

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: George Washington Hotel

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)



2. Location

Street & number: 23 Lexington Avenue

City or town: New York State: NY County: New York

Not For Publication:

Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property x meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide x local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B X C ___ D

<u>R-Daniel Mackey</u>	<u>3-27-2019</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>DS/PO</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

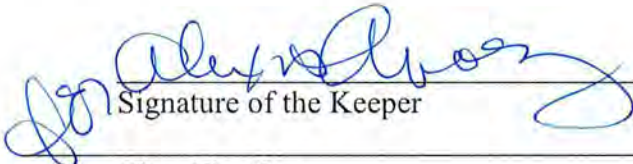
George Washington Hotel
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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)


Signature of the Keeper

2/20/2019
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/hotel

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/hotel

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19th & 20th CENTURY REVIVALS / Italian Renaissance Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, cast stone, terra cotta, cast iron

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The George Washington Hotel (19-39 Lexington Avenue, 135-37 East 23rd Street, 140-42 East 24th Street) is a sixteen-story Italian Renaissance Revival-style brick and cast-stone apartment hotel located in Manhattan's midtown section, near Gramercy Park, in New York County, NY. This area is largely commercial and institutional in character, with some pockets of residential construction near Gramercy Park. The mid-rise commercial buildings line the major avenues and 23rd Street, a primary crosstown artery. The George Washington Hotel occupies a corner site that fronts Lexington Avenue to the east, East 23rd Street to the south and East 24th Street to the north. The building creates a streetwall along all three facades. The surrounding city sidewalk has a number of moveable planters. The nominated lot is the parcel historically associated with the George Washington Hotel.

The structure is E-shaped, with two light courts on its east elevation, and measures 197 feet along Lexington Avenue and 50 feet along East 23rd and East 24th streets. The architects utilized the Italian Renaissance Revival-style on the exterior with a monumental entrance and elaborate terra-cotta decorative details. The interior featured grand spaces designed in a variety of other eclectic revival styles and finished with luxurious materials, including a Jacobean Revival-style lobby, a Georgian Revival-style library, an Italian Renaissance Revival-style gallery, and a Colonial Revival-style lounge. In addition, there were 630 modest-sized rooms and a rooftop solarium that catered to young working men and women starting their careers in New York. The George Washington retains a high degree of architectural integrity—the exterior of the building has undergone minimal alterations over the years and the primary interior spaces are largely intact. In 2018 the building was rehabilitated and returned to its original hotel use.

Narrative Description

The sixteen-story George Washington Hotel was built in 1929-30 and is constructed with a steel frame and is faced with brick, cast stone, and terra cotta. It is composed of three main sections: a three-story base, a thirteen-story shaft, and a one-story setback penthouse topped by a three-story elevator and water tank enclosure. The three-story base is faced with cast stone in a coursed ashlar pattern and terra-cotta decorative elements. The primary entrance on Lexington Avenue is distinguished by a double-height monumental arch. Much like a triumphal arch, it is framed by columns and piers, and crowned by a flat entablature. The second story within the arch has a highly decorative Palladian-inspired tripartite window that is described in more detail below. A non-historic metal marquee with open neon-letter signage ties

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back to the top of the monumental arch. At the first story, the recessed entrance has non-historic bronze-and-glass swing doors.

On Lexington Avenue, the entrance is symmetrically framed by double-height entrance and storefront bays. These include four single-bay-wide openings (next to the entrance and one bay in from each corner) featuring broken pedimented windows with cartouches on the second story and eight double-bay-wide recessed arched openings with cast-stone voussoirs and Palladian-inspired tripartite windows described above. On East 23rd Street the three deeply recessed openings read as an arcade, with monumental columns between each bay. On East 24th Street the openings are more planar to the building facade. On the first story the original cast-iron storefront frames are extant. These storefronts have contemporary metal infill with recessed entrances, granite bulkheads, divided-light transoms and retractable awnings. The second-story recessed arches on all facades have highly ornamented Palladian-inspired tripartite windows with a large central light flanked by two narrower sidelights sitting on a paneled spandrel. All retain their original steel casement windows with transoms above. The central section is flanked by engaged fluted columns that feature classical details such as egg-and-dart molding, acanthus leaves, and a Corinthian-style order. The central section is topped by a projecting segmental-arched hood that has a cherub head with wings and floriated scrolls within. The narrow outer sections are framed by pilasters with projecting geometric designs and a Corinthian-style capital and are topped by a scroll-like detail and acroteria. At the outer edges of the window there are two recessed vertical elements with a shell design. The third story is composed of single window openings with chamfered corners and replacement aluminum windows. A cast stone cornice separates the second and third stories.

The thirteen-story shaft is faced in red brick and trimmed in terra cotta on the upper stories. The elevations are vertically organized with windows and diapered-brick spandrel panels framed by projecting brick piers. Thirteen central bays and three outer bays on the Lexington Avenue facade and three central bays on both the East 23rd and East 24th Street elevations use this device between the 4th and 12th stories. At the 13th story these bays are framed by projecting brick on all sides. Decorative wrought-iron Juliette balconies project from the 14th story, at which point begins a double-height terra cotta arch with a panelized terra-cotta spandrel. The shaft is capped at the 17th (penthouse) story by a brick parapet featuring decorative terra-cotta panels and recessed terra-cotta railings (several are missing), as well as non-historic guardrails. Originally, open loggias rose above a simplified terra-cotta cornice at each corner on each elevation, but the loggias were removed sometime after 1950. All windows, which were originally one-over-one steel sash, are one-over-one double-hung aluminum replacement windows.

The building is set back at the 17th story, or penthouse level. Originally used as a solarium, this story features brick-arched openings with some original steel multi-light casement windows and doors and some replacement steel multi-light casement windows and doors. At the north and south sides of the building are stair bulkheads and the extant piers of the original brick loggias. The top of the building is crowned by an original three-story hip-roofed enclosure that houses the elevator machine and water tank rooms. It is faced with brick and trimmed with terra-cotta and features a decorative dormer that rises

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above the roof line at the west elevation. Window openings—some with original multi-light steel windows and others with replacement aluminum windows—are located on all of the enclosure's elevations.

The secondary east elevation is clad in brick and is visible from both East 23rd and East 24th streets, rising above the two low buildings to the east. The east elevation is minimally detailed, likely due to the expectation that the neighboring lots would eventually be developed with tall buildings. Each elevation, including those in the light courts, contains bays of single window openings. The windows are double-hung aluminum replacements.

When constructed, the interior of the George Washington Hotel was organized with public rooms at the base, hotel rooms from the 3rd to the 16th floors (like many hotels, the George Washington skips the 13th floor), and a public solarium/roof garden at the 17th floor penthouse level. The building contains several intact historic interior spaces in an eclectic array of revival styles popular at the time. Although most of these spaces have changed use over time, the finishes and features of the original design remains largely intact.

The Jacobean Revival-style lobby is decorated with decorative wood paneling featuring broad arches with keystones, pilasters, and both glazed and gold-leaf rosettes, egg-and-dart detailing and floral motifs. The space is rectangular in plan and is accessed through a non-historic vestibule with metal and glass double-leaf doors. Elevator banks with arched wood openings and wood paneled doors run along the east wall. Historically, the south end of the lobby was enclosed; it is now extended to the south, but the historic lobby is demarcated by the change in flooring from historic travertine (seen throughout the lobby) to wood. The lobby ceiling has historic plaster crown molding and three rows of non-historic surface-mounted light fixtures.

