

# 826 Broadway Building (now the Strand Building)

**826 Broadway, Manhattan**  
**Tax Map Block 564 Lot 34**

**Built:** 1902

**Architect:** William H. Birkmire

**Style:** Renaissance Revival

**Action:** Calendared September 25, 2018; Public Hearing December 4, 2018



**826 Broadway, 2018** (Landmarks Preservation Commission); **1915** (Museum of the City of New York)

826 Broadway is an eleven-story store and loft building developed by the National Realty Company and designed by William H. Birkmire in 1902. The building is significant architecturally for its intact Renaissance Revival facade that stretches around a corner site and for its steel skeleton-frame construction, features that exemplify the stylistic character and technological advances in skyscraper architecture at the time it was built.

826 Broadway was constructed during a period of large-scale commercial development on Broadway just south of Union Square. This development was initiated as the introduction of elevators, electricity and steel framing around the turn of the century made the construction of tall buildings more cost effective. The surge of new building north of the traditional loft districts of Lower Manhattan made rents more affordable for the garment manufacturing and wholesale companies that moved into the buildings on this stretch of Broadway. Garment factories such as those that populated 826 Broadway in the early 20th century were a major employer of New York City's working class and immigrant women, and the industry became an important sphere through which their advocacy on issues such as labor rights and suffrage emerged.

Architect William H. Birkmire was a prominent designer of steel-framed structures in New York City. Born in Philadelphia in 1860, Birkmire studied with Samuel Sloan before moving to New York City in 1885 to work for local ironworks companies. Birkmire became a well-known expert on the engineering aspects of design, establishing his own architecture practice in the mid-1890s. Ten of his works are New York City landmarks, including the Tremont Baptist Church in the Bronx, a designated individual landmark.

826 Broadway's first three stories are clad in limestone, with thick piers and ribbon capitals. The upper stories are clad in brick with limestone and terracotta Renaissance details and are topped by a heavy projecting metal cornice at the roof. The building footprint is an irregularly shaped trapezoid, with the narrowest part of the building facing Broadway, and the widest part facing East 12th Street. The decorative features are identical on both facades.

After primarily housing garment industry tenants for its first decades, in 1956 the Strand Bookstore moved into the ground floor from its previous location on Fourth Avenue's "book row," eventually expanding to three floors of retail space. The Strand became a center of literary life in Lower Manhattan and is an internationally-recognized destination for New Yorkers and visitors alike. The company purchased the 826 Broadway building in 1996, cementing the store's place within the streetscape south of Union Square.

With a highly visible corner site and intact Renaissance Revival facade, 826 Broadway endures as a notable example of the commercial architecture built in New York at the turn of the 20th century.

**(Proposed) 826 Broadway Building (now the Strand Building) | LP-2615**

