

# Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill Historic District Extension Designation Report



New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission  
October 23, 2001

**HAMILTON HEIGHTS/SUGAR HILL  
HISTORIC DISTRICT EXTENSION**

Borough of Manhattan  
Designation Report

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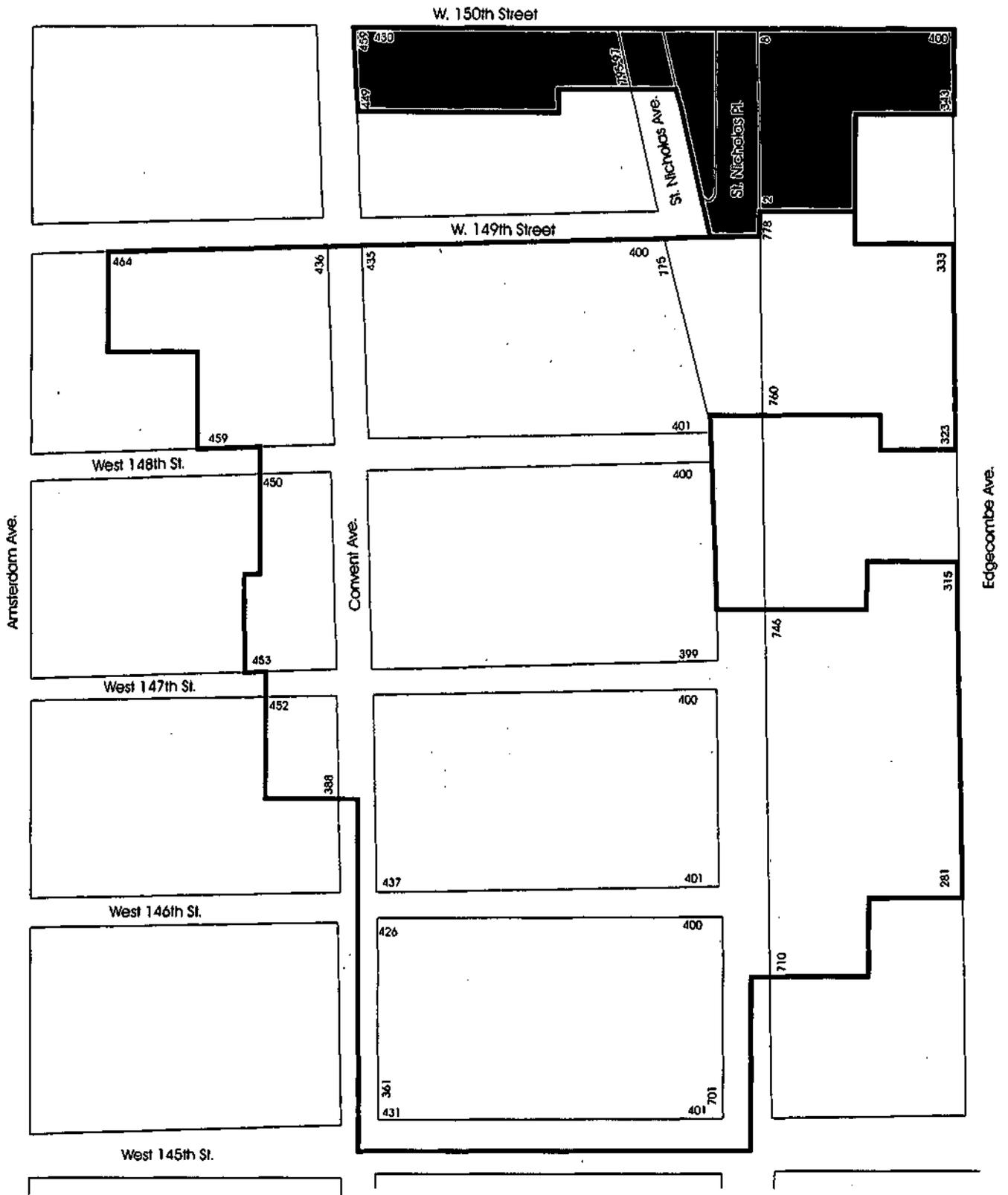
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On the front cover:  
416 and 418 West 150<sup>th</sup> Street

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**Hamilton Heights/ Sugar Hill  
Historic District and Extension  
Manhattan**

Designated October 23, 2001  
Landmarks Preservation Commission

Original Boundaries  
Designated June 27, 2000

Expanded Boundaries

## **HAMILTON HEIGHTS/SUGAR HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT EXTENSION BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill Historic District Extension consists of the properties bounded by a line beginning at a point at the intersection of the west curbline of Edgecombe Avenue and the southern curbline of West 150<sup>th</sup> Street, then extending westerly along the southern curbline of West 150<sup>th</sup> Street across St. Nicholas Place and St. Nicholas Avenue to the eastern curbline of Convent Avenue, southerly along said curbline, easterly along the southern property lines of 449 Convent Avenue, 418, 416, and 408-414 West 150<sup>th</sup> Street, and 795-797 St. Nicholas Avenue, northerly along the western property lines of 791 and 793 St. Nicholas Avenue, easterly long the northern property line of 793 St. Nicholas Avenue to the eastern curbline of St. Nicholas Avenue, southerly along said curbline to a point formed by the intersection of a line extending southerly from the eastern curbline of St. Nicholas Avenue and a line extending easterly from the southern curbline of West 149<sup>th</sup> Street, easterly to the eastern curbline of St. Nicholas Place, northerly along said curbline, easterly along the southern property line of 2-4 St. Nicholas Place, northerly along the eastern property lines of 2-4 and 6-8 St. Nicholas Place, easterly along the southern property line of 400-402 Edgecombe Avenue (a/k/a 343 Edgecombe Avenue) to the western curbline of Edgecombe Avenue, then extending northerly along said curbline to the point of the beginning.

## **TESTIMONY AT THE PUBLIC HEARING**

On October 16, 2001, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill Historic District Extension (item No. 1). Nine people spoke in favor of designation, including Councilman Stanley E. Michels and representatives of the Borough President of Manhattan C. Virginia Fields, Community Board 9, the 150<sup>th</sup> to 155<sup>th</sup> Street Block Association, the Municipal Art Society-Place Matters, the Society for the Preservation of the City, and the Historic Districts Council. No witnesses spoke in opposition to designation.

## INTRODUCTION

The extension to the Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill Historic District consists of fifteen buildings, built between 1885 and 1909. Located in northwestern Manhattan, from 149<sup>th</sup> to 150<sup>th</sup> Streets, and from the west side of Edgecombe Avenue to the east side of Convent Avenue, the extension expands the district's present boundaries, designated in June 2000, to more completely reflect the neighborhood's architecture and cultural history.

Three building types reflect distinct and overlapping stages in the district's residential development. The earliest structure is 8 St. Nicholas Place, a single-family house designed in the Queen Anne-style by Richard S. Rosenstock in 1885. Now part of the Dawn Hotel, it is connected by a modest addition to the former Jacob P. Baiter house, a fine example of the French Renaissance Revival-style, designed by Theodore G. Stein. Built in 1893-94, this four-story house features a finely detailed tan brick and terra-cotta facade. Ten well-preserved rowhouses, completed in 1897 and 1898, are also included in the district. On West 150<sup>th</sup> Street, the brick and limestone facades are decorated with a unusual mixture of finely tooled Romanesque and Renaissance Revival-style details. The six houses on Convent Avenue are linked by a common cornice and feature modest details fashioned in brick and limestone. The district has two particularly fine apartment buildings, both designed by architects who were particularly active in this section of Harlem. The Plaza, designed by A.B. Ogden and Son, stands at the southwest corner of St. Nicholas Avenue and 150<sup>th</sup> Street. Seven stories tall, the well-preserved Roman brick facade has a rusticated base, projecting triple-arch entrance portico, and terra-cotta window surrounds. At the southwest corner of Edgecombe Avenue and 150<sup>th</sup> Street is a six-story apartment house designed by John Hauser in 1909. Clad in red brick, limestone and terra cotta, this large Beaux-Arts-style structure is one of the most dignified buildings in the district.

In subsequent decades, the area became known as "Sugar Hill." Most residents were black professionals, active in law, business, medicine, and the arts. Few changes have been made to the neighborhood's architectural fabric since this celebrated era. By expanding the boundaries of the present district to the north and west, the Landmarks Commission seeks to not only preserve buildings of architectural distinction, but to more fully represent the area's historical and cultural development.

## THE HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE HAMILTON HEIGHTS/SUGAR HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT EXTENSION

### *The early history of the area<sup>1</sup>*

Throughout the first half of the seventeenth century, the West India Company encouraged the development of New Netherland through generous land grants to settlers.<sup>2</sup> These grants helped shape settlement patterns throughout the colony and in the area that would later become known as Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill. While many early citizens preferred the security and convenience of New Amsterdam at Manhattan's fortified southern tip, a small number chose to establish farms in the island's wooded north. In 1658, the town of Nieuw Haarlem was officially created by the colony's governor Peter Stuyvesant, incorporating "the land of Jochem Pietersen, deceased, and those which are adjoining it."<sup>3</sup> Grants were offered to prospective residents, who soon included "eleven Frenchmen, four Walloons, four Danes, three Swedes, three Germans, and seven Dutchmen."<sup>4</sup> In 1666 the new British government established a fixed boundary between the villages of New York and Harlem, extending diagonally from what is now 74<sup>th</sup> Street on the East River to 129<sup>th</sup> Street on the Hudson River. In the decades that followed, however, the two villages came to be considered one.<sup>5</sup>

Over the past four centuries, this area has been known by a succession of names that refer to its elevated geographic position. Toward the end of the seventeenth century, the hills west of Harlem's central plain became known as Harlem Heights. During the Revolutionary War, this area became the site of an important early victory for the American troops. Following its defeat by British and Hessian soldiers at the Battle of Brooklyn in August 1776, the Continental Army fled across the East River to the hills of northwestern Manhattan. Temporary fortifications were constructed throughout the "Heights of Harlem," as far north as 160<sup>th</sup> Street. General George Washington set up his headquarters in Mount Morris (also known as the Morris-Jumel Mansion), an abandoned summer villa built by the British military officer Roger Morris and his American-born wife, Mary Philipse Morris (1765, remodeling c. 1810, a designated New York City Landmark). British forces pursued Washington and several violent clashes occurred during late September and early October 1776, between what is now 130<sup>th</sup> and 145<sup>th</sup> Streets. Although the American victory was less than decisive, this was the first instance in which the Continental Army had equaled their much-better trained adversary. In late October

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<sup>1</sup> This portion of the essay is based mainly on Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Hamilton Heights Historic District Designation Report* (LP-0872) (New York: City of New York, 1974); *Hamilton Heights Historic District Extension* (LP-2044) (New York: City of New York, 2000) and *Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill Historic District* (LP-2064, 2000) prepared by Matthew A. Postal; and Andrew S. Dolkart, "The Architecture and Development of Harlem," *Touring Historic Harlem* (New York: New York Landmarks Conservancy, 1997), 7-16.