At the northeast corner of the lobby a grand open stairway leads both to the basement and to the second floor, providing access to rooms that were historically public spaces in the hotel. The stairway features a barrel-vaulted ceiling, paneled walls with decorative moldings, and a chandelier. The stair itself is composed of wrought-iron and brass railings, cast-iron posts, travertine treads and risers, and marble base boards. As part of the 2018 rehabilitation project, the three bottom stairs were reconstructed to provide better access to the commercial spaces on the north side of the lobby. In the basement the stair ends in the elevator lobby, which retains some moldings, original doors and door frames, and a travertine floor. A short, curved terrazzo stair leads to what was originally the restaurant and is now the hotel gym. In what was originally the barber shop there is a terrazzo and black-and-white tesserae floor. The remaining finishes at the basement level are non-historic.

The entrance to the second floor at the top of the open stairway is framed by two sculptural cast-stone abstracted caryatids. A metal double-leaf door provides access to the second-floor gallery, a 70'-long Italian Renaissance Revival-style gallery space that looks out onto Lexington Avenue through a series of

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wide recessed windows with window seats. Capped by a barrel-vaulted ceiling with three hanging light fixtures, the walls feature paired caryatids framing small recessed alcoves (originally intended for lighting fixtures) and the outermost windows on the west wall. The elevator bank opens directly into the room; the floors are travertine.

To the south of the gallery is the Colonial-Revival style lounge, a large open space looking out onto Lexington Avenue and East 23rd Street. The room features six substantial piers, which are topped by cruciform-shaped capitals that curve as they meet the paneled ceiling. The floors are made of herringbone-patterned wood and the painted walls feature classical pilasters, engaged columns and other decorative detailing. Round columns line the fronts of the windows, which are framed by pilasters.

To the north of the gallery, a double-loaded corridor leads to the library. The rooms off of the corridor, which were historically used as offices, retain some decorative moldings. The library is located at the north end of the building. It is finished with Georgian Revival-style wood paneling with a partially coffered ceiling and herringbone-patterned wood floors. The east wall is adorned with a wood fireplace with painting of Mount Vernon above; a copy of Gilbert Stuart's George Washington is located in a panel on the north wall.

In addition to the five elevators, the upper floors are accessible via two banks of utilitarian fire stairs, at both the north and south ends of the building. Additional circulation on the upper floors is provided by the original E-shaped double-loaded corridors, which have approximately 30 rooms per floor and are now carpeted with minimal finishes. Each modest-sized room originally had a bathroom. Overall, no significant finishes remain in the elevator lobbies, hallways, and rooms of the upper hotel-room floors.

The 17th-floor penthouse solarium is 130' long and features three sides with French casement windows open to the surrounding roof, which was originally used as a roof garden. This level, which is broken up into an elevator lobby and two larger spaces on the north and south ends, features the original black-and-white checkerboard terrazzo floor.

The George Washington Hotel has retained a high degree of architectural integrity. The exterior of the building has undergone minimal alterations over the years and the primary interior spaces are largely intact.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1930-1935

Significant Dates

1930

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

ANDREWS, FRANK M.

PETERKIN, JOHN B.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The George Washington Hotel is significant under Criterion C as an intact, representative example of the final group of apartment hotels erected in New York City after the building boom of the 1920s and before the passage of the Multiple Dwelling Law of 1929, when these types of buildings significantly decreased in popularity due to their lack of financial return. Completed in 1930, the George Washington Hotel was designed by Frank M. Andrews and John B. Peterkin for the Club Hotels Corporation. The building is also significant for its design, as a representative intact example of an Italian Renaissance-style residential hotel, typical of the 1920s when architects frequently echoed the styles of previous architectural eras. Designed to give a sense of social sophistication to its clientele, the architects utilized the Italian Renaissance Revival style and employed a monumental entrance, elaborate terra-cotta decorative details, and grand interior spaces finished with luxurious materials. The interior was arranged to provide a “club” atmosphere, with the entire second floor designated as communal space for residents and their guests. This included a large Italian Renaissance Revival-style gallery that overlooked Lexington Avenue, a Colonial Revival-style lounge, a Georgian Revival-style library, and smaller reception and bridge rooms. Additional amenities included a penthouse solarium and roof garden. With its restrained revival style and lack of setbacks, the building is a conservative example of late 1920s architectural design.

The George Washington Hotel is also locally significant under Criterion A for its association with the history of housing and social history in New York City. In the decade following World War I, a booming New York attracted droves of people who came to seek work and housing. As the population swelled, moderately-priced housing became increasingly difficult to find in convenient locations near businesses, shopping, and amusements. Apartment hotels became popular in New York during the late 19th and early 20th century among this growing population. The success of this building type was a result of its relative affordability and its offering of the amenities of a hotel with the greater permanence more typical of apartments. The George Washington Hotel—“Born of A Great Need,” as its brochure advertised—offered such a place for emerging young professionals of discriminating tastes just beginning their careers in the city. Envisioned as the first (and ultimately the only) in a series of presidential-themed apartment hotels, it offered affordably-priced rooms to young working men and women establishing their careers in New York City. The hotel distinguished itself with its club-like setting, offering extensive amenities and comforts that had been previously reserved for the upper class. In addition to the 630 modest-sized rooms, guests could spend time in the Georgian Revival-style library, meet friends in the Italian Renaissance Revival-style gallery, or enjoy a cocktail in the Colonial-Revival style lounge. While the George Washington’s eclectic combination of exterior and interior spaces referred to the opulent styles of the past, it offered accommodations and amenities that were distinctly modern.

The George Washington Hotel’s period of significance is from 1930, the year of the building’s completion, to 1935, the year it was sold to the building’s bondholders after being sued for foreclosure.

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Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

*Apartment Hotels*¹

The George Washington Hotel is an apartment hotel designed in the late 1920s, at the end of the type's popularity. Apartment hotels were introduced to New York in the 1870s as a hybrid type of accommodation that provided attractively furnished public rooms and restaurants on the lower floors and private rooms above. Intended for long-term residents, apartment hotels—sometimes called “club hotels”—offered the economy of apartment living and the luxury of a hotel stay.

The rise of the apartment hotel coincided with the increasing necessity for multi-family housing in the growing city where single-family residences were prohibitive to all but the wealthy. As author Elizabeth Collins Cromley wrote in *Alone Together: A History of New York's Early Apartments*, these types of buildings were especially important to a range of tenants, who, at the turn of the century, were less settled than the norm, including travelers, “bohemians,” and middle-class families who would not afford all the rent and services of full-scale housekeeping.² Apartment hotels ranged significantly in quality—from palatial residences for the wealthy with large suites of rooms with private baths (but usually pantries rather than kitchens); to one or two bedroom apartments usually occupied by single people and childless couples actively pursuing business careers; to single-room residences with both private and shared baths, which were marketed primarily to young men and women just establishing their careers.³ Typically, they supplied a high level of service with amenities and, on the higher-end of the spectrum, splendidly decorated public rooms, similar to those found in elegant hotels.

The apartment hotel flourished between 1880 and 1910; many early apartment hotels in New York City tended to be built for and marketed toward a middle-to-upper class clientele. Some early examples include the eight-story Wilbraham (D&J Jardine, 1888-90, NR-listed 5/4/18) at 284 Fifth Avenue; the Hotel Gerard (George Keister, 1893-94, NR-listed 2/10/83), the Ansonia Hotel (Paul Emile Duboy, 1899-1904, NR-listed 1/10/80) at Broadway and West 74th Street; the Hotel Belleclaire (Emery Roth, 1900-03) at 2171 Broadway; the Hotel Marseilles (Harry Allan Jacobs, 1902-05) at Broadway and West 103rd Street; and the many apartment hotels that lined Central Park West, including the Beresford, the San Remo, the Majestic, and the El Dorado, all built on Central Park West between 1889 and 1893 and later demolished for new buildings with the same name.

