



## The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

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### LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION DESIGNATES TWO INDIVIDUAL LANDMARKS

#### **Austin, Nichols & Co. Warehouse (184 Kent Avenue, Brooklyn)**

*“Cass Gilbert’s Austin, Nichols & Co. Warehouse is one of the most visually prominent structures on the Brooklyn waterfront,”* said Robert B. Tierney, Chairman of the Landmarks Preservation Commission. *“This influential and innovative commercial building undoubtedly merits recognition as a New York City landmark. I am thrilled to add it to our roster.”*

Financed by Havemeyer & Elder, the Austin, Nichols & Co. Warehouse was designed and built to serve Austin, Nichols & Co., the world’s largest wholesale grocery business. Established by James E. Nichols and five former associates of Fitts & Austin in 1879, the company grew to occupy nine buildings in Manhattan before moving to Brooklyn. To realize his first architectural venture, Horace Havemeyer assembled a team of seasoned professionals, including Cass Gilbert, architect of the U.S. Custom House and the Woolworth Building. Construction of the warehouse began in January 1914 and the plant was fully operational by March 1915. Measuring 179 by 440 feet, it was described by a contemporary writer as a “model of modern construction and efficiency,” integrating piers, railway tracks, freight elevators, conveyor belts, and pneumatic tubes. Under the Sunbeam Foods label, all types of products were prepared, processed and packaged in the building, from dried fruit and coffee, to cheese, olives, and peanut butter. In 1934, Austin Nichols entered the liquor business and the building remained its headquarters until the late 1950s.



Six stories tall, the exposed concrete elevations slope inward and are crowned by a coved or flared cornice, a feature that is likely to have been modeled on ancient Egyptian sources. The Egyptian Revival style is rare in the United States and the warehouse is one of the only examples in New York City. The windows, grouped in pairs and threes, are arranged to create a subtle and insistent rhythm. Narrow in width and connected by rounded mullions, the fenestration has a gentle vertical thrust. European architects, such as Le Corbusier and Walter Gropius, identified this type of industrial building as inspiration for the development of European modernism.

The Austin Nichols & Co. warehouse remains one of the most impressive structures on the East River; not only is it a superb and highly visible example of early twentieth century engineering,

but it is also one of the earliest reinforced concrete warehouses in the United States designed by a nationally prominent architect.

### **Fitzgerald-Ginsberg House (145-15 Bayside Avenue, Queens)**

*“The Fitzgerald-Ginsberg House is an outstanding example of the Tudor-style mansions built in Queens in the 1920s,”* said Robert B. Tierney.

The Fitzgerald-Ginsberg House is a rare 1920s, picturesque, neo-Tudor style mansion in Flushing, Queens. The building features rusticated, irregularly shaped fieldstone walls, a multi-colored slate roof, casement and leaded glass windows, and picturesque massing. Large, suburban picturesque revival-style houses from the 1920s were at one time prevalent throughout New York City’s affluent residential outer neighborhoods, but have become increasingly rare. The Fitzgerald house is one of the last great mansions from this period still standing in Flushing.



Built in 1924 to the design of architect John Oakman, the house represents the affluence and optimism of the 1920s. It was built immediately adjacent to an extension of Flushing’s Old Country Club and its golf course – a typical suburban pattern of those years. The Old Country Club, founded in 1887, is credited as being one of the oldest private country clubs in the United States. In 1902, the Club built its own golf course, one of nine private golf clubs in New York City listed by the U.S. Golf Association in 1926. The club house and golf course have since been demolished.

The house was built for Charles and Florence Fitzgerald and then sold, in 1926, to Ethel and Morris Ginsberg. Ginsberg made his fortune as part of a family-owned business supplying sash, door and wooden trim for builders. The firm was considered to be one of the leaders in this field in the Long Island region. The Ginsberg family lived in the house for over seventy years.

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The Landmarks Preservation Commission is the New York City agency responsible for designating and regulating New York City’s landmarks. To date, the Commission has designated 1,130 individual landmarks, 105 interior landmarks, 9 scenic landmarks, and 83 historic districts.