

LORD & TAYLOR BUILDING, 424-434 Fifth Avenue (aka 1-11 West 38th Street, 2-14 West 39th Street), Borough of Manhattan. Built 1913-14, Starrett & Van Vleck, architects.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan, Tax Map Block 840, Lot 42.

On August 7, 2007, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Lord & Taylor Building and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 1). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Two people spoke in favor of designation, including Gary Tarnoff, representing the owners, and a representative of the Historic Districts Council. A letter in support of designation from New York State Senator Liz Krueger was placed into the record.

Summary

Lord & Taylor is one of New York City's oldest retail stores and a recognized innovator in the history of department stores. The store traces its origins to the dry goods store established on Catherine Street in 1826 by Samuel Lord and his partner George Washington Taylor. As residential New York continued its northward momentum, Lord & Taylor, like other retailers, followed, relocating several times before moving to Fifth Avenue and 38th Street.

Starrett & Van Vleck's 1913-14 building for Lord & Taylor marks a turning point in retail design. The dignified, Italian Renaissance Revival store with its prominent chamfered corner, deep copper cornice, austere limestone base, gray face-brick center section and two-story colonnade was the first "frankly commercial"¹ building along the fashionable Fifth Avenue shopping district then developing above 34th Street. On Fifth Avenue the formal two-story arched entrance, is flanked by two tiers of display windows; those on the lower tier annually showcase the store's animated holiday displays.

In 1945, Lord & Taylor elected Dorothy Shaver as president of the store, the first woman to hold that position in a prominent retail store. A major force in retailing, Ms. Shaver, during her long tenure with Lord & Taylor (1924-1959), promoted new trends in home décor with the 1928 Exposition of Modern French Decorative Art, designed by Ely Jacques Kahn; fostered American fashion designers like Bonnie Cashin, Claire McCardell and Vera Maxwell; and created entirely new departments offering junior, misses, petite, bridal and maternity fashions. Under her aegis, noted designer Raymond Loewy updated selling floors and was instrumental in the design of the earliest suburban branch stores. Under succeeding administrations Lord & Taylor continued to expand its network of stores nationwide. Lord & Taylor was incorporated by its president Edward Hatch in 1904. In 1910 it became part of United Dry Goods Company, which later became the Associated Dry Goods Company. Lord & Taylor was sold to the private equity firm NRDC Equity Partners in 2006.



DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

History of Lord & Taylor²

Lord & Taylor traces its founding to 1826 when Samuel Lord, a 23-year-old émigré from Yorkshire, England, opened his first small dry goods store at 47 Catherine Street with \$1,000 borrowed from his wife Mary's uncle, John Taylor, and took into partnership her cousin George Washington Taylor. Catherine Street was then one of New York's major shopping streets, and the store, which sold fabric, notions, and ready made items such as hosiery and shawls, was enlarged by the end of the year. Through the complementary skills of the two partners, business continued to grow resulting in the annexation of 49 Catherine Street in 1832 and the move into a four-story building at 61-63 Catherine Street in 1838. Ever the entrepreneur, Lord also opened a dry goods store in New Orleans in the 1840s which was operated by his chief clerk Thomas Medley.³

With business growing, a new three-story building was erected at 255-261 Grand Street (on the southeast corner of Chrystie Street) in 1853. This building had a domed rotunda and large windows which allowed natural light to flood the interior. By the late 1850s, a large lot at the northwest corner of Grand Street and Broadway had been acquired and on August 29, 1859, 461-467 Broadway, a five-story marble emporium⁴ with an arched, two-story main entrance, became the flagship store of Lord & Taylor, the first of the major retailers to move to Broadway after the opening of A. T. Stewart's department store at Broadway and Chambers Street. Simultaneously, the firm expanded into the wholesale trade, the funding of which required Samuel Lord to withdraw his investment from the store in New Orleans.⁵ George W. Taylor had retired to England in 1852 leaving the firm in the hands of Mr. Lord until the latter took as his partners his eldest son John T. Lord and long-time store employee John S. Lyle.

