

Landmarks Preservation Commission
August 1, 1989; Designation List 219
LP-1670

FIRST BATTERY ARMORY (Later the 102nd Medical Battalion Armory),
56 West 66th Street, Borough of Manhattan. Built 1900-1903;
architect, Horgan & Slattery.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1118, Lot 52.

On July 12, 1988, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the the 102nd Medical Battalion Armory and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 8). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Seventeen witnesses, including representatives of the owner, spoke in favor of designation and one took no position.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Summary

Built in 1900-1903, the First Battery Armory (later the 102nd Medical Battalion Armory) was one of the few remaining examples of an American building type largely developed in New York City. It was the seventh of ten armories built by the New York City Armory Board as part of a general campaign to control rioting workers in industrial cities. The armory was designed by the firm of Horgan & Slattery when it held a virtual monopoly on city architectural and construction work gained through a relationship with the Tammany administration of Mayor Robert Van Wyck. The First Battery, a mounted field artillery unit established in 1867, was a well-regarded volunteer unit of the National Guard of the State of New York. Primarily German-American in its membership, it had its own distinctive traditions that extended to its uniforms and its armory. When the leadership of the First Battery changed in 1907 from Louis Wendel to Major John F. O'Ryan, a leader in the reform of the National Guard, the changes represented the transformation of the National Guard in that era from a group largely concerned with social affairs to a professional military organization and from an urban police force to an adjunct of the army. Like most New York City armories, six of which are designated New York City landmarks,¹ the First Battery Armory consists of a headhouse of conventional construction and a rear drillroom with a large interior space created by steel trusses; a symmetrical composition of the headhouse with a central tower and end pavilions; and ornamentation derived largely from medieval sources. The facade of the First Battery Armory is a lively, brightly colored composition of turrets, crenelations, sally ports, machicolations, and other castle-like features, some of which are

functional and others purely decorative. From 1913 to about 1973 the Armory was occupied by the 102nd Medical Battalion and its predecessors. And since 1976 it has been used as a television studio by Capital Cities/ABC.

The National Guard and the First Battery

The First Battery Armory was built for a unit of the National Guard of the State of New York (N.G.S.N.Y.), long the largest and most active state militia in the country. In order to maintain state power against that of the federal government, the states were first required under the 1792 "militia law", to form militia units; all able-bodied men were ordered to serve. Officers were elected by the men of their units and the units governed themselves, setting their own widely varying standards of military training.

The citizen militia provided a large portion of the fighting forces in all of America's wars through the 19th century. But beginning with the Civil War (during which it came to be called the National Guard), the standing army grew and the readiness of the militia for modern warfare was called into question. The composition of American society was changing with immigration and industrialization, which in turn affected the role of the National Guard. Particularly after the riots associated with the nationwide railroad strike in 1877, the National Guard was redirected toward the control of urban rioters.

In 1900 when plans were filed for its armory, the First Battery was a small militia unit of 106 men within the First Brigade of the N.G.S.N.Y. A battery of the National Guard was traditionally a "mobile administrative and fighting unit of four guns" which accompanied larger regiments of infantry or cavalry in military or police actions. One battery, a signal corps, and several field regiments, each stationed in separate quarters, were under the command of a single brigade commander.²

Although legally a military unit, the 19th-century National Guard was in large part also a social organization. In fact its major activities were athletic events, dances, parties, picnics, and entertainments of all kinds. Some, like the Seventh Regiment, drew members from the social elite, while others drew from ethnic groups. The First Battery was primarily a German-American ethnic unit with its own distinctive uniforms and traditions. In any case, efforts were made to recruit solid middle class men who would have an interest in the protection of property.

The First Battery was established in April 1867 as Battery K of the First Regiment of Artillery under the leadership of John Heubner and was taken over later that year by Augustus Hoelzle, a

lawyer. In 1869 the First Regiment of Artillery was discontinued but Battery K continued on its own. Battery K had been called to duty during the riots of 1877 and performed well, but was said to be poorly organized when, on December 17, 1881, it was renamed the First Battery.³

The following year, Louis Wendel, who had recently joined, was elected to succeed Hoelzle as Captain. Under Wendel the First Battery flourished: it was known in the National Guard for outperforming regular army soldiers in practice drills and marches and for knowing how to operate the most up-to-date equipment. In 1895 the First Battery served in putting down the Brooklyn motormen's strike and at the outbreak of the Spanish American War the officers and 71 men joined up, serving in the Fifth Battalion, New York Volunteers, a reserve unit.

Captain Louis Wendel was a colorful figure, more typical of 19th-century ward politicians in his personality and methods than of a professional military leader. Nevertheless he was recognized for having built the First Battery into a highly regarded military unit and held tight control over it for 25 years. Like many ward politicians he based his power on contacts made in neighborhood saloons and on his ability to help others above and below him. A saloon owner and operator of hotels, picnic grounds, and places of amusement, including Wendel's Assembly Rooms, he was a friend of Democratic party machine politicians and served one term on the Board of Aldermen.⁴

Captain Wendel was removed from office on May 10, 1907, for bribery, graft, and grand larceny, and was succeeded by Major John F. O'Ryan of the Second Battery, who reorganized the unit. In Wendel's court martial "the conditions in the First Battery were shown to be about as bad as ever existed in a National Guard unit."⁵ O'Ryan's appointment by National Guard superiors was initially resisted by the members of the First Battery who had always chosen their own leaders. O'Ryan was a leading figure in the reform of the National Guard in New York State and at the federal level.

Major O'Ryan, who was Captain of the First Battery from May 10, 1907, until the First Battery moved in 1913, was a West Point graduate who became Chief Engineer of the City of New York and later the Major General of all the New York forces of the National Guard. He was a successful commander of National Guard forces in Mexico during the campaign against Pancho Villa and in France during World War I, and a writer on military topics with a particular interest in reform and federalization of the National Guard. Such was the controversy over National Guard reform that O'Ryan was fired by Governor Dix and reinstated a few days later by Governor Sulzer in his first act as governor.⁶

During its years in the First Battery Armory (1903-1913) the

First Battery was never called to active duty. It held regular meetings in the Armory and additional training at a farm in North Salem, Westchester County and it participated in a large U.S. Army maneuver at Manassas, Virginia in 1909.