Apartment hotels became even more popular in New York City after the passage of the 1901 Tenement House Act, which made provisions for light, air, proper sanitation, and fire safeguards in new tenement construction in New York State. Under the new law, tenements had a height restriction of no more than one and one-third of the street width (typically six stories), but buildings which had apartments without individual kitchens were made exempt from height limitations and fireproofing restrictions. Many developers took advantage of this loophole and the number of apartment hotels multiplied, leading one

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author to estimate that there were almost 100 such establishments in “the central part of Manhattan” in 1905.⁴ Following World War I, “boot leg” kitchens or kitchenettes were introduced into the rooms (either by the hotel proprietors or by tenants) to warm food. The threat of fires in tall buildings made the issue a matter of public controversy.

Apartment hotel construction continued through the early part of the twentieth century and peaked in popularity during the 1920s. Building developers were intensely attracted to the apartment hotel type since the height of these buildings continued to be unregulated, even after the passage of the 1916 Zoning Resolution, which established limits in building massing at certain heights, requiring setbacks for the first time. Under the Zoning Resolution of 1916 residential buildings were allowed to grow to one and one-half the street width, however apartment hotels continued to have no height restrictions.⁵ Given the difference in return, property owners were thus much more likely to sell their land to commercial developers rather than residential ones.⁶

Over time apartment hotels became less associated with middle and upper-class living. Increasingly, developers aimed to house a wider range of tenants than were accommodated before in smaller, more inexpensive units. Although the rooms diminished in size, the public spaces continued to remain an important part of the building, as these were used to attract potential tenants. Built for middle-class, professional men and women at the commencement of their careers, the George Washington Hotel advertised its club-like setting, which had previously been associated with buildings catering to upper class clients. The creation of “residential club hotels” addressed the need for respectable, affordable housing and communal social life in the growing ranks of young single professionals in the city. They operated in a niche between YMCAs and YWCAs and exclusive private clubs with hotel rooms like the Yale Club or New York Athletic Club.

Examples of other club-type hotels built during this period include a series of hotels built by the Allerton Company, the first of which, the Allerton 39th Street House (Arthur Loomis Harmon), opened in 1918 at 145 East 39th Street, and later, the Barbizon Hotel for Women (Murgatroyd & Ogden, 1927-28, NR-listed 10/29/82) at 140 East 63rd Street; others included the Ritz Tower (Emery Roth and Thomas Hastings, 1925-27) at 465 Park Avenue; the Hotel Commander (Leo F. Knust, 1927-28) at 238 West 73rd Street; and the Masters Building (Harvey Wiley Corbett, 1928-29, NR-listed 2/23/16) at 310 Riverside Drive.

In 1929, the Multiple Dwellings Law came to be the primary law regulating tenements, apartments and other such units. At the time, the law only minimally affected existing tenement design standards, but it significantly changed the regulations for apartment hotels, or “bootleg hotels,” as they were sometimes known.⁷ For the first time, “skyscraper” apartment buildings were permitted under the new height and bulk restrictions, ending the economic advantages of developing apartment hotels. Urban housing historian Richard Plunz points out, however, that ironically, the Multiple Dwellings Law was partially responsible for the decline of the high-rise as a form of luxury housing since its “inferior design standards” in relation to external light and ventilation led to smaller apartments with less light.⁸

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23rd Street and Lexington Avenue

The George Washington Hotel is located on land that was originally part of the Rose Hill Farm, made up of 131 acres purchased by John Watts in 1747 between what are now East 21st and East 30th streets.⁹ Located well outside of the city's eighteenth-century limits, this area was largely undeveloped until the early nineteenth century when it became one of the city's premier cattle markets. One local landmark was the Bull's Head Tavern, an establishment that originated on the lower Bowery and moved to Third Avenue and 24th Street in the 1820s. Acting as a gathering place for drovers, stockmen and merchants, its associated cattle mart led to this area being sometimes referred to as Bull's Head Village.¹⁰

By the middle of the nineteenth century, 23rd Street became a new fashionable milestone for Manhattan's perpetually north-moving population. In the 1840s the areas around Gramercy Park and Madison Square were developing as popular residential communities for the wealthy, while to the east industry dominated the waterfront and inland areas. This new pressure prompted the Bull's Head cattle mart to move to 42nd Street, leaving a variety of other businesses in its wake. Early maps show a diverse assortment of building types at the intersection of 23rd Street and Lexington Avenue including upscale rowhouses, brick and frame commercial buildings, and the Free Academy (later the College of the City of New York), designed by James Renwick Jr. and built in 1849 at the southeast corner. Lexington Avenue marked the crossroads between the fashionable residential areas to the west and south and the manufactories, coal yards, marble works and livery stables to the east and north.

By the turn of the twentieth century, the neighborhood was opened up to new transportation options including the Third Avenue Elevated Train, which opened in 1878, and the Interborough Rapid Transit Company's (IRT) underground subway running along Fourth Avenue (now Park Avenue South), which opened in 1904. Both lines had stops at 23rd Street. However, little else had changed in the makeup of the neighborhood. If anything, the area had become dominated by auction stables. Firms such as Whitson & Sons, Seligmann & Hahn, Oakley & Smith, Fleischmann & Co., Fiss & Doerr and I.H. Dahlman occupied the blocks on East 24th and 25th streets between Lexington and Third avenues with their one and two-story brick stables.¹¹

It wasn't until the 1920s that development pressure began to bring tall buildings to both Gramercy Park and 23rd Street. In 1926, Renwick's mostly vacant Free Academy building at the southeast corner of 23rd Street and Lexington Avenue was demolished to make way for a 16-story structure that is now part of the Baruch College campus. In addition to the Free Academy, the old stable buildings began to be replaced. In 1930, Tom Benson, an eighty-three year old dealer lamented to the *New York Herald Tribune* the new costliness of the neighborhood and the concomitant loss of old sales stables.¹²

Increased land values and an intense need for space led to the construction of tall buildings that dwarfed the low-scale houses and stables that had previously defined this neighborhood. In 1931, the *New York*

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Times surveyed the changes in an article declaring “steady expansion” around Gramercy Park. Accessibility and its convenient location close to the midtown shopping and office districts were attributed to the demand.¹³

The *New York Times* credited the construction of the George Washington Hotel to the success of other similar hotels in the area such as the extant 675-room Kenmore Hall (1929, Maurice Deutsch), located at 145 East 23rd Street, just east of the George Washington. But more than the success of the Kenmore, it was the site’s proximity to the midtown shopping and office districts, as well as convenient transportation, that determined its construction.

The George Washington Hotel

In 1928, plans were announced for a 630-room residential club hotel to be built on Lexington Avenue by the Harry Barth of the Club Hotel Corporation.¹⁴ Envisioned as the first of a “presidential group” of affordable apartment hotels catering to young working men and women in metropolitan cities, it was to be followed by others in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, Boston, Buffalo and Newark, each to be named after presidents.

Born and educated in New York, Barth initially worked with his father selling hotel and restaurant supplies. In 1925 he sold his interest in his father’s firm, L. Barth & Sons, and embarked on building a chain of hotels including the Hotel Gladstone at 114-22 East 52nd Street (1923, George Pelham, demolished) and the Westbury Hotel at 15 East 69th Street (1926, George Fred Pelham, within the NR-listed Upper East Side Historic District) and several more outside New York City.¹⁵ Barth acted as president of the Club Hotel Corporation, while his own Barth Hotels Corporation managed and operated the hotels. The George Washington and its subsequent presidential group was meant to be similar to his other hotels but in a lower price range to attract working young men and women just starting their careers in the city. As these tenants found success, Malcolm Sumner, an official for Barth Hotels, predicted that they would move to the larger and more expensive apartment hotels in New York under their management.¹⁶ Ultimately, the George Washington would be the last of Barth’s projects before the Depression caused him to leave the hotel-building business.

