has recently been joined on the skyline by a number of additions including 1 Pierrepont Plaza in 1988 (which has been called the first skyscraper in Brooklyn in more than 50 years), the buildings of the sprawling MetroTech Center beginning in the 1990s, and the residential towers along Flatbush Avenue Extension from the first decade of the 21st century.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this area, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Borough Hall Skyscraper Historic District contains buildings and other improvements that have a special character and a special historic and aesthetic interest and value and which represent one of more eras in the history of New York City and which cause this area, by reason of these factors, to constitute a distinct section of the city.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Borough Hall Skyscraper Historic District has been the civic, cultural, and commercial heart of Brooklyn for more than a century and a half; that the area developed rapidly during the mid-19th century following the opening of Brooklyn City Hall (now Brooklyn Borough Hall) in 1848, and that the neighborhood became Brooklyn's true downtown office district in the post-Civil War period as a series of ever taller commercial buildings were erected on Court Street and on the adjacent side streets, designed by noted architects for prominent clients—of which the Franklin Building is a significant survivor; that building heights continued to increase in Downtown Brooklyn during the latter decades of the 19th century—aided in part by the planning and construction of the Brooklyn Bridge and a network of elevated railroads—culminating in the erection of the Temple Bar Building, which was widely lauded as the tallest commercial building yet raised in Brooklyn; that the area continued to develop commercially during the early 20th century following the consolidation of Brooklyn into Greater New York in 1898, with a number of notable structures designed according to the New York “solution” to the problem of the tall office building, with facades composed like a classical column consisting of a monumental base, a relatively simple shaft, and an ornamental capital, each distinguished by the use of color and materials; that new transportation improvements, including the opening of the first subway lines, as well as the early planning efforts for a new Municipal Building, lead many to speculate that the area was ready for a period of even great commercial development, and that these predictions came to fruition in 1918 when the 22-story building at 32 Court Street was completed and was widely regarded as Brooklyn's first true skyscraper; that during the 1920s the area became Brooklyn's definitive skyscraper row with the completion of the Remsen and Court Building, the Montague-Court Building, and the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce Building; that these skyscrapers show the clear influence of the 1916 zoning resolution, particularly in their use of setbacks and slender towers, and that their architectural detailing in the neo-Romanesque and neo-Gothic styles rivals that of any skyscraper erected in Great New York; that this significant period of development also saw the completion of the Municipal Building as well as a number of other notable commercial buildings on the adjacent blocks; that the Great Depression brought a halt to skyscraper construction in Downtown Brooklyn and throughout the city, and that subsequent development largely consisted of government-sponsored urban renewal projects that resulted in the demolition of many of the borough's historic commercial buildings, so that the skyscrapers on Court Street and the business structures on the adjacent blocks are amongst the few survivors of this period; that the ensemble of buildings within the Borough Hall Skyscraper Historic District remain significant for their historic importance as the heart of Brooklyn's downtown office district, as notable examples of the skyscraper and tall office building typologies, and for their continuing existence in a neighborhood that has undergone radical changes to much of its built environment.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 (formerly Section 534 of Chapter 21) 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 Historic District the Borough Hall Skyscraper Historic District, consisting of the property bounded The proposed Borough Hall Skyscraper Historic District consists of the property bounded by a line beginning at the intersection of the southern curblin of Montague Street and the western curblin of Court Street, continuing southerly along the western curblin of Court Street to a point formed by its intersection with a line extending westerly from and parallel with the lowest stair riser of the front steps of Brooklyn Borough Hall at 209 Joralemon Street (aka 209-245 Joralemon Street, 1-43 Court Street, and 384 Adams Street), easterly along said line to a point formed by its intersection with a line extending northerly from and parallel to the eastern outside wall of Brooklyn Borough Hall at 209 Joralemon Street (aka 209-245 Joralemon Street, 1-43 Court Street, and 384 Adams Street), southerly along said line and across the roadbed of Joralemon Street to the southern curblin of Joralemon Street, easterly along said curblin to a point formed with its intersection with a line extending northerly along a portion of the eastern property line of 210 Joralemon Street (aka 208-230 Joralemon Street and 45-63 Court Street), southerly along a portion of said property line, easterly along a portion of the northern property line of 210 Joralemon Street (aka 208-230 Joralemon Street and 45-63 Court Street), southerly along a portion of the eastern property line of 210 Joralemon Street (aka 208-230 Joralemon Street and 45-63 Court Street) to a point formed by its intersection with a line extending easterly from a portion of the southern property line of 210 Joralemon Street (aka 208-230 Joralemon Street and 45-63 Court Street), westerly along said line and a portion of the southern property line of 210 Joralemon Street (aka 208-230 Joralemon Street and 45-63 Court Street), southerly along a portion of the eastern property line of 210 Joralemon Street (aka 208-230 Joralemon Street and 45-63 Court Street), westerly along a portion of the southerly property line of 210 Joralemon Street (aka 208-230 Joralemon Street and 45-63 Court Street) to the eastern curblin of Court Street, southerly along said curblin to the northern curblin of Livingston Street, across the roadbed of Court Street and along the northern curblin of Livingston Street to a point formed by its intersection with a line extending southerly from the western property line of 75 Livingston Street (aka 71-75 Livingston Street and 66 Court Street), northerly along said property line and a portion of the western property line of 62 Court Street (aka 58-64 Court Street), westerly along a portion of the southern property line of 62 Court Street (aka 58-64 Court Street), a portion of the southern property line of 50 Court Street (aka 46-50 Court Street and 194-204 Joralemon Street), and a portion of the southern property line of 186 Joralemon Street (aka 186-190 Joralemon Street), northerly along a portion of the western property line of 186 Joralemon Street (aka 186-190 Joralemon Street), westerly along a portion of the southern property line of 186 Joralemon Street (aka 186-190 Joralemon Street) and along a portion of the southern property line of 184 Joralemon Street, southerly along a portion of the eastern property line of 184 Joralemon Street, westerly along a portion of the southern property line of 184 Joralemon Street, northerly along the western property line of 184 Joralemon Street, across the roadbed of Joralemon Street, and along the western property line of 191 Joralemon Street (aka 187-191 Joralemon Street), easterly along the northern property lines of 191 Joralemon Street (aka 187-191 Joralemon Street) and 193 Joralemon Street and a portion of the northern property line of 44 Court Street (aka 38-44 Court Street and 195-207 Joralemon Street), northerly along the western property line of 186 Remsen Street (aka 184-188 Remsen Street) and across the roadbed of Remsen Street to the northern curblin of Remsen Street, westerly along said curblin of to a point formed by its intersection with a line extending southerly from a portion of the western property line of 188 Montague Street (aka 188-190 Montague Street and

165 Remsen Street), northerly along said property line, westerly along a portion of the southern property line of 188 Montague Street (aka 188-190 Montague Street and 165 Remsen Street) and the southern property line of 186 Montague Street (aka 184-186 Montague Street), northerly along the western property line of 186 Montague Street (aka 184-186 Montague Street) to the southern curbline of Montague Street, easterly along said curbline to the point of the beginning.

Robert B. Tierney, Chair

Pablo E. Vengoechea, Vice Chair

Frederick Bland, Diana Chapin, Michael Devonshire, Joan Gerner, Michael Goldblum, Christopher More, Margery Perlmutter, Elizabeth Ryan, Commissioners

BUILDING PROFILES

COURT STREET (EAST SIDE, ODD NUMBERS)

1-43 Court Street

See: 209 Joralemon Street

45-63 Court Street

See: 210 Joralemon Street

COURT STREET (WEST SIDE, EVEN NUMBERS)

16 Court Street (aka 10-20 Court Street and 206-212 Montague Street)

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 250, Lot 44

Building Name: Montague-Court Building

Date: 1925-27

Architect/Builder: H. Craig Severence

Original Owner: Court and Montague Streets Realty Company

Type: Offices

Style: Neo-Romanesque

Stories: 35

Material(s): Brick; limestone; brownstone

Significant Architectural Features: Set-back massing; four-story limestone base with pilasters; decorative brick spandrels; elaborate cornices above each setback

Historic Metal Work: Ornamental spandrels and window frames in lower stories

Alterations: Entrance enframing replaced; right storefront opening configuration altered, storefront infill in ground-floor openings; portion of mid cornice removed; many windows replaced (originally two- or three-over-one double-hung); several louvers and vents installed in window openings; light fixtures installed along cornice above limestone base; security cameras installed at building corners

Site Features: Subway entrances; stand pipes

East Facade: Designed (historic, lower stories painted)

Door(s): Replaced primary door

Windows: Mixed

Storefront: Replaced

Cornice: Original

Sidewalk Material(s): Concrete

Curb Material(s): Granite; bluestone; concrete with metal edging



North Facade: Designed (historic)