First Battery Armory: Background

For its first 36 years, from 1867 to 1903, the First Battery occupied rented and shared quarters. By 1884 it was in a building managed by Louis Wendel, the unit's captain, that included Wendel's Assembly Rooms and a saloon at 334-346 West 44th Street. In that year Wendel first requested a permanent armory from the Armory Board, but it was not until March 31, 1896, that the Armory Board took the first step, the selection of a site, an action taken after a general survey of possible sites for new armories.⁷ In the meantime, until the new armory was finished, the First Battery remained in Wendel's Assembly Rooms.

The firm of Horgan & Slattery was chosen as the architect by the Armory Board on November 10, 1899. In addition to the wider controversy over the firm's position with the city (see below), within the Armory Board itself the choice was contentious. The three members representing the city (Mayor Robert A. Van Wyck and two of his appointed commissioners) chose Horgan & Slattery unanimously over the two votes of the representatives of the National Guard. One of the latter, Brigadier General McCoskry Butt was most involved: "When the question of preparing plans first came up General Butt wanted the Board to select the firm of architects but the mayor objected, saying that that was the business of Commissioner Kearny. Mr. Kearny selected Horgan & Slattery. General Butt objected to the first draft of the plans and as a member of a committee with Commissioner Kearny, he revised them." As commander of the First Brigade, Butt's contribution to the plans included modifying them to include his headquarters, a function they never served as Butt left the National Guard before the building was finished and his successor established his headquarters at the 71st Regiment Armory.⁸

Plans for the First Battery Armory were accepted by the Armory Board February 16, 1900, filed with the Department of Buildings October 19, 1900, and on February 27, 1901, contracts were awarded for construction. The principal contract for construction went to the low bidder, Luke A. Burke, for \$170,911. Construction began May 23, 1901, and work was completed May 28, 1903. The total cost of the armory was \$319,654.07. It was officially opened on February 3, 1904.⁹

The First Battery Armory was the first building on its site, seven standard city lots (25 by 100) in the middle of its block. The entire block had been part of the 18th-century farm of John Somarindyck and was subdivided into city lots for sale beginning

in 1852. By the time the Armory was built, its block was typical of the neighborhood, being over half built up, primarily with five-story brick rowhouses. Across the street the St. Nicholas Arena, the city's first indoor ice-skating rink, was built in 1896 (demolished 1986). The neighborhood had begun to develop as a desirable residential area following the extension of the Ninth Avenue Elevated Railroad to the Upper West Side in 1880.

Horgan & Slattery, Architects¹⁰

The firm of Horgan & Slattery was established in 1889 and dissolved in 1910 around the time that Horgan died. Like many others in the period before architectural licensing laws, widespread institutional training of architects, or the establishment of standard professional practices, Horgan and Slattery were both builders and architects, the building business serving both as a good background for architectural practice and as a safer occupation during lean times. The city directories suggest the vicissitudes of their practice: listed as builders from 1889-1891 and architects from 1892-1895, they were not listed at all in 1896, then again as builders in 1897-1898; after 1898 they were always listed as architects. On at least one occasion they apparently worked as both developers and builders on their own architectural project.¹¹

Horgan & Slattery received an unusual amount of attention in the press, much of it negative. The firm had serious financial trouble in 1894 and 1899, and then suddenly achieved great prosperity and notoriety through its relationship with the administration of Mayor Robert Van Wyck. Referred to politely as the City Architects (there was no such official position at the time), but more commonly as the Tammany architects, following the rehabilitation of the interior of the Democratic Club in 1897, the firm did virtually everything for the Board of Health, the Department of Corrections, the Charities Department, and the Tax Department under Mayor Van Wyck including landscape gardening, numerous recreation piers, interior work at the Tombs, numerous fire stations, completion of the Hall of Records, Harlem Hospital, the Sanitarium at Sailors' Snug Harbor, a major addition to the 14th Regiment Armory in Brooklyn, the First Battery Armory, and even city barges, mud scows, and the overhauling of machinery on city-owned boats.¹²

Apart from the controversy over its position and despite the criticism made of the abilities of the architects, the firm's work was reviewed favorably on numerous occasions in the architectural press.¹³ Like most architectural designs published in prominent architectural journals of the day, those of Horgan & Slattery generally combined classical vocabularies and Beaux-Arts principles of composition and planning. In addition, the firm was skilled in handling specialized technical matters that

included plumbing and a concern for sanitation. Among their better known works not built for the city are the Fiss, Doerr, and Carroll Horse Company Buildings, the Abattoir of the New York Butchers Dressed Meat Company, The Scarboro Mansions on West 57th Street, 918 West End Avenue, several houses on West 71st Street (No. 322-326 and 329-343), and single houses at 205 West 77th Street, 140 Summit Place (The Bronx), and 3079 Kingsbridge Terrace (The Bronx).

Arthur J. Horgan (1868-1911) came from a family active in the building business. He apprenticed for five years in the architectural office of his godfather, Colonel Arthur Crooks, a prolific and well regarded designer of churches who himself had apprenticed with Richard Upjohn. Crooks died in December of 1888 and Horgan joined Slattery in 1889 when Horgan was only 21 and Slattery 22 years old. Prior to joining Slattery, Horgan was listed in the city directories as an architect in 1885-1886 (when he was 17-18 years old) and as a builder in 1886-1888.¹⁴

Vincent J. Slattery (c. 1867-1939) is less well known. Before joining Horgan he was in the coal business and was never independently listed as either a builder or an architect. After Horgan's death he remained in architecture a few years, then was involved in insurance and real estate, including the development of the Beaux-Arts Apartments on East 45th Street. He was an honorary member, along with numerous Democratic party officials of the First Battery, serving as Quartermaster in 1900, and he testified in 1899 that he had been friends for more than 20 years of Mayor Van Wyck and John F. Carroll, the Tammany boss.¹⁵

Within the firm, located for most of its years at 1 Madison Avenue, Horgan apparently handled technical and architectural matters while Slattery was occupied with business development.¹⁶

Armories¹⁷

The term "armory" refers to a building type that developed in 19th-century America to house the civilian militias of the separate states. These militia units required space both for drilling and for their various administrative and social functions. Under the federal militia law of 1792, militia units and their members were required to provide all their own arms, equipment, and facilities. Thus, the earliest militia units drilled outdoors and usually met in rented quarters and the only armories actually built were privately paid for.¹⁸

