

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

56-2386

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: The Wilbraham

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: 284 Fifth 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Not For Publication: Vicinity: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>Roger David Mundy</u>	<u>3/19/18</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
_____ 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

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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

5/4/18
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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Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property:

FOUNDATION: Stone
WALLS: Stone/Granite
WALLS: Stone/Brownstone
WALLS: Brick
ROOF: Copper
OTHER: Cast Iron

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

Commanding the northwest corner of Fifth Avenue and West 30th Street, The Wilbraham—eight stories of polished granite, rusticated and carved Belleville brownstone, cast iron, and Philadelphia brick capped in a copper mansard roof—is a remarkably well-preserved example of its style, period and type. Developed by Scottish-born jeweler William Moir between 1888-1890 as “bachelor flats” atop a flagship retail showroom for Gilman Collamore & Co., the richly detailed Romanesque and Renaissance Revival-inspired building was designed by a firm of fellow Scotsmen, the architects and brothers D[avid] and J[ohn] Jardine. The stretch of Fifth Avenue running north from Madison Square & 23th Street to 42nd Street has seen consistent change over the past century and a half. This unnamed neighborhood recently dubbed “Midtown South” by the real estate industry, connects the reemergent Madison Square area to Midtown but lacks a strong identity of its own. What was once a street of Gilded Age mansions and spec-built brownstones, and later a stretch of high-end retail shops, is in transition once again, as new glass and steel sky-scraping residential buildings slowly replace eclectic five- to seven-story late-Victorian and Beaux-Arts commercial buildings. Within a block of the Wilbraham, several heavily modified three and four-story brownstones dating to the 1840s remain interspersed with later, taller commercial, office, and apartment buildings. The Wilbraham is one of three major City landmarks anchoring this part of Fifth Avenue. To the south, across 30th Street, stands the imposing former Holland House Hotel (1891, Harding & Gooch), considered to be one of the finest hotels in the world at the time of its construction. Down the block, at 29th & Fifth, stands the Gothic revival-style Marble Collegiate Church (1851-54, Samuel A. Warner). The variety of styles and periods represented around The Wilbraham reflect many social, cultural and architectural changes visited upon the neighborhood since the 1840s. The nominated lot is the lot historically associated with The Wilbraham.

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Narrative Description

Exterior

The Wilbraham stands eight stories in height, with seven bays extending along West 30th Street, and two bays fronting Fifth Avenue. A two-story rusticated brownstone base sits on a polished grey granite watertable and houses the commercial spaces of the first and second floor. The main retail showroom entrance is located along Fifth Avenue, where non-historic entrance doors and show windows have been installed.

The detailing of the base is richly textured. Rusticated brownstone piers are formed by alternating bands of rock-faced stone with narrow carved geometric and organic patterns, capped with carved foliate capitals. In the middle bays of the W 30th Street façade at the first floor, two smooth round-arched openings are set into a field of rock-faced random ashlar. Ornate and delicate cast iron columns on tall bases provide intermediate support of the beams spanning the heavy rusticated piers framing the commercial spaces. Cast iron banderoles visually fasten the columns to the beams behind. Two of the three column bases have been removed, but the columns remain.

The 3rd through 6th floors are clad in a rich red Philadelphia brick, with brownstone cornices above the 5th and 6th floors. The window surrounds on floors 3-5 are framed in brownstone quoining, with carved spandrel panels and colonnettes between each window; 6th floor windows are framed in rounded rubbed brick. The 7th and 8th floors are treated individually: Rock-faced brownstone ashlar clads the 7th floor, while an angular copper mansard launches from this ashlar base and clads the 8th floor. Copper-clad dormers and brick and brownstone chimneys articulate the mansard. A non-historic one-story penthouse replaced the historic penthouse, which originally housed staff; this small structure was never counted as a story. The modern masonry and metal structure is not visible from the street.

The Wilbraham retains its original wood sash windows, which are deployed in a number of configurations. Two pairs of large 1/1 wood sash on each elevation light the second-floor retail space at the corner of Fifth and 30th. Along Fifth Avenue, the windows from floors 3-7 are ranked in threes; on the 30th Street elevation, they are paired from floor 3-6 and single at the 7th floor. Windows on floors 3 and 5 have square transoms, while the 4th floor windows have round arched transoms. From the outside, the bottom sash read as single pane windows; from the inside, large wooden bottom sash raise up into the transom, therefore can only be raised the height of the transom. Windows on floors 7 and 8 are 1/1 wood sash, paired in the 8th floor mansard.

The windows and doors of the original Fifth Avenue showroom have been replaced with non-historic metal frames and plate glass. Along W 30th Street, the commercial entrances in the central bays have been blocked off and/or reconfigured. Non-historic glass block infill and security bars have been added to the round-arched opening of the central southern bays. The show windows on W 30th Street near the Fifth Avenue corner retain the original decorative cast iron enframements, but they are obscured by a roll-down security gate. Non-historic canopies

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and signbands are found on both facades at the first floor. On the Fifth Avenue (eastern) façade, some mid-twentieth-century tiles have been veneered over the location of the original column base, which appears to have been removed to make way for the roll-down security gate. On both elevations, twentieth-century commercial canopies have been added.

The Wilbraham's residential entrance pavilion is located in the westernmost bay along the West 30th Street façade. The lobby is entered through a slightly projecting, ornamentally carved round-arched opening supported on pairs of cushion colonnettes with the Richardsonian's hallmark foliate capitals. The building's name, "WILBRAHAM," is carved in Uncial script across a fluttering banderole, and is flanked by foliate carvings and masks of zephyrs. This projecting pavilion is carried up to the sixth floor, where it is capped in a projecting pediment. The entire bay corresponds to the interior stair hall. The original lantern over the main residential entrance is missing, and the original treatment of the round arched area above the door is unclear.

Interior

The historic building plan remains essentially intact. The retail space at the corner of Fifth and 30th is one large open area, extending approximately 2/3rd of the way back toward the residential entrance on the west side of the building. A second-floor retail space occupies a similar footprint. Entering the residential lobby, the former superintendent's vestibule is located to the right of the entry doors, now a mail room. The open stairs dominate the west side of the hall, while the elevator is located directly to the rear (north end) of the lobby.

On the residential floors (3-7), the typical layout is a single-loaded corridor on the north side of the building, extending east from the elevator. Each original suite was two-rooms deep, designed on complementary plans with bathrooms alternately along the outside wall (with a window) or on the interior. Each unit has a corner fireplace that mirrored the unit next door. The 8th floor was originally the location of the kitchen and three servant apartments, now converted to apartments.