<sup>2</sup> See Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (Oxford University Press, 1999), 20-21.

<sup>3</sup> James Riker, *Revised History of Harlem: Its Origins and Early Annals* (New York: New Harlem Publishing Company, 1904), 170.

<sup>4</sup> Burrows and Wallace, 70.

<sup>5</sup> Dolkart, 8.

1776, Washington's troops evacuated to White Plains.

Prior to the American Revolution, few roads passed through northern Manhattan. In 1791 a new approach to Fort Washington (originally called Fort Mifflin, between 181<sup>st</sup> and 186<sup>th</sup> Streets) was opened, extending the Bloomingdale Road northeast to meet the Kingsbridge Road at what is now 147<sup>th</sup> Street and St. Nicholas Avenue. The site of this T-shaped intersection was owned by Dr. Samuel and Mary Bradhurst, who acquired it from the estate of Charles Aitken in 1787. Born in 1749, Bradhurst was trained as a surgeon and during the American Revolution served at the Battles of Princeton and Brandywine. In 1799, he sold sixteen acres in Harlem Heights to Alexander Hamilton whose thirty-two acre estate would extend from what is now Hamilton Place on the west, to Hamilton Terrace on the east, and from 140<sup>th</sup> to 147<sup>th</sup> Streets. While most of Hamilton's property is part of the Hamilton Heights Historic District and the Hamilton Heights Historic District Extension, a small triangular segment, north of 145<sup>th</sup> Street, is located within the Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill Historic District. Hamilton's property had panoramic views and rich soil for farming and gardening. Near 143<sup>rd</sup> Street, the former Secretary of the United States Treasury erected a twelve-room house, with large porches, designed by the architect John McComb in the Federal style. He called it the Grange (a designated New York City Landmark), recalling his grandfather's ancestral seat in Ayrshire, Scotland. Hamilton found life in Harlem Heights both pleasant and convenient. A place of escape and refuge, he described his country home as "a sweet asylum from care and pain."<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, he continued to travel, to his law office in lower Manhattan, and when business took him outside the city, to Philadelphia and Albany, taking advantage of the daily stages that passed close-by on the recently extended Bloomingdale Road.

North of the Grange stretched the one-hundred-and-ten-acre Bradhurst estate. Close to the property's summit, near what is now Convent Avenue and 148<sup>th</sup> Street, the Bradhursts built an impressive Federal-style mansion, named "Pinehurst."<sup>7</sup> Three generations of the Bradhurst family lived here, enjoying sweeping views across the Bronx, New Jersey, and Long Island. During the 1830s, the district began to lose its rural character. Tenth Avenue was chosen as the main supply route for New York City's new water system. The impact of the New York State-financed construction project was significant, causing members of the Bradhurst family "considerable vexation."<sup>8</sup> Croton water ran through iron pipes placed inside masonry conduits. While the pipes were buried, their large diameter resulted in the road being raised by more than ten feet, creating a ridge to the west of the estate. Not only was drainage in their gardens seriously disrupted, but views west toward the Hudson River were permanently obstructed. In an era when few streets in northern Manhattan were passable, or well-maintained, the newly-graded Tenth Avenue became a busy transit route.

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<sup>6</sup> Quoted in "Hamilton Grange," National Parks Service brochure, 1993.

<sup>7</sup> After 1875 "Pinehurst" became the Mt. St. Vincent Hotel. A photograph in the collection of The New-York Historical Society dating from the late 1880s shows a sign for "Koch's New Mount St. Vincent Hotel" as well as the building and the approach from St. Nicholas Avenue. At the time the property was surrounded by a low picket fence, much of which was covered with advertisements. The house stood in the "middle of the juncture of Convent Avenue and 148<sup>th</sup> Street" and was demolished as part of the extension of Convent Avenue north to 152<sup>nd</sup> Street and St. Nicholas Avenue. See Dolkart, 90, 107. Today, the site is occupied by groups of rowhouses at 408-418 and 420-430 Convent Avenue.

<sup>8</sup> Augustus Maunsell Bradhurst, *My Forefathers* (1910), 230.

By the late 1840s, the district was commonly called Washington Heights.<sup>9</sup> John Maunsell Bradhurst, son of Samuel Bradhurst, signed correspondence with this address, evoking the area's (and his father's) association with the first President of the United States. During these years, the area continued to lose its pastoral character and in 1860 he divided his property and began to sell lots east of the Kingsbridge Road, near what would later become Edgecombe Avenue. In 1865 the family departed for Europe, and by 1875 they settled permanently in Essex, England. Sales of Bradhurst-owned lots increased after the Civil War, fueled, in part, by proposals of the Board of Commissioners of Central Park to abandon the winding Bloomingdale Road and lay out the "Boulevard," today known as Broadway. The closing of this road, which sliced diagonally to the northeast, from what is now Broadway and 140<sup>th</sup> Street toward St. Nicholas Avenue and 146<sup>th</sup> Street, created a long uninterrupted block between 145<sup>th</sup> and 146<sup>th</sup> Streets for residential development.<sup>10</sup>

St. Nicholas Avenue was created in 1866, and three years later, extended to 150<sup>th</sup> Street. Conceived to improve access to Central Park, it originates near the intersection of 110<sup>th</sup> Street (Central Park North) and Lenox Avenue, heading northwest toward 125<sup>th</sup> Street, where it follows the north border of St. Nicholas Park. In contrast to Tenth Avenue, it became a popular route for trotters heading to the Harlem Speedway and Jerome Park, where the American Jockey Club built a racecourse seating eight thousand spectators. One block east is Edgecombe Avenue. This street, which climbs gently as it continues north, derives its name from the Saxon word "combe," meaning crest of a hill. It opened in 1876, providing a scenic alternative to St. Nicholas Avenue, from 136<sup>th</sup> to 155<sup>th</sup> Streets, and then to 170<sup>th</sup> Street.

Despite the Panic of 1873, a period of economic stagnation in New York City, real estate sales in Washington Heights continued. In 1873 Henry and Anna T. Nicoll purchased several large tracts from Henry M. and Elizabeth Bradhurst, which they subsequently divided into smaller parcels and sold to mostly German and Irish buyers. These sales anticipated construction of the "elevated road" on Eighth Avenue (now Frederick Douglass Boulevard), which began service to 145<sup>th</sup> and 155<sup>th</sup> Streets in 1879.<sup>11</sup> These transit improvements made the area attractive to both developers and new residents. From the new elevated railway station at Eighth Avenue and 145<sup>th</sup> Street, commuters reached their homes by ascending the steep incline of West 145<sup>th</sup> Street. This route would become a major cross-town thoroughfare, where rowhouses, multiple dwellings, and commercial buildings were constructed.

### *Single-Family Houses, 1885-1898*

Following the Civil War, New York City prospered and residential development pushed north into upper Manhattan. With elevated railroads serving Second, Third, and Eighth Avenues by 1880, areas that once had country estates and farmhouses, gave way to speculative construction, including long rows of single-family houses and multiple dwellings of varying quality. Unlike central Harlem, which developed quickly during the

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 239.

<sup>10</sup> Known by a succession of names, St. Nicholas Avenue was planned by the Board of Commissioners of Central Park in 1866 and extended to 145<sup>th</sup> Street three years later. That year, a river-to-river route across 145<sup>th</sup> Street was also completed. St. Nicholas Avenue was officially named in 1901.

<sup>11</sup> The Metropolitan Elevated Railroad yards were located east of Eighth Avenue, between 144<sup>th</sup> and 146<sup>th</sup> Streets.

1880s, at this time Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill still had the character of a remote country village, popular with downtowners for its "bracing air and picturesque scenery."<sup>12</sup> While some wealthy city residents raced their prized trotters through the neighborhood en route to the Harlem Speedway, others enjoyed quieter pleasures at the New York Tennis Club, near 148<sup>th</sup> Street and Tenth Avenue, or at the Atheneum, a building devoted to "dancing and other social amusements."<sup>13</sup> In 1906, Charles Henry White recalled how the area had once been a "rural retreat," claiming its "chief charm [was] its well-bred seclusion."<sup>14</sup>

Access to the neighborhood improved with the construction of a short-lived cable-car railway on Tenth Avenue in the late 1880s.<sup>15</sup> *King's Handbook of New York* praised the railway for its "marvelously low fares" and the *Real Estate Record and Guide* maintained that "it [was] possible to travel more quickly by this means from 155<sup>th</sup> Street and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue to City Hall than to get from City Hall to 125<sup>th</sup> Street and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue."<sup>16</sup> Many streets had been paved by this time and with the enthusiastic support of the recently established Washington Heights Taxpayers' Association and other civic-minded groups, the Commissioner of Public Works announced plans in 1886 to construct a steel viaduct across 155<sup>th</sup> Street, linking the Central (now Macomb's Dam) Bridge with St. Nicholas Place (the bridge and viaduct ensemble are a designated New York City Landmark). This ambitious scheme, begun in 1890 and completed in 1895, was conceived to improve vehicular circulation in northern Manhattan, linking the Bronx to north Harlem and Washington Heights.<sup>17</sup>

Real estate interest in Washington Heights, consequently, surged in the late 1880s. Many free-standing single-family homes were built along St. Nicholas Avenue and Place, particularly near 150<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>18</sup> Two of these houses are located in the district, the John W. Fink house (Richard S. Rosenstock, 1885) at 8 St. Nicholas Place, and the Jacob P. Baiter house (Theodore G. Stein, 1893-94) at 6 St. Nicholas Place. The Fink house stands on a fifty by one hundred foot lot at the southeast corner of St. Nicholas Place and 150<sup>th</sup> Street. Designed in the Queen Anne-style, it is decorated with many picturesque features, including a jerkinhead roof,

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<sup>12</sup> "On Washington Heights," *Real Estate Record and Guide*, September 6, 1890, 300.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* The New York Tennis Club has been variously known as the Hamilton Grange Club and the Cosmopolitan Tennis Club.

<sup>14</sup> Cited by Gilbert Osofsky in *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 74.

<sup>15</sup> Tenth Avenue, above 59<sup>th</sup> Street, was renamed Amsterdam Avenue by the Board of Alderman in 1890, who noted that such a name change would have "a marked and beneficial effect on property" values. Ninth Avenue, above 59<sup>th</sup> Street, was renamed Columbus Avenue that same year. See Henry Moscow, *The Street Book*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 1978) 22, 40.

<sup>16</sup> "On Washington Heights," *Real Estate Record and Guide*, September 6, 1890, 300.

<sup>17</sup> See LPC, *Macomb's Dam Bridge (originally Central Bridge) and 155<sup>th</sup> Street Viaduct* (LP-1629) (New York: City of New York, 1992), report prepared by Jay Shockely.