By the mid-1850s New York City handled more than a third of American exports and around two-thirds of the imports and was the financial center of the country. Raw bulk cotton from the south was transshipped through New York to the mills of Europe while New York merchants and banking houses offered southern planters goods and credit.⁶ Lord's investment in a New Orleans dry goods store suggests that he was willing to invest in the South during the antebellum period; however, the extent to which Lord & Taylor's fabrics were made from slave-produced cotton cannot be definitely established. Throughout the Civil War, Lord & Taylor continued to advertise in New York newspapers the availability of a wide variety of fabrics from silk to poplin, home furnishings (carpets, linens and curtains) and ready-made clothing for women and children on display in their respective departments at the firm's three New York locations. A particularly poignant announcement was the opening of a new department in 1863 exclusively for "Mourning Millinery."⁷ At the end of the war the Lords, father and son, retired, leaving the firm to their successors George Washington Taylor Lord and Samuel Lord, Jr.

Following the Civil War, residential New York continued its steady move farther uptown and although the existing stores were doing well and the building at Chrystie Street had been enlarged, the firm once again prepared to follow its customer base. In 1869 the directors entered into an agreement with Robert and Peter Goelet, members of one of the city's most important landowning families, for a lot above Union Square at 895-899 Broadway, and with the Bateau family, which owned the corner lot (901 Broadway) at 20th Street. The Goelets and Lord & Taylor together hired James H. Giles, a Brooklyn architect to design the five-story, cast-iron structure at the southwest corner of Broadway and 20th Street which, when it opened in 1870, included one of the earliest steam passenger elevators.⁸

Like its competitors, Lord & Taylor found itself in financial difficulty as a result of the Panic of 1873. Through a large loan subscribed by the retired partners in 1879 the firm survived. The firm's fortunes improved along with the economy and in 1894 Lord & Taylor began twelve years of growth that would see the store expand to Fifth Avenue in 1903 and again in 1906. Lord & Taylor was the first of the major retailers to have an address on the avenue.⁹ During this period Edward P. Hatch, who was brought in as a partner in 1879, purchased the interests of the remaining partners and in 1904 converted Lord & Taylor into a stock company.

Department Stores, Fifth Avenue and Construction of the Lord & Taylor Building¹⁰

Department stores had developed in the mid-nineteenth century as an outgrowth of the dry goods store, which sold fabric, sheetings, notions and some ready made items for women and children. The first of the new type, essentially a departmentalized dry goods store, was opened at the northeast corner of Broadway and Chambers Street by A. T. Stewart (Joseph Trench & Co., 1845-46 with later additions, a designated New

York City Landmark) leading the way for the commercial development of Broadway north of City Hall.¹¹ Designed in the Italian Renaissance *palazzo* style, it had large display windows set between cast-iron columns.

These department stores, along with specialty retail stores increased in number and soon created whole shopping districts, following the progress of residential Manhattan as it moved uptown. In the 1850s and 1860s shops and department stores such as Arnold Constable & Co. and Lord & Taylor, catering to the “carriage trade,” were located on Broadway between Canal and 14th Streets. Within the next twenty years the shopping district moved to the area between 14th and 23rd Streets concentrated on Broadway, known as “Ladies’ Mile,” and home to Lord & Taylor, Gorham Manufacturing Co., and Arnold Constable. On Sixth Avenue, known as “Fashion Row,” B. Altman & Co., Hugh O’Neill, and Siegel Cooper, established large department stores partially as a result of the opening of the Sixth Avenue “el” in 1878. The department store buildings of this era were described as “commercial palaces,” incorporating central light courts and large display windows, and modern conveniences like elevators.¹²