By March of 1929 Barth arranged \$1.65 million in financing for the George Washington Hotel with the Empire Bond and Mortgage Corporation, which had also furnished the building loans for similar projects such as Kenmore Hall, a building located on 23rd Street and also designed to be affordable for single workers.¹⁷ C.J. Fleischmann, of the Empire Bond and Mortgage Corporation, emphasized in the *New York Herald Tribune* that these affordable apartment hotel projects were not an attempt at charity or philanthropy, but rather “founded on a solid business basis.”¹⁸ Fleischmann cited the fact that at Kenmore Hall, the women’s floors had already been fully rented shortly after completion and had a waiting list of 150 to 200.

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Plans for the George Washington were drawn up by architect Frank M. Andrews and his associate John B. Peterkin with a facade in the “modern treatment,” featuring Indiana limestone (later substituted by cast stone), brick and terra cotta.¹⁹ This “residential club hotel” belonged to an architecturally distinguished group of apartment hotels built for the working man and woman in the early part of the 20th century. They were distinguished from earlier “bachelor hotels,” meant for single men, and from early apartment hotels meant for young families, by accommodating both sexes on alternating floors. The Italian Renaissance Revival-style design provided a sense of elegance and urbanity with its monumental entrance, elaborate terra-cotta decorative detailing, and grand interior spaces finished with luxurious materials. Arranged to provide a “club” atmosphere, the ground floor was given over to a lobby and shops, while the entire second floor was designated as communal space for residents and their guests. This included a large Italian Renaissance Revival-style gallery that overlooked Lexington Avenue, a Colonial Revival-style lounge, a Georgian Revival-style library, and smaller reception and bridge rooms. Additional amenities included a penthouse solarium and roof garden.

The George Washington quickly generated interest. In an advertisement for trust certificates for the building in May 1929, the Empire Bond and Mortgage Corporation noted that over 400 applications had been received for the building’s 622 rooms although it had not yet been advertised.²⁰ By June it was reported that the hotel had received enough applications to fill all of the rooms.²¹

Advertisements and brochures for the building boasted its superior location and its well-equipped, affordable rooms. The building’s official slogan, “Ten Minutes from Everywhere,” alluded to its proximity to the nearby business district at Madison Square, shopping on Ladies’ Mile, as well as numerous local clubs, schools and churches.²² Many transportation options also existed nearby including the IRT at Fourth Avenue, the Brooklyn-Manhattan Transit Corporation (BMT) subway at Fifth Avenue and the elevated train at Third Avenue, not to mention numerous surface cars. With “unprecedented home-living values,” each of the completely furnished “cozy” rooms had a private bath, and weekly rates for the rooms ranged from \$12.50 to \$16.50, with no leases required.²³ For further convenience there was also a resident physician and dentist, as well as a ladies hair salon, barber shop, valet, dry-cleaning and laundry, drug store, newsstand, and theater ticket agency.

Although originally scheduled to open on May 1, 1929, the official opening was delayed until February 22, 1930, likely due to an electricians strike.²⁴ As part of the opening ceremonies, the hotel arranged an exhibition of some of George Washington’s manuscripts, as well as maps and books from his collection.²⁵ The same month as its opening, the building was featured in *Architecture and Building*, which particularly noted the public rooms, including the 70-foot Italian Renaissance Revival-style gallery that looked out onto Lexington Avenue from a series of wide recessed windows with window seats, the Georgian Revival-style library with fine wood paneling, and the Colonial Revival-style lounge finished in knotty pine.²⁶

Later History

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The onset of the financial crises following the stock market crash of October 24, 1929 took its toll on the George Washington Hotel. In 1932 the Club Hotels Corporation defaulted on its mortgage and the bondholders took control of the hotel.²⁷ The Manufacturer's Trust Company filed suit to foreclose on the property in December of that year, but the bondholders delayed the foreclosure until they were able to acquire the building in 1935.²⁸

In the meantime, the hotel was changing with the neighborhood. In 1936, a new bar and grill (not extant) opened in the space of the hotel's former drugstore.²⁹ Designed by John B. Peterkin, one of the original architects of the hotel, the new space featured a concave bar of Brazilian rosewood, walls of African teakwood and white mahogany, aluminum doors and wall trimmings, and chairs and tables upholstered in red leather.³⁰ Connected to both the hotel lobby and the basement dining room, the new bar and grill was clearly meant to be yet another amenity for the George Washington's guests. When its sidewalk cafe opened for the summer the *New York Herald Tribune* noted that it was the first enterprise of its kind in the area, adding a "Continental touch" to the Gramercy Park district.³¹ In a similar attempt to raise the profile of the hotel, in 1937, a marquee (no longer extant), also designed by Peterkin, was constructed over the entrance.³²

The hotel remained more or less successful through the 1930s. In 1939 the writers Christopher Isherwood and W.H. Auden stayed at the George Washington. Auden spent two months in the hotel, praising it to a friend as the "much nicest hotel in town."³³ When he left he wrote the manager a thank-you note in verse expressing admiration for the George Washington.

... It stands on the Isle of Manhattan, Not far from the Lexington line, And although it's demode to fatten,
There's a ballroom where parties may dine

...The walls look unlikely to crumble And although, to be perfectly fair, A few entomologists grumble That
bugs are exceedingly rare, The Normal Man life is so rich in Will not be disgusted, perhaps, To learn that
there's food in the kitchen, And that water comes out of the taps, That the sheets are not covered with
toffee, And I think he may safely assume That he won't find a fish in his coffee Or a very large snake in his
room.

While the curious student may study All the sorts and conditions of men, And distinguish the Bore
from the Buddy, And the Fowl from the Broody Old Hen; And presently learn to discover How one looks
when one's deeply in debt, And which one is in search of a lover, And which one is in need of a vet; And
among all these Mrs and Mr's, To detect as each couple arrives, How many are really their sisters, And
how many are simply their wives.

But now let me add in conclusion Just one little personal remark: Though I know that the Self's an illusion,
And that words leave us all in the dark, That we're serious medical cases If we think that we think that we
know, Yet I've stayed in hotels in most places Where my passport permits me to go (Excluding the British
Dominions And Turkey and U.S.S.R.), And this one, in my humble opinion's The nicest I've been in so far.