First Floor Residential Lobby

The layout of the lobby remains unchanged from the time of construction, however some of the finishes have been replaced. As described in 1890:

. . .the vestibule and main hall are tiled in mosaic, while the wall [sic] have high wainscotings in mahogany. The ceilings are decorated, and a large stained glass window meets the eye at the northern end of the hall. At the southeast corner, there is a superintendent's room which contains electric bells and tubes communicating with every apartment.¹

The current lobby has lost its Minton encaustic tile floor and stained glass window and, the superintendent's room, has been converted to a mail room. The original mahogany and oak woodwork of the lobby and upper hallways remains, but has been coated in several layers of

¹ "A Bachelors' Home on Fifth Avenue," *Real Estate Record & Guide* (1890): 305.

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paint—currently white. The building is in the process (in late 2017) of having the non-historic finishes carefully removed to reveal the original wood.

An Orientalist scenic mural fills the wall of the lobby from wainscot to crown molding, extending up to the second-floor landing. Early descriptions of the Wilbraham's interior describe scenic frescoes and paintings throughout the building; it is uncertain whether this is the original wall mural, but it may date anytime up to the 1935 renovation. Any original wallpaper and ceiling murals on the upper floors have been painted over.

A substantial open stair with ornamental cast iron newel and balustrade runs along the western wall of the lobby and serves the entire residential building. Pink marble treads and landings lead up to the upper floors, where it meets halls laid in polychrome encaustic tiles. Beyond (north of) the stairs, the original elevator shaft once housed a state-of-the-art Otis elevator upon the building's completion. The current elevator is of a more recent vintage.

First Floor Retail Showroom

The high-ceilinged retail showroom along Fifth Avenue retains its interior cast iron columns and ornamental plaster ceiling. Entrances along 30th Street have been altered to create a second retail space in the middle bays.

Second Floor Commercial Space

The second-floor commercial space occupies the majority of the floor plate from Fifth Avenue back to the elevator. Though it remains in commercial use, it is accessible from the residential stair hall and elevator. It retains some of its period plaster details and cast iron columns.

Residential Floors 3-8

On the residential floors, a wide single-loaded corridor extends east from the elevator and stair hall and runs the length of the building. The original encaustic tiles have been removed from the lobby but remain on all landings of the upper floors. Most have been coated in a thick paint. This coating is in the process of being removed and the tile floors restored. Residential corridors have been carpeted for acoustics, but are likely also still tiled. Each corridor is wainscoted in painted paneled wood, and each has a two 1/1 windows facing into a light/air shaft, located near the elevator.

One of the resident's apartments was featured in a period interior decorating journal from 1892, which described the approach to the unit:

Mr. Tewksbury's apartments on the third floor are reached by an elevator. A major-domo in livery conducts us along a corridor laid in a mosaic of tiles, the walls of which are wainscoted in polished oak, and otherwise painted a robin's-egg blue, and the ceiling hand-frescoed.²

² "A Typical American Interior," *The Decorator and Furnisher* 20 (1892): 140.

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There were originally 6 units per floor, all located along the south and east walls. All original door locations along the corridor remain the same, but some units have been combined internally. The building's original layout included 42 residential units on floors 3-7, plus three servants' units on the 8th, and two servants' rooms in the penthouse (47 units total). There are now a total of 38 residential units.

Apartment Layout & Design

As described in the *Real Estate Record and Builders Guide* upon completion in 1890:

Each suite of apartments consists of two rooms and a bathroom, and these can be enlarged at will by throwing two or more suites together. The rooms which comprise each suite are arranged so that one can be used as a sitting room and one as a bedroom. The sitting-room has a handsome mahogany mantel. . . .The fireplace, which is tiled, contains an ornamental basket and brass fenders. . . .The floors have inlaid borders of hardwood, while the centre flooring is of selected timber, finely planed and ready to be stained and polished in any color desired by the occupant. The walls are handsomely papered and the ceilings frescoed. A feature of each sitting-room is the handsome gas and electric light chandelier containing self-lighting electric and gas attachments and electric arcs. The bedrooms are handsomely appointed and have electric sidelights. . . .The bathrooms, and there is one to each suite, are models of neatness and sanitation.³

The typical apartment consists of two rooms plus a bathroom and closet. The reception or sitting room is separated from the bedroom by a broad segmentally arched opening. Doors to adjoining apartments were included in the original design to enable expansion into multiple apartments. No kitchens were provided in the original layout; a communal dining room and kitchen on the eighth floor were intended to supply in-house breakfast and dinner for bachelors.

In 1934-35, under the architectural guidance of Emery Roth and D. Everett Waid, working for the contractors Bing & Bing, several of the residential units were remodeled to include kitchens. Bathrooms were remodeled as part of this functional update. The original 1890 finish details—including plasterwork, trim, moldings, doors, wood windows, fireplace surrounds and mantels—were left intact.⁴

The woodwork of the apartment is in polished mahogany. . . .The ceiling is decorated in fresco, there being a border of beautiful scrolls in gold and colors in the style of the French Renaissance. The elaborate mahogany mantel contains a large mirror of beveled glass. . . . The fire-place has a border of blue enameled tiles.⁵

³ "A Bachelors' Home on Fifth Avenue," 305-306.

⁴ Jay Shockley, "Wilbraham Designation Report," (New York: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, 2004), 6.

⁵ "A Typical American Interior," 142.

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As described in period literature, the original units were designed to be customizable by configuration and finishes. It appears from written descriptions and from observation of existing conditions, that there is variation among units. For example, the unit visited during onsite investigations has an Italian marble fireplace surround and hearth, while a fireplace described in an 1892 design magazine is surrounded in blue enamel tiles. Over the years, some of the apartments have been combined, as they were designed to be able to do. There remain examples of intact apartments retaining many of their original molding, trim, and plaster details, segmentally arched openings, as well as mantels and 1930s-era bathrooms.