Facade Notes: Similar to east facade; some historic windows; several louvers and vents installed in window openings; storefront infill in historic openings; roll-down security gates and a cloth awnings above right-most storefront openings; fixed signage and a utility box with metal conduit installed on right pier; subway vents and stand pipes in sidewalk; concrete sidewalk with granite curb

West Facade: Partially designed (historic)

Facade Notes: Upper floors similar to east facade, lower floors partially designed with simplified ornament; some historic windows; several louvers and vents installed in window openings

South Facade: Partially designed (historic, partially visible)

Facade Notes: Upper floors visible above adjacent building; similar to east facade; several bays of blind openings; several louvers and vents in window openings

26 Court Street (aka 22-30 Court Street and 177 Remsen Street)

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 250, Lot 1

Building Name: Court and Remsen Building

Date: 1925-26 (NB 9491-25)

Architect/Builder: Schwartz & Gross

Original Owner: 22 Court Street Company

Type: Offices

Style: Neo-Romanesque

Stories: 30

Material(s): Brick; limestone; granite

Significant Architectural Features: Setback massing; four-story limestone base with double-height, segmental-arched storefront openings; decorative spandrels and piers; elaborate cornices above each setback

Special Windows: Arched, multi-pane casement windows in upper section of ground-floor openings

Alterations: Entrance doors and enframements in center ground-floor opening replaced, storefront infill in flanking openings; mezzanine windows in right opening bricked in; cloth awnings, sign bands, and a roll-down security gate installed above storefronts; signage and light fixtures affixed to piers and in front of lower-story windows; most upper-story windows replaced (originally one-over-one double-hung)

Site Features: Stand pipes on building facade

East Facade: Designed (historic)

Door(s): Replaced primary door

Windows: Mixed

Roof: Pitched, tile (historic)



Storefront: Replaced
Cornice: Original
Sidewalk Material(s): Concrete
Curb Material(s): Granite

South Facade: Designed (historic)

Facade Notes: Similar to east facade; ground-floor infill in storefront openings, fixed cloth awnings and sign bands installed above; some casement windows replaced and several louvers installed in upper section of ground-floor openings; additional signage installed in front of second-story windows and at corner piers; left-most storefront opening reconfigured with a service entrance and a small one-story commercial entrance extension; subway vents and cellar hatches in sidewalk

West Facade: Partially designed (historic)

Facade Notes: Upper stories visible above adjacent building; simplified ornament with terracotta or limestone beltcourses; regular arrangement of rectangular window openings

North Facade: Not designed (historic, partially visible)

Facade Notes: Buff-brick rear wall partially visible above adjacent building; rectangular window openings; brick chimney; metal vent pipe

32 Court Street (aka 32-36 Court Street and 190-198 Remsen Street)

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 255, Lot 44

Date: 1916-18
Architect/Builder: Starrett & Van Vleck
Original Owner: Court and Remsen Company
Type: Offices
Style: Colonial Revival
Stories: 22
Material(s): Brick; limestone; granite

Significant Architectural Features: Tripartite division; limestone-clad base with double-height round-arch storefront openings; beltcourses; paired window openings; ornamented upper stories with spandrel panels and tympanum

Alterations: Storefront infill within historic openings; windows replaced (originally six-over-six double-hung); northeast and portions of southeast building corners rebuilt and some ornament removed or modified; brickwork on top stories largely rebuilt in kind, with some historic ornament, including urns and balustrade, removed

Site Features: Stand pipe



East Facade: Designed (historic, lower stories painted)

Door(s): Replaced primary door

Windows: Replaced

Roof: Pitched - tile (historic)

Storefront: Replaced

Cornice: Removed

Sidewalk Material(s): Concrete

Curb Material(s): Concrete; concrete with metal edging

North Facade: Designed (historic)

Facade Notes: Similar to east facade; storefront infill with raised bulkheads and signboards; sunken areaway enclosed with historic metal railings supported by granite piers and accessed by diamond-plate metal stairs; areaway facade clad in brick with storefront infill, many with roll-down security gates; access ramp with metal railing installed in front of right storefronts; security camera, pipes, and signage installed on ground-floor piers at right; granite curb; cellar hatch in sidewalk

West Facade: Partially designed (historic)

Facade Notes: Upper stories visible above adjacent building; similar to east facade

South Facade: Partially designed (historic, partially visible)

Facade Notes: Portions of upper stories visible above adjacent building; generally similar to east facade; some louvers and vents installed in window openings; recessed air shaft; chimney

44 Court Street (aka 38-44 Court Street and 195-207 Joralemon Street)

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 255, Lot 1

Building Name: Temple Bar Building

Date: 1899-1901 (NB 940-99)

Architect/Builder: George L. Morse

Original Owner: David G. Leggett

Type: Offices

Style: Beaux Arts

Stories: 13

Material(s): Brick; granite; limestone

Significant Architectural Features: Elaborately ornamented, rusticated granite base; limestone ornament on upper stories includes window surrounds, balconies, beltcourses, columns, pilasters, and cornices; rusticated brickwork; some historic wood one-over-one double-hung windows; cupolas

Special Windows: Round-arched and round windows in upper stories

Alterations: Entrance portico with columns removed; ground floor windows openings combined



and enlarged for storefront openings; storefront infill with roll-down security gates and signage; security camera with metal conduit; some windows replaced; a few louvers and vents installed in existing window openings; one window opening bricked over

Site Features: Stand pipes; subway entrance

East Facade: Designed (historic)

Door(s): Replaced primary door

Windows: Mixed

Roof: Pitched, standing-seam copper (historic)

Storefront: Replaced

Cornice: Original

Sidewalk Material(s): Concrete

Curb Material(s): Concrete with metal edging

South Facade: Designed (historic)

Facade Notes: Similar to east facade; right-most ground-floor window openings reconfigured into storefront, infill and roll-down security gate installed; remainder of ground-floor window openings filled in; basement window openings, some with historic iron security grilles, most filled in; secondary entrance created at left of ground floor, entrance infill and access ramp with metal railing installed; light fixtures installed above lower cornice, security camera and metal conduit beside secondary entrance; stand pipes, cellar hatch, and subway vents in sidewalk; granite curb

West Facade: Partially designed (historic)

Facade Notes: Brick side wall partially visible above adjacent building; rectangular window openings with shutter attachment points; corbelled brick chimney

50 Court Street (aka 46-50 Court Street and 194-204 Joralemon Street)

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 265, Lot 43

Building Name: Terminal Building

Date: 1913

Architect/Builder: William E. Lehman

Original Owner: Weinboro Realty Company

Type: Offices

Style: Renaissance Revival

Stories: 12

Material(s): Brick; terra cotta; limestone

Significant Architectural Features: Tripartite division with limestone-clad base, brick middle section, and terra-cotta clad upper stories; cornices above ground floor and second story; upper stories feature decorative polychrome terra-cotta spandrels, piers, and round-arched openings



Special Windows: Round-arched sash in upper story windows

Alterations: Storefront openings reconfigured and ground floor reclad with granite panels below projecting cornice; signage and light fixtures installed above lower cornice; upper cornice partially removed; several louvers and vents installed in existing window openings; most window sashes replaced (matching original one-over-one configuration; some historic wood frames remain); fixed marquee installed above main entrance and light fixtures beside; signage and flag pole installed on facade

East Facade: Designed (historic)

Door(s): Replaced primary door

Windows: Mixed

Storefront: Replaced

Cornice: Removed

Sidewalk Material(s): Concrete

Curb Material(s): Concrete with metal edging

North Facade: Designed (historic)

Facade Notes: Similar to east facade; metal-and-glass storefront at right; some louvers and vents in existing window openings; subway entrance, stand pipes, and cellar hatch in sidewalk

South Facade: Not designed (historic)

Facade Notes: Brick side walls follow L-shape of building lot; rectangular and segmental window openings, some filled in; water tower and vent stack visible above roofline

52 Court Street

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 265, Lot 49

Date: c. 1852

Architect/Builder: Not determined

Original Owner: Not determined

Type: Stores

Style: None

Stories: 4

Material(s): Parged marble

Significant Architectural Features: Segmental-arched window openings

Alterations: Facade parged; shallow two-story commercial extension with reconfigured openings; cloth awnings above right storefront, roll-down security gate above left; signage, light fixtures, and sign post affixed to facade; cornice replaced

Site Features: Cellar hatch

Notable History and Residents: Originally erected c. 1852 as part of a row of marble-fronted commercial buildings that stood at 46 to 64 Court Street