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To the Manager of the George Washington Hotel Mr. Donald Neville-Willing and to all the staff with gratitude and good wishes from W.H. Auden.³⁴

Following the Depression and through the 1940s, the Gramercy Park neighborhood became less fashionable to the wealthy, but more affordable to artists. In 1943, the daily rate at the George Washington was \$2.50 and the weekly rate \$13.50, virtually the same as when it had opened thirteen years previously. Auden's stay was part of a trend of many artists, writers and performers living in the neighborhood, including George Bellows, Robert Henri, Eugene O'Neill, O. Henry, David Graham Phillips, Ida Tarbell, Nathanael West, and Ludwig Bemelmans.³⁵

In 1941 the George Washington was acquired by Carter Management Hotels, owned by Hyman B. Cantor, who operated a chain of hotels, including the Riviera in Newark, the Essex and Avery in Boston, and the Garde in New Haven. Carter announced renovations to the cost of \$100,000 including a new cocktail lounge (not extant) designed by Jac Lessman and the renovation of the solarium.³⁶ The new "23" Room opened in 1942 as a cocktail-supper room featuring a patriotic theme reflecting the hotel's name. At the time, there were two other dining rooms, including the Pine Room and the Washington Cafe.³⁷

By the 1970s both the neighborhood and the hotel had changed. Although the area immediately around Gramercy Park started to become fashionable again, 23rd Street and much of New York suffered through an economic downturn. In 1977 the *New York Times* reported that luxury hotels in the city were booming; however, many of the city's older hotels were facing problems. Cantor, who still owned the George Washington, attributed this both to a lack of tourism and to the city's failure to promote tourism. "There are not enough visitors in the city," he said. "The business is only good at the top, catering to the top dollar rather than catering to the masses. New York is for the masses."³⁸ Ultimately, in 1984, Cantor sold the building to George Washington Gramercy Park Hotel Associates. It was sold again in 1986 to 23 Realty Associates, who lost the building in foreclosure in 1994.

In 1995 the building was converted from a hotel to a school dormitory and eventually leased to students in the School of the Visual Arts.³⁹ Over 100 long-term residents still lived in the building, but students took over the rooms as the residents vacated.⁴⁰ In 2018 the 17-story building was rehabilitated and converted back to its original hotel use with restaurant and retail at the ground floor.

Frank M. Andrews (1867-1948), supervising architect

Frank Mills Andrews, the supervising architect of the George Washington, was born in Des Moines, Iowa in 1867.⁴¹ He studied civil engineering at Iowa State College and received a degree in architecture from Cornell University in 1888. Having traveled in Europe and attended the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, he was an adherent of the Beaux Arts and Italian and French Renaissance Revival styles. He worked for a time for George B. Post and also in the office of Jenney & Mundie in Chicago from 1891-93.

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Andrews opened a practice in Dayton, OH, in 1894. As a young architect his largest client was the National Cash Register Company, for which he designed the Arcade Building, American Building, and Dye Building.⁴² Several of Andrews's earliest commissions were institutional projects. These include the Battle Creek Sanitarium (1903, NR-listed 1974) in Battle Creek, MI, the Kentucky State Capitol in Frankfurt, KY (1905-09, NR-listed 1973), and additions to the Montana State Capitol (1909-12, NR-listed). F.M. Andrews & Company moved to Cincinnati, OH, in 1905 and opened a branch in New York City the following year.

Hotels were a particularly intriguing building type for Andrews. In 1907 he wrote of the "ideal hotel" in the *Real Estate Record and Guide*. "I have not yet despaired of designing the ideal hotel, in which every room shall be an outside room—it's almost as difficult a task as squaring the circle," he said. "A hotel must be a handsome building, with an interior that in luxury and appointments would put some of the palaces of the Old World to shame; it must be hot in winter and cool in summer, and there must be plenty of room. The man who grapples most successfully with these elemental problems is the man who gets the most hotels to build."⁴³ Among his most notable New York commissions was the Hotel McAlpin, located at the corner of Broadway and 34th Street and considered the largest hotel in the world when opened in 1912.⁴⁴ The opulent hotel featured a tapestry gallery, a banquet room with a vaulted ceiling, a marble lobby, a Louis XVI-style dining room and Russian and Turkish baths. Andrews is also credited with the design of the Seelbach Hotel (1905, NR-listed 1975) in Louisville, KY, the Hotel Sinton (1907, demolished) in Cincinnati, OH, and the Hotel Taft (1912) in New Haven, CT, among others. From 1910-14 he partnered with H.E. Kennedy and during World War I designed buildings in England and elsewhere.⁴⁵

However, it wasn't until the late 1920s that Andrews would get another chance to design New York hotels. In 1928 he submitted plans for the George Washington Hotel and in 1929 he submitted plans for a sixty-story apartment hotel at the intersection of Central Park West and Broadway. This second commission, for the Veronica Realty Corp., was likely abandoned due of the financial crisis that began that same year. Andrews died in Brooklyn in 1948. His obituary credited him as one of the architects of the famous Equitable Building, built 1913-15; however, recent scholarship has shown that he was involved but eventually pushed out of the project.⁴⁶

John B. Peterkin (1886-1969), associate architect

John B. Peterkin was born in England in 1886. The family migrated to the United States in 1901 and settled in Short Hills, NJ.⁴⁷ Peterkin took classes at Cooper Union, the Mechanic's Institute and studied architecture at the University of Pennsylvania from 1904-07. He worked for a time in the offices of George B. Post and Waid & Wallauer. Eventually he came to specialize in apartment houses and civic structures, including 53 Park Place (1922, in association with Cross & Cross), 1016 Fifth Avenue (1922, part of the NYC Metropolitan Museum Historic District), the Art Deco Airlines Terminal Building (1939-

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40, demolished), the East Side Airlines Terminal (1950-51, demolished) and the New York Coliseum (1953-54, in association with Leon & Lionel Levy, demolished). Peterkin also notably collaborated with Harrison & Abramowitz beginning in 1952, and is credited with the first scheme for the Socony-Mobil Building (1954-56, in associated with Harrison & Abramowitz, determined eligible for NR-listing).⁴⁸

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Endnotes

- 1 This section is based on the following sources: Robert A.M. Stern, et. al., *New York 1930: Architecture and Urbanism Between the Two World Wars*, (New York: Rizzoli, 1987), p. 207-08; NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, *The Allerton 39th Street House*, (New York: March 2008), 2-3; NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, *The Wilbraham* (LP-2153) (New York: City of New York, 2004); NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, (Former) *Aberdeen Hotel* (now Best Western Manhattan Hotel) (LP-2076) (New York: City of New York, 2001); “Apartment Hotel Will Test Its Legal Status,” *New York Times*, 31 October 1926, p. XX8; “Want Ban Delayed on Hotel Cooking,” *New York Times*, 29 April 1927, p. 3.
- 2 Elizabeth Collins Cromley, *Alone Together: A History of New York’s Early Apartments* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 189.
- 3 NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Barbizon Hotel for Women* (LP-2495) (New York: City of New York, 2012), 3.
- 4 A.C. David, “Three New Hotels,” *Architectural Record* 17 (Mar. 1905), 167-188, quoted in NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, (Former) *Aberdeen Hotel* (now Best Western Manhattan Hotel), 3.
- 5 The earlier Tenement House Act of 1867 covered any building that contained three or more rental dwellings, with independent living and cooking, and more than two per floor. The buildings constructed under this and the Tenement House Act of 1879 were known as “Old Law” tenements. The 1901 Tenement House Act added height restrictions. Additionally, the 1916 Zoning Resolution added height and setback laws for all types of building in New York City. For more information see Michael R. Montgomery, “Keeping the Tenants Down: Height Restrictions and Manhattan’s Tenement House System, 1885-1930,” in *Cato Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Winter 2003): 495-509; and Richard Plunz, *A History of Housing in New York City*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 84-85.
- 6 In addition to height restrictions, the Tenement House Law also regulated the amount of light and air needed to reach interior rooms and the number of fire stairs required per family.
- 7 Plunz, 195.
- 8 Plunz, 196.
- 9 Loyal to the British crown, Watts’ land was forfeited after the Revolutionary War. Although known as Rose Hill through much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this area of Manhattan is more commonly referred to as NoMad (North of Madison Square), Gramercy Park, Murray Hill or Kip’s Bay today. For more, see Christopher Gray, “A House That’s Shy About Revealing Its Age,” *New York Times*, 2 April 2006.
- 10 Charles Hemstreet, *Nooks & Corners of Old New York* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1899), 190-91.
- 11 *Map bounded by E. 27th St., 2nd Ave., E. 22nd St., 4th Ave. In: Sanborn-Perris Map Co, Ltd., Insurance Maps of the City of New York*, vol. 4 (New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Co. Ltd, 1890), plate 68.