By the turn of the twentieth century, commerce was invading residential Fifth Avenue above 34th Street. Small shops took over the lower floors of brownstones only to be replaced by a growing number of purpose-built commercial buildings. The first wave of major retailers included specialty stores such as Black, Starr & Frost, jewelers, at West 39th Street; Knox, the hat company, at 40th Street (John H. Duncan, 1901-02, a designated New York City Landmark); Tiffany & Co. at 37th Street and Gorham Manufacturing Co. at 36th Street, jewelry, china, silver, and glass (McKim, Mead & White, 1903-06 and 1904-06, respectively, both designated New York City Landmarks); and Franklin Simon, ladies wear, between 37th and 38th Streets. B. Altman & Co., the first of the large department stores to move there, opened on Fifth Avenue at 34th Street in 1906 (Trowbridge & Livingston, 1905-1913, a designated New York City Landmark).¹³ Recognizing the inevitable need for Lord & Taylor to move yet again, Edward Hatch, who died in 1909, and his grandson Wilson Hatch Tucker carefully studied the needs of both employees and customers when planning the new building and selecting its location.¹⁴ In late 1912 the store announced that it had negotiated the lease of a large lot on the west side of Fifth Avenue between 38th and 39th Streets from brothers Frank V. and John Howes Burton measuring 260 feet along 38th Street, 148 feet 1 inch along Fifth Avenue and 159 feet along 39th Street which wrapped around a hold-out corner lot and building at Fifth Avenue and West 39th Street.¹⁵ Plans for the building were filed by Starrett & Van Vleck in February 1913 and the store opened February 24, 1914.¹⁶

McKim, Mead and White’s Gorham and Tiffany buildings and Trowbridge & Livingston’s B. Altman & Co. store on Fifth Avenue continued the tradition of the commercial palace, through their use of neo-Classical and Beaux Arts vocabulary. Starrett & Van Vleck’s ten-story Lord & Taylor building, with its distinctive chamfered corner, was heralded by the contemporary architectural press as “a triumph in design, plan, construction and decoration.”¹⁷ Its dignified, “vaguely Italian Renaissance” style marked, as Robert A. M. Stern later noted, the “emergence of a more utilitarian and less artistically ambitious” type of department store.¹⁸

The Italian Renaissance Revival Lord & Taylor store is a solid presence on the corner of West 38th Street and Fifth Avenue. The dignity of its design and sense of scale is derived from the subtle treatment of the tripartite façade. Starrett & Van Vleck kept overt decorative elements to a minimum: the two-story arched Fifth Avenue entrance with its coffered vault and sphinx-headed keystone, a continuous balustrade and balconies (now truncated), a two-story colonnade across the ninth and tenth floors and a deep copper cornice.

Above the two-story granite and limestone base, with its display windows, rises the store’s six-story central section. Here Starrett & Van Vleck created interest through the subtle use of patterned brick and terra cotta and the device of having the central bays recede slightly from the established plane of the wall. The more heavily decorated third and eighth floors here act as transitions between the three segments.

At the top a two-story Corinthian colonnade with terminal clusters of pilasters and columns supports the deep bracketed cornice. Further adding to the sense of scale is the use of multi-light windows on all floors above the second, a significant departure from previous dependence on large plate glass windows in the design of retail establishments. This became a feature that the critic writing for *Architecture* noted “added much to the appearance of the openings” further noting that “thus we have escaped from the slavery of the plate glass store front.”¹⁹

A particularly distinctive design element, and one later repeated by the architects in the Saks Fifth Avenue building (1922-24, Starrett & Van Vleck, a designated New York City Landmark) is the chamfered corner. Used to create a link between the West 38th Street and Fifth Avenue facades, Starrett & Van Vleck

highlighted the chamfer by bracketing it with slender columns of molded brick that appear capped by terra cotta at the eighth floor only to reemerge as part of the clusters of pilasters and columns at the ninth and tenth floors. Shoppers and strollers on Fifth Avenue, viewing the building from the southeast, experience the iconic view of the building's imposing architecture. To provide an elegant edge to the building where it abuts its shorter neighbor, Starrett & Van Vleck repeated the elongated column at the north end of the Fifth Avenue façade.

Architecture magazine in 1914 called the building "the best of its class" and "a gift and a benefit" to the public. This opinion was upheld twenty-five years later when the authors of the Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration's *New York City Guide* wrote:

The construction of Lord and Taylor in 1914 at Thirty-eighth Street marked a break with tradition (Starrett and Van Vleck were the architects); the avenue now had a building that was frankly commercial as well as dignified. Many of the smaller stores, eclipsed as show places by the graceful candor of the Lord and Taylor edifice, hastily incorporated large display windows and arched entrances.²⁰

Besides its fine design, the building included many innovations. An inclined drive between West 38th and 39th Streets connected to the receiving and delivery departments eliminated on-street loading. The displays in the show windows could easily be replaced by being lowered to the basement on tracks and a new display moved into position and raised to the window. Originally, the Fifth Avenue entrance itself was treated likewise with a display window that would be raised into position when the store was closed. Dumbwaiters and conveyors moved packages to the wrapping desk in the basement and either returned them to the customers or forwarded them to the shipping department for delivery.

