

832 Broadway Building

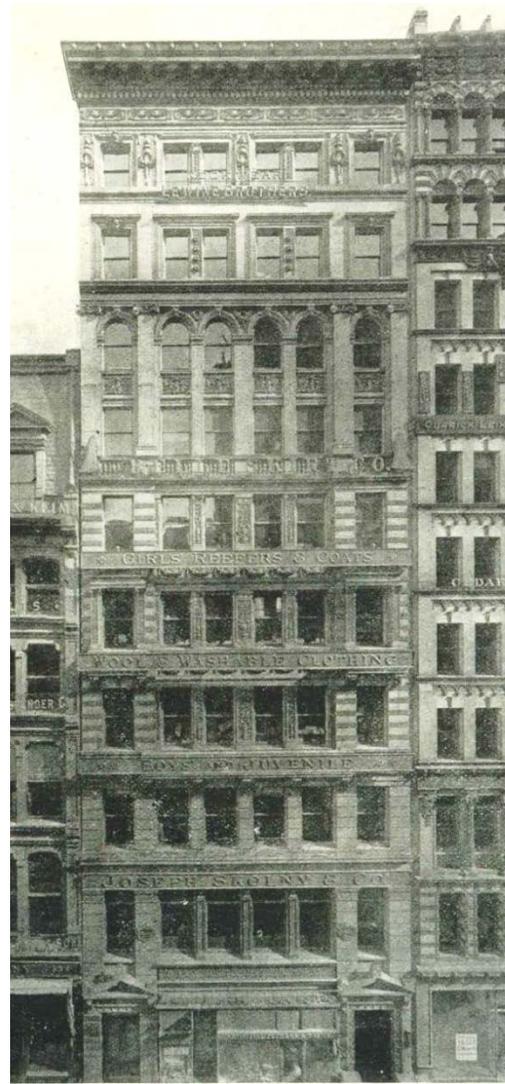
832 Broadway
Manhattan, Tax Map Block 564 Lot 36 (in part)

Built: 1896-97

Architect: Ralph S. Townsend

Style: Renaissance Revival

Action: Proposed for Commission's Calendar September 25, 2018



832 Broadway, 2018, LPC; 1910, Both Sides of Broadway

832 Broadway is a notable and highly intact 10-story Renaissance Revival style store and loft building designed in 1896 by Ralph S. Townsend for the Commercial Realty and Improvement Company. In the early 20th century, 832 Broadway contained a variety of manufacturing and wholesale businesses, mainly in the garment industry, and in the second half of the 20th century was home to several publishing companies.

832 Broadway is an architecturally significant example of the high-rise commercial loft and store development along Broadway south of Union Square in the late-19th century. This development was initiated as a result of the introduction of elevators, electricity and steel framing around the turn of the century, which made tall buildings more cost-effective to build. The surge of new construction north of the earlier loft districts of Lower Manhattan attracted factories and wholesale companies to this stretch of Broadway.

Ralph S. Townsend was a distinguished late-19th and early-20th century architect, noted for his skillful designs with bold ornamentation in a variety of building types including hotels, apartment buildings, and commercial structures. Several loft and store buildings designed by Townsend are located within designated historic districts, including 532-534 Broadway in the SoHo Cast-Iron Historic District, and 39 Bond Street within the NoHo Historic District Extension as well as the individual landmark, George S. Bowdoin Stable located at 149 east 38th Street.

Garment industry companies located in 832 Broadway were among many picketed during the labor riots of the late 19th-century and early 20th century. The garment industry remained active in 832 Broadway until the 1930s. In the 1930s, 832 Broadway became home to the Worker's Library Publishing House, later referred to as the New Century Publishers. The Worker's Library was the official publishing company of the Worker Party of America, later the Communist Party of the U.S.A. The company was responsible for propaganda that ranged from books to pamphlets.

By the 1980s the building became residential with a commercial ground floor and remains that way today. Its high level of integrity and elegant details make it a prime example of Renaissance Revival Style in America at the turn of the 20th century.