An 1862 State law required counties in New York to provide armories for its militia units. In fact, only a few were ever built under this law, including two in Brooklyn and none in Manhattan. (However, in this period the Seventh Regiment built an armory, now a designated New York City landmark, at 643 Park

Avenue, with its own funds).¹⁹ With growing concern about urban riots the "Armory Law" was passed by the State in 1884, establishing an Armory Board in New York City to build armories which would be financed by city bonds. The five member Armory Board consisted of the Mayor, two city commissioners, and two representatives of the National Guard. The Board was charged with arranging to build, furnish, and maintain armories for units whose commanders requested them. In practice, pork barrel politics played a major role in the financing and contracting out of these buildings.²⁰

While there were no formal standards for the design of armories and while there were somewhat different needs for units of different sizes and purposes, still there were features shared by nearly all armories of the period including that of the First Battery. All had to meet both the functional requirements of a military unit for training, storage of equipment, and housing of men and animals as well as the social and ceremonial functions of a unique kind of men's club. As a military building, an armory was to be designed so that a small force could protect the building from the roof and gun turrets while the unit was on duty outside, the entrances could be cleared by rifle fire for troops entering or leaving, and guards could signal troops from a tower. Break-ins were inhibited by window bars, storming by mobs was discouraged by outward opening doors, and the unit could withstand a siege with self-contained heating, lighting, and power systems.

In appearance, likewise, there were no formal guidelines and no articulated theory or functional rationale but a consensus about the appropriateness of the medieval castle as a model. Writing long after the practice had begun, an important armory architect, Lieutenant-Colonel J. Hollis Wells said an armory should have "the features of the medieval fortress or castle." He mentioned the city walls of Aigues-Mortes and Carcassone (both 13th century) in southern France and the castles of Warwick and Dover (both 12th century) in England as appropriate models. Others have observed Scottish Baronial castles, Norman castles, the Romanesque Revival Style (a 19th-century style looking at the 10th-12th centuries), and the 14th-15th century Mexican fortified town of Chapultepec in New York City armories, each perhaps reflecting the self-image of self-conscious militia units. Drawn from models in various countries built at various times, the medieval castle imagery of armories is less a coherent style than the reflection of a general intention to signify, on the one hand, both power and control in the city, and, on the other, the individual character of separate militia units who functioned primarily as social organizations. In fact, the earlier Armory Board armories, built when the threat of riots was felt more strongly, tended to be more severe in appearance and the later ones built when the social side of the militia was more conspicuous than its military function were more decorative and

playful. As social organizations, the interiors of the armories evoked comfortable, exclusive men's clubs rather than military establishments.²¹

First Battery Armory: Design

The design of the First Battery Armory followed the model of the Seventh Regiment Armory and the early Armory Board armories. Considered to be a national prototype, the Seventh Regiment Armory was modeled in plan after 19th-century railroad stations. It was in two parts, a rectangular "headhouse" of conventional construction, and a rear shed, utilizing steel trusses to span large spaces. In design, the headhouse was a rectangular block with a central tower and end pavilions, in a mixture of imagery from medieval castles and Parisian boulevards.²²

As built, the First Battery Armory was a fireproof building with cast-iron columns and steel girders, reinforced-concrete floors built according to the "Roebbling System of Construction," and self-supporting brick walls. Its street facade was clad in varicolored brick with a granite base and granite trim.²³

Its headhouse, 175 by 26 feet, had a central tower and end pavilions. The central tower was for signalling and public entry at the base. The end pavilions contained "sally ports" for horses, one leading directly back to the drill room and the other down a ramp to horse stalls.

The drill room itself was 170 by 73 feet and three stories in height under a steel trussed roof with skylights, its walls finished in buff brick with a wainscoting of cream brick. Its floor was concrete except for a tanbark riding ring. At the second level the drill room was encircled by a gallery which doubled as a viewing place for 426 spectators and a running track. The head house contained officers rooms, a reception room, and a gun room on the first floor, where there was mosaic tile flooring and marble wainscoting; a gymnasium, a locker room, a kitchen, and a non-commissioned officers room on the second floor; and a general's room, the captain's apartments, and an Armory Board meeting room on the third floor. In the basement were stalls for 76 horses, a rifle range, a pistol range, showers and toilets, a harness room, a storage room for ammunition and shells, and a boiler room. The building was equipped with a large elevator. Many of its interior spaces were richly paneled and decorated. The New York Times called the First Battery Armory "one of the finest in the city."²⁴

The principal facade of the First Battery Armory is a lively, brightly colored, nearly symmetrical composition of elements that suggest a fortified medieval European castle. In fact, the building's ornamentation is derived from a mix of

sources arranged in a Beaux-Arts composition. Rather than following German examples as might be expected for a German-American unit, the design resembles a number of English and Welsh castles of the 14th and 15th centuries in its overall character; it resembles the 15th-century Pierrefonds Chateaux in France as restored by Viollet-le-Duc in the mid 19th century in the sharpness and character of its details; and it is like 18th-century English and contemporary Georgian Revival buildings in its wall and window detail.²⁵

The medieval character of the design was considered appropriate to the military function of the building in a symbolic sense. Although structurally the building was not a fortress, there were also programmatic reasons for some of the details. The tower was for signaling men in the field and nearby armories; the crenellations along the parapet were designed to protect riflemen; the granite base might have withstood an assault by street mobs better than brick; and the fenced areaways and barred windows of the basement and first story protected the building against break-ins. But the machicolated cornice was not designed to accommodate the pouring of hot oil on marauders, the loopholes (slit windows) were not practically designed for rifles, the crenellations were not sound enough to deflect heavy fire, and the presence of windows, even though barred, left the building vulnerable to vandalism.²⁶

In fact the First Battery Armory fell between the truly fortified and self-contained building where a militia unit could protect itself against attack, and an ordinary building with simply a symbolic demeanor. For the First Battery, preeminently a social military unit, its picturesque facade, more festive than military in its bearing, seems at least as suitable to the social role of the unit and the aspirations of its leader, Captain Wendel, as to its military function. In comparison to several other New York City armories, its design, suggesting a castle dressed up for a tournament, is playful rather than severe, engaging rather than intimidating.