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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

1888-1890
1888-1935

Significant Dates

1888-1890

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

D&J Jardine, Architects

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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 Wilbraham, constructed 1888-1890 as a bachelor apartment hotel along a transitioning Fifth Avenue, is locally significant under Criterion A as an example of an emergent housing type designed to serve the changing demographics of a rapidly urbanizing America in the late nineteenth century. Designed in a richly detailed Romanesque revival mode by the noted New York City firm of brothers D[avid] & J[ohn] Jardine, the eight-story brownstone, brick, granite and cast iron building is architecturally significant under Criterion C, as a well-preserved representative of both its Romanesque revival style and its type: the bachelor apartment. As one of the earliest and most architecturally distinguished local examples of the bachelor apartment or bachelor flat, the period of significance coincides with its date of construction, and corresponds to the era of the rise and fall of the bachelor apartment, exemplified in The Wilbraham. Successful jeweler William Moir commissioned fellow Scotsmen, the architect-brothers David and John Jardine, to design The Wilbraham in 1888. Moir saw a good investment to be made on this stretch of Fifth Avenue, where clubs and high-end retail stores were steadily replacing the brownstones and Gilded Age mansions of only three or four decades earlier. Bachelor apartments or apartment hotels were a new type of housing that emerged in the post-Civil War era to accommodate increasing numbers of mobile, unmarried men flocking to cities for work. Replacing an 1840s townhouse with an apartment hotel enabled Moir to maximize his investment by building taller than the six-story limit for residential construction.⁶ The first two floors of the building were designed to house a flagship retail space (see photos H5 & H6), fitting in with the high-end retail trade that dominated Fifth Avenue by the end of the century. The Wilbraham housed the flagship commercial space for high-end “fine china and fancy glass-ware” importers Gilman Collamore & Co., which occupied Wilbraham’s retail space for three decades.⁷ The building retains a high degree of integrity both exterior and interior, retaining elements of design, materials, and plan to an exceptional degree.

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

Fifth Avenue

The 1811 Commissioners Plan added Fifth Avenue to the map, but it was only gradually opened to development. Extending north from Washington Square to the Harlem River, the southern end of the avenue was recognized as an upper-class address by the 1830s. The section of Fifth Avenue between Madison Square and 42nd Street was only opened after 1837. From the 1850s through the 1860s, the Townsends, Astors, Vanderbilts, and department store magnate AT Stewart constructed elaborate mansions on the stretch of Fifth Avenue between 33rd & 35th,

⁶ Jay Shockley, “The Wilbraham Designation Report,” New York: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, 2004, 3, citing an 1885 city law limiting new residential construction to 80 feet or six stories.

⁷ Moses King, *King’s Handbook of New York City* (Boston: Moses King, 1893), 850; Shockley, 6.

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establishing this part of the avenue as the preeminent Gilded Age society address.⁸ Interspersed with the mansions north of Madison Square stood stolid, speculatively built brownstone rowhouses dating to the 1840s and the Marble Collegiate Church (Fifth and 29th), built in the early 1850s to serve the newly arrived residential population. During the late nineteenth century, retail and commercial flagships supplanted the grand old mansions of Fifth Avenue, as middle and upper class residential development moved up the avenue.

When The Wilbraham was completed in 1890 this area was a bustling, mixed use neighborhood with easy access to the street cars along parallel avenues. Located near stores, offices, several prominent social clubs and the Broadway entertainment district, a bachelor would find plenty to do, for work or pleasure, within walking distance of home. Delmonico's Restaurant (Fifth and 26th Street) opened in 1876, and catered to a fashionable upper-class clientele; its proximity was a selling point of The Wilbraham's location in the real estate press. By 1898, the fashionable set was already moving yet farther north; Delmonico's followed, decamping to 44th Street.

In 1908, John J. Gibbons of Gilman Collamore & Co., a prominent dealer of expensive fine china, porcelain, pottery, glassware, and other imported goods, purchased The Wilbraham from William Moir's widow, Emily, for \$1,000,000, signifying his belief in the long-term viability of this commercial district.⁹ By 1920, however, Gilman Collamore & Co. built a new showroom at 15 East 56th Street. By the 1930s, the area around the Wilbraham lost some of its luster, having been left behind as the money headed farther north.

D&J Jardine

The firm of Scottish-born brothers David and John Jardine, established in 1865, was well-known for working in a number of modes throughout the city during the late nineteenth century. After training under their builder-architect father, both pursued careers in architecture and engineering and immigrated to the United States independently before forming an architectural partnership. The Jardines' projects ranged from mid-nineteenth century rowhouse designs (1860-80s), to large cast-iron or stone-fronted lofts of Tribeca, the Bowery and lower Broadway (1860s-1880s), to a handful of residential apartment buildings, including early examples of French Flats (1870s-1880s) and the Fourth Reformed Presbyterian Church (1874).¹⁰ Well regarded for the quality of their work, the Jardines were never associated with a particular style; like their contemporaries in the late Victorian era, they specialized in being architectural generalists, able to convincingly work in a variety of styles popular during the period.

For The Wilbraham, the Jardines designed a massive Romanesque revival-inspired edifice, lightened with the addition of delicately rendered cast iron columns and ornately carved brownstone details. Due to the work of architect Henry Hobson Richardson, the Romanesque Revival style, which was characterized by its heavy, rusticated stone masonry and emphasis on arches, had gained popularity during the 1880s. Substantial Romanesque revival design was

⁸ Eric Homberger, *The Historical Atlas of New York City* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1994), 100-101.

⁹ Shockley, 6; King, 850; "In the Real Estate Field: Fifth Avenue and Thirtieth Street Corner Sold for One Million Dollars," *New York Times*, January 3, 1908.

¹⁰ Shockley, 3-4, contains a detailed profile of Jardine firm projects.

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more commonly seen in large loft buildings of this era, where it gave the sense of solidity; or in smaller-scale brownstone rowhouses which could be richly ornamented on a manageable scale. The Jardines incorporated the rock-faced stonework and intricately carved stone detail of the Romanesque style but interpreted it freely. They blended it with classical references and other popular styles and trends, such as the use of a variety of materials and textures. The Wilbraham's copper mansard roof, atypical of the Romanesque but in keeping with Victorian eclecticism, attests to the Jardines' range of influences and interests. The interior—with paneled mahogany wainscoting, Minton tiles, ornamental cast iron and, when built, frescoed walls and ceilings—would have represented the height of Victorian taste. Upon completion, according to the *Real Estate Record and Guide*, the Wilbraham was “[t]he latest addition to the comparatively few bachelor apartment houses. . . in this city. . . and is certainly the ‘crack’ apartment house of its kind. . .” It was also regarded as “the most elegantly appointed among the bachelor apartment houses in New York City.”¹¹

Bachelor Flats

As remarkable as it is for its architectural style, the Wilbraham's architectural as well as its social significance extends to its typology. The Wilbraham represents a novel housing type that emerged in the last decades of the nineteenth century to challenge the longstanding traditions of the American home: what it should look like, how it is populated, and how it functions.¹² Called bachelor apartments or bachelor flats, the Wilbraham was actually more aligned with the high-end residential hotels that emerged during this period. When completed in 1890, the Wilbraham boasted a communal dining room, but none of the units included kitchens; the lack of a private kitchen distinguishes the hotel from the true apartment.¹³

Historian Paula Lupkin notes that beginning in the mid-nineteenth century “. . . the corporate reorganization of American Culture affected the rest of the built environment as well, requiring reformulation of spatial ideas about gender and class.” Middle-class men, made mobile by the railroad, flocked to urban centers, where an increasingly complex economy offered them a diversity of roles in business and industry. New housing strategies were required to meet the demands of a concentrated population of single, middle-class, white collar men.¹⁴

The YMCA began in London in 1844 and arrived in Boston in 1854. A clear precursor to the bachelor hotel or bachelor flat, the YMCA offered safe, dormitory-style housing for middle-class white men, along with in-house entertainment, such as billiard rooms and libraries, paired with an overarching mission of promoting moral rectitude. Shortly after the opening of the YMCA, Boston's Hotel Pelham (1857) was built, which is often cited as the first American apartment building.¹⁵ Unlike the YMCA, designed to convert & uphold spiritual and moral values, the

¹¹ “A Bachelors' Home on Fifth Avenue,” 305; “The Wilbraham,” *Real Estate Record & Guide* (1890): 335.