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- 12 Gurney C. Gue, "Tall Buildings Replace Famous Auction Rings," *New York Herald Tribune*, 13 September 1930, p. 19.
- 13 "Residential Area Around Gramercy Park Shows Steady Expansion," *New York Times*, 31 May 1931, p. RE2.
- 14 "Sixteen-Story Hotel for Lexington Ave." *New York Times*, 1928 July 12, p. 43. The George Washington was built on land leased from the Roman Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary.
- 15 "Harry Barth Dead; Hotel Chain Head," *New York Times*, 27 August 1937, p. 19. Barth's hotels outside of New York City included the Hotel Warwick in Philadelphia, PA, the Hotel Taft in New Haven, CT, the Hotel Hampton in Albany, NY, the Hotel Jermyn in Scranton, PA, and the Edgewood Inn in Greenwich, CT
- 16 "Hotel Group to Bear Names of Presidents," *New York Times*, 16 June 1929, p. RE1.
- 17 "Building Loan is Placed," *New York Times*, 18 March 1929, p. 51. For more information on Kenmore Hall see, "Rooms for Workers," *New York Times*, 20 May 1928, p. 45.
- 18 "Kenmore Hall Has Long Waiting List of Women Toilers," *New York Herald Tribune*, 5 May 1929, p. D17.'
- 19 "Sixteen-Story Hotel for Lexington Ave."
- 20 "Advertisement: \$1,650,000 George Washington Hotel," *New York Herald Tribune*, 15 May 1929, p. 39.
- 21 "Hotel Group to Bear Names of Presidents," *New York Times*, 16 June 1929, p. RE1.
- 22 *The George Washington: A Residential Hotel* (New York: Club Hotel Corporation of New York, 1929).
- 23 "Advertisement: New Residential Hotel," *New York Herald Tribune*, 5 November 1929, p. 2.
- 24 For articles on the strike, see "Tie-Up of Building Looms As One Union Wins 5-Day Week," *New York Times*, 14 January 1929, p. 1, and "Coercion Charged To Union Strike," *New York Times*, 5 February 1929, p. 23.
- 25 "Washington Manuscripts Put on View as New Hotel Opens," *New York Herald Tribune*, 23 February 1930, p. 4.
- 26 "The George Washington Hotel, New York City" *Architecture and Building* 62 (February 1930): 37, and plates 49-51.
- 27 "Bondholders Will Hold Geo. Washington Hotel," *New York Herald Tribune*, 28 June 1932, p. 34.
- 28 "Geo. Washington Hotel Mortgage Foreclosure," *New York Herald Tribune*, 16 December 1932, p. 34; "Bondholders Get Hotel At Auction," *New York Times*, 13 June 1935, p. 42.
- 29 This change came about after a murder in the drugstore by one of its owners, Leonard Josephie, who shot his business partner, Abraham Ross. Their argument involved financial difficulties and the fact that the hotel was contemplating replacing the pharmacy with a bar. See "Pharmacist Slain; Partner is Held," *New York Times*, 22 September 1935, p. 20.
- 30 "Hotel to Open Bar and Grill," *New York Times*, 16 February 1936, p. RE3. Work was filed under NYC Department of Buildings Alteration #2739 in 1935.

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- 31 "Sidewalk Cafe Opened in Gramercy Park Area," *New York Herald Tribune*, 17 May 1936, p. 13.
- 32 The marquee was filed under NYC Department of Buildings Alteration #1927 in 1937.
- 33 Edward Mendelson, "W.H. Auden: Ode to the George Washington Hotel," *New York Times*, 8 March 1981, p. A11.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Harriet Davis-Kram, "Gramercy Park," in Kenneth T. Jackson, ed. *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, Second Edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 542.
- 36 "Chain Acquires Hotel," *New York Times*, 6 December 1941, p. 30. Lessman moved to New York in 1928 and furnished and decorated a number of hotels including the Delmonico. He became a prominent hotel and resort planner and developer, planning the renovation of several large Manhattan hotels in the 1960s including the Hampshire House, St. Mortiz, Biltmore, Lincoln, St. Regis, the Barclay and the Roosevelt. For more on Lessman, see "Jac Lessman, 85, Dies; Hotel-Resort Developer," *New York Times*, 8 November 1990.
- 37 "'23 Room' To Have Debut Next Week," *Women's Wear Daily* 64 (January 2, 1942): 43.
- 38 "Interest in Hotel Projects Stirs As Luxury Market Booms," *New York Times*, 4 December 1977, p. 314.
- 39 This work was filed under NYC Department of Buildings Job #101099847 in 1995 by Mandl Architects for the BLDG Management Co.
- 40 "A Niche Business: Dorms for New York Students," *New York Times*, 20 December 1998, p. RE7.
- 41 "F.M. Andrews Dies; A Noted Architect," *New York Times*, 3 September 1948, p. 19. "F.M. Andrews, Hotel McAlpin Architect, Dies," *New York Herald Tribune*, 3 September 1948, p. 18.
- 42 For more information on Andrews see, "Kentucky State Capitol History," *Kentucky Division of Historic Properties*, last modified September 6, 2013, accessed August 5, 2015, <http://historicproperties.ky.gov/hp/capitol/history/completehistory.htm>.
- 43 "The Ideal Hotel," *Real Estate Record and Guide* 79, no. 2037 (March 30, 1907): 625.
- 44 Christopher Gray, "The McAlpin Marine Grill; The Fate of a Polychrome Grotto Hangs in Balance," *New York Times*, 23 July 1989.
- 45 "The Unknown Architect: Frank Mills Andrews," *Calvary Cemetery*, last modified July 18, 2013, accessed August 5, 2015, <http://www.calvarycemeterydayton.org/the-unknown-architect/>.
- 46 NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Equitable Building* (New York: June 25, 1996), 3.
- 47 "Peterkin, John Boddington," in *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* 54 (University Microfilms, 1973), 318.
- 48 NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Socony Mobil* (New York: February 25, 2003): 2.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

“F.M. Andrews Dies; A Noted Architect,” *New York Times*, 3 September 1948.

“Hotel Group to Bear Names of Presidents,” *New York Times*, 16 June 1929.

“Sixteen-Story Hotel for Lexington Ave.” *New York Times*, 1928 July 12.

Stern, Robert A.M., et. al., *New York 1930: Architecture and Urbanism Between the Two World Wars*, (New York: Rizzoli, 1987).

The George Washington: A Residential Hotel (New York: Club Hotel Corporation of New York, 1929).