Description

The First Battery Armory is a three-story north-facing rectangular structure located in the middle of the block of West 66th Street between Central Park West and Columbus Avenue. Exposed in recent years on the east side, the building can be seen as consisting of two volumes, a narrow, rectangular, flat-roofed block along the street front and a broader gable-roofed block at the rear. Although the wall surfaces on the east side and a narrow strip on the west side have been recently tiled in a checker pattern to match the brick front, these walls were originally undecorated and completely hidden from view. A narrow light shaft on the west side, hidden from view, has common brick

walls in common bond with window openings bricked in above original bluestone sills.

The principal facade, whose design recalls a medieval castle, is organized in a nearly symmetrical composition and is divided into two parts vertically by the use of granite at the first story and brick with granite trim above. As if they were medieval curtain walls connecting projecting towers, the main wall sections are slightly recessed behind areaways between a central tower and end pavilions which project to the building line.

The resemblance to a castle is achieved through the use of a number of details: a battered base, windows and entry arches with deep reveals, angled spurs between the first story of the central pavilion and its upper floors, massive turreted entrance pavilions, loopholes, machicolated cornices, crenellated parapets, and turrets at the top of the central tower (one higher than the other). At the same time, the upper level wall surfaces are embellished with features typically associated with post-Italian Renaissance architecture, particularly that of 18th-century England, notably two-toned Flemish bond brickwork (red stretchers and dark headers) and windows with classical proportions and rustic Gibbs surrounds of granite.

The building is entered through a round arch reached by a short flight of steps at the base of the central tower, and through segmental arches in each end pavilion, approached from the street via curb cuts for vehicles. The central tower, with its buttressed base incorporates two inscribed panels. Above the first story are the letters "N.G.S.N.Y." At the top of the tower is the First Battery's insignia: carved in relief is a central shield with "1901," the date of construction; "N.G.N.Y."; and "Semper Paratus," meaning always ready. Above this shield is a helmet and crossed axes flanked by flags, and on the sides are muzzle loading cannons and cannon balls tended by militiamen in helmets including one on horseback. The iron fence with granite posts around each areaway is intact except as noted below.

Alterations are limited to the new aluminum and glass doorway in the central entry, metal rolldown doors at the side entries, and an unobtrusive new door cut within the width of an existing window on the east side of the facade. This latter required a bridge over the areaway and a modification of the fence. The windows appear to be the original wood double-hung, one-over-one sash except for the loopholes which originally were open and were later glazed.

Subsequent History

As the First Battery was being built the role and structure

of the National Guard was the subject of debate. Within a few years a gradual process of federalization was begun which eventually placed the National Guard under the administration of the U.S. Army. From its role as urban policeman, the National Guard was redefined as an adjunct of the Army.

One result of the restructuring was the expansion of the First Battery to Battalion size. Too large to remain in the First Battery Armory, the First Battery moved on November 1, 1913, to the recently vacated 23rd Regiment Armory on the east side of Broadway between 67th and 68th Streets. The successor of the First Battery still exists today as the Second Battalion, 104th Field Artillery.

When the First Battery moved out, the First Battery Armory was occupied by the First Sanitary Train, afterwards called the First Field Ambulance Corps, the 102nd Medical Regiment, and in 1947 the 102nd Medical Battalion. This medical unit was active in the campaign against Pancho Villa, in World War I, and in World War II. During its tenure in the armory, as the defensive role of the building diminished, the stables and turrets were converted for storage, and the insignia of the 102nd was placed in terrazzo in the floor of the entryway. The 102nd Medical Battalion stayed in the Armory until 1976 when it moved to new quarters. The 102nd Medical Battalion still exists and is presently located in the 69th Regiment Armory.

During World War II ownership of the armory, built on city land by the City of New York, was transferred to the State. After the 102nd Medical Battalion moved out in January 1976, the building was rented to a private club which installed tennis courts in the drillroom. Later in 1976, the Board of Estimate of the City of New York bought the building back from the State for \$1.00 and put it up for sale at public auction. The building was bought by Capital Cities/ABC, Inc. in 1976 and in 1977 the interior was remodeled for use as a television studio by the architectural firm of Kohn Pederson Fox at a cost of almost \$8 million. In the remodeling some floors and columns were replaced, partitions moved, old finishes were completely obliterated, and the original bronze-clad front door was replaced by an aluminum and glass door. In addition, portions of the east and west side walls, exposed by the demolition of five-story brick houses which predated the armory, were painted to resemble the patterned brickwork of the main facade.²⁷

Report prepared by
Michael Corbett, Research Department

NOTES

1. 369th Regiment Armory; Madison Avenue Front of the Squadron "A" Armory; Seventh Regiment Armory; 23rd Regiment Armory; Kingsbridge Armory; and 69th Regiment Armory.
2. According to the City Register of Trow's Directory 1899-1900, 25-26, in New York City there were about 8,000 men in three Brigades consisting of 19 militia units, almost all of them much larger than the First Battery: there were seven regiments of infantry, two batteries, one squadron of cavalry, and one signal corps in Manhattan; four regiments of infantry, one battery, one troop of cavalry and one signal corps in Brooklyn; and a company of infantry in Queens. Quote from Elbridge Colby, Army Talk (Princeton, 1940), 21. When the First Battery was established in 1867 it had four muzzle loading iron cannons. By the turn of the century when the First Battery Armory was built it was equipped with four model 1903 field cannons, the first rapid firing cannons, each pulled by six horses.
3. "The Artillery Arm," New York Daily Tribune, April 20, 1902. It was common for militia units to change their names.
4. Wendel served on the notorious "Boodle Board" of 1884 and was indicted while in office for participating in the improper granting of a franchise to the Broadway Surface Railway Company. Charges against him were dismissed.
5. "Capt. Wendel Accused of Taking Much Graft," New York Times, December 23, 1906.
6. Biographical information from conversation with Captain Robert Von Hasseln, Battalion Historian of the Second Battalion, 104th Field Artillery. O'Ryan's firing and reinstatement was reported in the NYT, January 2, 1913, p.1:7: "impatient at the politics and petticoat rule which had obtained in the State Militia... [Governor Sulzer] determined to make the officers of the Guard something more than ballroom heroes" by his appointment of O'Ryan.
7. The property was condemned by the city in 1896 for construction of the Armory, but acquisition was delayed until 1899 while the sale price was challenged by the owners before the Commissioners of Appraisal and appealed to the Supreme Court. "May Prepare Armory Plans", NY Tribune, November 11, 1899. The final sale price was \$115,681.15: "First Battery Armory Award", NY Tribune, January 17, 1900. Most units preferred to be uptown and the First Battery was pleased with the location it was assigned, unlike some others.