<sup>18</sup> Near 150<sup>th</sup> Street, four additional residences from this period survive: the James A. and Ruth Bailey House (1886-88, a designated New York City Landmark), the Nicholas and Agnes Benziger House (1890-91, a designated New York City Landmark) at 345 Edgecombe Avenue, and 14 and 16 St. Nicholas Place (1883-84, part of the Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill Northeast Historic District).

brownstone oriel, corner turret, and a relief panel set into the north facade embellished with a floral design and the date of the building's construction. To the south, separated by a twenty-five foot lot, is the Baiter house, designed in the style of the French Renaissance. Clad in light-colored Roman brick and brownstone, the four-story neo-Classical facade is crowned by a gable with a foliated panel. Baiter, a yeast manufacturer, was one of the neighborhood's wealthiest residents; he employed a staff of ten servants. In 1912, Dr. Henry Lloyd purchased both houses and converted them into a hospital.<sup>19</sup>

During the late 1880s, development patterns became more complex and ambitious, attracting seasoned speculators who assembled larger lots for more lucrative residential projects. In contrast to the Hamilton Heights Historic District and Extension, where much of the development during this period was controlled by restrictive covenants imposed by William H. De Forest in 1886,<sup>20</sup> Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill's growth followed models that had enjoyed success on the Upper East and West Sides, where builders divided their properties into twenty or twenty-five foot wide lots and built single-family houses in rows, some with kitchen, laundry, and stairway extensions at the rear. In front, they were set back from the sidewalk to accommodate a straight or box stoop above a raised basement. A ground floor entrance, which was convenient for deliveries, was located beneath the stoop. At the rear of this floor was the kitchen which opened to the garden. Front and back parlors were located on the first floor, with bedrooms and bathrooms above. Most rowhouses were built to the side lot line, sharing party walls with adjacent houses. This strategy saved space and lowered building costs so that the cost of a single unit in a large row was lower than that of a free-standing house with the same dimensions and materials. Most were constructed with load-bearing walls clad in various materials of contrasting color and texture, including brick in various shades, brownstone, limestone, and terra cotta. Many popular historical styles are represented, from neo-Grec and Queen Anne to Classical Revival.

Convent Avenue, which before 1884 abruptly ended at 145<sup>th</sup> Street, became an extremely desirable address in the early 1890s. From 140<sup>th</sup> Street north, it was entirely residential, lined with handsome private homes and churches, and later apartment buildings. Among these buildings are six Renaissance Revival-style rowhouses at 449-459 Convent Avenue (aka 424-430 West 150<sup>th</sup> Street), near the intersection of 150<sup>th</sup> Street. Designed by John E. Scharsmith in 1896-97, these four-story residences are linked by a continuous bracketed pressed-metal cornice embellished with dentils, rosettes, and festoons. The Convent Avenue elevations are fairly austere; aside from the molded limestone surrounds that frame the second-story fenestration, most of the decoration has a distinctly two-dimensional character, expressed in shallow bands of limestone or decorative brick.

On 150<sup>th</sup> Street, east of Convent Avenue, is 416-422 West 150<sup>th</sup> Street. Fred W. Moore designed these four Romanesque Revival-style rowhouses in 1898. Clad in light-colored brick and limestone, these three-story residences share many noteworthy details, including flared stone stoops, rock-faced stonework, and arched fenestration. The westernmost building, 422 West 150<sup>th</sup> Street, is the most simply treated, with a banded limestone base and molded window surrounds. These features were possibly chosen to compliment the

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<sup>19</sup> In August 1920, Lloyd purchased the Benziger House on Edgecombe Avenue to use as an annex to the hospital at 6-8 St. Nicholas Place. Much of his practice involved "nervous, mental, drug and alcohol" cases. He sold the building in 1927 and relocated his practice to the Riverdale section of the Bronx. *Medical Directory of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut* (Medical Society of New York, 1939-40), np.

<sup>20</sup> See LPC, *Hamilton Heights Historic District Extension*, 8-10.

adjoining side facade of 459 Convent Avenue (aka 424-430 West 150<sup>th</sup> Street).

By the mid-1890s, Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill had become one of Manhattan's finest residential neighborhoods. A mix of middle- to upper-middle class white professionals were the earliest residents, as well as recent immigrants from Italy, Ireland, and Germany. *The Real Estate Record and Guide* claimed that the area:

... for a considerable distance on both sides [was] being occupied by dwellings for the better classes of our citizens, well-to-do lawyers, doctors, merchants and brokers, and as it is being fast filled up it will in a short time compare favorably with any of the residential districts of any extent above 72<sup>nd</sup> Street.<sup>21</sup>

To serve community needs, several social organizations were founded, including the Washington Heights Taxpayers' Association, the Washington Heights Progressive Association, and the Heights Club. The latter group, a private men's club, was established in 1897. The clubhouse was located in a converted four-story Romanesque Revival-style residence at 721 St. Nicholas Avenue (aka 400 West 146<sup>th</sup> Street), designed by Hugh M. Reynolds in 1891. The club, which initially had more than one hundred members, celebrated its opening with an exhibition of paintings lent by the prominent collector Thomas B. Clark.<sup>22</sup>

#### *Apartment Houses, 1895-1909*

During the early 1890s, the New Croton Aqueduct was put into service, insuring future residents of northern Manhattan with an adequate fresh water supply. Plans for the New York City subway were approved by popular referendum in 1894 and construction commenced in March 1900. The Interborough Rapid Transit (IRT) system began at City Hall, proceeding north along Manhattan's east side to Grand Central Terminal and then west through Times Square and up Broadway. As originally planned, the IRT's northern terminus was located at 145<sup>th</sup> Street. Service began in October 1904 with a five cent fare and the promotional slogan "fifteen minutes to Harlem."<sup>23</sup> The 157<sup>th</sup> Street station opened in March 1906.

These civic improvements led to a dramatic increase in property values throughout the Manhattan's west side and in the district. Among the earliest apartment houses to be built in the neighborhood was the Plaza, designed by A.B. Ogden & Son in 1895.<sup>24</sup> Located on an irregular L-shaped lot at the southwest corner of St. Nicholas Avenue and 150<sup>th</sup> Street, the building is clad in light-colored brick, limestone, and terra cotta. The north facade has a handsome triple-bay frontispiece, extending from the fourth to sixth floors. It is richly

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<sup>21</sup> "An Addition to St. Nicholas Avenue," *The Real Estate Record and Guide*, February 2, 1895, supplement, n.p.

<sup>22</sup> The club's president was William Travers Jerome. See "New Club's Success" and "The Heights Club," *Harlem Local Reporter*, January 19, 1898, 1; March 9, 1898, 1.

<sup>23</sup> The actual trip to Sugar Hill took "less than a half hour." See Stan Fishler, *Uptown, Downtown: A Trip Through Time on New York's Subways* (Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1976), 41.

<sup>24</sup> The Plaza Hotel (McKim, Mead & White, a designated New York City Landmark) on Fifth Avenue, between 58<sup>th</sup> and 59<sup>th</sup> Streets, was built in 1889-90.

embellished; the lowest story has three arches supported by pairs of squat composite collonettes and the upper stories display paired composite pilasters and an elaborate entablature. The Plaza apartment house was commissioned by Annie Doyle, who previously worked with Odgen & Son on six Classical Revival-style row houses at 423-431 Convent Avenue (1893-95, part of the Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill Historic District).

Throughout the next decade, six- and seven-story apartment buildings were constructed throughout Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill. Most, like the Plaza, incorporated neo-classical-style details, reflecting the current popularity of the Beaux-Arts and City Beautiful movements. Typical of these buildings is Halcyon Hall at 408-414 West 150<sup>th</sup> Street. Designed by (Fred W.) Moore & (Frank) Landsiedel in 1900-1, this seven-story apartment building adjoins the Plaza and shares various complimentary materials and details.<sup>25</sup> The mostly brick facade has curved corner bays with windows and prominent terra-cotta quoins. Each floor of windows is decorated in a distinct manner. While some have arches or splayed lintels, others have rectangular lintels or bracketed crowns. These varied treatments give the facade a unusual rhythmic quality. At ground level is a columnar entrance portico, with free-standing granite ionic columns, shallow reliefs, and limestone pilasters. Atop each column is a globe set on a carved pedestal.

The Audubon Court, at 2-4 St. Nicholas Place, near 149<sup>th</sup> Street, was built in 1904-5. Hogenauer & Wesslau were the developers. The authors of *A History of Real Estate, Building and Architecture in New York* (1898) praised their work in Harlem, commenting that the "houses, flats, and apartments completed by this firm are of the best class, and no element of cheapness was allowed to enter into their construction."<sup>26</sup> This building was named for the artist and naturalist John James Audobon who lived in the vicinity and was a frequent guest of the Bradhurst family, whose mansion was located near the intersection of Convent Avenue and 148<sup>th</sup> Street. Designed by Henry Andersen, who contributed eight residential buildings to the Hamilton Heights Historic District and Extension, this six-story apartment house has a O-shaped floorplan and is clad in light-colored brick, limestone, and terra cotta. Early promotional materials emphasized the building's location, as well as the views from "Rear windows overlooking the Harlem River Valley and Colonial Park."<sup>27</sup> There were five apartments per floor, incorporating as many as five rooms. Telephone service was provided to all residents, as well as uniformed hall and elevator service.

At the southwest corner of Edgecombe Avenue and 150<sup>th</sup> Street is the Belvedere, one of the handsomest apartment houses in the area. It is located on a prominent 100 by 100 foot lot, overlooking Colonial (now Jackie Robinson) Park. While legislation to create the park became law in 1894, it was not until 1909, the year of the Belvedere's construction, that the 12.9 acre park was completed. Designed by John Hauser, a prolific architect in Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill area, the six-story building is clad with alternating red brick and limestone bands, terra-cotta reliefs, and a prominent denticulated metal cornice. The main entrance faces 150<sup>th</sup> Street, near St. Nicholas Avenue. Promotional materials emphasized the convenience of this location, claiming that

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<sup>25</sup> Moore & Landsiedel formed their partnership by 1900. Their offices were located at Willis Avenue and 148<sup>th</sup> Street. See Ward, 55.

<sup>26</sup> *A History of Real Estate, Building and Architecture in New York City* (New York: Record and Guide, 1898, reprint, 1967), 336. Other works by (A.) Hogenauer & (A. E.) Wesslau include 308-314 102<sup>nd</sup> Street.

<sup>27</sup> *Apartment Houses of the Metropolis* (New York: G.C. Hesselgren, 1908), 208.