¹² Paul Groth, *Living Downtown: The History of Residential Hotels in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 2.

¹³ Groth, 7.

¹⁴ Paula Lupkin, *Manhood Factories: YMCA Architecture and the Making of Modern Urban Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), xxi, 2, 15.

¹⁵ Elizabeth C. Cromley, *Alone Together: A History of New York's Early Apartments* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 18.

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apartment hotel was designed to uphold standards of middle- and upper-class status and comfort. The hybridization of these two new housing types resulted in the development of the gendered space of the bachelor apartment hotel, which soon spread to other urban centers, including New York.¹⁶

During the 1870s in New York, the “French Flat,” an interpretation of the rambling Parisian upper-class apartment, legitimized apartment living for the well-to-do. Richard Morris Hunt is credited with designing the first French Flat in 1869, located at 142 East 18th Street near Third Avenue. Three years later, Morris designed Stevens House (1872), a luxury apartment building occupying the entirety of the south side of 27th between Fifth Avenue and Broadway, the largest and most ornate of its kind at the time. Stevens House, designed as eighteen permanent apartment residences, was soon converted into an apartment hotel for the transient rich.¹⁷ As in Boston, the luxury apartment hotel was the precursor to the gender-specific apartment hotel.

At the time it was built, the Wilbraham was noted as one of “comparatively few bachelor apartment houses. . .” in New York.¹⁸ Jay Shockley has identified four other bachelor hotels predating the Wilbraham, including another Jardine design, The Alpine (1282-86 Broadway, 1886-87, demolished.), completed the year before their Wilbraham Commission.¹⁹

According to housing historian Paul Groth, the decades between 1880 and 1930 “marked the widest viable range of housing diversity in American urban history.”²⁰ Rapid industrialization and urbanization spurred physical and social problems that housing policy sought to address; the general trend was toward a segregation of uses to avoid industrial and commercial sites bumping up against residential. Bachelor and residential hotels ran counter to the prevailing planning trends by inserting residents into the heart of downtown.

Unlike the YMCA, which offered in-house entertainment to dissuade men from partaking in spiritually hazardous pursuits, Wilbraham residents had a wealth of entertainment options, high and low, within a few short blocks. Located along Fifth Avenue just north of fashionable Madison Square and just east of the Broadway theater district (28th to 32nd Street), the Wilbraham was well situated for bachelor living. Men’s clubs and associations, including the Knickerbocker Club (Fifth Avenue & 27th); University Club (Madison & 26th); and the Scottish Rite Hall (Madison & 29th) were within three or four blocks. Madison Square Garden was four blocks away; proximity to the clubby restaurant Delmonico’s at Fifth and 26th was touted in Wilbraham’s early press.²¹

¹⁶ Lupkin, 3, 9-15.

¹⁷ Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 971.

¹⁸ Real Estate Record and Guide, September 6 1890, 305.

¹⁹ Shockley, 5.

²⁰ Groth, x; 22-23

²¹ “A Bachelors’ Home on Fifth Avenue,” 305.

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The advantages of hotel living were significant: Residents enjoyed proximity to jobs and to entertainment; month-to-month rents required minimal commitment; and single people accustomed to “a high standard of living in their parents’ homes” could enjoy servants, comfort, and company.²²

The residential composition of the Wilbraham aligned with the prevailing socio-economic trends, identified by Paul Groth:

From the Civil War through World War II, people in rapidly expanding business markets were often sojourners. The expansion of trade and railroad links throughout the United States opened thousands of white collar positions in manufacturing, marketing and managing chain and branch store businesses. Engineers, accountants, lawyers and other professionals flocked to assist these new operations.²³

The typical resident of the Wilbraham (and of bachelor flats of its quality) were Anglo-Saxon, middle- to upper-middle-class, white-collar men. Ages varied widely, and according to the census and contemporary reportage, the Wilbraham housed everyone from young men beginning careers as retail clerks and brokers; to middle aged lawyers, actors and architects; to elderly retired judges.²⁴

The era of the apartment hotel in New York—roughly 1880-1930—coincided with one of the greatest transformations in American society: the legitimization of singleness. Once thought to be a threat to the family, the single man, in the context of dignified housing, found a place for himself in the world. By offering “alternatives to traditional household culture,” the bachelor flat has also been cited as an incubator of gay society in the late nineteenth century by historian George Chauncey.²⁵ The freedom and independence of bachelor living—and the lack of surveillance by others, opened a world of possibilities for Wilbraham residents.²⁶

By the 1930s, the golden age of the bachelor flat was on the wane, and this section of Fifth Avenue had fallen out of fashion. Although it was still listed as “bachelor apartments,” a 1929 Manhattan directory shows that the Wilbraham housed fifteen female and ten male residents, including married couples. In 1934, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company became the owner due to unpaid taxes and a mortgage default. Under its ownership, the building was remodeled in 1934-35 by architects Emery Roth and D. Everett Waid with the firm of Bing & Bing, general contractors, to serve as more conventional apartments. This project included the creation of six apartments with kitchens on floors three through eight, the creation of a second-story office, and

²² Groth, 59-61.

²³ Groth, 57.

²⁴ Shockley, 5-6; “A Typical American Interior,” 140; “Judge Cooper’s Will Filed,” *New York Times*, June 3, 1909.

²⁵ George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 158-159.

²⁶ Groth, 7.

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the extension of the penthouse for the creation of two apartments.²⁷ The building has continually remained residential, with two stories of retail space at its base.

²⁷ Shockley, 6.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Burrows, Edwin G. and Mike Wallace. *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898*. New York: Oxford, 1999.

Chauncey, George. *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940*. New York: Basic Books, 2008.