8. Citation from "First Battery Armory Award." Kearny, as Commissioner of Public Buildings, Lighting and Supplies, was a member of the Armory Board, but evidently acted on his own.
9. Contracts mentioned in The Armory Board, The Armory Board 1884-1911, January 1, 1912, p.19. Dates from Department of Buildings, N.B. 1081-1900. This project took an unusually long time to carry out. In October 1900 Captain Wendel expressed to the Armory Board his frustration over a two year delay since the appropriation was made. In addition, according to the NY Tribune, "Fine New Armories", April 12, 1903, 6:1, the contractor was later fined \$500 for being 20 days late in completing the work. Costs are broken down in The Armory Board, p.42, 45, as follows:

cost of site:	\$116,339.58	
armory:	194,064.84	
furniture:	9,249.65	
		\$319,654.07
operating costs		
1903-1911	31,422.52	31,422.52
Total Costs		\$351,076.58

Opening festivities described in "First Battery's New Home," NYT, February 4, 1904, p.9:3.

10. See Trow's Directories, NYT articles cited in bibliography, and LPC files including designation report on "Former 50th Precinct Police Station".
11. The last directory listing for the firm was for 1909-1910. Horgan died September 20, 1911, at the age of 43, over a year after the period covered by the directory, suggesting that he had left the firm. He had moved to New Jersey about 1905. The Scarborough Mansions on West 57th Street, owned by Horgan & Slattery, was built by day labor, indicating that the architect functioned as the contractor. See American Architect and Building News, 15: 905 (April 29, 1893), p. 75.
12. "Horgan and Slattery," NYT, March 4, 1902. There was ample precedent for granting great quantities of work to single firms by the City of New York. As early as 1887, Napoleon Le Brun, for example, was retained to design firehouses.
13. For example, The Architects and Builders Magazine of January 1907, p.154, recognized that, "[J.R. Thomas'] work has been carried on in praiseworthy fashion by Messrs. Horgan and Slattery who have added to Mr. Thomas' brilliant conception much of the virility of design which characterizes their other well-known masterpieces."

14. On Horgan see both business and residential directories: the 1886 Trows' Directory lists Arthur J. Horgan and Arthur O. K. Horgan as builders, and Patrick K. Horgan as a contractor, all residing at 136 Summit Avenue in Brooklyn; "Mazet Committee's Work: Relations between Horgan and Slattery and the City Looked Into," NYT, August 2, 1899, p.5; and "Arthur J. Horgan," American Art Annual 9, p.313. On Crooks see, "Colonel Arthur Crooks", American Architect and Building News 24:678 (December 22, 1880), 286.
15. On Slattery see Trow's Directories 1887-1925, and "Mazet Inquiry Again", NY Tribune, August 2, 1899.
16. For the years 1898-1900 the firm employed a Chief Assistant named E.T. MacDonald. Nothing is known for certain about MacDonald except that he resided in New York only in 1898-1900. He might be the same E.T. MacDonald whose competition design for the Detroit Chamber of Commerce Building was published in the Inland Architect in May 1893. During the Mazet hearings, Horgan was asked about his firm's drawings for the Tombs: "Were they not drawn by a designer out West?", to which he answered, "They were not" ("Mazet Inquiry Again", NY Tribune, August 2, 1899). If in fact they were, perhaps the designer was E. T. MacDonald who came to New York during the period of the most public of the firm's work and at a time when the volume of its work was so great that a large office would have been required. The position of the Tribune article was that Horgan and Slattery were unconvincing and evasive witnesses.
17. See LPC reports cited in Note 1, above; Robert Koch, "The Medieval Castle Revival: New York Armories," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 14 (October 1959), 23-29; and especially Ann Beha Associates, "The Armory: Armories of New York City", 1986, and Pamela Whitney Hawkes, "An American Phenomenon," Metropolis, 7:4 (Nov. 1987), 74-77, 81.
18. According to Russell Sturgis, A Dictionary of Architecture and Building, (New York, 1902; Republished by Gale Research Company, 1966), Vol.1, p.150, "Armory" has been used in two ways in the United States: the earlier use, sometimes interchangeable with "arsenal," refers to buildings where arms are made, for example the Springfield Armory in Hartford, Connecticut (begun 1794), or where arms and ammunition are stored, such as The Arsenal (1847-1851), a designated New York City landmark in Central Park. The first armory built by a milita unit was a small rectangular stone structure in 1835 for the Newport Artillery Company in Newport, Rhode Island. The first armory in New York City was the Tompkins Market Armory built jointly by the Seventh Regiment and the butchers of Tompkins Market in 1855, with

- the Seventh Regiment drill hall on the top floor.
19. Armories were built in Brooklyn under the 1862 law for the 23rd Regiment in 1872 and the 47th Regiment in 1883. Cf. especially Grand Central Depot of 1871.
 20. The Armory Board was established by the Military Code: Section 9, Chapter 91 of the Laws of 1884, amended in 1888 as Section 62 of Chapter 299 of the laws of 1888: The Armory Board, p. 3-4. Under the Armory Law, the Armory Board built six armories in Manhattan and one armory expansion in Brooklyn before that of the First Battery. Before Consolidation in 1898, Kings County built three armories under the same law but outside the jurisdiction of the Armory Board. For a list of Armory Board projects in Manhattan see the LPC designation report on the Sixty-Ninth Regiment Armory, note 4.
 21. Montgomery Schuyler pointed out in 1906 that the imagery of most armories suggested warfare by bow and arrow or ballista and catapult rather than modern weaponry. "Armories for the organized militia," The Brickbuilder 17 (1908), 120-127: Wells worked for Clinton & Russell, one of the leading designers of armories. Hawkes suggests that the notion of state power is particularly persuasive for new immigrants from semi-feudal Europe. The one armory that was not at all castle-like was that of the 69th Regiment, the contract for which was taken away from Horgan & Slattery (as was the 2nd Naval Battalion Armory in Brooklyn) by the reform mayor, Seth Low. The design for the 69th Regiment Armory was awarded in competition to Hunt & Hunt. Its Beaux-Arts classical style, as throughout the U.S., was a repudiation of the era of machine politics and an assertion of the success of the Progressive movement.
 22. The Seventh Regiment Armory was not the first to follow this arrangement; the armory of the Philadelphia City Cavalry by Furness & Hewitt, was built in 1874 (Ann Beha, p.6); and the 23rd Regiment Armory, built in Brooklyn in 1872, may also have been of this type.
 23. Although an earlier armory was built in the Bronx by the Armory Board for the Second Battery, it is long since demolished and whether or not it was a model for the First Battery Armory is not known. As a fireproof building, this was of sound modern construction like other city buildings with public uses, rather than a fortified structure for defense against artillery fire.
 24. "Captain Wendel Accused of Taking Much Graft," NYT, December 23, 1906. Because no plans of the building before its remodeling are available, the spaces and finishes of the