East Facade: Designed (resurfaced)
Door(s): Replaced primary door
Windows: Replaced
Storefront: Replaced
Cornice: Altered
Sidewalk Material(s): Concrete
Curb Material(s): Concrete with metal edging

56 Court Street (aka 54-56 Court Street)

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 265, Lots
1101-1114

Date: 1926-27 (NB 2981-26)
Architect/Builder: Not determined
Original Owner: Not determined
Type: Commercial (historically); residential (currently)
Style: Neo-Gothic
Stories: 7
Material(s): Brick; terra cotta; granite

Significant Architectural Features: Terra-cotta cladding and ornament; double-height, pointed-arched ground floor openings; cornice with trefoil decoration and finials

Alterations: Storefront infill within historic openings; cloth awnings; fire escape; sign post, piping, and security camera with metal conduit installed on facade; windows replaced (matching original one-over-one configuration)



East Facade: Designed (historic)
Door(s): Replaced primary door
Windows: Replaced
Storefront: Replaced
Cornice: Original
Sidewalk Material(s): Concrete
Curb Material(s): Concrete with metal edging

North Facade: Not designed (historic, partially visible)
Facade Notes: Painted brick side wall; rectangular window openings

62 Court Street (aka 58-64 Court Street)

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 265, Lots
1001-1036

Date: c. 1852; 1998

Architect/Builder: Not determined

Original Owner: Not determined

Type: Stores (historically); residential (currently)

Style: None

Stories: 6

Material(s): Stucco

Alterations: Storefront infill; two floors added and facade
of upper stories resurfaced (1998)

Site Features: Cellar hatch

Notable History and Residents: Originally four separate
buildings erected c. 1852 as part of a row of marble-
fronted commercial buildings that stood at 46 to 64
Court Street; these structures were combined into a
single building, with the addition of two stories and the resurfacing of the facade, in 1998



East Facade: Designed (resurfaced)

Door(s): Replaced primary door

Windows: Replaced

Storefront: Replaced

Sidewalk Material(s): Concrete

Curb Material(s): Concrete with metal edging

66 Court Street

See: 75 Livingston Street

JORALEMON STREET (NORTH SIDE, ODD NUMBERS)

191 Joralemon Street (aka 187-191 Joralemon Street) Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 255, Lot 8

Building Name: Central Building
Date: 1925 (NB 2924-25)
Architect/Builder: Henry I. Oser
Original Owner: Dworman Realty Company, Inc.
Type: Offices
Style: Neo-Gothic
Stories: 14
Material(s): Brick; limestone; terra cotta



Significant Architectural Features: Limestone ground floor with pointed-arch openings; elaborate decorative terra-cotta cladding on third and fourth stories; ornamental spandrels and piers on upper stories; elaborate terra-cotta cornice; set-back top stories with projecting tower-like bays

Alterations: Historic infill in most storefront openings (likely 1940s), non-historic entrance infill in left bay; pyramidal roofs on top of corner towers removed; light fixtures installed above ground floor

Site Features: Cellar vent; stand pipes

South Facade: Designed (historic)

Door(s): Replaced primary door

Windows: Historic

Storefront: Altered

Cornice: Original

Sidewalk Material(s): Concrete

Curb Material(s): Bluestone

East Facade: Not designed (historic, partially visible)

Facade Notes: Brick side wall; regular arrangement of rectangular window openings, most retain historic six-over-six windows

West Facade: Not designed (historic)

Facade Notes: Brick side wall; two-story mechanical equipment enclosure on roof

193 Joralemon Street

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 255, Lot 7

Date: c. 1850s; 1934-35

Architect/Builder: Not determined

Original Owner: Not determined

Type: Stores and offices

Style: Art Deco

Stories: 3 and basement

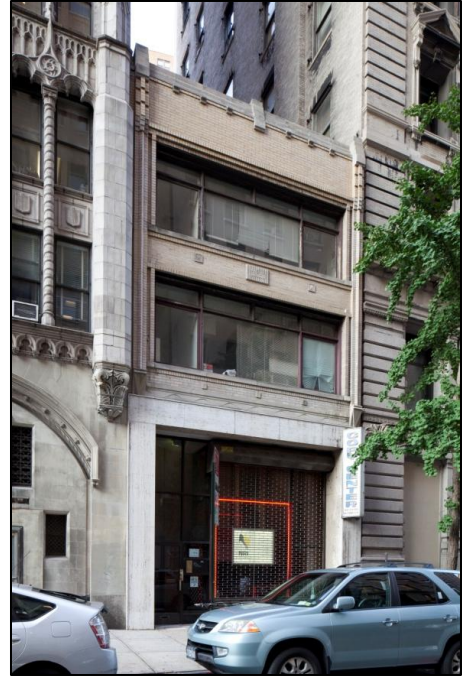
Material(s): Brick; cast stone

Significant Architectural Features: Patterned brickwork; cast-stone ornament and cornice; strip windows

Alterations: Lower two stories reconfigured into double-height storefront; storefront infill with travertine frame and roll-down security gate; signage installed on right pier

Site Features: Stand pipe

Notable History and Residents: Originally erected as a row house c. 1850s; new facade installed in 1934-35 for Edward J. Gaynor Realty Corporation



South Facade: Designed (historic)

Door(s): Replaced primary door

Windows: Historic

Storefront: Replaced

Cornice: Historic

Sidewalk Material(s): Concrete

Curb Material(s): Bluestone

195-207 Joralemon Street

See: 44 Court Street

**209 Joralemon Street (aka 209-245
Joralemon Street, 1-43 Court Street, and
384 Adams
Street)**

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map
Block 139, Lot 1 in part

Building Name: Brooklyn City Hall, now
Brooklyn Borough Hall

Date: 1845-48; 1898

Architect/Builder: Gamaliel King; Vincent

Griffith and Stoughton & Stoughton

Original Owner: City of Brooklyn

Type: Civic

Style: Greek Revival

Stories: 3 and basement

Material(s): Tuckahoe Marble



Significant Architectural Features: Pedimented, Ionic-order portico with monumental staircase; Doric-order pilasters; crisp window enframements, some with pedimented lintels; dentiled cornice; cast-iron cupola with copper-shingle dome

Historic Metal Work: Handrails beside main staircase of north facade and along secondary stair on south facade

Alterations: Metal flashing above cornice; basement entrances under main stairs altered; straps around portico columns support hanging signage

Building Notes: Designated an New York City Individual Landmark (1966); partial lot consists generally of land under building (see boundary description)

Site Features: Sunken areaways on both sides of main stairs, leading to basement entrances under stairs; planting beds along east, south, and west facades; subway entrance kiosks at both sides of south facade; replica lamp posts

Notable History and Residents: Brooklyn City Hall was originally planned in 1835 to designs by Calvin Pollard; construction was halted by the Panic of 1837 and recommenced in 1845 under the direction of architect Gamaliel King; the cast-iron cupola designed by Vincent Griffith and Stoughton & Stoughton was installed in 1898 after a fire destroyed the original; the building was restored in 1989 under the direction of Conklin & Rossant and the crowning figure of justice, planned in 1898, was finally installed

North Facade: Designed (historic)

Porch(es): Original

Windows: Historic (upper stories); historic (basement)

Security Grilles: Historic (basement)

Cornice: Original

Sidewalk Material(s): Bluestone

Curb Material(s): Bluestone

Areaway Paving Material: Planting beds

West Facade: Designed (historic)

Facade Notes: Projecting center section with Doric-order pilasters topped with a pediment; secondary entrance in basement

East Facade: Designed (historic)

Facade Notes: Similar to west facade

South Facade: Designed (historic)

Facade Notes: Projecting wings topped with pediments; central entrance with heavy stone enframingent, secondary entrances in reveals of projecting wings; all entrances with wood doors

JORALEMON STREET (SOUTH SIDE, EVEN NUMBERS)

184 Joralemon Street

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 265, Lot 39

Date: c. 1909-11

Architect/Builder: George Keister

Original Owner: Joralemon Company

Type: Offices (historically); residential (currently)

Style: Beaux Arts with Colonial Revival elements

Stories: 12

Material(s): Brick; limestone

Significant Architectural Features: Tripartite composition with rusticated limestone base, brick shaft, and limestone capital; voussoirs and keystone lintels; projecting cornice above ground floor; bracketed balconies above third and ninth stories; modillioned cornice with cartouches

Special Windows: Angled bay windows with multi-paned upper sash, some segmental-arched

Historic Metal Work: Balcony railing at ninth story

Alterations: Fixed cloth canopy above main entrance; accessible ramp with metal railing installed in front of main entrance; light fixtures and bronze plaque beside main entrance, intercom box in entrance reveal

Site Features: Cellar hatch in accessible ramp; stand pipes, some installed in building facade



North Facade: Designed (historic)