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Eric Homberger, *The Historical Atlas of New York City*. New York: Henry Holt & Co, 1994.

King, Moses. *King's Handbook of New York City*. Boston: Moses King, 1893.

Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library. "Plate 17 [Map bounded by E. 36th St., Lexington Ave., W. 25th St., 8th Ave.]" *The New York Public Library Digital Collections*. 1891.
<http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/a1ebc562-2baf-5f02-e040-e00a18064811>

Irma and Paul Milstein Division of United States History, Local History and Genealogy, The New York Public Library. "No. 284 Gilman Collamore & Co. - No. 304 W.A. McLaughlin, shirt maker." *The New York Public Library Digital Collections*. 1911.
<http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47dc-9a7c-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

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<https://query.nytimes.com>.

_____. "Judge Cooper's Will Filed." June 3, 1909. Accessed online September 4, 2017
<https://query.nytimes.com>.

_____. "Living Amid Office Buildings With a Legend of Lillian Russell. May 18, 1968. Accessed online September 4, 2017 <https://query.nytimes.com>.

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Plunz, Richard. *A History of Housing in New York City*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.

Real Estate Record & Guide. "A Bachelors' Home on Fifth Avenue." September 6, 1890, pp. 305-306. Collection of Columbia University.

_____. "The Wilbraham." September 13, 1890, p. 335 (with illustration). Collection of Columbia University.

Shockley, Jay. "The Wilbraham Designation Report." New York: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, 2004.

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: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .12 acres

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

1. Zone: 18	Easting: 585549	Northing: 4511075
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting :	Northing:

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

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the attached map with scale.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

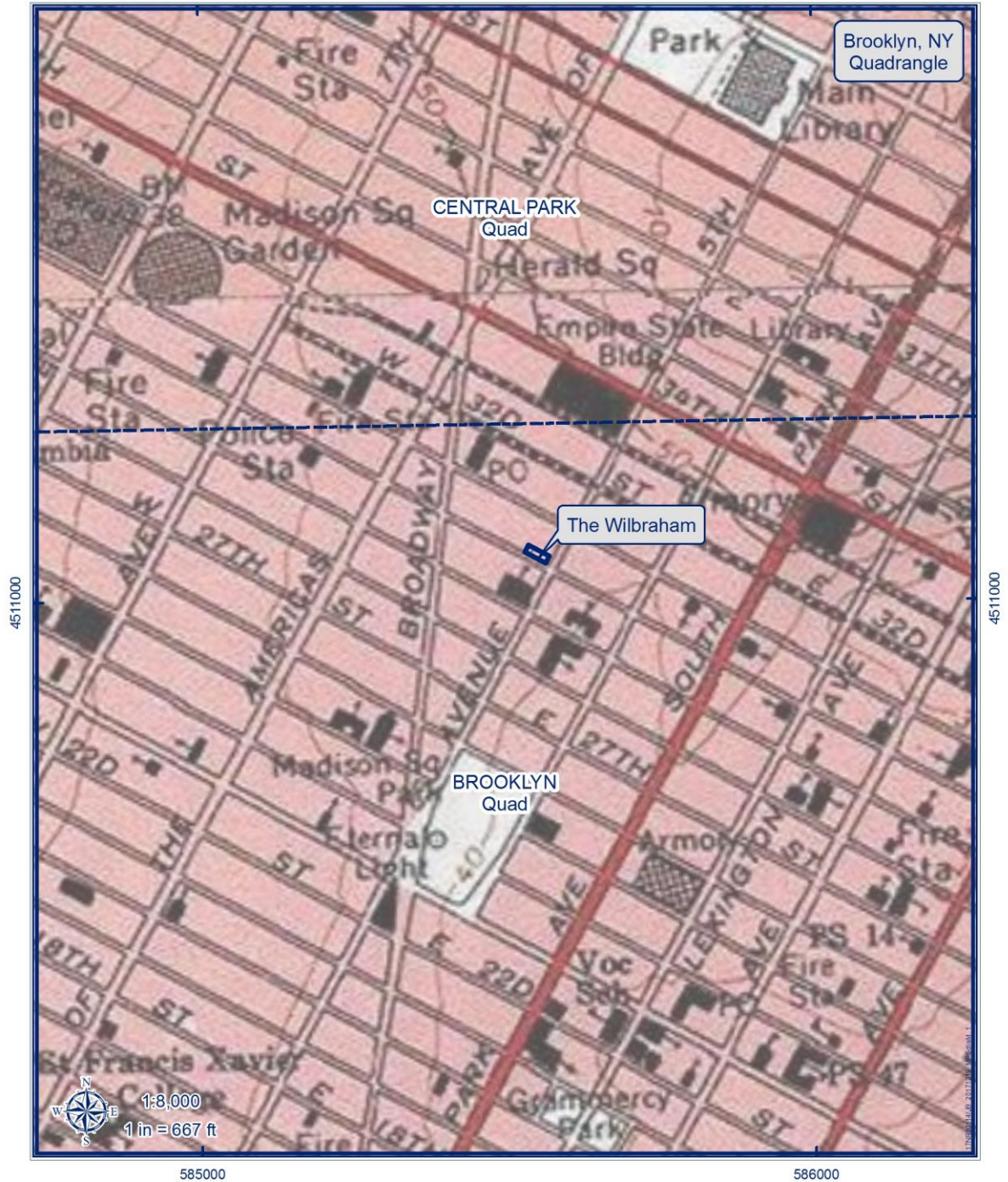
The National Register boundaries are coterminous with the building lot and legal boundaries of the parcel.

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County and State

The Wilbraham
New York, New York Co., NY

284 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10001



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



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation

The Wilbraham
Name of Property

New York, NY
County and State

The Wilbraham
New York, New York Co., NY

284 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10001



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



 The Wilbraham



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation

The Wilbraham
Name of Property

New York, NY
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Kerri Culhane
organization: Independent Architectural Historian
street & number: 107 North River Road
city or town: Fort Edward state: NY zip code: 12828
e-mail culhaneblack@gmail.com
telephone: 646-737-3390
date: November 13, 2017

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.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: The Wilbraham

City or Vicinity: New York

County: New York

State: NY

Photographer: Kerri Culhane

The Wilbraham
Name of Property

New York, NY
County and State

Date Photographed: August 2017

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction:

NY_New York County_Wilbraham_0001

Wilbraham principal facades, looking NW from SE corner of 5th Avenue & W30th Street

NY_New York County_Wilbraham_0002

Wilbraham residential entrance, 1 W 30th Street. Looking N.

NY_New York County_Wilbraham_0003

Wilbraham façade detail of cast iron columns and infill glass block. Looking N at S façade.