In addition to merchandise, the Lord & Taylor store offered customers a wide variety of services, including four restaurants on the tenth floor and counters offering everything from candy and magazines to theater tickets and travel assistance, telephone booths and a Rest Room on the fifth floor. On the seventh floor, where musical instruments were sold, the store had a concert hall with built-in pipe organ.

Recognizing that the health, welfare and happiness of employees were important for the success of the operation, their needs were also taken into account. Selling floors behind the counters were covered with cork to reduce physical strain and amenities like employee dining rooms, a men's smoking room, gymnasium, solarium, and medical and dental services were provided.

Starrett & Van Vleck²¹

Founded in 1907 by Goldwin Starrett (1874-1918) and Ernest Alan Van Vleck (1875-1956), the firm was known for their work designing a wide range of building types including dwellings, office and institutional buildings, and department stores. Ernest Alan Van Vleck received a degree in architecture from Cornell University in 1897 and subsequently spent a year studying in Europe. Goldwin Starrett had studied engineering at the University of Michigan, graduating with his Bachelor of Science degree in 1894. After graduation, he entered the office of D. H. Burnham & Co. in Chicago where he went on to become one of Burnham's principal assistants. In 1898 he moved to New York where he joined his brother Theodore at the George A. Fuller Construction Company. In 1901, he, Theodore and their brothers Ralph and William A., formed the Thompson-Starrett Construction Company where he served as the architect on the Algonquin Hotel (1902, a designated New York City Landmark) and the Hahne Department Store in Newark, New Jersey. After several years he moved to Vermont where he joined the E. B. Ellis Granite Company which supplied stone for several major buildings, including the Woolworth Building (1910-13, a designated New York City Landmark) and Washington, D.C.'s Union Station. It was on his return to New York that he joined forces with Ernest Van Vleck. Originally called Goldwin Starrett & Van Vleck, the firm changed its name to Starrett & Van Vleck after adding two partners including William A. Starrett and continued under that name with Mr. Van Vleck as principal after the death of Goldwin Starrett in 1918 at the age of 44.

The Lord & Taylor Department Store was the firm's first major department store, which led to other significant commissions such as the former Abercrombie & Fitch Building (1917, exterior demolished), the La Salle & Koch Department Store (1918, Toledo, Ohio),²² Saks Fifth Avenue (1922-24, a designated New York City Landmark), and the expansion of Bloomingdale's Department Store and the Abraham & Strauss (now Macy's) store in Brooklyn (both 1930) as well as the Lord & Taylor suburban stores in Manhasset (1941) and

Westchester County (1948) in partnership with the designer Raymond Loewy. Other commissions included the Everett Building (1908, a designated New York City Landmark), The Equitable Life Assurance Society Building at 393 Seventh Avenue, the façade of the Curb (now American Stock) Exchange Building (1930), and the Downtown Athletic Club (1929-30, a designated New York City Landmark). In their early work, as exemplified by their two Fifth Avenue department stores and the Equitable Building, Starrett & Van Vleck employed the conservative Italian Renaissance Revival style. Later designs would reflect modernist influences like Art Deco and the International Style.

Later History

Soon after the company opened its new building, the managers of Lord & Taylor were faced with the realization that not only had the expense of building and equipping the new store exceeded the estimate but that the finances of United Dry Goods Company of which the company had been part since 1910 were impaired. In 1915 a re-organization took place and United Dry Goods Company was merged with Associated Merchants Company, forming the Associated Dry Goods Company, and Lord & Taylor withdrew from the wholesale business.²³ The next year Samuel Reyburn, who had been serving as Treasurer, was elected President of the store.²⁴ It was during his tenure that the annual Christmas window display was inaugurated, a legacy enjoyed for more than eighty years by New Yorkers and visitors alike.²⁵