Door(s): Replaced primary door

Windows: Historic

Security Grilles: Possibly historic (upper stories)

Cornice: Original

Sidewalk Material(s): Concrete

Curb Material(s): Concrete

West Facade: Not designed (historic, partially visible)

Facade Notes: Brick side wall with rectangular window openings

186 Joralemon Street (aka 186-190 Joralemon Street)

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 265, Lot 40

Date: 1921-22 (NB 4752-21)

Architect/Builder: Edward A. Klein

Original Owner: Pincus Glickman

Type: Offices

Style: Neo-Gothic

Stories: 12

Material(s): Brick; limestone; terra cotta; granite

Significant Architectural Features: Tripartite division; segmental arched, double-height openings in lower stories; decorative spandrels and piers in middle stories; terra-cotta-clad upper stories with double-height openings fitted with metal window enframements

Historic Metal Work: Window enframements and spandrel panels in upper stories

Alterations: Storefront and entrance infill in existing openings; fixed metal-and-glass awning installed above main entrance; light fixtures and signage affixed to piers at ground floor; windows replaced (one historic eight-over-eight double-hung window remains)

Site Features: Subway vents; cellar hatch



North Facade: Designed (historic, lower stories painted)

Door(s): Replaced primary door

Windows: Replaced

Storefront: Replaced

Cornice: Original

Sidewalk Material(s): Concrete

Curb Material(s): Concrete with metal edging

194-204 Joralemon Street

See: 50 Court Street

210 Joralemon Street (aka 208-230 Joralemon Street and 45-63 Court Street)

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 266, Lot 30 in part

Building Name: Brooklyn Municipal Building

Date: 1923-26

Architect/Builder: McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin

Original Owner: City of New York

Type: Civic

Style: Neo-Classical

Stories: 14

Material(s): Limestone; granite



Significant Architectural Features: Recessed central tower flanked by shorter projecting wings; rusticated limestone base with Tuscan-order colonnade in front of main entrance; rusticated piers; paired window openings; modillioned cornice; hipped copper-clad roofs; cupola

Special Windows: Multi-pane casements in entrance enframingent

Historic Metal Work: Bronze entrance enframingent; balconettes in three bays of central section

Alterations: Mechanical equipment on colonnade roof; accessible ramp with metal handrail at right side of colonnade; light fixtures removed from colonnade soffit and other fixtures installed on piers inside colonnade

Building Notes: Partial lot does not include driveway along Livingston Street (see boundary description)

Site Features: Subway entrances inside colonnade; newsstand at left; subway vents in sidewalk; historic subway sign post; stand pipes on building facade

Notable History and Residents: A previous Municipal Building (1876-78, Ditmars & Mumford) occupied part of this site until it was demolished around 1915; plans for a new Municipal Building were begun as early as 1903 when architect Washington Hull won a competition for the commission; subsequent borough presidents brought in their own architects for the project, with McKim, Mead & White submitting plans in 1905, Lord & Hewlett in 1906, and McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin in 1911; none of these were ever executed and McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin was commissioned again in 1923 to update its earlier designs; the Brooklyn Municipal Building was finally completed in 1926

North Facade: Designed (historic)

Door(s): Historic primary door

Windows: Historic

Roof: Pitched - copper (historic)

Notable Roof Features: Hipped roofs

Cornice: Original

Sidewalk Material(s): Concrete

Curb Material(s): Granite

West Facade: Designed (historic)

Facade Notes: Similar to lower wings of main facade; a few louvers and vents in window openings; metal grates in sidewalk above basement window wells' cellar hatch with metal handrails; stand pipes, other pipes, and utility box on building facade

East Facade: Designed (historic, partially visible)

Facade Notes: Similar to lower wings of main facade; full cornice towards front of building, simpler cornice on remainder of facade

South Facade: Designed (historic, partially visible)

Facade Notes: Rear facade partially visible from driveway along Livingston Street; similar to lower wings of main facade

LIVINGSTON STREET (NORTH SIDE, ODD NUMBERS)

75 Livingston Street (aka 71-75 Livingston Street and 66 Court Street)

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 265, Lot 1

Building Name: Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce Building

Date: 1926-28 (NB 9964-26)

Architect/Builder: Abraham J. Simberg

Original Owner: 66-74 Court Street Realty Corporation

Type: Offices (historically); residential (currently)

Style: Neo-Gothic

Stories: 30

Material(s): Brick; limestone; granite; terra cotta

Significant Architectural Features: Set-back massing; limestone base with triple-height openings and decorative metal infill; ornamental spandrels; elaborate terra-cotta cornices above each set back; pyramidal roof with cupola

Historic Metal Work: Spandrel panels and window frames in lower stories; decorative entrance enframements in primary commercial entrance along Court Street and in residential entrance along Livingston Street

Alterations: Storefront infill in all but left-most ground-floor openings; fixed cloth marquee above residential entrance at left; light fixtures installed on piers between storefronts; upper cornice partially stripped; metal flashing installed on parapet; skylights installed in roof; cupola roof removed; windows replaced (were originally one-over-one on the primary facades and three-over-three or two-over-two on the secondary facades)

Site Features: Stand pipes and other piping; subway vent

South Facade: Designed (historic)

Door(s): Replaced primary door

Windows: Replaced



Roof: Pitched - metal (standing seam) (historic)

Storefront: Replaced

Cornice: Historic

Sidewalk Material(s): Concrete

Curb Material(s): Concrete with metal edging

East Facade: Designed (historic)

Facade Notes: Similar to south facade; elaborate, pointed-arch entrance enframing at center; storefront infill within existing openings; new entrance doors, louvers, and vents installed within historic metal frames in entrance opening; signboard installed in front of entrance opening and light fixtures in entrance

North Facade: Partially designed (historic)

Facade Notes: Brick side wall partially visible above adjacent building; upper set back similar to primary facade; lower stories of simpler design, with regularly-placed rectangular window openings; non-historic fire escape in right bay of upper stories; one row of historic three-over-three windows

West Facade: Partially designed (historic, partially visible)

Facade Notes: Brick rear wall partially visible above adjacent building; upper set back partially designed with terra-cotta ornamentation; lower stories of simpler design, with regularly-placed rectangular window openings; metal balconies installed in front of upper story windows; a few window openings reconfigured or combined; much of the brickwork replaced in kind

MONTAGUE STREET (SOUTH SIDE, EVEN NUMBERS)

186 Montague Street (aka 184-186 Montague Street)

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 250, Lot 34

Date: 1904; 1941-42 (NB 1397-04; ALT 649-41)

Architect/Builder: Helmle, Huberty & Hudswell; Slee & Bryson

Original Owner: Lawyers Mortgage Company

Type: Bank

Style: Neo-Classical

Stories: 4

Material(s): Limestone

Significant Architectural Features: Double-height, round-arched storefront openings; entrance enframingent with historic bronze frame in left bay; fluted pilasters; modillioned cornice above lower stories; metal spandrel panels and window enframements; denticulated cornice

Historic Metal Work: Window enframements and spandrel panels

Alterations: Main entrance, including historic entrance enframement, moved from center to left bay (likely in 1941-42 during the addition of the upper stories); entrance infill installed in front of historic bronze door frame in left bay; accessible ramp with metal railing at left entrance; entrance infill in center storefront opening; fixed awnings installed above center entrance and second-story windows; window sash in upper stories replaced

Site Features: Cellar hatch; stand pipe

Notable History and Residents: Originally erected in 1904 as a 150-foot, nine-bay wide building extending from 176-186 Montague Street; this structure was damaged by fire in 1939; the western section at nos. 176-182 was essentially demolished and rebuilt, while this section at nos. 184-186 was restored as a separate building; the upper two stories were subsequently added in 1941-42

North Facade: Designed (historic, lower stories painted)

Door(s): Altered primary door

Windows: Mixed

Storefront: Altered

Cornice: Historic

Sidewalk Material(s): Concrete

Curb Material(s): Concrete with metal plating



188 Montague Street (aka 188-190 Montague Street)

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 250, Lot 36
in part

Date: 1904-06 (NB 1656-04)

Architect/Builder: Helmle, Huberty & Hudswell

Original Owner: Lawyers Title Insurance Company

Type: Offices

Style: Beaux Arts

Stories: 10

Material(s): Brick; limestone; terra cotta

Significant Architectural Features: Tripartite division; limestone base with pilasters separating bays; molded cornice above base with inscribed frieze; upper stories ornamented with elaborate terra-cotta brackets, pilasters, and spandrels; modillioned cornice