"nowhere can more or better accommodations be found at such moderate prices."<sup>28</sup> There were only five units on each floor, with as many as eight rooms per apartment. The interiors were quite luxurious:

The rooms are exceptionally large and light and beautifully finished in selected hard woods and panel wainscoting and Dutch plate shelf in the dining rooms, and parquet floors with inlaid borders in the parlors, libraries, and dining rooms . . . The bathrooms have porcelain tubs, oval basins, tiled walls and floors, showers, mirror medicine cabinets . . . The kitchens have porcelain tubs and sinks, modern gas ranges, tiled lined refrigerators, sanitary garbage closets and large dressers.<sup>29</sup>

During this era the neighborhood's population rapidly increased. To serve the new residents, two public institutions were built on 145<sup>th</sup> Street, west of Amsterdam Avenue: the "Hamilton Grange" branch of the New York Public Library (McKim, Mead & White, 1905-6, a designated New York City Landmark) and Public School No. 186 (C. B. J. Snyder, 1901). Broadway became the main shopping corridor with numerous entertainment venues clustered nearby, especially in the vicinity of the new IRT subway station. These included B. S. Moss's neo-Renaissance style "Hamilton Theater" (Thomas Lamb, 1912-13, a designated New York City Landmark), a vaudeville house (and later movie theater) with a monumental terra-cotta facade, seating 1,800 persons at 146<sup>th</sup> Street, and the Bunny (now Nova) Theater, between 146<sup>th</sup> and 147<sup>th</sup> Streets. In 1912, the Manhattan Bathing Beach opened along the Hudson River at 149<sup>th</sup> Street.

#### *Sugar Hill since 1920*

The Independent Subway (IND) had a tremendous impact on the area. Approved by the Board of Transportation in 1924, the city-owned transit system included five new routes, with several lines beneath St. Nicholas Avenue. Excavations began the following year to create a multi-level express stop at 145<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>30</sup> Life along the avenue was significantly disrupted by construction, many residents and businesses relocated, two buildings collapsed, and a significant number of stoops were removed and replaced by ground-level entries. The 145<sup>th</sup> Street station was completed in 1930, and express service began two years later in September 1932.<sup>31</sup> Entrances were located on either side of St. Nicholas Avenue, at 145<sup>th</sup> and 147<sup>th</sup> Streets.

Various names given to the area -- Harlem Heights, lower Washington Heights and Hamilton Grange -- fell out of use during the 1920s and 1930s. The blocks surrounding the former Hamilton mansion, west of St. Nicholas Avenue and mainly between 140<sup>th</sup> and 145<sup>th</sup> Streets became known as Hamilton Heights, and the blocks to east and the north, Sugar Hill. According the *Encyclopedia of New York City*, "Sugar Hill" was in use

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<sup>28</sup> *The World's New York Apartment Houses* (New York: The World, 1910), 159.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> The ground-breaking for the municipal subway system took place on March 14, 1925 at the intersection of St. Nicholas Avenue and 123<sup>rd</sup> Street. Two thousand people attended the ceremony. Brian J. Cudahy, *Under the Sidewalks of New York* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1995), 93.

<sup>31</sup> D train service was inaugurated in 1940.

by 1919, a time when few, if any, blacks actually lived in the area.<sup>32</sup> For those inhabiting crowded tenements and rooming houses on the Harlem plain, the elevated residential area to the northwest took on a mythic character.<sup>33</sup> It was perceived as a place where life was "sweet," where residents enjoyed prosperous and comfortable lives. The phrase became part of American culture and in 1931 a musical comedy of the same name opened on Broadway. It represented Sugar Hill "to be the cream - or at least the café au lait - of the Harlem residential district."<sup>34</sup> In later years, "Duke" Ellington and Billy Strayhorn celebrated the neighborhood, in "Take the A Train," (1940) where lyrics urge listeners to ". . . take the A train . . . to go to Sugar Hill," and in "Sugar Hill Penthouse," the closing section of "Black, Brown and Beige."<sup>35</sup> This last piece, which Ellington debuted at Carnegie Hall in January 1944, told the history of the "American Negro" from slavery to modern times.<sup>36</sup>

For residents of central Harlem, the eastern crest of the hill, Edgecombe Avenue, was Sugar Hill's most visible and consequently, best-known street.<sup>37</sup> Overlooking Jackie Robinson Park, the street's uninterrupted west front from 145<sup>th</sup> to 150<sup>th</sup> Streets is lined with sturdy neo-classical style apartment buildings, most of which were built between 1905 and 1916. *The New York Amsterdam News*, a weekly newspaper aimed at black readers, featured advertisements during the 1920s for Sugar Hill buildings in which the neighborhood was promoted as "the Finest and Most Exclusive Section in Harlem."<sup>38</sup>

James Weldon Johnson, the noted black writer and educator, was one of the first authors to describe the

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<sup>32</sup> "Sugar Hill," *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 1141. According John Cohen and Mike Seeger, "Sugar Hill is often referred to in Negro songs as "the wild part of town." See *Old-Time String Band Songbook* (New York: Oak Publications, 1964, 1976), 193.

<sup>33</sup> For a discussion of Harlem's "lamentable" housing conditions during the 1910s, see "How the Colored Population Lives," *Real Estate Record and Guide*, December 18, 1915, 1020.

<sup>34</sup> "Reunion in Comedy," *New York Times*, December 26, 1931, 15.

<sup>35</sup> Strayhorn lived in the ground floor of a converted townhouse at 315 Convent Avenue, near 144<sup>th</sup> Street, from 1939 to 1946 (part of the Hamilton Heights Historic District). For complete lyrics to "Take the A Train," see *The New 1001 Jumbo Song Book* (New York: Charles Hanson Press, Inc., 1977), 424.

<sup>36</sup> James L. Collier, *Duke Ellington* (1987), 221-22, 218.

<sup>37</sup> Some writers have identified Sugar Hill's boundaries as extending as far south as Striver's Row, along 138<sup>th</sup> and 139<sup>th</sup> Streets, where the first sales to blacks were made in 1919-20, or to an apartment building at 580 St. Nicholas Avenue, below 140<sup>th</sup> Street. See LPC, *St. Nicholas Historic District Designation Report* (LP-322) (New York: City of New York, 1967), and David Levering Lewis, *When Harlem Was in Vogue* (New York: Vintage Books, 1982), 127. Other writers frequently include 555 Edgecombe Avenue, near 160<sup>th</sup> Street (aka the Roger Morris Apartments, a designated New York City Landmark), as well.

<sup>38</sup> *The New York Amsterdam News*, April 25, 1922, 15.

neighborhood's changed character. In *Black Manhattan* (1930) he observed:

At any rate, there is no longer any apparent feeling against the occupancy of Harlem by Negroes . . . It has spread to the west and occupies the heights of Coogan's Bluff overlooking Colonial Park. And to the east and west of this solid Negro area, there is a fringe where the population is mixed, white and coloured. This expansion over the past five years has taken place without any physical opposition, or even any considerable outbreak of antagonistic public sentiment.<sup>39</sup>

He speculated as to whether such demographic changes could be maintained in the future, writing that:

. . . the Negro's situation in Harlem is without precedent in all his history in New York City; never before has he been so securely anchored . . . never before has he had so well established a community life.<sup>40</sup>

With the neighborhood's white population in decline, many local churches were sold to black congregations. Notable examples include the Lenox Presbyterian Church, at 141<sup>st</sup> Street and St. Nicholas Avenue, transferred to St. James Presbyterian Church in 1927, and the Washington Heights Baptist Church, at 145<sup>th</sup> Street and Convent Avenue, which was renamed the Convent Avenue Baptist Church in 1942 (both are part of the Hamilton Heights Historic District). Reverend Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. hailed the area's transformation. In the *Post* in 1935 he wrote:

On Sugar Hill . . . Harlem's would-be "sassiety" goes to town. 'Midst paneled walls, parqueted floors, electric refrigeration, colored tile baths, luxurious lobbies, elevators and doormen resplendent in uniforms, they cavort and disport themselves in what is called the best of afay manner.<sup>41</sup>

St. Nicholas Avenue developed into a lively commercial thoroughfare during the 1930s. Retail stores and restaurants, as well as nightspots opened on the lower floors of various rowhouses and apartment buildings. The best-known venues were located between 148<sup>th</sup> and 149<sup>th</sup> Streets: Jimmy's (Jimmie's) Chicken Shack, a popular restaurant with jazz musicians located in the basement of 763 St. Nicholas Avenue and Luckey's Rendezvous (aka The Rendezvous Club), an intimate "piano joint" owned by the celebrated stride pianist and Sugar Hill resident Charles Luckeyth "Luckey" Roberts, at 773 St. Nicholas Avenue, near 149<sup>th</sup> Street.

Sugar Hill received considerable media attention during the late 1940s. According to *Ebony* magazine, the "tree-shaded blocks between Edgecombe and Amsterdam Avenues" were populated by "Harlem's most

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<sup>39</sup> James Weldon Johnson, *Black Manhattan* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1930), 158-59. For more about Johnson's career and background, see Steven Watson, *The Harlem Renaissance: Hub of American Culture, 1920-1930* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1995), 21-23, or *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, 624.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Jervis Anderson, *This Was Harlem, A Cultural Portrait, 1900-1950*, 342.

talked-about men and women in law, sports, civil liberties, music medicine, painting, business and literature."<sup>42</sup> Photo essays focused on the luxurious living conditions found at 409 Edgecombe Avenue and the racially integrated Cosmopolitan Tennis Club (Convent Avenue and 149<sup>th</sup> Street, demolished c. 1960).<sup>43</sup>

In a 1949 issue devoted to New York City, *Holiday* magazine published a vivid description of life and living conditions in Harlem. Ann Petry observed:

There is a moneyed class which lives largely in and around the section known as the Hill . . . There is no inherited wealth on the Hill. The leisure class is composed of the wives of successful doctors, lawyers, dentists, real-estate operators and business men. Their lives refute the picture of Harlem as a poverty-stricken community . . . The Hill suggests that Harlem is simply a pleasant and rather luxurious part of Manhattan.<sup>44</sup>

The article also devoted space to neighborhood critics, such as Dan Burley, the editor of the *New York Age*, who maintained, contrary to Petry's view, that many of the "folk on the Hill are so stony-broke that they can not afford the luxury of overnight guests."<sup>45</sup>

During the 1950s, Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill began to decline. *Jet* magazine reported in 1953 that the neighborhood had begun to experience "steady deterioration." Doormen and around-the-clock elevator operators had disappeared from the entrances of the better apartment buildings, and St. Nicholas Avenue had begun to fill with bars, saloons, and "third-rate diners."<sup>46</sup> It was during this period that Luckey's Rendezvous closed and many of the neighborhood's better-known black residents began to move away, seeking homes on Riverside Drive, or in St. Albans, Queens.