In the years that followed, Lord & Taylor flourished particularly as a result of the work of Dorothy Shaver. Miss Shaver, a native of Arkansas, was the first woman to serve as the president of a major retail store when she was elected to that position in 1945 and her legacy lives on in the store's distinctive hand written logo and American Beauty Rose emblem. First associated with the store in 1921 when she promoted the "Five Little Shavers," her sister Elsie's line of rag dolls, Miss Shaver joined Lord & Taylor full-time in 1924 as head of the Comparative Shopping Bureau. She changed the department's focus to customer service and developed the Red Rose Personal Shopping Service. This and other innovations led to increased sales and in 1927 she joined the Board of Directors one of the first women to be so honored in the retail field. Within the next decade she became an officer of Lord & Taylor becoming Vice President in charge of style publicity and advertising in 1931 and First Vice President in 1937. During her long tenure with the company, Miss Shaver contributed much to the development of the modern department store. Significantly, she promoted new trends in home décor in the Exposition of Modern French Decorative Art with interiors designed by Ely Jacques Kahn, and fostered American fashion designers like Bonnie Cashin, Claire McCardell and Vera Maxwell at a time when they and other American designers were being overlooked by other stores.²⁶ Lord & Taylor became the first store to feature departments with clothing especially designed for juniors, misses and petites, as well as specialty departments such as bridal, maternity and budget. Miss Shaver sought to update the selling floors and in 1938 Raymond Loewy redesigned both the third and fourth floors.²⁷ It was also under her leadership that Lord & Taylor began its expansion into the suburbs with six branches, including the stores in Manhasset (1941) and Westchester County (1948) (both by Starrett & Van Vleck, architects, in partnership with Raymond Loewy, designer), followed by Millburn, New Jersey (1949), and the first of the stores outside the metropolitan area in West Hartford, Connecticut (1953) and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (1955). A seventh store in Washington, D.C. opened in 1959 after her death. At the time of her death in 1959 she was both president of Lord & Taylor and a vice president and member of the board of directors of Associated Dry Goods. In addition to her work at Lord & Taylor, Miss Shaver was active at other venues including the Metropolitan Museum of Art where she not only served on the Board of Trustees but helped establish the Costume Institute and The Girls Clubs of America where she served as Chairman of the Board in 1957. During the Second World War she served as general merchandising consultant to the Office of the Quartermaster General. Among her many awards were an award from the American Woman's Association for "eminent achievement," the Cross of Chevalier in the French Legion of Honor and the Star of Solidarity from the Italian government.²⁸

The store continued to expand, building new branches and updating the selling floors of the Fifth Avenue flagship store. One of the largest changes to the Fifth Avenue building was the complete remodeling of its main floor and four of the upper floors under the aegis of Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Joseph E. Brooks in 1976. The designs by R. J. Pavlik, of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, did not affect the basic architecture of the main selling floor but covered the columns and walls with mirrored glass and replaced the wooden sales counters with travertine.²⁹ The work of removing the exterior third-floor balustrade appears to have taken place around 1967.³⁰ In 1986, Associated Dry Goods Company, Lord & Taylor's parent firm,

signed a lease for the use of the entire building on the corner of West 39th Street known for many years as the Dreicer Building and soon expanded the store into the space.³¹ In an upgrade of the building in 2003, the new multi-light windows were installed over the existing sashes.³²

As a result of further retail consolidations in the late twentieth century, Lord & Taylor and Associated Dry Goods were purchased by the May Department Stores Company in 1986. In 2005 May was itself purchased by Federated Department Stores, owner of both Bloomingdale's and Macy's, and within a year the Lord & Taylor stores, including the Fifth Avenue flag-ship store, were spun off and sold to the private equity firm NRDC Equity Partners.³³

Description

Lord & Taylor is a ten-story plus penthouse building, with its main façade on Fifth Avenue and two developed facades fronting on West 38th and West 39th Streets. The three facades are faced in gray brick with terra-cotta details above a two-story base of granite and limestone. When viewed from the southeast, its distinctive chamfered corner creates an imposing, architectural expression by linking the Fifth Avenue and West 38th Street facades with their Corinthian colonnades across the ninth and tenth floors, deep, uninterrupted, copper cornice and balconies. At West 39th Street, however, it wraps around a smaller builder.