Historic Metal Work: Window enframements at second story and upper stories

Alterations: Rustication removed from lower story pilasters, entrance enframement removed from left bay, and lower cornice reworked (likely 1934); subsequent changes to lower stories include partial removal of one pilaster, resurfacing of spandrels, and storefront infill in ground floor openings; fixed cloth awning above storefront; window sashes replaced (were originally one-over-one; many historic window frames remain)

Site Features: Stand pipe; cellar vent

Other Structures on Site: 165 Remsen Street on same tax lot (see separate building profile)

North Facade: Designed (historic, other, lower stories painted)

Door(s): Replaced primary door

Windows: Mixed

Storefront: Replaced

Cornice: Original

Sidewalk Material(s): Concrete

Curb Material(s): Concrete with metal plating

West Facade: Not designed (historic, partially visible)

Facade Notes: Painted brick side wall; regular arrangement of rectangular window openings; several louvers and vents installed in window openings

East Facade: Not designed (historic)

Facade Notes: Brick side wall; a few irregularly-placed rectangular window openings; fire escape visible on rear facade



200 Montague Street (aka 192-200 Montague Street)
Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 250, Lot 39

Date: 1959-60; 1967-68; 2006 (NB 548-59; ALT 1674-67)
Architect/Builder: Philip Birnbaum; FacadeMD/Facade Maintenance Design, PC
Original Owner: Lafayette National Bank
Type: Bank
Style: Altered Modern
Stories: 4
Material(s): Metal; glass; granite

Significant Architectural Features: Glass-and-metal curtain wall framed by granite piers and parapet; glass- and granite-clad ground floor with aluminum piers

Alterations: New curtain wall installed on upper stories (2006); ground floor altered, with storefront and entrance infill in left four bays and entrance infill at center; accessible ramp with metal handrail at left; fixed marquee above main entrance; bulkheads visible above parapet

Building Notes: Built in conjunction with 175 Remsen Street (see separate building profile)

Site Features: Sunken areaway at center enclosed with metal railing; basement facade facing areaway contains plate glass windows similar to ground floor; polished granite planting bed at right inscribed with "1960" date; two flag poles in planting bed

Notable History and Residents: Two-story building erected 1959-60, with two additional stories added in 1968, both designed by Philip Birnbaum; new curtain wall installed in 2006, designed by FacadeMD/Facade Maintenance Design, PC



North Facade: Designed (resurfaced)

Door(s): Replaced primary door

Windows: Replaced

Storefront: Altered

Sidewalk Material(s): Concrete

Curb Material(s): Concrete with metal edging

206-212 Montague Street

See: 16 Court Street

REMSEN STREET (NORTH SIDE, ODD NUMBERS)

165 Remsen Street

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 250, Lot 36
in part

Date: c. 1922-24

Architect/Builder: Not determined

Original Owner: Not determined

Type: Commercial

Style: Neo-Classical

Stories: 3

Material(s): Limestone; metal; granite

Significant Architectural Features: Limestone piers frame a triple-height opening with historic metal infill; pedimented entrance enframing; granite watertable; modillioned cornice with parapet

Special Windows: Accordion casement windows

Historic Metal Work: Bronze entrance enframing

Alterations: Light fixture with metal conduit installed above entrance; signage installed on right limestone pier

Site Features: Cellar hatch and vent

Other Structures on Site: 188 Montague Street on same tax lot (see separate building profile)

South Facade: Designed (historic)

Door(s): Replaced primary door

Windows: Historic

Storefront: Historic

Cornice: Original

Sidewalk Material(s): Concrete

Curb Material(s): Concrete

East Facade: Not designed (historic, partially visible)

Facade Notes: Painted brick side wall; metal conduit and signage installed



175 Remsen Street (aka 171-175 Remsen Street)

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 250, Lot 7

Date: 1960-62 (NB 704-60)

Architect/Builder: Philip Birnbaum

Original Owner: Lafayette Safe Deposit Company

Type: Commercial

Style: Modern

Stories: 12

Material(s): Aluminum; glass; granite; brick

Significant Architectural Features: Glass-and-aluminum curtain wall framed by white brick piers and parapet; operable pivot windows

Alterations: Ground floor altered with granite and metal cladding installed around and above storefront and entrance openings; storefront and entrance infill in ground floor openings; roll-down security gates, fixed cloth awnings, and light fixtures installed above storefronts; fixed metal hood above main entrance at left; brick parapet clad with metal

Building Notes: Built in conjunction with 200 Montague Street (see separate building profile), with historic vehicular right-of-way to that building passing through the right ground-floor bay

Site Features: Subway vents in sidewalk

South Facade: Designed (historic)

Windows: Historic

Storefront: Replaced

Sidewalk Material(s): Concrete

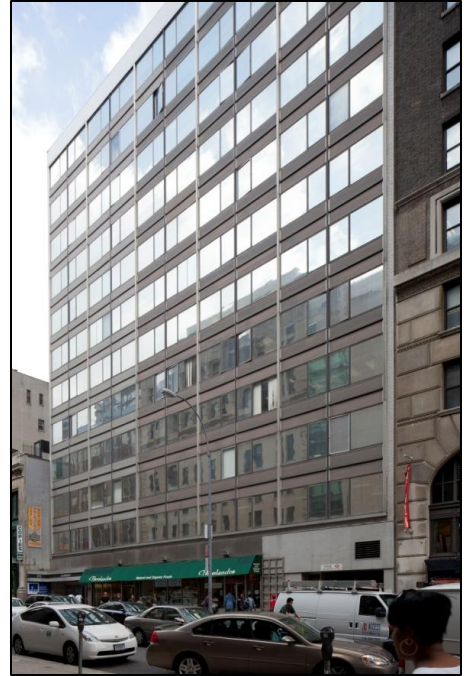
Curb Material(s): Concrete

West Facade: Not designed (historic, partially visible)

Facade Notes: Brick side wall; one bay of rectangular window openings, some with historic six-over-six windows; two-story mechanical equipment enclosure with ventilation openings and additional mechanical equipment above

North Facade: Not designed (historic)

Facade Notes: Brick rear wall partially visible above adjacent building on Montague Street; ribbon windows; parapet clad with metal



REMSEN STREET (SOUTH SIDE, EVEN NUMBERS)

186 Remsen Street (aka 184-188 Remsen Street)

Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 255, Lot 42

Building Name: Franklin Building

Date: 1886-87 (NB 755-86)

Architect/Builder: Parfitt Brothers

Original Owner: Abiel Abbott Low

Type: Commercial

Style: Romanesque Revival

Stories: 6

Material(s): Brick; brownstone; terra cotta; granite

Significant Architectural Features: Two-story rusticated brownstone base; round-arched entrance opening flanked by rectangular display windows; decorative terra-cotta lintels, sills, pilasters, spandrels, and beltcourses on upper stories; projecting cornice

Special Windows: Round-arched windows at sixth story

Alterations: Upper story and a half removed (c. 1950) and replaced with brick parapet; metal fourth-story balconies removed; central entrance boarded up; infill display windows installed; accessible ramp along right side of ground floor; brownstone corbels underneath inner piers shaved down; light fixtures with metal conduit above ground-floor beltcourse; flag poles installed at third story

Site Features: Stand pipes; cellar hatch

Notable History and Residents: Erected as a speculative real estate development for merchant and prominent Brooklyn citizen Abiel Abbot Low

North Facade: Designed (historic)

Windows: Historic

Storefront: Altered

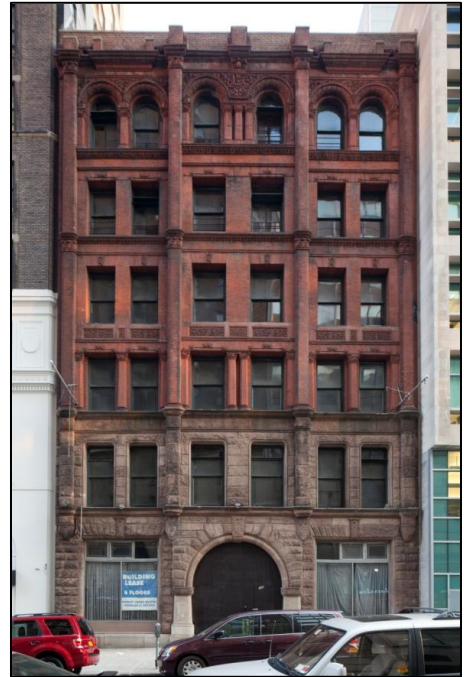
Cornice: Historic

Sidewalk Material(s): Concrete

Curb Material(s): Concrete

190-198 Remsen Street

See: 32 Court Street



ARCHITECTS APPENDIX

Philip Birnbaum (1907-96)

200 Montague Street (1959-60 and 1967-68)
175 Remsen Street (1960-62)

Philip Birnbaum was born in New York City and studied architecture at Columbia University, graduating in 1934. He established his own architecture practice by 1937 and soon became a prolific producer of suburban six-story elevator apartment houses—many located in Queens—designed in a range of eclectic revival and Art Moderne styles that were then popular. By the late 1940s Birnbaum had apparently diversified his practice, designing a wider range of building types and adopting an increasingly Modern architectural vocabulary. He also began to receive larger commissions including multi-building apartment complexes and skyscraping residential towers, many on Manhattan's Upper East Side. Birnbaum continued his prolific practice into the 1980s, by some accounts designing more than 300 buildings in New York City. He was most noted for his efficient interior layouts. Examples of his work are also located in the Upper East Side Historic District.