Whereas many neighborhoods in central Harlem suffered at the hands of insensitive landowners and urban renewal projects during the 1960s, Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill has retained much of its original historic fabric. In 1974 the Harlem Task Force, a subsidiary of the New York State Urban Development Corporation, commended the neighborhood's "stable residential pattern," particularly the houses along Convent Avenue, which it described as "amongst the best built and best preserved in all of New York City."<sup>47</sup> The report also paid considerable attention to the apartment houses on St. Nicholas and Edgecombe Avenues, noting their spacious size and modest rents. Despite such praise, the neighborhood was not without problems. Some

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<sup>42</sup> "Sugar Hill: All Harlem looks up to 'folks on the hill,'" *Ebony* (November 1946), 4.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.* During the 1920s, it was known as the Hamilton Grange Club. During the 1940s, it consisted of five courts. Members included Lester Granger, of the National Urban League, and Negro College Fund executive William J. Trent. Wimbledon and U.S. Open champion Althea Gibson trained here beginning in 1940.

<sup>44</sup> *Holiday*, (April 1949) 112, 16.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> "Has Sugar Hill Gone to the Dogs?," *Jet* (March 19, 1953), 12-15.

<sup>47</sup> *A Profile of Harlem: Findings of the Harlem Task Force* (The Harlem Urban Development Corporation, December 1973), 28-29.

observers were quick to point out its current difficulties and decline, while others took pride in recalling the neighborhood's celebrated past.<sup>48</sup>

Efforts to preserve the Hamilton Heights and Sugar Hill area began soon after the creation of the Landmarks Commission in 1965. The following year a public hearing was held regarding the creation of an historic district in Hamilton Heights, from 140<sup>th</sup> to 145<sup>th</sup> Streets. While no action was taken, several individual landmarks in the area were designated, including the Alexander Hamilton House in 1967, the Hamilton Grange branch of the New York Public Library in 1970, and the James A. and Ruth M. Bailey House in 1974. In November 1974 the Hamilton Heights Historic District was designated. The Landmarks Preservation Commission designated 409 and 555 Edgecombe Avenue in 1993, the Nicholas C. and Agnes Benziger House in 1999, and the (former) Hamilton Theater in 2000. In March 2000, the boundaries of the Hamilton Heights Historic District were expanded, adding 51 buildings, including 31 rowhouses, 17 apartment buildings, and 3 related (and contiguous) ecclesiastical structures to the district. The Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill Historic District was designated in June 2000. It includes 185 buildings, primarily long rows of well-preserved townhouses, as well as a fine group of apartment houses.

Initially built for the white middle class, the area achieved its greatest fame during the 1930s and 1940s when a large number of black professionals, active in law, business, medicine and the arts, took residence here. With unbroken rows of single-family houses and fine apartment buildings on its major thoroughfares, Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill has remained, for more than a century, one of New York City's most architecturally distinguished and culturally significant neighborhoods. Virtually unchanged since the First World War, these blocks of well-preserved dwellings recall, not only the neighborhood's architecture and physical origins, but also its vibrant cultural heyday.

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<sup>48</sup> See "Neighborhoods: Sugar Hill in Harlem, Once a Model of Sweet Life, Has Soured," *New York Times*, October 14, 1976.

**CONVENT AVENUE, 449 to 459 (East Side Between West 149<sup>th</sup> and West 150<sup>th</sup> Streets)**

*449, 451, 453, 455, 457 & 459 (aka 424 - 430 West 150<sup>th</sup> Street) CONVENT AVENUE  
Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 2064, Lots 149, 49, 48, 47, 46, & 45*

Date of Construction: 1896-97 (NB 1299-1896)

Architect: Jno. Scharsmith

Original Owner/Developer: Jno. Scharsmith

Type: Dwellings

Style/Ornament: Renaissance Revival

Stories: Four and basement

Materials: Brick and limestone



*History*

These six Renaissance Revival row houses were designed and built by Jno. Scharsmith in 1896-97 at a time when the area was being developed with attached houses. Distinguished by their decorative brickwork and limestone trim, these buildings remain remarkably intact.

### *Description*

**449 Convent Avenue:** Three bays; historic cast-iron fence at the areaway with non-historic wrought-iron gate; historic wrought-iron window at door grilles at the basement; limestone water table, painted; non-historic concrete stoop with historic wrought-iron railings; historic wood-and-glass door with paneled surround; non-historic aluminum awning; one-story, banded limestone base topped by molded crown; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash and wrought-iron window grilles at the first story; upper stories feature brick quoins, projecting window sills, molded surrounds, and coursed brickwork; historic, one-over-one wood sash with aluminum storm windows at the second, third, and fourth stories; pressed-metal roof cornice with brackets, dentils, rosettes, and festoons. South elevation: Brick, painted.

**451 Convent Avenue:** Two bays; similar to 449 Convent Avenue; non-historic concrete bulkhead and wrought-iron fence and gate at the areaway; non-historic window grilles at the basement; historic limestone stoop with historic wrought-iron railings; non-historic door; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash.

**453 Convent Avenue:** Two bays; similar to 449 Convent Avenue; non-historic door under the stoop; historic wrought-iron window grilles at the basement; historic limestone stoop with cast-iron railings; historic cast-iron fence at the areaway; non-historic door; non-historic lighting; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash.

**455 Convent Avenue:** Two bays; similar to 449 Convent Avenue; non-historic metal gate under the stoop; historic wrought-iron window grilles at the basement; historic limestone stoop with cast-iron railings; historic cast-iron fence at the areaway; non-historic door; non-historic lighting; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash.

**457 Convent Avenue:** Two bays; similar to 449 Convent Avenue; historic wrought-iron window grilles at the basement; historic limestone stoop with cast-iron railings; historic cast-iron fence at the areaway; non-historic door with historic paneled wood enframements; non-historic lighting; non-historic casements at the first story; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash at the second, third, and fourth stories.

**459 Convent Avenue (a/k/a 424 - 430 West 150<sup>th</sup> Street):** Convent Avenue facade: Three bays; similar to 449 Convent Avenue; non-historic metal fence enclosing the garden; historic wrought-iron window grilles at the basement; historic limestone stoop with cast-iron railings; non-historic door; non-historic lighting; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash. West 150<sup>th</sup> Street facade: One bay at the second story; two bays at the third story; three bays at the fourth story; similar to 449 Convent Avenue; non-historic metal fence enclosing the garden; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash. East elevation: Three bays; brick, repointed; non-historic brick stoop and entryway; non-historic lighting; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash.

### Significant References

*Real Estate Record & Guide* (Nov. 21, 1896).

**ST. NICHOLAS AVENUE, 795 to 797 (Southwest Corner of West 150<sup>th</sup> Street)**

***795 - 797 ST. NICHOLAS AVENUE***

*Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 2064, Lot 36*

Date of Construction: 1895 (1080-1895)

Architect: A.B. Ogden & Son

Original Owner/Developer: Annie C. Doyle

Type: Apartment house

Style/Ornament: Renaissance Revival

Stories: Seven and basement

Materials: Brick, limestone, and terra cotta



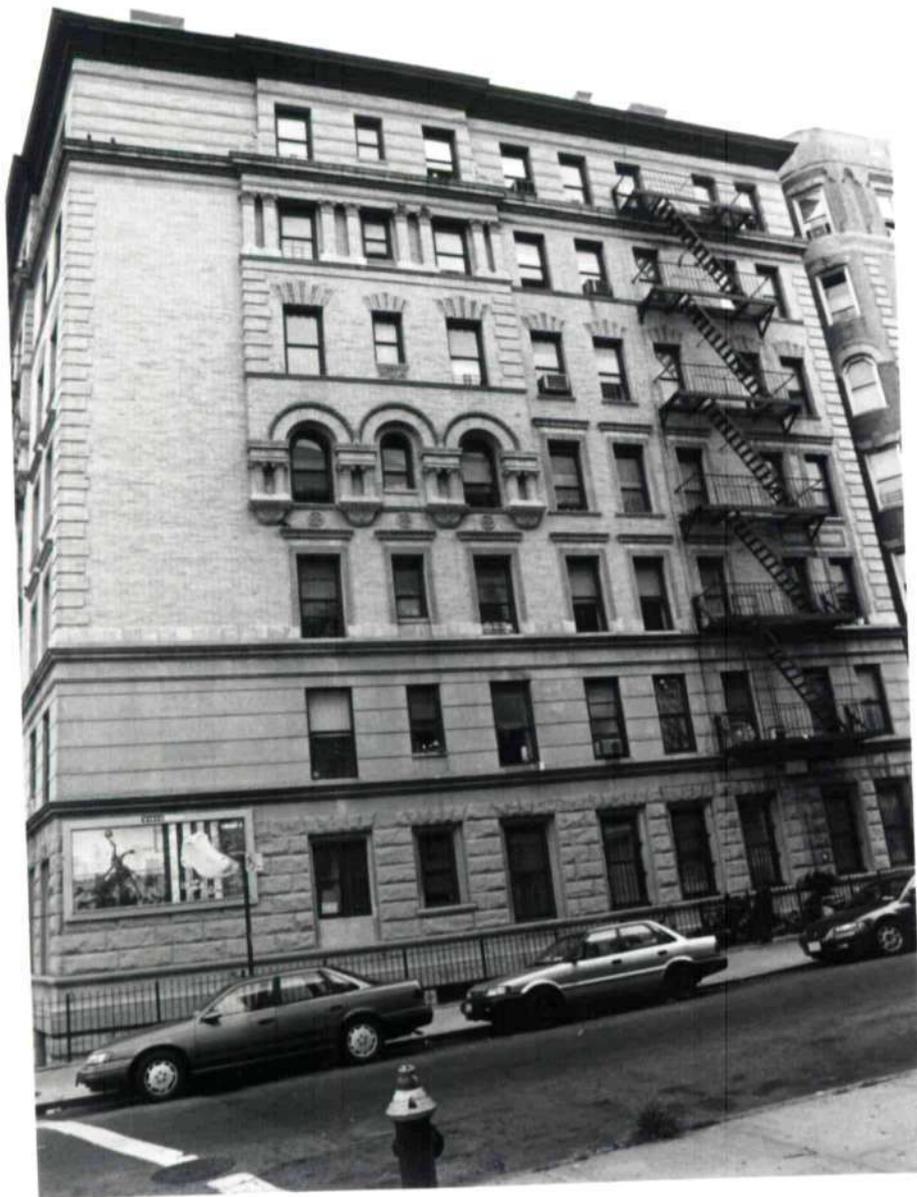
### *History*

This Renaissance Revival style apartment house, which has two fully-developed facades on St. Nicholas Avenue and West 150<sup>th</sup> Street, was designed by the architectural firm A.B. Ogden & Son, and built for Annie C. Doyle for \$140,000. Featuring a rock-faced limestone base, elaborate entryway, decorative brickwork, and terra-cotta ornamentation, the building remains remarkably intact.