“The George Washington Hotel, New York City” *Architecture and Building* 62 (February 1930): 37, and plates 49-51.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .24 acres

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 18 | Easting: 585757 | Northing: 4510368 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is the entirety of Manhattan block 879, lot 23.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

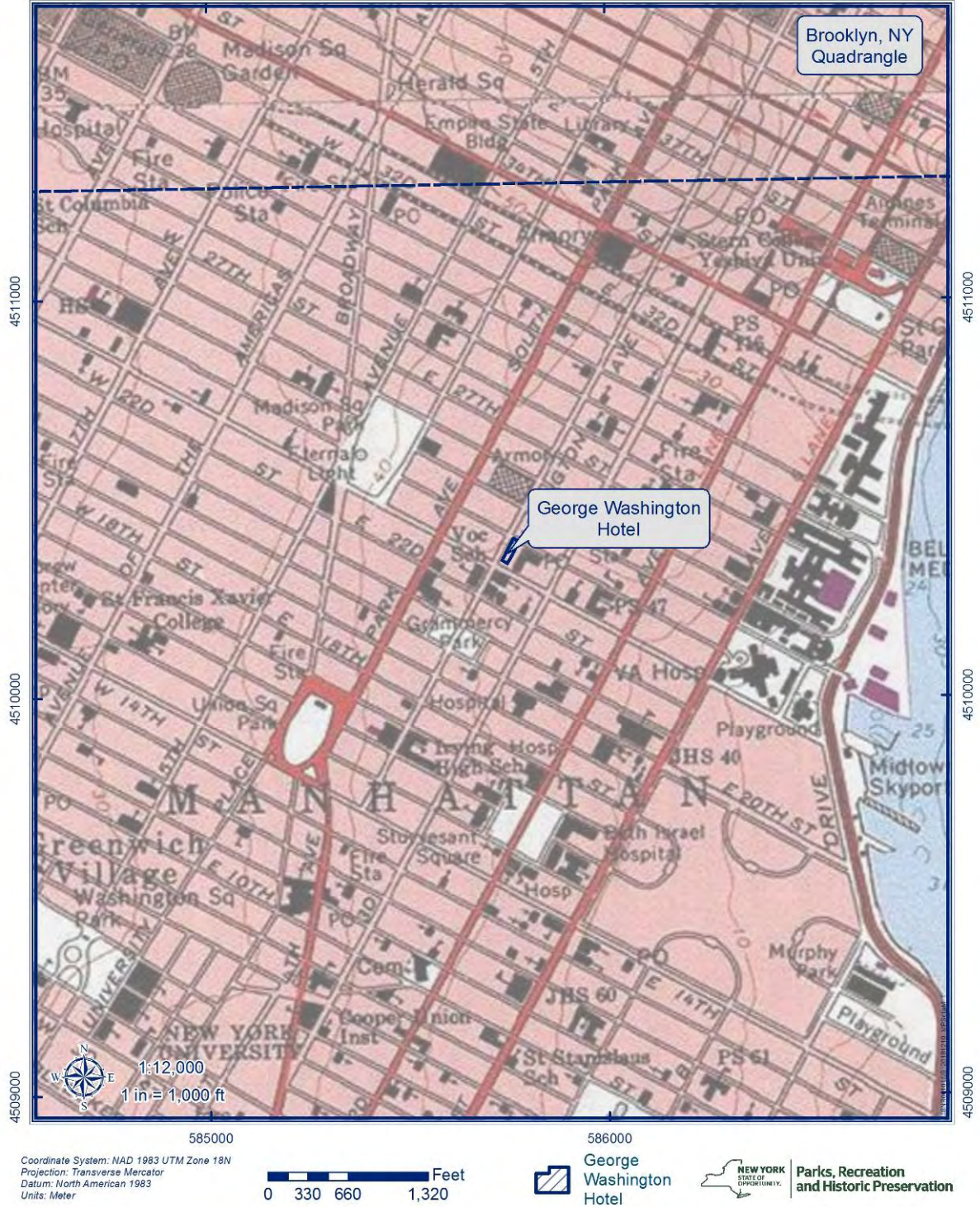
The nominated parcel is the lot historically associated with the George Washington Hotel

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George Washington Hotel
New York, New York Co., NY

23 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY 10010



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George Washington Hotel
New York, New York Co., NY

23 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY 10010



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



 George Washington Hotel



Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

George Washington Hotel
Name of Property

New York, NY
County and State

George Washington Hotel
New York, New York Co., NY

23 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY 10010



George Washington Hotel
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County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Lindsay Peterson
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street & number: 11 Hanover Square, 16th Floor, New York, NY 11218
city or town: New York state: NY zip code: 10005
e-mail peterson@hqpreservation.com
telephone: 212-274-9468
date: November 2018

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

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Photograph Log

Name of Property: George Washington Hotel
City or Vicinity: New York City
County: New York
State: NY
Photographer: Lindsay Peterson
Date Photographed: November 2, 2018

Photo 1 of 29

View of the south and west facades, looking northeast from the corner of Lexington Avenue and East 23rd Street.

View 2 of 29

View of the south façade, looking north from East 23rd Street. On this façade the three recessed doubled-height arched openings at the base read as an arcade.

View 3 of 29

View of the north façade, looking south from just north of East 24th Street.

View 4 of 29

View showing the modest side elevation from East 24th Street, looking southwest.

View 5 of 29

View of the building's base, faced with cast stone in a coursed ashlar pattern and terra-cotta decorative elements, on Lexington Avenue.

View 6 of 29

Detail view of the double-height monumental arched entrance on Lexington Avenue.

View 7 of 29

Detail view of the base north of the entrance on Lexington Avenue.

View 8 of 29

Detail view of the storefronts south of the entrance. The cast-iron frames are original and the infill is contemporary.

View 9 of 29

Detail view of one of the second-story windows. These Palladian-inspired tripartite windows are faced with terra cotta and feature engaged columns, scrollwork and an angel bust in the pedimented segmental arch. The windows are historic steel casements.

View 10 of 29

Detail view of upper floors, which are faced in red brick and trimmed with terra cotta. Note the decorative wrought-iron Juliette balconies that project from the 14th story and the double-height terra cotta arch with panelized terra-cotta spandrel.

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View 11 of 29

View of setback 17th story, or penthouse level, solarium. Note the brick-arched openings which contain some original steel multi-lite windows and doors.

View 12 of 29

View of the extant loggia piers on the 17th story.

View 13 of 29

Interior view of the Jacobean Revival-style lobby, decorated with wood paneling featuring broad arches with keystones, pilasters, rosettes, egg-and-dart detailing and floral motifs.

View 14 of 29

Interior view of the lobby elevators, which are located within arched wood openings. The floors are historic travertine.

View 15 of 29

Interior view of open stairway that connects the basement, ground floor and mezzanine. The stairway is composed of wrought-iron and brass railings, cast-iron pots, travertine treads and risers, and a marble base boards. It was extended at the ground story as part of the 2018 rehabilitation.

View 16 of 29

Interior view of basement elevator lobby, which retains some original moldings, original doors and frames, and a travertine floor.

View 17 of 29

Interior view of the open stair at the mezzanine level, where it terminates with a barrel-vaulted ceiling, paneled walls with decorative moldings, and a chandelier.

View 18 of 29

Interior view of the 70'-long Italian Renaissance Revival-style gallery at the mezzanine level. It is capped by a barrel-vaulted ceiling and features paired caryatids framing small recessed alcoves on the walls.

View 19 of 29

Interior view of one of the paired caryatids on the east wall.

View 20 of 29

Interior view of the Colonial Revival-style lounge located on the mezzanine level at the corner of East 23rd Street and Lexington Avenue.

View 21 of 29

Interior view of a double-loaded corridor on the mezzanine level that connects the gallery to the historic library.

View 22 of 29

Interior view of rooms, historically used as offices, on the mezzanine level.

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View 23 of 29

Interior view of the historic library which is finished with Georgian-style wood paneling with a partially coffered ceiling and herringbone-patterned wood floors.

View 24 of 29

Interior view of a typical steel fire stair.

View 25 of 29

Interior view of typical upper floor elevator lobby and partial view of the E-shaped double-loaded corridors.

View 26 of 29

Interior view of a typical hotel room.

View 27 of 29

Interior view of a typical hotel room.

View 28 of 29

Interior view of the elevator lobby at the 17th floor penthouse solarium.