Obituary, *New York Times* (November 28, 1996); "The World of Birnbaum: One Version of Luxury," *New York Times* (June 18, 1978), R1.

Helmle, Huberty & Hudswell

Frank J. Helmle (1869-1939)
Ulrich J. Huberty (1876-1910)
William H. Hudswell, Jr.

186 Montague Street (1904)
188 Montague Street (1904-06)

The firm of Helmle, Huberty & Hudswell was formed in 1902 by a trio of established Brooklyn architects. Frank J. Helmle was born in Ohio and educated at Cooper Union and the School of Fine Arts of the Brooklyn Museum; in 1890 he entered the office of McKim, Mead & White, but by the mid 1890s he had formed his own firm in Williamsburg with Ephraim Johnson under the name of Johnson & Helmle. Ulrich J. Huberty served as the head draughtsman in architect Frank Freeman's office and later began practicing on his own by 1897. William H. Hudswell, Jr., opened his own architecture office in the Fort Greene area of Brooklyn in 1896; prior to that, he was listed as a draughtsman residing at the same Brooklyn address as William H. Hudswell, Sr., a manufacturer.

Helmle, Huberty & Hudswell, along with its successor firms, was among the most notable proponents in Brooklyn of the brand of Classicism espoused by the City Beautiful Movement in Brooklyn. A significant number of the borough's most prominent bank and commercial buildings were designed by members of the group. In addition to the two buildings on Montague Street within the Borough Hall Skyscraper Historic District, the firm was responsible for additions to the Williamsburgh Savings Bank (in 1905 and 1925, a New York City Landmark), as well as new buildings for the Williamsburg Trust Company (1906) and the Greenpoint

Savings Bank (1908). They also designed the Hotel Bossert further down Montague Street (1908-13, within the Brooklyn Heights Historic District). The firm's notable municipal commissions included the design for several structures within Prospect Park (a New York City Scenic Landmark), including the Boathouse (1904, a New York City Landmark). They were also responsible for the Winthrop Park Shelter Pavilion in the Greenpoint neighborhood (1910, a New York City Landmark). Numerous residence and ecclesiastical building throughout the borough were also designed by the firm (many located within New York City Historic Districts).

The firm of Helmle, Huberty & Hudswell lasted only until 1906 when Hudswell left to open an independent office. Helmle & Huberty continued in partnership until the latter's death in 1910. Helmle subsequently joined with Harvey Wiley Corbett in 1912, sometime working under his own name and sometimes under the firm name Helmle & Corbett (later Helmle, Corbett & Harrison). Helmle is credited individually for the designs of the Brooklyn Central Office, Bureau of Fire Communications (1913, a New York City Landmark) and for St. Gregory the Great Roman Catholic Church (1915-16, within the Crown Heights North II Historic District). The firm with Corbett was responsible for a number of pioneering skyscrapers in Manhattan, including the Bush Tower (1916-18), which helped pioneer set-back massing for tall buildings, as well as the Master Building (1928-29), widely considered one of the finest Art Deco high-rises in the city (both are New York City Landmarks).

AIA Guide, 946-947; Brooklyn City Directories; Dennis Steadman Francis, *Architects in Partice in New York city, 1840-1900* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1979), 32, 91; *Guide to New York City Landmarks*, 124, 178, 211; Helmle Obituary, *New York Times* (July 16, 1939), 16; Huberty Obituary, *New York Times* (February 13, 1910), 11; LPC, *Crown Heights North Historic District Designation Report*; New York City Telephone Directories.

Gamaliel King (1795-1875)

Brooklyn City Hall, now Brooklyn Borough Hall, 209 Joralemon Street (1845-48)

Gamaliel King was one of Brooklyn's most important early professional architects. He began his professional career as a carpenter and builder in the 1810s, at the very start of Brooklyn's urban development. His earliest known commissions include the First Presbyterian Church (1822, demolished) on Cranberry Street and the wood-framed York Street Methodist Episcopal Church (1823-24, demolished). King eventually established himself as an architect and he went on to design many of the most prominent civic, ecclesiastical, and commercial buildings in Brooklyn. King's most lauded commission was Brooklyn City Hall, now Brooklyn Borough Hall (1845-48, a New York City Landmark), the centerpiece of Downtown Brooklyn. He also designed, in partnership with Herman Teckritz, the imposing, neo-classical Kings County Courthouse (1862-65, demolished) that stood across Joralemon Street from City Hall. His many church plans included the original Greek Revival design for St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church (1838, subsequently altered, within the Cobble Hill Historic District) at 180-192 Court Street, the Gothic-style Free Church of St. Matthew's (1859-61, demolished) at Throop Avenue and Pulaski

Street, the Romanesque Revival-style Washington Square Methodist Church in Manhattan (1859-60, within the Greenwich Village Historic District), and the similarly-designed Twelfth Street Reformed Church (1868-70, extant) at 251-255 12th Street in Park Slope. He also designed the Friends Meeting House in Manhattan in partnership with John Kellum (1859, a New York City Landmark).

King's commercial commissions were equally notable. He was responsible for Montague Hall (1848, demolished), one of the first purpose-built cultural venues in Brooklyn whose pedimented facade complimented the recently completed City Hall across Court Street. His partnership with Kellum, which lasted for nearly a decade from 1850-59, focused on the design of commercial buildings and storefronts in Lower Manhattan; their design for the Cary Building (1856-57, a New York City Landmark) is considered a masterpiece of cast-iron construction. A later partnership with William H. Wilcox (sometimes spelled Willcox), under the firm name of King & Wilcox, produced the Kings County Savings Bank (1868, a New York City Landmark), which is widely lauded as one of the city's most magnificent French Second Empire buildings.

In addition to his architectural practice, King was highly involved in promoting the cultural and civic life of Brooklyn. He was a founding member of the Brooklyn Apprentices' Library Association—later the Brooklyn Institute and now known as the Brooklyn Museum—in 1823. He served as a tax assessor for the Village of Brooklyn, as well as foreman of Fire Engine Company No. 2 and a trustee of the Fire Department. King was elected to the New York State Legislature in 1846 and he later held municipal appointments with the water and sewerage commissions.

Brooklyn Daily Eagle Online, 1841-1902, Brooklyn Public Library, online: eagle.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; LPC, *Cary Building Designation Report*; Stiles.

George Keister (1859-1945)

184 Joralemon Street (c. 1909-11)

Little is known about the early life and professional training of George Keister. He had established an architectural practice by the mid 1880s and formed a brief partnership with Frank E. Wallis from 1887-88. During his early career he worked in a wide variety of architectural styles and building types. His earliest known commissions include neo-Grec and Renaissance Revival style tenement buildings located in the Greenwich Village Historic District, designed between 1885 and 1892. He was also responsible for an eclectic group of row houses in the Bronx erected in 1891 and known as the Bertine Block (within the Bertine Block Historic District). Other designs from this period include the Sunday School for Saint Mary's Protestant Episcopal Church (1890, a New York City Landmark), the eccentric Romanesque Revival style First Baptist Church in Manhattan (1892), and the Hotel Gerard (1893-94, a New York City Landmark).

In the early 20th century Keister earned a number of notable theater commissions. His most famous designs include Belasco's Stuyvesant Theater (1906-07, a New York City Individual and Interior Landmark), the Bronx Opera House (1912-13), the Apollo Theater (1913-14, a New

York City Individual and Interior Landmark), the Selwyn (1917-18), and the Earl Carroll (1922 and 1931, altered). Kiester also designed the George L. McAlpin House (1902-03, a New York City Landmark also within the Expanded Carnegie Hill Historic District). Other examples of Keister's work can be found in the Ladies Mile, NoHo, Upper West Side/Central Park West, and West 71st Street Historic Districts.

LPC, *Apollo Theater Designation Report*; LPC, *NoHo Historic District Designation Report*.

Edward A. Klein (b. c. 1875)

186 Joralemon Street (1921-22)

Little is known about the life or professional career of Edward A. Klein. Directories indicate he maintained an architecture practice in Manhattan during the early 1920s. He was apparently a member of the New York Society of Architects and was on the City Legislation committee in 1922.