### *Description*

St. Nicholas Avenue facade: Six bays; non-historic wrought-iron fence at the areaway; non-historic wrought-iron window grilles at the basement; historic limestone stoop with non-historic wrought-iron railings; two-story limestone base, rock faced at the first story and banded at the second story, surmounted by a molded crown with a carved frieze; three-bay arched portico featuring joined columns, foliated keystones, and carved panels; upper stories feature molded window surrounds, projecting sills, splayed lintels, quoins, and molded bands; the central bays at the fifth story feature arched fenestration with molded architraves flanked by paired, squat half columns with Ionic capitals and foliated bases; the sixth story is topped by a denticulated crown; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash; non-historic wrought-iron fire escape; pressed-metal roof cornice with dentils. West 150<sup>th</sup> Street facade: Eight bays; similar to the St. Nicholas Avenue facade; non-historic wrought-iron window grilles at the basement; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash; non-historic sign billboard attached at the first story; non-historic wrought-iron fire escape. South elevation: Brick and cement stucco; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash. West elevation: Brick; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash.





Significant References

*Real Estate Record & Guide* (June 1, 1895), 929.

**ST. NICHOLAS PLACE, 2 to 8 (East Side Between St. Nicholas Avenue and West 150<sup>th</sup> Street)**

**2 - 4 ST. NICHOLAS PLACE**

*Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 2053, Lot 111*

Date of Construction: 1904 (NB 255-1904)

Architect: Henry Andersen

Original Owner/Developer: Hogenauer & Wesslau

Type: Apartment house

Style/Ornament: Renaissance Revival

Stories: Six and basement

Materials: Brick, limestone, and terra-cotta



*History*

This Renaissance Revival apartment house, called Audubon Court, was designed by architect Henry Andersen, and built by Hogenauer & Wesslau in 1904 at a time when the area was rapidly developing with five- and six-story apartment houses. The building contained five apartments per floor, each containing four or five rooms. The building was equipped with long-distance telephone lines, a mail

chute, and uniformed hall and elevator service. The building, which is distinguished by its limestone base, columnar portico, and elaborate terra-cotta ornament, remains remarkably intact. Maceo A. Thomas, professor of physics, chemistry, and agriculture who founded the Department of Agriculture at Tuskegee University, lived here in the late 1920s, and E. Elliott Durant, the rector of St. Luke's Episcopal Church on West 141<sup>st</sup> Street, lived here in the early 1930s.

#### *Description*

Areaway enclosed by historic wrought-iron fence; ten bays; brick foundation with historic one-over-one wood sash; banded limestone base with molded crown; limestone stoop with historic wrought-iron railings and portico with Ionic columns, molded hood, "Audubon Court" inscribed on the frieze, and historic wrought-iron and glass doors and transom; non-historic lighting; second story features limestone banding and molded crown; upper stories feature terra-cotta banding, molded window surrounds, splayed lintels, and brick and terra-cotta panels; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash; historic wrought-iron fire escapes; pressed-metal roof cornice with scrolled brackets and paneled frieze. South elevation: Brick, repointed. North elevation: Brick, repointed.

#### Significant References

*Apartment Houses of the Metropolis* (New York: G.C. Hesselgren Publishing Co., 1908), 208.  
City of New York, Department of Buildings, Borough of Manhattan, *New Building Docket Books*.  
*Who's Who in Colored America* (1928-29), 361; (1930-32), 139.

*6 ST. NICHOLAS PLACE*

*Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 2053, Lot 106, in part*

Date of Construction: 1893-94 (NB 745-1893)

Architect: Theodore G. Stein

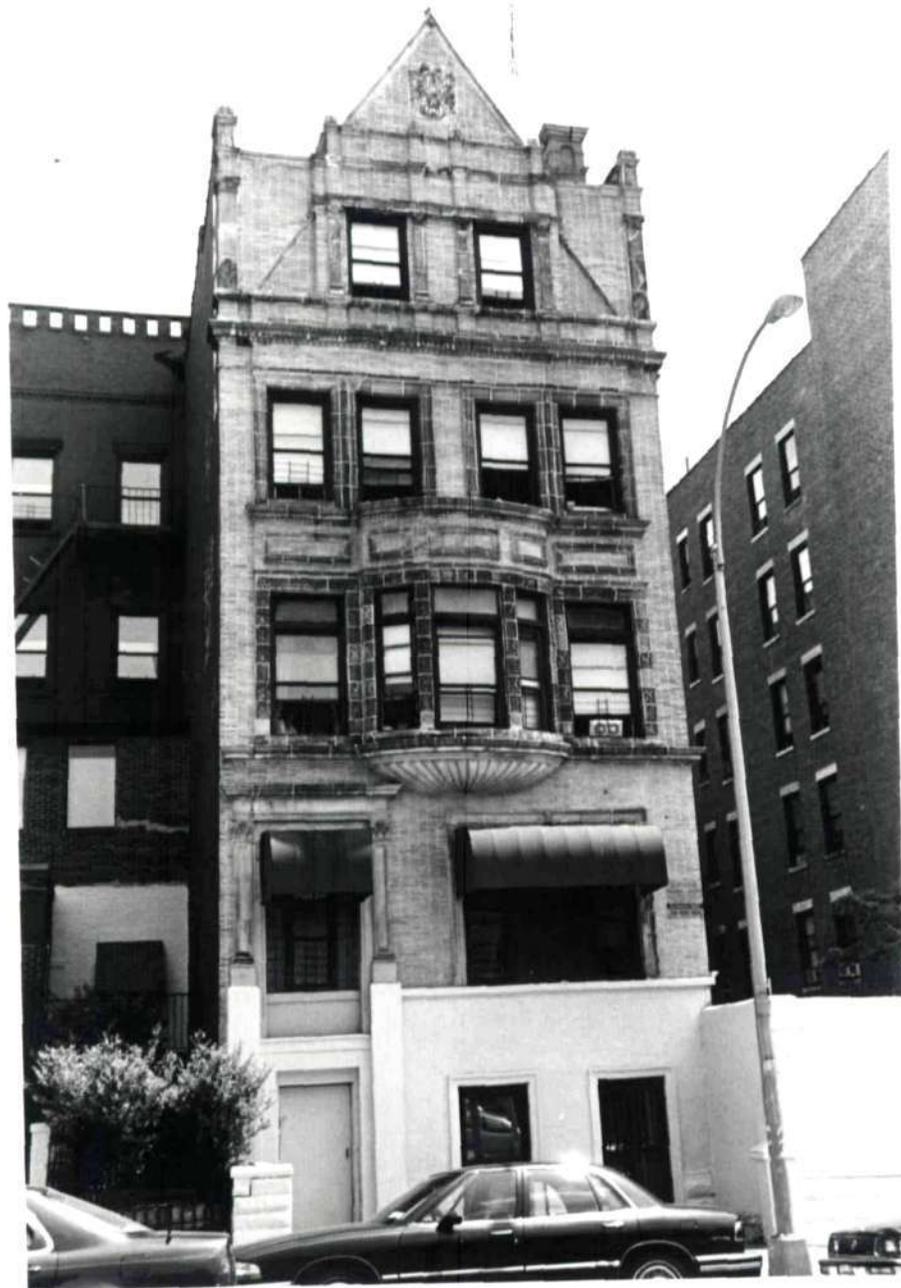
Original Owner/Developer: Jacob P. Baiter

Type: Dwelling

Style/Ornament: Romanesque Revival

Stories: Four and basement

Materials: Brick and terra-cotta



**8 ST. NICHOLAS PLACE**

*aka 404 West 150<sup>th</sup> Street*

*Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 2053, Lot 106, in part*

Date of Construction: 1885 (NB 677-1885)

Architect: Richard S. Rosenstock

Original Owner/Developer: John W. Fink

Type: Dwelling

Style/Ornament: Queen Anne

Stories: Two plus basement and attic

Materials: Brick and brownstone



*History*

No. 8 St. Nicholas Place was designed by architect Richard S. Rosenstock and built for John W. Fink in 1885, while No. 6 St. Nicholas Place was designed by architect Theodore G. Stein and constructed in 1893-94 for Jacob P. Baiter, at a time when many single-family dwellings were being built on this section of St. Nicholas Place by prominent New York families. Baiter was one of New York's major yeast suppliers. Baiter's mansion was joined to Fink's house in 1912 by Dr. Henry Lloyd to form Dr. Lloyds Sanitarium, a private hospital for maternities and surgery. Additional wings were constructed at

the rear of the original buildings in the mid-twentieth century. In the late 1920s, Dr. Lloyd relocated to the Bronx and the buildings became the Community Hospital. By the 1960s, the premises had become the Dawn Hotel. It is now a group home.

### *Description*

**6 St. Nicholas Place:** Three-bay, brick and brownstone basement facade, painted, with non-historic entryway (original stoop has been removed), molded window surrounds, rough-faced stone, and non-historic wrought-iron window grilles; two-bay first story with altered original entryway containing non-historic, one-over-one metal sash and molded terra-cotta surround and hood; grouped sash in the south bay with molded architrave; non-historic box awnings at the second story; second story features three-bay oriel with ornate base, flanking sash, and molded surrounds; paneled spandrels between the second and third stories; four-bay third story has molded architraves and denticulated crown; two-bay fourth story features prominent gable, projecting window sills, molded surrounds, and crown; gable contains foliated panel; chimney has elaborate cap; brickwork at the upper stories repointed. South elevation: Brick, paneled chimney flues, crown moldings, splayed lintels, and oval window; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash. North elevation: Brick, painted. Rear Wing (located behind 6 St. Nicholas Place): Three stories; painted brick; four bays; steel I-beam window lintels; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash; non-historic wrought-iron fire escape.

**Connective wing:** Brick; four stories and basement; projecting, non-historic main entryway with masonry steps, non-historic marquee, non-historic doors, and non-historic awnings; non-historic emergency exit at the third story; non-historic wrought-iron fire escape; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash; molded roof cornice and open, brick roof parapet.

**8 St. Nicholas Place:** Rock-faced brownstone ashlar basement and two-bay first story (painted); altered original entryway featuring splayed segmental lintel with carved keystone; first-story north bay contains projecting sill, molded hood, and non-historic box awnings; first-story topped by molded crown; two-bay second story features painted brownstone oriel with curved base and roof and paired sash in the south bays; original second-story crown removed and replaced with cement-stucco fascia; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash; roof features jerkin-headed gable, two-bay attic story, historic slate tiles, fluted chimney and terra-cotta finial; two-story, altered corner turret with mansard roof and historic slate tiles. South facade: Grouped first-story fenestration; curved-arch second-story fenestration; non-historic wrought-iron fire escape; hipped roof dormer. North facade: Three bays with chamfered northeast corner; rock-faced brownstone ashlar basement and first story; grouped fenestration; projecting chimney flue with carved panels, elaborate gable, and fluted stack (altered); curved window heads; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash; historic stained-glass transoms at the first story; molded crowns above the first and second stories; roof features jerkin-headed gable, paired attic-story sash, and historic slate tiles. East facade: Rock-faced basement and first story; one-and-a-half story rear wing; roof gable; similar in detailing to the north elevation. Rear Wing (located behind 8 St. Nicholas Place): Two stories; three bays; non-historic entryway; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash; non-historic wrought-iron window grilles at the first story.

