

840 Broadway Building

Manhattan Tax Map Block 564 Lot 41

Built: c. 1899

Architect: Robert Maynicke

Style: Renaissance Revival

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



840 Broadway, 2018 (Landmarks Preservation Commission); 1927 (New York Public Library)

An intact 12-story Renaissance Revival style store-and-loft building, 840 Broadway was designed by the noted architect Robert Maynicke and built for developer Henry Corn in 1899. The building housed a variety of small manufacturing and wholesale businesses, largely associated with the clothing industry, through the mid-20th century. By the 1970s, artists began to move into the building using the large lofts as live/work spaces. The ground floor was occupied by the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company for many years in the mid-20th century. It was converted to a co-operative apartment house in the 1970s.

The building is a significant example of a high-rise store-and-loft building built during a period of large-scale commercial development in New York City, particularly in the Union Square area. 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. In anticipation of the IRT subway opening in 1904 there was a surge of new construction north of the traditional loft districts of Lower Manhattan, which made rents more affordable for the factories and wholesale companies that moved to this stretch of Broadway.

Born in Germany, architect Robert Maynicke (1848-1913) studied mechanics and mathematics at Cooper Union. By 1872-73, he was employed by George P. Post's architecture office where he supervised the firm's work on early elevator buildings. Maynicke left Post's office in 1895 to form his own firm. By 1905, he partnered with Julius Franke, another alumnus of Post's firm. Maynicke's work is found in many of the city's historic districts, including NoHo and the Tribecas, as well as Ladies Mile, where he was the district's most prolific architect.

In his design for 840 Broadway, Maynicke employed the decorative elements associated with the Renaissance Revival style. The classic tripartite facade with its deeply set fenestration features a chamfered bay at the corner containing the main commercial entryway, a three-story limestone base featuring projecting show windows and double-height columns, an eight-story center section of light tan brick with terra-cotta window surrounds, arcaded windows at the 12th story, and elaborate ornamentation at the upper stories and cornice.

Real estate operator Henry Corn (b.1854), who was of German ancestry, developed many similar commercial properties in the Union Square area, including some found in the Ladies Mile and NoHo Historic Districts. In 1906, he formed the Improved Property Holding Company which owned, among other buildings, the Alwyn Court Apartments at Seventh Avenue and 58th Street (a designated Landmark). The company went bankrupt in 1915; afterwards Corns worked in the movie business.