"Manhattan New Building Database, 1900-1986," Office for Metropolitan History, online: MetroHistory.com; New York Society of Architects, *Year Book 1922* (New York: New York Society of Architects, 1922), 6; James Ward, *Architects in Practice in New York City, 1900-1940* (Union, NJ: J & D Associates, 1989), 43.

William E. Lehman (1874-1951)

50 Court Street (1913)

William E. Lehman graduated from the Cornell University School of Architecture in 1895 and opened his own practice the following year in 1896 in Newark, New Jersey. His firm designed several notable public buildings in Newark, as well as a number of theaters in the New York metropolitan region including Keeney's Theater (1915, demolished) in Brooklyn. Lehman eventually brought his brother, David J. Lehman, and his son, William E. Lehman, Jr., into the firm, which continued as a successful New Jersey practice after Lehman's death in 1951.

Encyclopedia of New Jersey, ed. Maxine N. Lurie and Marc Mappen (Rutgers University Press, 2004), 464; Obituary, *New York Times* (July 31, 1951), 22.

McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin

Andrew McKenzie (1861-1926)

Stephen Voorhees (1879-1965)

Paul Gmelin (1859-1937)

Brooklyn Municipal Building, 210 Joralemon Street (1923-27)

The partnership of McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin is one of the many iterations of a series of related architectural firms active in New York City since the 1880s. Andrew McKenzie, born in Dunkirk, New York and educated in Buffalo, came to New York City in 1884 and worked for the firm of Babb, Cook & Willard. He later became associated with Cyrus L. W. Eidlitz, son of the prominent 19th-century New York architect Leopold Eidlitz, and the two formed the partnership of Eidlitz & McKenzie in 1902. Eidlitz retired from the firm in 1910, at which point McKenzie partnered with Stephen Voorhees and Paul Gmelin as McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin.

Stephen Voorhees was born near Rocky Hill, New Jersey, and was a descendent of a Dutch family that settled in Flatlands, Brooklyn in 1660. Educated as a civil engineer at Princeton University, he worked in that capacity in Newark, New Jersey from 1900, the year of his graduation, until 1902. That year he joined the newly formed partnership of Eidlitz & McKenzie as a civil engineer and superintendent of construction. Besides his work in the firm, Voorhees was president of the American Institute of Architects in 1936 and 1937, and chairman of the board of design, chief architect, and vice president of the New York World's Fair of 1939-40. As an engineer, he believed that architects should be closer to the processes of construction, and was a founder in 1921 and later president of the New York Building Congress.

Paul Gmelin was born in Ulm, Germany and studies in Stuttgart. As a young man he came to this country to be a draftsman for "The Bridge Builder Magazine," and while employed there he was asked by Charles Follen McKim, of the firm McKim, Mead & White, to make perspective drawings of that firm's Boston Public Library. Shortly afterwards Gmelin joined the firm of Babb, Cook & Willard where he likely met Andrew McKenzie. He and McKenzie won a competition in 1885 for a proposed telephone building in New York; the first such building to be constructed in the United States, it was the first of a long series of telephone and telegraph company buildings designed by the firm.

American Architects Directory (New York, 1962); LPC, *Upper West Side/Central Park West Designation Report*; Francis, 54. Paul Gmelin Obituary, *New York Times* (November 21, 1937), 8:8; "McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin," *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects* 3, ed. Adolf K. Placzek (New York, 1982), 973; Henry F. Withey and Elisie R. Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)*, (Hennessey and Ingalls: Los Angeles, 1970), 237.

George L. Morse (1836-1924)

44 Court Street (1899-1901)

George L. Morse was born in Bangor, Maine. He moved to New York at an early age and studied under Jarvase Wheeler. Morse opened his own practice in Brooklyn in 1860, and soon established himself as one of Brooklyn's most prominent architects. In addition to serving as president of Brooklyn's chapter of the American Institute of Architects, Morse was also a founder and the first president of the Brooklyn Institute's Department of Architecture, whose membership included nearly all of the leading Brooklyn architects of the time.

Morse designed many of Brooklyn's most distinguished late-19th-century commercial buildings, including the cast-iron-fronted Continental Building that once stood at Court and Montague Streets (1873-74, demolished), an extension to the Wechsler & Abraham (later Abraham & Straus) Department Store Building (1885), the Franklin Trust Company Building (1891, within the Brooklyn Heights Historic District), the Brooklyn Daily Eagle Building (1892, demolished), the Mechanics Bank Building (1896, demolished), and the Temple Bar Building. He also designed the First Reformed Church of Brooklyn (1893) in Park Slope, as well as numerous residences throughout Brooklyn.

LPC, *DUMBO Historic District Designation Report*; Obituary, *New York Times*, (November 9, 1924), E7; Withey and Withey, 429.

Henry I. Oser (c. 1864-1935)

191 Joralemon Street (1925)

Henry I. Oser was born in Kiev, Russia. He attended Columbia University, where he studied civil engineering, and by 1911 was employed as an engineer with the New York City Department of Buildings. He continued in that capacity until the late 1910s, when he apparently began practice as an architect. By the early 1920s Oser had earned a steady stream of commissions, particularly tall loft and office buildings located in the Garment District in Manhattan. His notable designs include the Fashion Centre Building at 525 Seventh Avenue (1922), the Central Building at 191 Joralemon Street in Brooklyn (1925), and the elaborately-decorated Trinity Court Building at 70 Trinity Place (1927). Oser was a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

"Manhattan New Building Database, 1900-1986," Office for Metropolitan History, online: MetroHistory.com, accessed July 27, 2001; Obituary, *New York Times* (March 21, 1935), 23.

Parfitt Brothers

Walter E. Parfitt (d. 1925)

Henry D. Parfitt (1848-1888)

Albert E. Parfitt (1863-1926)

186 Remsen Street (1886-87)

Parfitt Brothers was among the most successful architectural firms in Brooklyn in the final two decades of the 19th century. The firm consisted of three brothers, all of whom were English immigrants. Walter E. Parfitt was apparently the first of the three to arrive in Brooklyn, immigrating in about 1863. In 1869, city directories list Walter's occupation as "real estate." By 1875, when the Parfitt Brothers firm was established, Walter had been joined by his younger brother, Henry D. Parfitt. The third brother, Albert E. Parfitt, arrived in Brooklyn in 1882 and worked as a draftsman in the firm before becoming a junior partner. At the time that the Parfitt Brothers firm was established, most residential construction in Brooklyn consisted of brownstone-fronted row houses and flats in either the traditional Italianate style or the newer neo-Grec variant on this form. Parfitt Brothers designed hundreds of such buildings, including many examples in New York City Historic Districts.

Parfitt Brothers excelled in the design of buildings in the Queen Anne style, which it may have introduced into residential architecture in Brooklyn in 1881 with of a pair of red brick buildings with Queen Anne-inspired terra-cotta decoration, located at 472 and 474 Lafayette Avenue between Franklin and Bedford Avenues. These flats were soon followed by a series of superb single-family homes in the Queen Anne style, notably the Seth Low House (1882; demolished) on the corner of Pierrepont Street and Columbia Heights; the Dr. Cornelius N. Hoagland House (1882) at 410 Clinton Avenue in the Clinton Hill Historic District; the Erastus and Nettie Barnes House (1884; facade stripped) at 316 Clinton Avenue; and the John S. James House (1887) at 9 Pierrepont Street in the Brooklyn Heights Historic District. The Truslow House (1887-88, a New York City Individual Landmark also located within the Crown Heights North Historic District) at 96 Brooklyn Avenue is among the last of this sequence and, on the exterior, is one of the most intact houses designed by the firm.

Parfitt Brothers also pioneered in the design of apartment houses for the middle class in Brooklyn, with the Montague, Berkeley, and Grosvenor, 103, 115, and 117 Montague Street, all dating from 1885-86, in the Brooklyn Heights Historic District. Besides residential work, Parfitt Brothers was responsible for several Brooklyn civic structures, most notably a landmark firehouse in Bushwick, Engine Company 52 (1896-97; now Engine Co, 252). The firm also designed four prominent Brooklyn churches as well as the borough's grandest synagogue (Temple Israel, 1890-94; demolished). The four churches are extant—the Nostrand Avenue Methodist Church (1881) on Nostrand Avenue in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Grace Methodist Church (1882) on Seventh Avenue in the Park Slope Historic District, St. Augustine's R.C. Church (1888) on Sixth Avenue in Park Slope (outside of the designated historic district), and the Embury Methodist Church (1894; now the Mount Lebanon Baptist Church) in the Stuyvesant Heights Historic District. All of the firm's many buildings for important Brooklyn hospitals and philanthropic organizations have been demolished.