**Landscaping:** Rock-faced brownstone and concrete block wall, painted, with non-historic metal gate, facing St. Nicholas Place south of No. 6; south side yard paved with concrete; historic rock-faced bulkheads with historic wrought-iron fencing flanked by paneled plinths in front of connective wing and No. 8.

Significant References

*Real Estate Record & Guide* (May 9, 1885), 551.

*Real Estate Record & Guide* (May 27, 1893), 850.

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, *Sugar Hill Historic District*, A Preliminary Report, 2001.

**WEST 150<sup>TH</sup> STREET, 400 to 404 (South Side between Edgecombe Avenue and St. Nicholas Place)**

***400 - 402 WEST 150<sup>TH</sup> STREET***

***aka 343 Edgecombe Avenue***

***Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 2053, Lot 101***

Date of Construction: 1909 (NB 66-1909)

Architect: John Hauser

Original Owner/Developer: Emanuel Doctor

Type: Apartment house

Style/Ornament: Beaux Arts

Stories: Six and basement

Materials: Brick, limestone, and terra cotta



### *History*

This Beaux Arts style apartment house, called the Belvedere, was designed by architect John Hauser, and constructed in 1909 for owner Emanuel Doctor for \$140,000, at a time when this section of Edgecombe Avenue was being developed with apartment buildings. Upon its completion, the building was touted for its proximity to transportation, Riverside Drive, and the historic Jumel Mansion. Each apartment contained between five and eight rooms with separate servants quarters, and were fully equipped and luxuriously appointed. Distinguished by its limestone base, splayed lintels, and prominent cornice, the building remains remarkably intact.

### *Description*

West 150<sup>th</sup> Street facade: Thirteen bays; historic wrought-iron fence at areaway; limestone base encompasses the basement and first-story facades; historic wrought-iron window grilles at the basement; projecting water table; first-story window sills in a continuous band; molded band above the first story; entryway featuring limestone steps, limestone sidewalls, and elaborate hood with scrolled brackets and central cartouche, and "The Belvedere" inscribed on the frieze; non-historic lighting; non-historic doors; non-historic marquee; second story features alternating brick and limestone bands, molded window surrounds, and molded crown; upper stories feature projecting window sills, splayed lintels, carved spandrels, festooned panels, and molded and bracketed bands; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash; bracketed, pressed-metal roof cornice. Edgecombe Avenue facade: Fourteen bays; similar detailing to the West 150<sup>th</sup> Street facade; historic wrought-iron window grilles at the basement; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash; historic wrought-iron fire escapes. South elevation: Brick, repointed; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash. West elevation: Brick, repointed; lot-line windows; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash; non-historic lighting.

### Significant References

*Real Estate Record & Guide* (Feb. 6, 1909), 240.

*The World's New York Apartment House Album* (New York: New York World, 1910), 159.

### **404 WEST 150<sup>TH</sup> STREET**

**aka 8 St. Nicholas Place**

*Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 2053, Lot 106, in part*

See: 8 St. Nicholas Place

**WEST 150<sup>TH</sup> STREET, 406 to 430 (South Side Between St. Nicholas Avenue and Convent Avenue)**

***408 - 414 WEST 150<sup>TH</sup> STREET***

*Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 2064, Lot 39*

Date of Construction: 1900-1901 (NB 1039-1900)

Architect: Moore & Landsiedel

Original Owner/Developer: Moore & Ashley

Type: Apartment house

Style/Ornament: Renaissance Revival

Stories: Seven and basement

Materials: Brick, limestone, and terra cotta



### *History*

This Renaissance Revival style apartment house was designed by the architectural firm Moore & Landsiedel and built for Moore & Ashley at a cost of \$100,000 in 1900-01, at a time when this area was being developed with row houses and apartment buildings. This building features a limestone base, columnar portico, and splayed lintels.

### *Description*

Ten bays plus curved corner bays; historic wrought-iron fence at the areaway; brick foundation; one-story, banded limestone first story with molded crown; projecting window sills and splayed lintels at the first story; central entryway featuring granite columns, painted, with Ionic capitals, fluted pilasters, and molded hood topped by carved pedestals with globes and historic wrought ironwork; non-historic door and lighting; upper stories feature terra-cotta quoins, projecting sills, splayed lintels, keyed surrounds, lunettes, arched windows at the fifth story, and bracketed crowns; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash; roof cornice removed and replaced by cement-stucco fascia. East elevation: Brick. West elevation: Brick, repointed.

### Significant References

*Real Estate Record & Guide* (Oct. 13, 1900), 469.

**416, 418, 420, & 422 WEST 150<sup>TH</sup> STREET**

*Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 2064, Lots 42, 142, 43, & 143*

Date of Construction: 1898 (NB 261-1898)

Architect: F.W. Moore

Original Owner/Developer: Moore & Ashley

Type: Dwellings

Style/Ornament: Romanesque Revival

Stories: Three and basement

Materials: Brick, brownstone, and limestone



### *History*

This group of four Romanesque Revival attached houses were designed by architect F.W. Moore and constructed for owners Moore & Ashley in 1898, at a time when this area was being developed with row houses and apartment buildings. Facade detailing varies from one house to another, but the row is unified by the consistent use of flared stoops, rock-faced stonework, intricately-carved ornament, arched fenestration, and prominent roof cornices. The westernmost building in the row features a projecting bay. The row remains largely intact.

### *Description*

**416 West 150<sup>th</sup> Street:** Two bays at the first story; three bays at the basement, second and third stories; historic brownstone bulkhead enclosing the areaway; rusticated brownstone basement and flared stoop, painted, with solid sidewalls and carved newel; non-historic wrought-iron gate at the stoop; historic wrought-iron gate under the stoop; historic wrought-iron window grilles at the basement; historic wood-and-glass double doors; non-historic lighting; rock-faced limestone ashlar first story with carved panels, molded crown, and arched fenestration and entryway with splayed surrounds; historic stained-glass transoms at the first-story windows; second story features window sills in a continuous band, and arched fenestration with rock-faced architraves, and prominent keystone in the central bay; third story has projecting window sills in a continuous band and paneled lintels with brackets; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash; bracketed, pressed-metal roof cornice with festooned frieze.

**418 West 150<sup>th</sup> Street:** Three bays at the basement, first, and second stories; two bays at the third story; historic brownstone bulkhead enclosing the areaway; rusticated brownstone basement and flared stoop, painted, with solid sidewalls and carved newel; non-historic wrought-iron gate at the stoop; historic wrought-iron gate under the stoop; historic wrought-iron window grilles at the basement; historic wood-and-glass double doors; non-historic lighting; rock-faced limestone ashlar first story with carved panels, molded crown, and arched fenestration and entryway with splayed surrounds; second story features window sills in a continuous band, and arched fenestration with rock-faced architraves, and prominent keystone in the central bay; third story has projecting window sills in a continuous band and paneled lintels with brackets; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash; bracketed, pressed-metal roof cornice with festooned frieze.

**420 West 150<sup>th</sup> Street:** Three bays; rusticated brownstone basement and flared stoop with solid sidewalls and carved newel; historic brownstone bulkhead enclosing the areaway; rusticated brownstone basement and flared stoop with solid sidewalls and carved newel; non-historic wrought-iron gate at the stoop; historic wrought-iron gate under the stoop; historic wrought-iron window grilles at the basement; historic wood-and-glass double doors; non-historic lighting; rock-faced limestone ashlar first story with carved panels, molded crown, and arched fenestration and entryway with splayed surrounds; second story features window sills in a continuous band, and arched fenestration with rock-faced architraves, and prominent keystone in the central bay; third story has projecting window sills in a continuous band and paneled lintels with brackets; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash; bracketed, pressed-metal roof cornice with festooned frieze.

**422 West 150<sup>th</sup> Street:** Two bays, including projecting end bay; historic brownstone bulkhead enclosing the areaway; rusticated brownstone basement and flared stoop with solid sidewalls and carved newel; non-historic wrought-iron gate at the stoop; historic wrought-iron gate under the stoop; non-historic wrought-iron window grilles at the basement; historic wood-and-glass double doors with

non-historic wrought-iron storm doors; non-historic lighting; rock-faced limestone ashlar first story with carved panels, molded crown, and arched fenestration and entryway with splayed surrounds; second story features window sills in a continuous band, and arched fenestration with rock-faced architraves, and prominent keystone in the central bay; third story has projecting window sills in a continuous band and paneled lintels with brackets; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash; bracketed, pressed-metal roof cornice with festooned frieze. West elevation: Brick, repointed, and cement stucco; non-historic, one-over-one metal sash with non-historic wrought-iron grilles.

Significant References

*Real Estate Record & Guide* (March 26, 1898).

**424 - 430 WEST 150<sup>TH</sup> STREET**

**aka 459 Convent Avenue**

*Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 2064, Lot 45*

See: 459 Convent Avenue

## ARCHITECTS' APPENDIX

### **HENRY ANDERSEN** (dates undetermined)

2-4 *Saint Nicholas Place* (1904) ..... 20

Henry Andersen was a prolific New York City architect. During his early career Andersen was the head draftsman for Simon I. Schwartz (see Schwartz & Gross), but by 1882 he had established his own practice. He was particularly active in the 1890s and 1900s, and his work in Harlem with developers Hogenauer & Wesslau was favorably recognized in at least one architectural publication of the period. Andersen's work, mostly residential, is represented in the Upper West Side/ Central Park West Historic District by several neo-Renaissance style rowhouses, flats, and tenement buildings. An example of his commercial work can be found at 143-147 Franklin Street in the Tribeca West Historic District, a warehouse characteristic of the Renaissance Revival style, including banding and an oversized window treatment. In the Carnegie Hill Historic District he designed a row of six Renaissance Revival one-family houses.

Andersen designed a number of residences in the Hamilton Heights/ Sugar Hill area. In the Hamilton Heights Historic District, he was responsible for eight neo-Renaissance style structures on West 143<sup>rd</sup> Street (1895) and a row of four brick houses on Hamilton Terrace (1897-98). In the Hamilton Heights Historic District Extension, he designed two attached brick apartment buildings on Amsterdam Avenue (1897). And his work is represented in the Hamilton Heights/ Sugar Hill Northeast Historic District by the apartment building located at 393 Edgecombe Avenue.

The Hamilton Heights/ Sugar Hill Historic District Extension contains one of Andersen's apartment building designs, a brick and terra-cotta structure with elaborate terra-cotta trim and the original decorative grated fire escapes.

Dennis Steadman Francis, *Architects in Practice in New York City, 1840-1900* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1979), 11.