original interior are known only from the general descriptions in the newspapers, and from the recollections of members of the 102nd Medical Battalion.

25. Among English castles, Herstmonceux in Sussex, for example, is a brick building with light stone trim, a machicolated cornice, and a crenellated parapet, and its principal facade is in a symmetrical composition with a high central turreted tower and end towers. The restoration of Pierrefonds was widely known at the time from translations into English of Viollet-le-Duc's writings in the late 19th century.
26. This has been called the Medieval Castle Revival Style. The term was used in the title of an article by Robert Koch cited above in The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians called "The Medieval Castle Revival: New York Armories," but never appeared in the text which was a summary of the history of armories in New York City, and dealt with the relationship of changing approaches to style to the development of the building type rather than any specific style, insofar as it dealt with style. This title, perhaps bestowed by the Journal's editors, or perhaps used to give legitimacy to the article at a time when architectural style was the predominant concern of architectural historians, gives a misleading impression of the contents of the article.
27. New York City, City Planning Commission, Operational Planning Unit Memo to Richard K. Bernstein regarding State-Owned Armories. January 18, 1965, p.11; Lawrie Mifflin, "Estimate Board Okays Pact...", New York Daily News, March 5, 1976, p.17; Richard E. Hockman, Vice-President/Real Estate and Construction, Capital Cities/ABC, Inc, Remarks to LPC, July 12, 1988. The soap opera "One Life to Live" has been recorded here since that time.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the First Battery Armory (later the 102nd Medical Battalion Armory) has a special character, special historical and aesthetic interest and value as a part of the development, heritage and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the First Battery Armory is one of the few remaining examples of an American building type largely developed in New York City; that it was the seventh of ten armories built by the Armory Board, as part of a larger campaign to control rioting workers in industrial cities; that it was the home of the First Battery, a mounted field artillery unit established in 1867, and a well-regarded volunteer unit of the National Guard of the State of New York under the leadership of Louis Wendel; that in the change of leadership from Wendel to John F. O'Ryan, a leader in the reform of the National Guard, it represented the transformation of the National Guard in that era from a group largely concerned with social affairs to a professional military organization and from an urban police force to an adjunct of the army; that, primarily a German-American unit, it had its distinctive traditions that extended to its uniforms and its armory; that the armory was designed by the firm of Horgan & Slattery when it held a virtual monopoly on city architectural and construction work, gained through a relationship with the Tammany administration of Mayor Robert Van Wyck; that, like most armories, the First Battery Armory consists of a headhouse of conventional construction and a rear drillroom with a large interior space created by steel trusses; that it is designed in a symmetrical composition with a central tower and end pavilions and ornamentation derived largely from medieval sources; that the facade is a lively, brightly colored composition of turrets, crenellations, sally ports, machicolations, and other castle-like features, some of which are functional and others purely decorative.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 21, Section 534, of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the First Battery Armory (later the 102nd Medical Battalion Armory), 56 West 66th Street, Borough of Manhattan and designates Tax Map Block 1118, Lot 52, Borough of Manhattan, as its Landmark Site.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ann Beha Associates. "The Armory: Armories of New York City."
Prepared for the New York Landmarks Conservancy, 1986.
- The Armory Board. The Armory Board 1884-1911. January 1, 1912.
- Bennett, Lt.-Colonel A.U.S. (Ret). Conversation Aug. 1, 1989.
- "Arthur J. Horgan." American Art Annual 9 (1912), 313.
- Brown, R. Allen. Castles, A History and Guide. Poole, Dorset:
Blandford Press, 1980.
- Colby, Elbridge. Army Talk. Princeton: Princeton University
Press, 1940.
- "Colonel Arthur Crooks." American Architect and Building News
24:678 (Dec. 22, 1880), 286.
- Hassett, Major John J. Telephone conversations, July 1989.
- Hawkes, Pamela Whitney. "An American Phenomenon." Metropolis
7:4 (Nov. 1987). 74-77, 81.
- Hockman, Richard E. Testimony given before the Landmarks
Preservation Commission at a public hearing, July 12, 1988.
- Israel, Fred L. "New York's Citizen Soldiers: The Militia and
Their Armories." New York History 42 (April 1961), 145-156.
- Koch, Robert. "The Medieval Castle Revival: New York Armories."
Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 14 (Oct.
1955), 23-29.
- Landmarks Preservation Commission. "Brooklyn Building Types
Inventory: Armories." New York: City of New York, n.d.
- Landmarks Preservation Commission. Designation Reports for The
Seventh Regiment Armory, The 23rd Regiment Armory, The 69th
Regiment Armory, The Kingsbridge Armory, The Madison Avenue
Front of the Squadron "A" Armory, The 369th Regiment Armory,
and The Former 50th Precinct Police Station.
- Landmarks Preservation Commission. Files on "Horgan & Slattery."
- Marshall, Alexander G. "The Necessity of Armories." The
Bostonian 1:6 (March 1895), 611-614; 2:1 (April 1895), 49-
53; 2:2 (May 1895), 141-145; 2:3 (June 1895), 275-282; 2:4
(July 1895), 419-426; 2:5 (Aug. 1895), 523-530; 2:6 (Sept.
1895), 617-625.