View 29 of 29

Interior view of penthouse showing the original black-and white checkboard terrazzo floor that connects the space.

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Map



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1. Sanborn map, ca. 1985 showing the building at the northeast corner of East 23rd Street and Lexington Avenue.

Historic Images



1. Rendering of the George Washington Hotel, 1930. (*Architecture and Building*, vol. 62, February 1930)

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2. View of the lobby looking north, 1930. (*Architecture and Building*, vol. 62, February 1930)

George Washington Hotel
Name of Property

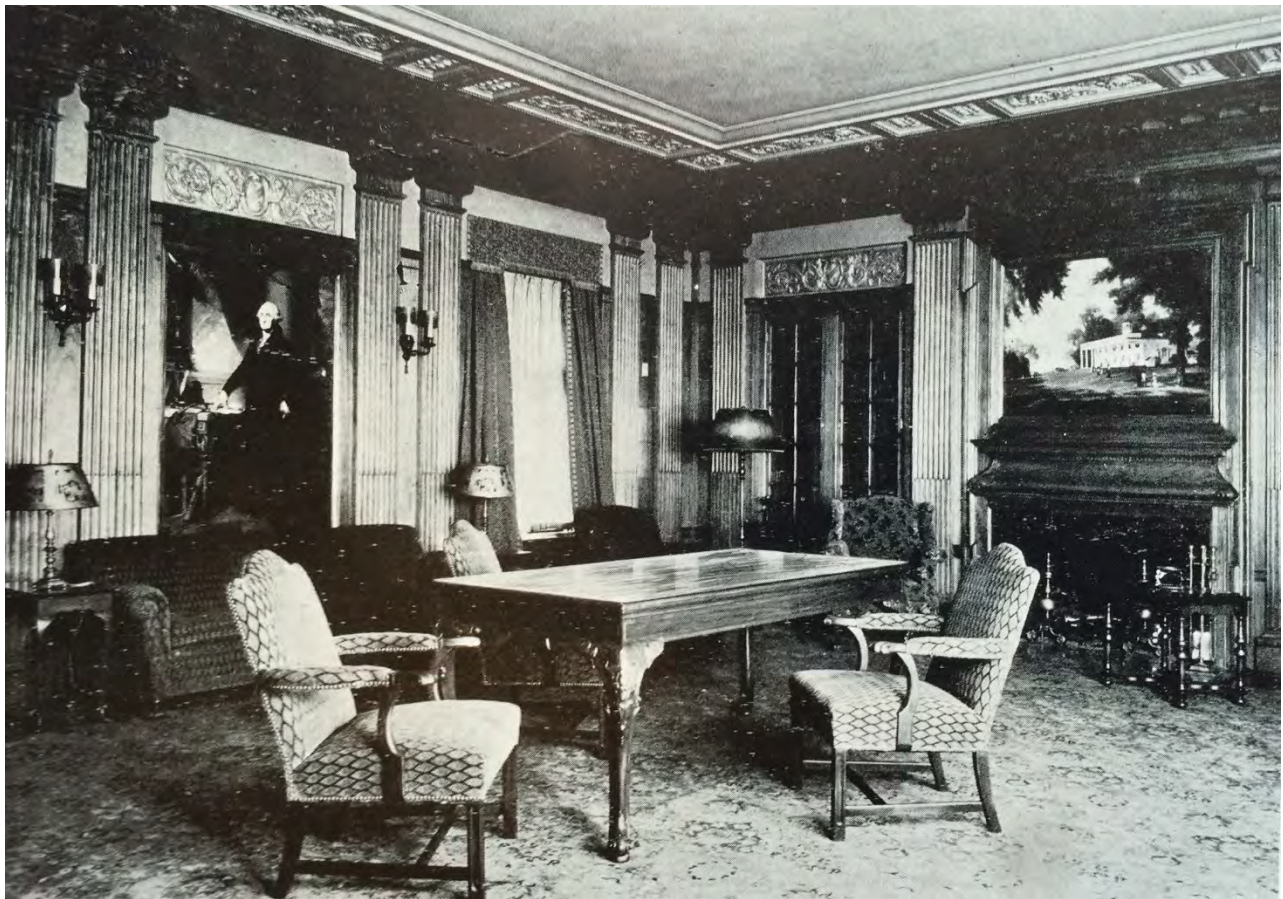
New York, NY
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3. View of the gallery looking south, 1930. (*Architecture and Building*, vol. 62, February 1930)

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4. View of the library looking northeast, 1930. (*Architecture and Building*, vol. 62, February 1930)

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5. View of the lounge looking northeast, 1930. (*Architecture and Building*, vol. 62, February 1930)

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6. View from the roof looking north towards the Empire State Building, 1942. (Museum of the City of New York)

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County and State



7. View of the building, looking northeast, 1950. (Museum of the City of New York)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.





139 EAST 23RD STREET

NYCCMC
ONE BRONX PLAZA
BRONX, NY 10460
1-800-207-2200



LEFT LANE
MUST
TURN LEFT

3 AVE
SOUTH
←





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COLLEGE

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23rd Street
Partnership

3931147

www.usps.com



Goldman

BAR
ACCOMMODATIONS
CAFE ROOFTOP

FIW

BROOKLYN CHURCH

ONE WAY





Freehand

BAR
ACCOMMODATIONS
CAFE
ROOFTOP

Chopped

NO STOPPING
OR PARKING
IN THIS AREA
EXCEPT AS
HEREINAFTER
SPECIALLY
APPROVED BY
THE POLICE
DEPARTMENT
VIOLATIONS
WILL BE
PROSECUTED
BY THE
POLICE
DEPARTMENT

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OR PARKING
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THE POLICE
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VIOLATIONS
WILL BE
PROSECUTED
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DEPARTMENT



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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 4/3/2019 Date of Pending List: 4/22/2019 Date of 16th Day: 5/7/2019 Date of 45th Day: 5/20/2019 Date of Weekly List: 5/31/2019

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver | <input type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

Accept Return Reject 5/20/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Alexis Abernathy Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2236 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

RECEIVED

MARCH 8 2019

DIVISION FOR
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Kate Lemos McHale
Director of Research

March 12, 2019

1 Centre Street
9th Floor North
New York, NY 10007

212 669 7902 tel
212 669 7797 fax

R. Daniel Mackay
Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

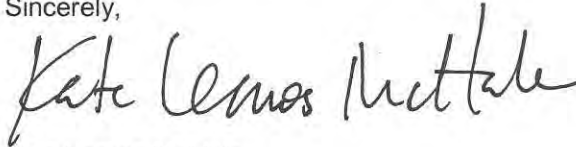
Re: George Washington Hotel, 23 Lexington Avenue, Manhattan (Block 879, Lot 23)

Dear Deputy Commissioner Mackay:

I am writing on behalf of Chair Sarah Carroll in response to your request for comment on the eligibility of the George Washington Hotel, located at 23 Lexington Avenue, Manhattan, for the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

The agency has reviewed the materials you submitted and has determined that the George Washington Hotel appears to meet the criteria for inclusion on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Therefore, based on this review, the Commission supports the nomination of the building. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Kate Lemos McHale
klemosmchale@lpc.nyc.gov



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ERIK KULLESEID
Acting Commissioner



28 March 2019

Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places

Mail Stop 7228

1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to submit the following five nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

Alku & Alku Toinen, Brooklyn, Kings County
St. Luke's Hospital, New York, New York County
George Washington Hotel, New York, New York County
Waterloo High School, Waterloo, Seneca County
Sidney H. Lowndes House, Northport, Suffolk County

Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank
National Register Coordinator
New York State Historic Preservation Office