NY_New York County_Wilbraham_0004

Wilbraham lobby detail. Cast iron newel and balustrade; marble treads; mahogany paneled wainscot (painted). Looking E.

NY_New York County_Wilbraham_0005

Wilbraham lobby. Orientalist mural of unknown date (pre-1935). Elevator beyond stairs. Looking N.

NY_New York County_Wilbraham_0006

Wilbraham second floor landing, with original Minton encaustic tiles; mahogany paneling (painted). Looking NNE.

NY_New York County_Wilbraham_0007

Wilbraham third floor single loaded corridor. Looking ENE from elevator.

NY_New York County_Wilbraham_0008

Wilbraham hall; 4th floor typical of residential hallways. Looking W toward elevator.

NY_New York County_Wilbraham_0009

Wilbraham apartment, Unit 4D. Looking S from entrance door through original reception room toward bedroom.

NY_New York County_Wilbraham_0010

Wilbraham apartment, Unit 4D. Looking N from bedroom through original arched opening to reception room and entrance door.

NY_New York County_Wilbraham_0011

Wilbraham apartment, Unit 4D. Looking SE to the original mahogany and marble mantle and fireplace. Molding details are original (chimney piece/mirror is not original).

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NY_New York County_Wilbraham_0012

Wilbraham apartment, Unit 4D. Looking SE to fireplace detail. Original marble and bronze firebox frame.

NY_New York County_Wilbraham_0013

Wilbraham apartment, Unit 4D. Looking S to original wood 1/1 light hung sash windows and trim.

NY_New York County_Wilbraham_0014

Wilbraham apartment, Unit 4D. Looking W at original (now painted) trim and corner block details at bathroom door.

NY_New York County_Wilbraham_0015

Wilbraham apartment, Unit 4D. Looking WSW to the intact 1930s-era bathroom, designed by Emery Roth.

NY_New York County_Wilbraham_0016

Wilbraham exterior detail, to the right of the main entrance. Brownstone colonettes meet polished and carved granite base. Looking NE.

NY_New York County_Wilbraham_0017

Wilbraham exterior detail, rusticated and carved brownstone to the right of commercial entry door on W 30th Street. Looking N.

NY_New York County_Wilbraham_0018

Wilbraham, historic plasterwork and cast iron columns in the first-floor showroom. Looking W.

NY_New York County_Wilbraham_0019

Wilbraham exterior detail, show window along W 30th Street, with original cast iron colonettes and enframing. Non-historic roll-down gate and canopy. Looking NE.

NY_New York County_Wilbraham_0020

Wilbraham exterior detail, show window along W 30th Street, with original cast iron colonettes and enframing. Non-historic roll-down gate and canopy. Looking NW.

NY_New York County_Wilbraham_0021

Wilbraham, looking W at principal façade along Fifth Avenue.

NY_New York County_Wilbraham_0022

Second floor landing, showing the diversity of materials: cast iron stairs, marble treads, Minton tiles, mahogany wainscoting, plaster and painted walls.

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NY_New York County_Wilbraham_0023

Wilbraham exterior residential entrance detail. Looking N.

NY_New York County_Wilbraham_0024

Wilbraham interior second floor landing detail: wainscoting and original braided relief motif.
Looking SSW.

Historic Images

H1. The Wilbraham, *Kings Handbook of New York City*, 1893, p. 850 (detail).

H2. The Wilbraham, *Kings Handbook of New York City*, 1893, p. 850.

H3. The Wilbraham, *Real Estate Record and Builders Guide*, September 13, 1890.

H4. The Wilbraham on the Bromley Atlas, Plate 17, 1891. Collection NYPL.

H5. The Holland House Hotel ([1891] left), The Wilbraham (center left) were among the first large-scale new buildings on Fifth Avenue by the time of this April 1893 photo. Photo by Alice Austen/Collection Alice Austen House.

H6. The Wilbraham in the context of Fifth Avenue retail in 1911. Collection NYPL.

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H1. The earliest known published photograph of The Wilbraham, *Kings Handbook of New York City*, 1893, p. 850 (detail).

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850

KING'S HANDBOOK OF NEW YORK.

Gilman Collamore & Co., on Fifth Avenue, at the northwest corner of 30th Street, have a veritable art exhibition in their usual display of fancy glass-ware and fine china. The Collamore name is indelibly identified with the past traditions of this trade, and in houses of wealth and taste it seldom happens that there are not wares obtained through Collamore's. The firm occupies a handsome sandstone and brick building, which has a frontage of 40 feet on Fifth Avenue, and a depth of 125 feet. Their grand display-rooms are so laid out and arranged as to promote the artistic effect of the exceedingly choice stock of goods. A specialty is made of securing the richest and handsomest novelties in glass and china that Europe produces. Its buyers are instructed to look for novelties, rather than to attend to the purchase of staple goods. The house imports heavily of Sévres, Royal Dresden and Royal Berlin wares, and of the products of the best English and German factories. A large part of its imported goods cannot be found in any other house in America. The firm looks for its support to people of wealth, of good taste and refinement, and therefore handles nothing but expensive goods. Its methods are progressive and brilliant, and at the same time conservative. It will search all Europe for a novelty of real artistic value, and then will allow that article to make its own appeal to the