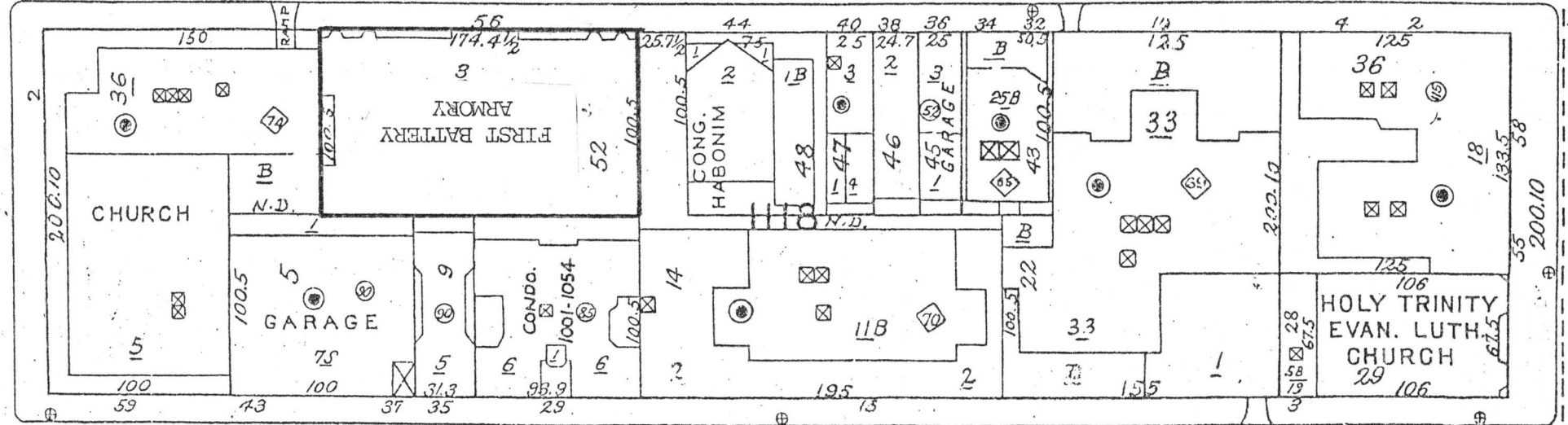
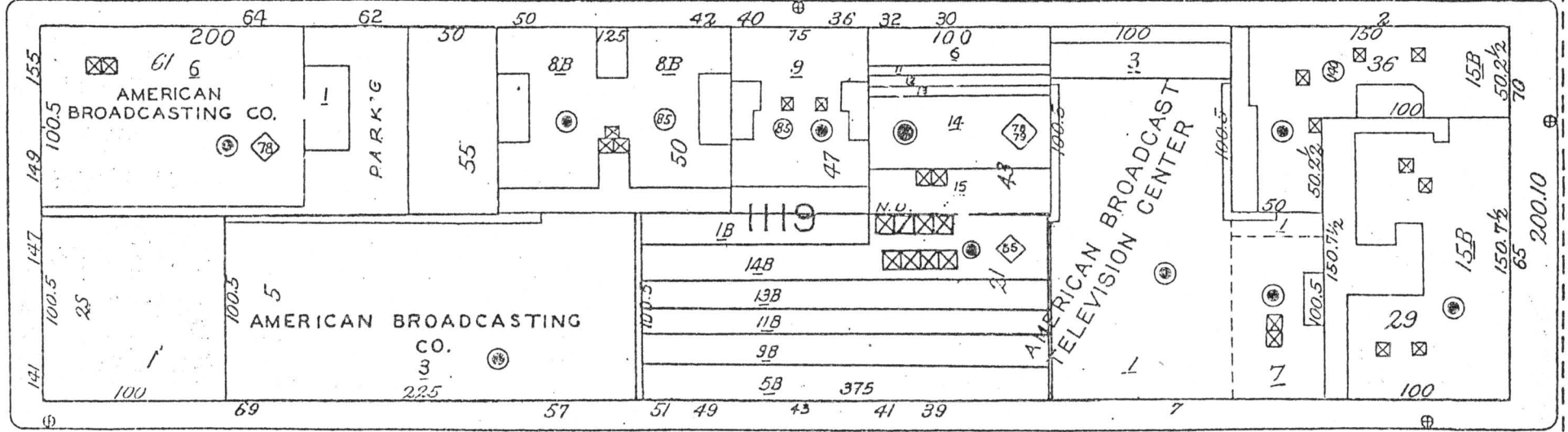
- Mifflin, Lawrie. "Estimate Board Okays Pact." New York Daily News, Mar. 5, 1976, p.17.
- "The New Hall of Records." The Architects and Builders Magazine 39 (Jan. 1907), 154.
- New York City. Department of Buildings, Manhattan. Plans, Permits, and Dockets. [Block 1118, Lot 52].
- New York Daily Tribune. Aug. 2, 1899 ("Mazet Inquiry Again"); Nov. 11, 1899 ("May Prepare Armory Plans"); Jan. 17, 1900 ("First Battery Armory Award"); April 20, 1902 ("The Artillery Arm"); April 12, 1903 ("Fine New Armories"), p.6.
- New York Times. Feb. 15, 1887 ("Willing to Get Rid of it All"), p.5:3; Feb. 22, 1899 ("Petition in Bankruptcy"), p.7:6; Aug. 2, 1899 ("Mazet Committee's Work: Relations Between Horgan & Slattery and the City Looked Into"), p.5; Mar. 25, 1900 ("Dinner to Capt. Wendel"), p.2:4; July 22, 1901 ("Cornerstone"); Jan. 28, 1902 (Untitled Editorial Reply to a letter from Hugh J. Barron), p.6; Mar. 4, 1902 ("Horgan & Slattery"); Feb. 4, 1904 ("First Battery's New Home"), p.9:3; Dec. 23, 1906 ("Captain Wendel Accused of Taking Much Graft"); Feb. 6, 1907 ("Wendel Battery Rebels: Military Laws Broken"), p.16:4; Dec. 4, 1908 ("Wendel Guilty; Back in the Tombs"), p.7:5; Jan. 2, 1913 (Reorganization of National Guard by Gov. Sulzer), p.1:7; July 20, 1913 ("Wife Gives Him \$7 A Week"), Sect. II, p.7:2; April 6, 1914 ("Capt. Louis Wendel Dead").
- Schuyler, Montgomery. "Two New Armories." Architectural Record 19:4 (April 1906), 259-264.
- Stokes, I.N. Phelps. Iconography of Manhattan Island. Vol. 5. New York: Robert H. Dodd, 1926.
- Sturgis, Russell. A Dictionary of Architecture and Building. 3 vols. 1902. Reprint. Detroit: Gale Research Co. 1966.
- Trow's Directory. 1887-1925.
- Tuulse, Armin. Castles of the Western World. Trans. from the German by R.P. Girdwood. Vienna: Thames & Hudson, 1958.
- Von Hasseln, Capt. Robert H, Company Historian for 2nd Battalion, 104th Field Artillery. Telephone conversations June 1989.
- Wells, J.H. "Armories for the Organized Militia." The Brickbuilder 17 (1908), 120-127.