James Ward, *Architects in Practice in New York City, 1900-1940* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1989), 3.

Landmarks Preservation Commission Research Files.

Landmarks Preservation Commission, "Architects' Appendix," *Tribeca West Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1713), (New York: City of New York, 1991); "Architects; Appendix," *Upper West Side/ Central Park West Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1647), (New York: City of New York, 1990); "Architects' Appendix," *Expanded Carnegie Hill District Designation Report* (LP-1834), (New York: City of New York, 1993); "Architects' Appendix," *Hamilton Heights Historic District Extension* (LP-2004), (New York: City of New York, 2000).

### **JOHN HAUSER** (dates undetermined)

400-402 *West 150th Street* (1909) ..... 26

John Hauser is listed in New York City directories from 1892- 1922 as a specialist in private houses and flats. Like many of his contemporaries, he designed in a variety of revival styles. The Hamilton Heights/ Sugar Hill Historic District includes twelve Romanesque Revival style rowhouses, a Renaissance Revival and two Northern Renaissance Revival style apartment houses. Other rowhouses and apartment buildings by Hauser are location in the Morris Avenue and Hamilton Heights Historic Districts.

Dennis Steadman Francis, *Architects in Practice in New York City, 1840-1900* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1979), 38.

Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Morris Avenue Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1932), (New York: City of New York, 1986); "Architects' Appendix," *Hamilton Heights/ Sugar Hill Historic District Designation Report* (LP-2064), (New York: City of New York, 2000).

James Ward, *Architects in Practice in New York City, 1900-1940* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1989), 33.

**MOORE & LANDSIEDEL**

Fred W. Moore (dates undetermined)  
 Frank L. Landsiedel (dates undetermined)

408 - 414 West 150<sup>th</sup> Street (1900-1901) ..... 28

Frank L. Lansiedel was associated with Warren C. Dickerson in 1899, but by 1900 he had formed a partnership with Fred W. Moore, a partnership that existed until 1930. Moore & Lansiedel were active in the Bronx and along the west side of Manhattan. Their work includes two Romanesque Revival style buildings in the Greenwich Village Historic District, rowhouse modifications in the Tribeca West Historic District, and a store and loft building in the Ladies' Mile Historic District.

In the Hamilton Heights/ Sugar Hill Historic District Extension., the firm designed an apartment building in the Renaissance Revival style.

Dennis Steadman Francis, *Architects in Practice in New York City, 1840-1900* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1979), 49, 56.

Landmarks Preservation Commission, "Architects' Appendix," *Greenwich Village Historic District Designation Report* (LP-0489), (New York: City of New York, 1969); "Architects' Appendix," *Ladies' Mile Historic District Designation Report* (LP- 1609), (New York: City of New York, 1989); "Architects' Appendix," *Tribeca West Historic District Designation Report* (LP- 1713), (New York: City of New York, 1991).

James Ward, *Architects in Practice in New York City, 1900-1940* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1989), 55.

**F.W. MOORE** (dates undetermined)

416, 418, 420 & 422 West 150<sup>th</sup> Street (1898) ..... 30

There is little information available about the career of Fred W. Moore prior to his partnership with Frank L. Lansiedel in 1900. He is listed in city directories as a builder from 1896 through 1899, and it was during this time that he designed the group of Romanesque Revival attached houses at 416-422 West 150<sup>th</sup> Street in the Hamilton Heights/ Sugar Hill Historic District Extension.

*Trow's New York City Directory* (New York, 1896, 1897, 1989, 1899).

**A.B. OGDEN & SON**

795- 797 St. Nicholas Place (1895) ..... 17

Alfred B. Ogden established an independent architectural practice in New York City in 1874. In 1885, he invited his son, Samuel B. Ogden, to join his firm and changed the name to A.B. Ogden & Son. The father and son team specialized in rowhouse, apartment, and industrial design, and their work can be found in the Greenwich Village, Expanded Carnegie Hill, Upper West Side/ Central Park West, and Hamilton Heights/ Sugar Hill Historic Districts. In the Hamilton Heights/ Sugar Hill Extension, they designed a Renaissance Revival style apartment building, distinguished by an elaborate entryway and decorative brickwork.

Dennis Steadman Francis, *Architects in Practice in New York City, 1840-1900* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1979), 58.

Landmarks Preservation Commission, "Architects' Appendix," *Ladies' Mile Historic District Designation Report* (LP- 1609), (New York: City of New York, 1989); "Architects' Appendix," *Upper West Side/ Central Park West Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1647), (New York: City of New York, 1990); "Architects' Appendix," *Expanded Carnegie Hill Historic District Designation Report* (LP- 1834), (New York: City of New York, 1993), 321; "Architects' Appendix," *Hamilton Heights/ Sugar Hill Historic District Designation Report* (LP-2064), (New York: City of New York, 2000).

**RICHARD ROSENSTOCK (? - 1889)**

8 St. Nicholas Place, aka 404 West 150<sup>th</sup> Street (1885) ..... 23

Little is known about the life of Richard Rosenstock, but he is listed as a practicing architect in Manhattan from 1881-1887. In the Hamilton Heights/ Sugar Hill Historic District Extension, Rosenstock designed a Queen Anne style sandstone and brick free-standing house that was subsequently connected to the adjacent building at 6 St. Nicholas Place.

Dennis Steadman Francis, *Architects in Practice in New York City, 1840-1900* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1979), 66.

*Trow's New York City Directory* (New York, 1880-1889).

**JOHN E. SCHARSMITH (dates undetermined)**

449, 451, 453, 457 & 459 Convent Avenue (1896- 1897) ..... 15

John E. Shcarsmith was established as an architect in New York City in 1889, at which time his name was spelled Schaarschmidt. In 1893, he worked with Arthur M. Thom and James W. Wilson in the firm of Thom, Wilson, & Schaarschmidt. While this liaison was brief, lasting approximately one year, it yielded the design for the new Criminal Courts Building (replaced in 1939 by the present Criminal Courts and Prison building, "The Tombs"). In 1906, Scharsmith's name was listed in directories with its anglicized spelling, and he was intermittently listed as an architect until 1930.

At the turn of the century, his specialty was listed as residences. Examples of his residential work

include the Northern Renaissance style Swiss Home, a dormitory in the Upper West Side/ Central Park West Historic District, and the Chatsworth Apartments at 240 and 244 West 72<sup>nd</sup> Street (a designated landmark). Scharsmith designed six Renaissance Revival rowhouses in the Hamilton Heights/ Sugar Hill Historic District Extension, which are distinguished by their decorative brickwork and limestone trim.

Dennis Steadman Francis, *Architects in Practice in New York City, 1840-1900* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1979), 67, 74.

Landmarks Preservation Commission, "Architects' Appendix," *The Chatsworth Apartments and Annex Designation Report* (LP- 2506), (New York: City of New York, 1984); "Architects' Appendix," *Upper West Side/ Central Park West Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1647), (New York: City of New York, 1990).

James Ward, *Architects in Practice in New York City, 1900-1940* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1989), 68.

### **THEODORE G. STEIN** (dates undetermined)

*6 St. Nicholas Place (1885)* ..... 22

Theodore G. Stein is listed as a practicing architect in Manhattan from 1885 to 1898. In 1898, he formed the short-lived firm of Stein, Cohen & Roth under some rather unusual circumstances. A very young Emery Roth purchased Stein and Cohen's practice in 1898 for \$1000, with the condition that Roth's new practice would continue to carry the names of Stein and Cohen for at least one year. Roth did this in an effort to capitalize on their established names. The firm of Stein, Cohen & Roth is attributed with the design of the Irving Place Theater (1899-1900), the Saxony Apartments at 250 West 82<sup>nd</sup> Street (1901), and a row of neo-Renaissance tenements at 202-230 West 140<sup>th</sup> Street. The partnership dissolved in 1905, and Stein returned to private practice during the period 1908-1910.

Little information is available regarding the work of Stein prior to his partnership with Cohen and Roth. 6 St. Nicholas place is an example of his earliest work, a single family dwelling in the Romanesque Revival style using brick and terra-cotta materials.

Dennis Steadman Francis, *Architects in Practice in New York City, 1840- 1900* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1979), 72.

Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Hotel Belleclaire Designation Report* (LP- 1507), (New York: City of New York, 1987); "Architects' Appendix," *Upper West Side/ Central Park West Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1647), (New York: City of New York, 1990); "Architects' Appendix," *Tribeca West Historic District Designation Report* (LP- 1713), (New York: City of New York, 1991).

James Ward, *Architects in Practice in New York City, 1900-1940* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1989), 74.

## FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this area, the Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill Historic District Extension contains buildings and other improvements which have a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value and which represent one or 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 special qualities the Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill Historic District Extension contains a rich collection of free-standing houses, rowhouses, and apartment buildings dating from 1885 to 1909 when this part of the city developed its present residential character; that mostly speculative developers commissioned leading architects to design and construct these structures in various fashionable styles inspired by Queen Anne, French and Italian Renaissance, and other European sources; that these dwellings were designed by such residential specialists as Theodore G. Stein, A.B. Ogden & Son, and John Hauser; that the neighborhood achieved its greatest fame during the 1930s and 1940s when a significant group of black professionals, active in law, business, literature, music and art, lived here; and that the intact streetscapes and relationships between the building materials, styles, and architectural elements, both in the single-family dwellings and apartment buildings, provide the Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill Historic District Extension with a special sense of place.

Accordingly, pursuant to Chapter 21 (formerly Chapter 63) of the Charter of the City of New York, and Chapter 8-A of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as an historic district, the Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill Historic District Extension, Borough of Manhattan, consists of the properties bounded by a line beginning at a point at the intersection of the west curbline of Edgecombe Avenue and the southern curbline of West 150<sup>th</sup> Street, then extending westerly along the southern curbline of West 150<sup>th</sup> Street across St. Nicholas Place and St. Nicholas Avenue to the eastern curbline of Convent Avenue, southerly along said curbline, easterly along the southern property lines of 449 Convent Avenue, 418, 416, and 408-414 West 150<sup>th</sup> Street, and 795-797 St. Nicholas Avenue, northerly along the western property lines of 791 and 793 St. Nicholas Avenue, easterly along the northern property line of 793 St. Nicholas Avenue to the eastern curbline of St. Nicholas Avenue, southerly along said curbline to a point formed by the intersection of a line extending southerly from the eastern curbline of St. Nicholas Avenue and a line extending easterly from the southern curbline of West 149<sup>th</sup> Street, easterly to the eastern curbline of St. Nicholas Place, northerly along said curbline, easterly along the southern property line of 2-4 St. Nicholas Place, northerly along the eastern property lines of 2-4 and 6-8 St. Nicholas Place, easterly along the southern property line of 400-402 Edgecombe Avenue (a/k/a 343 Edgecombe Avenue) to the western curbline of Edgecombe Avenue, then extending northerly along said curbline to the point of the beginning.

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