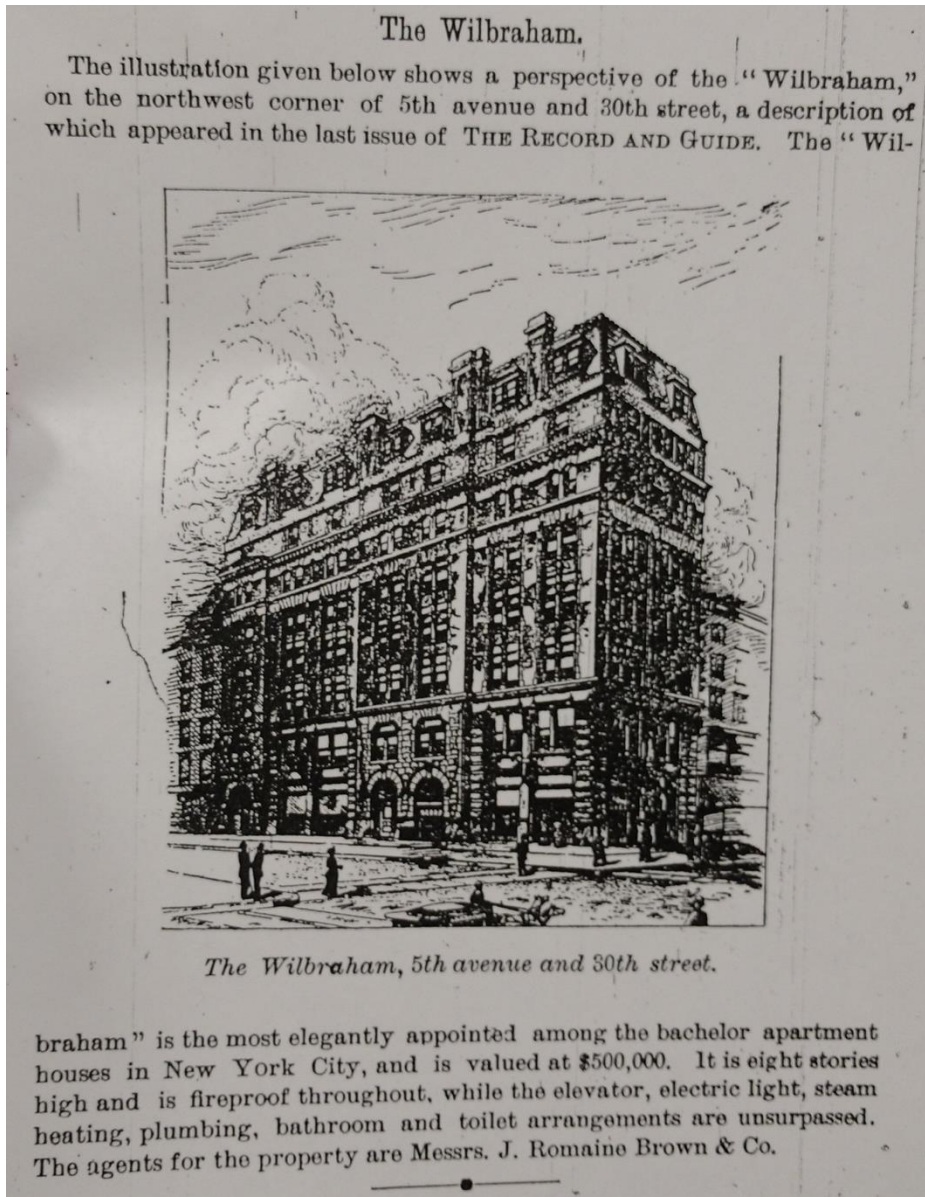
GILMAN COLLAMORE & CO., FIFTH AVENUE, NORTHWEST CORNER 30TH STREET.

purchaser by virtue of its place in the general display of stock. The house has been in existence for thirty years, and has always maintained itself at the head and front of its line of trade by virtue of the artistic excellence of its goods. It has been in its present location for about two years. Mr. Collamore, the founder, died some years ago. The firm at present consists of John J. Gibbons and Timothy J. Martin. The former pays special attention to purchasing, and makes trips to Europe frequently to that end. Mr. Martin devotes himself to the display and sale of goods. There is no choicer or more precious stock in this line in America, none more delicately exhibited.

H2. The Wilbraham, *Kings Handbook of New York City*, 1893, p. 850.

The Wilbraham
Name of Property

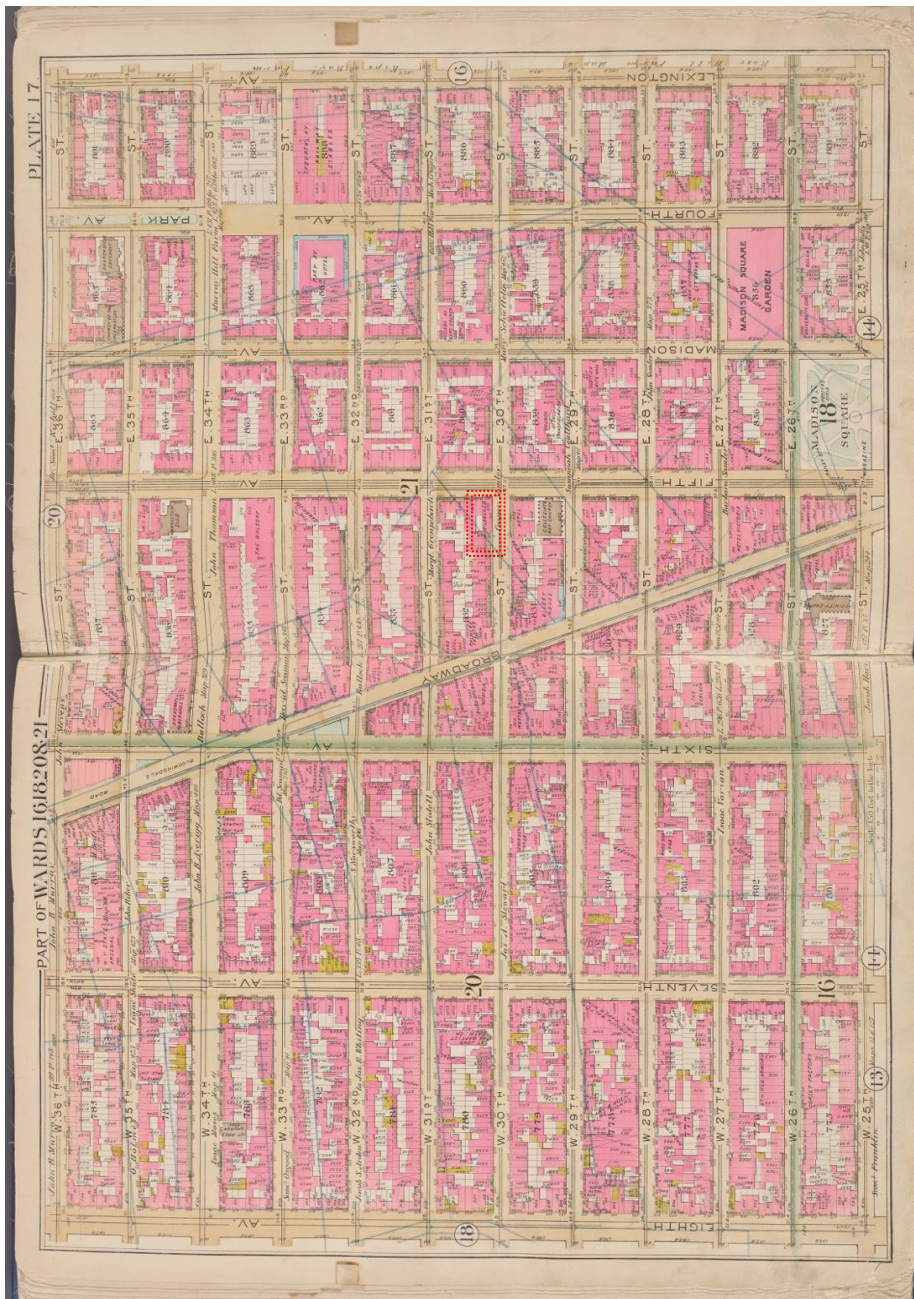
New York, NY
County and State



H3. The earliest known published image of the completed Wilbraham. *Real Estate Record and Builders Guide*, September 13, 1890.