LPC, John and Elizabeth Truslow House Designation Report; LPC, Crown Heights North Historic District Designation Report.

Schwartz & Gross

Simon I. Schwartz (c. 1877-1956)

Arthur Gross (1877-1950)

26 Court Street (1925-26)

Graduates of the Hebrew Technical Institute, Simon I. Schwartz and Arthur Gross were partners for nearly four decades. Schwartz, who began his career as a draftsman in the office of Henry Andersen, first teamed with Gross in 1903. Their partnership, which proved to be extremely successful, from the beginning specialized in luxury apartment buildings and hotels, including the Beaux-Arts style Colosseum at 435 Riverside Drive (1910), the Gothic-inspired 1185 Park Avenue (1920, in the Expanded Carnegie Hill Historic District), and 55 Central Park West (1929, in the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District), whose elevations display the influence of the Art Deco style. Schwartz & Gross are considered one of the firms whose numerous apartment houses helped shape the face of the Upper West Side. Much of firm's output has survived, particularly in the Audubon Park, Upper West Side/Central Park West, Riverside Drive-West End, Hamilton Heights Extension and Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill Historic Districts. The firm also designed 409 Edgecombe Avenue (1916-17, a New York City Landmark), which was the most prestigious address for African-American New Yorkers from the 1930s through the 1950s, and several commercial structures, examples of which can be found throughout the Ladies' Mile Historic District.

The firm of Schwartz & Gross was among a select group of architectural practices with Jewish principals, including the firms of Emery Roth, George & Edward Blum, and Rouse & Goldstone, that achieved prominence in early 20th century New York.

LPC, Audubon Park Historic District Designation Report; LPC, Research Files; LPC, S. Jarmulowsky Bank Building Designation; Obituary, New York Times (November 7, 1950), 25; Obituary, New York Times (April 25, 1956), 35:3; Ward.

H. Craig Severance (1879-1941)

16 Court Street (1925-27)

Harold Craig Severance, born in Chazy, New York, studied architecture in the United States and France, and began his career in 1900 in New York in the office of architect Charles A. Rich, his cousin. After working for the firm of Carrère & Hastings, Severance began his own practice in 1907. Between 1916 and about 1924, he was the partner of William Van Alen in the firm of Severance & Van Alen, which was noted for its creative "modern" classical designs for steel-framed commercial buildings; Van Alen was called "the designer of the firm." Commissions included 377 Fifth Avenue (1921); Bainbridge Building (1922) at 37 West 57th Street; alteration to the Prudence Building alteration (1924) at 331 Madison Avenue; the Gidding & Co. Building

(c. 1924) at 724 Fifth Avenue; and the Bar Building (c. 1924) at 36 West 44th Street. Independently, Severance was responsible for a number of New York commercial buildings and skyscrapers designed in variations of classical and Art Deco styles, including the 36-story Ruppert Building (1926) at 531 Fifth Avenue; the Hotel Taft (1926-27) at 761 Seventh Avenue; the 35-story 50 Broadway (1926-27); 16 Court Street (1925-27) in Brooklyn, the Herald Square Building at 1350 Broadway; 400 Madison Avenue (1929), financed by Ohrstrom; and the 45-story Nelson Tower (1930-31) at 450 Seventh Avenue. The Manhattan Company Building (1929-30, a New York City Landmark) was Severance's most important commission; his firm at this time was "H. Craig Severance, Inc., architects and engineers." At the time of his death he was involved in construction at the Naval Air Station, Lakehurst, New Jersey.

LPC, Manhattan Company Building Designation Report.

Abraham J. Simberg (1892-1981)

75 Livingston Street (1926-28)

Abraham J. Simberg was born in Ukraine in 1892 and arrived in the United States around 1901. Census records indicate that by 1910 he had begun working as a draftsman in an architect's office. He apparently received his architectural license in 1922 and directories list Simberg in practice from 1920 through 1940. During the early 1920s he worked primarily on low-scale apartment houses, including several on Ocean Parkway in Brooklyn. His first major commission came in 1926 when local developer Jacob Adelman hired him to design the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce Building at 75 Livingston Street; Adelman had also built a number of apartment houses on Ocean Parkway and it is likely the two met on one of these projects. By the late 1920s Simberg seems to have specialized in renovating older buildings, in particular tenements and multi-family dwellings. In 1929 he published an article titled "Modernizing Old Tenements" in the *Real Estate News*, and in 1930 was placed in charge of an architects bureau sponsored by the Greater New York Taxpayers' Association designed "to help members owning old-law apartments to solve their remodeling problems." Simberg continued to submit building permits, mostly alteration work to tenements, throughout the 1930s, but by the early 1940s it appears he had ceased active practice.

Christopher Gray, "Portrait of a Building as a Young High-Rise," *New York Times* (December 6, 2009), RE9; "Offer Architects' Service," *New York Times* (January 12, 1930), 154; Ward, 71

Slee & Bryson

John Slee (1875-1947)

Robert Bryson (1875-1938)

186 Montague Street (alterations 1941-42)

The firm of Slee & Bryson, founded around 1905 by John Slee and Robert Bryson, designed buildings in Brooklyn for over a quarter of a century. Slee was born in Maryland and studied at the Maryland Institute before coming to New York. Bryson was born in Newark, New Jersey,

and educated in Brooklyn. Early in their careers, both men worked for the architect John J. Petit. After forming a partnership, Slee & Bryson designed many buildings in Brooklyn, including Colonial Revival and neo-Tudor style houses, such as those found in Prospect Park South, Ditmas Park, and the Prospect Lefferts Gardens Historic Districts. The firm was most active in the design of early-twentieth-century neo-Federal and neo-Georgian-style row houses. Among their finest designs in these styles are found on Albemarle Terrace in the Albemarle-Kenmore Terrace Historic District, as well as in the Crown Heights North Historic District.

LPC, Upper East Side Historic District Designation Report; LPC, Crown Heights North Historic District Designation Report.

Starrett & Van Vleck

Goldwin Starrett (1874-1918)

Ernest Alan Van Vleck (1875-1956)

32 Court Street (1916-18)

Founded in 1907 by Goldwin Starrett and Ernest Alan Van Vleck, the firm was known for their work designing a wide range of building types including dwellings, office and institutional buildings, and department stores. Ernest Alan Van Vleck received a degree in architecture from Cornell University in 1897 and subsequently spent a year studying in Europe. Goldwin Starrett had studied engineering at the University of Michigan, graduating with his Bachelor of Science degree in 1894. After graduation, he entered the office of D. H. Burnham & Co. in Chicago where he went on to become one of Burnham's principal assistants. In 1898 he moved to New York where he joined his brother Theodore at the George A. Fuller Construction Company. In 1901, he, Theodore and their brothers Ralph and William A., formed the Thompson-Starrett Construction Company where he served as the architect on the Algonquin Hotel (1902, a New York City Landmark) and the Hahne Department Store in Newark, New Jersey. After several years he moved to Vermont where he joined the E. B. Ellis Granite Company which supplied stone for several major buildings, including the Woolworth Building (1910-13, a New York City Landmark) and Washington, D.C.'s Union Station. It was on his return to New York that he joined forces with Ernest Van Vleck. Originally called Goldwin Starrett & Van Vleck, the firm changed its name to Starrett & Van Vleck after adding two partners including William A. Starrett and continued under that name with Mr. Van Vleck as principal after the death of Goldwin Starrett in 1918 at the age of 44.

The firm designed the Lord & Taylor Department Store (1913-14, a New York City Landmark), which led to other significant department store commissions such as the former Abercrombie & Fitch Building (1917, exterior demolished), the La Salle & Koch Department Store (1918, Toledo, Ohio), Saks Fifth Avenue (1922-24, a New York City Landmark), and the expansion of Bloomingdale's Department Store and the Abraham & Strauss (now Macy's) store in Brooklyn (both 1930), as well as the Lord & Taylor suburban stores in Manhasset (1941) and Westchester County (1948) in partnership with the designer Raymond Loewy. Other commissions included the Everett Building (1908, a New York City Landmark), The Equitable Life Assurance Society Building at 393 Seventh Avenue, the façade of the Curb (now American Stock) Exchange Building (1930), and the Downtown Athletic Club (1929-30, a New York City Landmark). In

their early work, as exemplified by their two Fifth Avenue department stores and the Equitable Building, Starrett & Van Vleck employed the conservative Italian Renaissance Revival style. Later designs would reflect modernist influences like Art Deco and the International Style.

LPC, 21 West Street Building Designation Report; LPC, Lord & Taylor Building Designation Report.