



The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

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LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION DESIGNATES CAST-IRON BUILDING IN WILLIAMSBURG

“This is a rare cast-iron building in Williamsburg that is remarkably intact,” said Robert B. Tierney, Chairman of the Landmarks Preservation Commission. *“It is a treasure to add to our collection of landmarked buildings in Brooklyn.”*

Smith, Gray & Company Building (103 Broadway, Brooklyn)

The Smith, Gray & Co. Building is an early, significantly intact, cast-iron-fronted store-and-loft building in Brooklyn. The firm was founded by tailor Edward Smith, who began his business in 1833 in lower Manhattan and pioneered in the profitable manufacture of ready-made clothes for children. In 1864, he transferred the business to Williamsburg, Brooklyn, in partnership with Allen Gray, his brother-in-law. This was their first new structure, constructed in 1870, at 95 (later 103) Broadway, on Williamsburg’s then most important commercial street. Henry R. Stiles’ *History of Brooklyn* (1884) said of Smith, Gray & Co. “in their specialty of boys’ and children’s clothing, this house is the largest, as it was the first, in the United States” and that it was one of the largest manufacturers of any kind in Brooklyn.

Designed by prominent Brooklyn architect, William H. Gaylor, the building is five stories high and 25 feet wide. Typical of cast iron designs in the Second Empire style, the building’s main facade features tiered upper stories with segmental-arched fenestration framed by Corinthian columns and pilasters. The building’s historic wooden storefront still survives.

Today, 103 Broadway remains an important reminder of Williamsburg’s commercial emergence after the Civil War and of the nationally-important clothing manufacturer that was one of Brooklyn’s preeminent 19th-century commercial firms.