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H4. At the time it was built, The Wilbraham was surrounded by a wide range of building types and uses, including an active entertainment district along Broadway; a burgeoning retail district along Fifth Avenue; and a majority of small scale residential and commercial buildings. Bromley Atlas, Plate 17, 1891. Collection NYPL.

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H5. The Holland House Hotel ([1891] left), The Wilbraham (center left) were among the first large-scale new buildings on Fifth Avenue by the time of this April 1893 photo. The surrounding buildings dated to the mid-19th century, when this part of Fifth Avenue was largely residential. Photo by Alice Austen/Collection Alice Austen House.

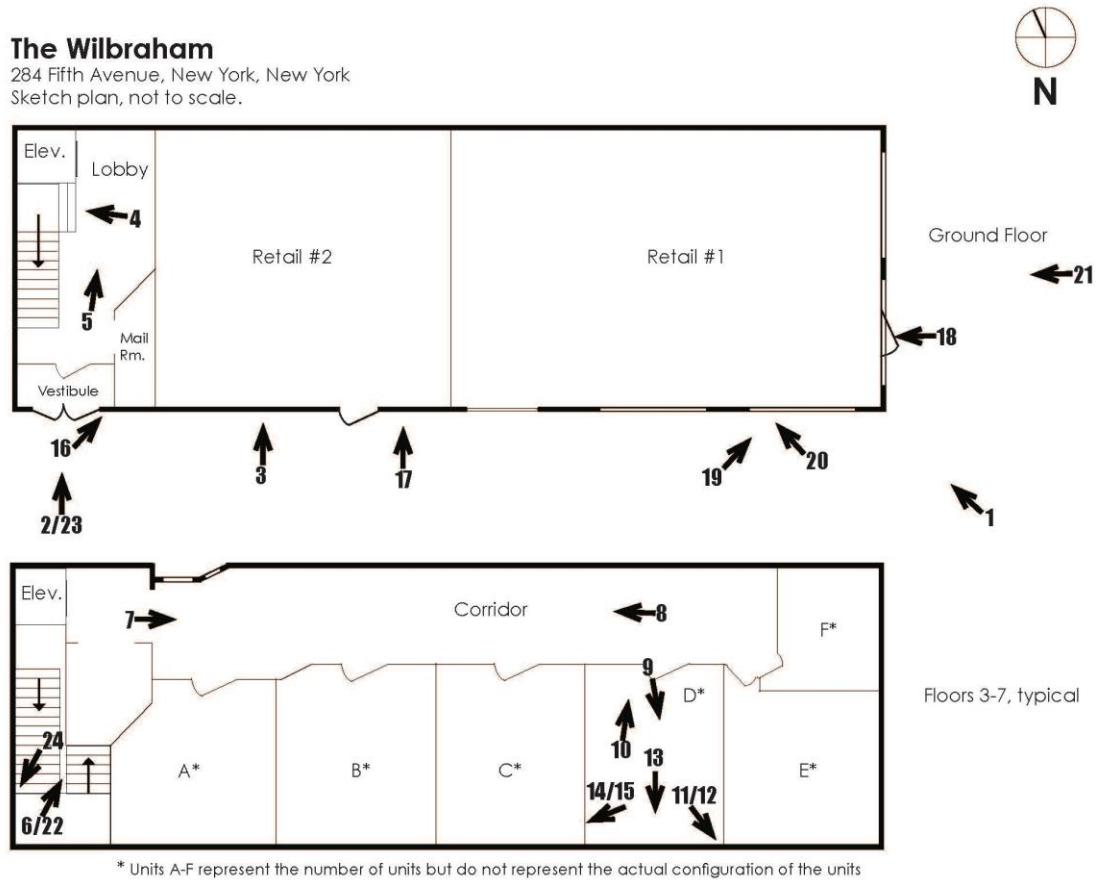


H6. The Wilbraham (left) in the context of its high-end Fifth Avenue retail neighbors in 1911. Collection NYPL.

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Sketch Plan/Photo Key



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.



ESTEX home fashions

ESTEX home

OK SABAI GYM

SHALOM BROTHERS

ONE WAY

ONE WAY

ISUZU

WHITE VAN

BLURRY CAR



284 Fifth Ave
1 W 30th St

WING BARN

RETAIL &
SPACE
LEASE
9918
MAN
aw.com

CAUTION
REFRESHING DELIVERY
FREQUENT STOP



SHALOM
ORIENTA



FIRE HOSE

8

99































204

SCATTERS

ESTEX home fashions

ESTEX home fashions





264

264

264

264

264

264

264

ESTEX home fashions

264

ESTEX

ONE WAY

15

CHOK SABAT GYM
212.544.2920

ESTEX





W. B. ALLEN

284 Fifth Ave.
1 W. 30th St.



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: 3/23/2018 Date of Pending List: 4/12/2018 Date of 16th Day: 4/27/2018 Date of 45th Day: 5/7/2018 Date of Weekly List: 5/4/2018

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 5/4/2018 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.

NYC
Landmarks Preservation
Commission

FEB - 9 2018

Meenakshi Srinivasan
Chair

February 1, 2018

Sarah Carroll
Executive Director
SCarroll@lpc.nyc.gov

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

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

212 669 7902 tel
212 669 7797 fax

Re: The Wilbraham, located at 284 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY

Dear Deputy Commissioner Mackay:

I am writing on behalf of Chair Meenakshi Srinivasan in response to your request for comment on the eligibility of **The Wilbraham**, located at 284 Fifth Avenue in Manhattan and a designated New York City Individual Landmark, for the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

The New York Landmarks Preservation Commission's Director of Research Kate Lemon McHale has reviewed the materials you submitted and has determined that The Wilbraham **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 Wilbraham. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Sarah Carroll

cc: Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair, Landmarks Preservation Commission
Kate Lemos McHale, Director of Research, Landmarks Preservation Commission



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ROSE HARVEY
Commissioner



20 March 2018

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 eight nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

The Wilbraham, New York County
Pilgrim Furniture Company, Ulster County
Wading River Radio Station, Suffolk County
Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse, Brentwood, Suffolk County
Hempstead Town Hall, Nassau County
Mitchel Air Base and Flight Line, Nassau County
Daniel Webster Jenkins House, Schoharie County
Gooley Club, Essex and Hamilton Counties

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