COLUMBUS AVE.

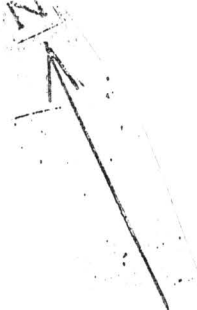
W. 67 TH ST.

W. 66 TH ST.

W 65 TH ST.



GRAPHIC SOURCE: SANBORN, MANHATTAN LAND BOOK, 1988-1989, PLATE 89.
FIRST BATTERY ARMORY, LANDMARK SITE





First Battery Armory, 1900-1903
56 West 66th Street, Manhattan

Architect: Horgan & Slattery
Photo Credit: Michael Corbett



First Battery Armory

Photo Credit: Michael Corbett

Perspective view of facade from North



First Battery Armory

Photo Credit: Michael Corbett

Perspective view of building from East



First Battery Armory

Photo Credit: Michael Corbett

Detail: Central Entry Tower



First Battery Armory

Photo Credit: Michael Corbett

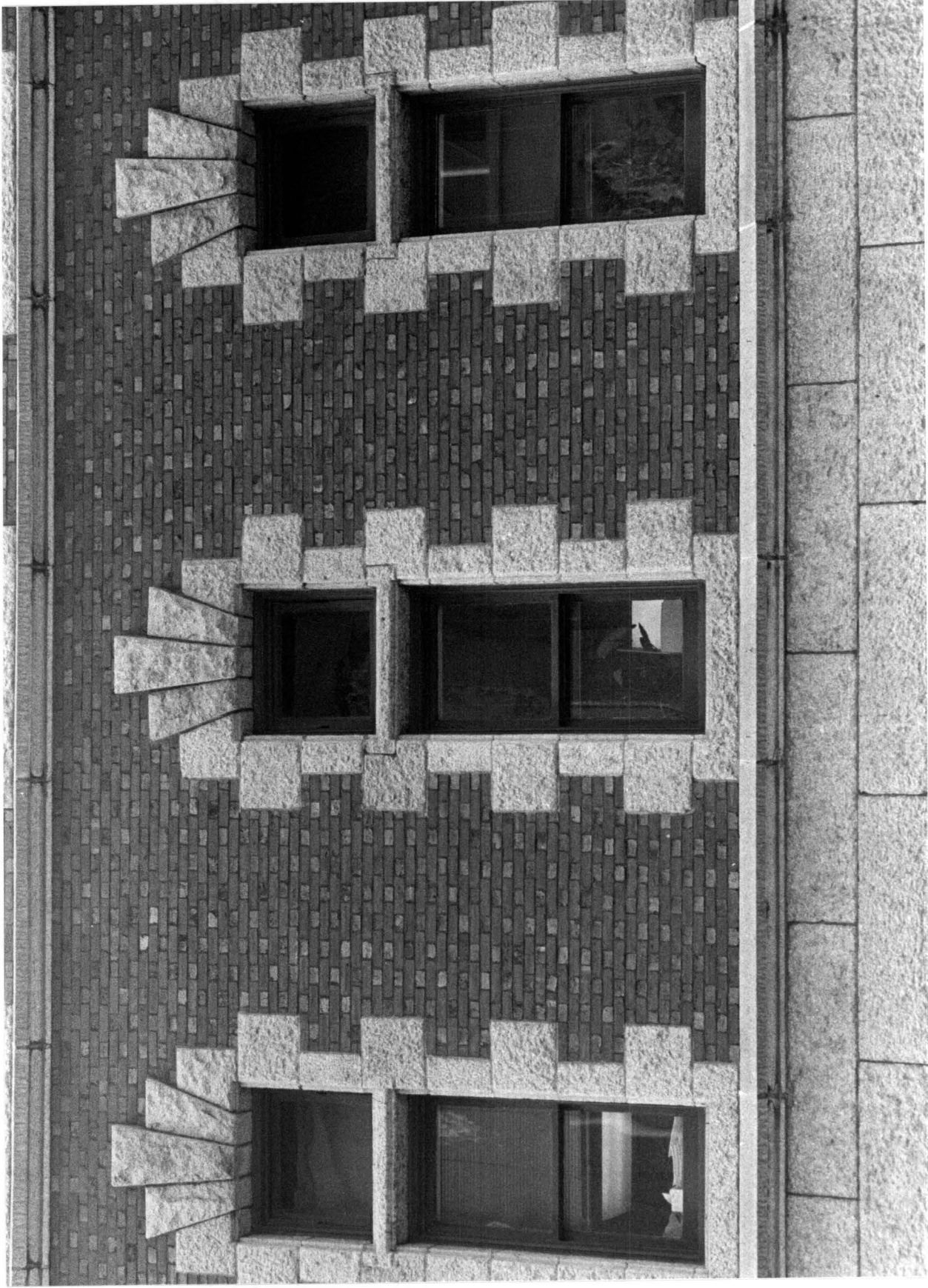
Detail: Inscribed Relief Panel



First Battery Armory

Photo Credit: Michael Corbett

Detail: West Pavilion



First Battery Armory

Detail: Second Story

Photo Credit: Michael Corbett



First Battery Armory

Detail: First Story Window

Photo Credit: Michael Corbett



First Battery Armory

Photo Credit: Michael Corbett

Detail: Areaway Fence