Fifth Avenue Façade: The first and second floors are buff painted limestone above a narrow base of pinkish Stoney Creek granite.³⁴ Display windows flank the two-story high, slightly recessed, arched central entrance. The arch, which springs from smooth pilasters with simple impost blocks, is topped by a scrolled, scaled keystone with sphinx-head. Its paneled soffit has a rosette at the apex. Over the vestibule is a coffered vault decorated with rosettes and a classically-inspired metal grille. Leading into the vestibule are three pairs of glass and metal doors with corresponding transoms set into an elaborately figured metal enframing with an earlier metal lintel topped by delicate cresting and dentils. A repeated motif in the cresting is a heraldic shield with the monogram "L & T" bracketed by foliated scrolls. On either side of the archway at the second story level are low relief cartouches of large shields with entwined "L & T" over crossed scepter and mace, with a drapery surmounted by a crown. The store's distinctive logo of a handwritten signature created by Dorothy Shaver appears on either side of the archway and at the ends of the façade.

The third through eighth floors are brick set in stretcher bond with header courses at a ratio of 5:1 or 7:1. Soldier courses of brick run above the windows on the fourth through seventh floors. Terra-cotta spandrel panels are located between the fourth and fifth floors. The sixth floor balcony remains, although stripped of its balustrade and decorative brackets. The third floor rests on the vestige of the original balustrade, which now resembles a cornice with a soffit of alternating coffers and blocks above a molded architrave with guttae. Above the third floor windows is a molded, terra-cotta stringcourse which blends into the eared terra-cotta architraves of the windows. Gracing the piers between the windows are alternating decorative brick panels (a raised panel of three columns of headers with a narrow terra-cotta border) and flat terra-cotta panels, each framed by a surround of brick stretchers with corner blocks formed by four square headers. The eighth floor has a limestone sill course.³⁵ Separating it from the ninth floor is a cornice, supported on a row of tightly spaced brackets above a frieze of alternating small and large diamond-shaped lozenges also executed in terra cotta. The window surrounds of the eighth floor are raised brick with corner blocks of terra cotta. Recessed brick panels (columns of headers with surrounds of stretchers and corner blocks of four headers) decorate the piers between the windows. The single line of windows on the north side of the façade and the turn of the chamfered corner are flush with the building line and meet the base of the pilasters at the ninth floor. A unique design element is the use of slender, engaged columns of molded brick with simple terra-cotta capitals that define the northern edge of the Fifth Avenue façade and the chamfered corner at West 38th Street. At the eighth floor they become squatter and wider.

The ninth and tenth floors are faced with terra cotta. A two-story colonnade of engaged, Corinthian columns supporting a limestone and terra-cotta entablature terminates both at the northern end and the West 38th Street corner in a surround of closely spaced pilasters and columns with stylized Corinthian capitals. The terra-cotta capitals atop the limestone columns combine distinctly American symbolism with the elements of the Corinthian order. In lieu of the traditional acanthus leaves, there are elongated leaves or feathers. Between the volutes on the three exposed sides are bald eagles standing on classical urns. Above the tenth floor windows are terra-cotta spandrel panels with roundels. The store's name is spelled out in large metal letters on the pilasters of the chamfered corner. Above the entablature a series of modillions support the deep, bracketed

copper cornice with antefixes that begins with a return at the northern corner and runs continuously across the entire Fifth Avenue and West 38th Street facades. On the West 39th Street façade, the cornice begins at the eastern edge of the building and continues westward to the building line.

The north wall of the store above the neighboring building at 436-438 Fifth Avenue continues the delineation of the façade in light colored brick. A large version of the store's signature logo is attached to the wall directly under the cornice return.

There are noticeable patches on the third floor at the corner and northern end of the façade where the brick has either been cleaned or replaced with a different color brick.

Fifth Avenue windows: First and second floor: On either side of the entrance are smaller display windows. Each has a metal surround, with paneled architrave, banded frieze, and denticulated cornice topped by cresting identical to that over the door with a single central shield with monogram. The displays in the two windows next to the main entrance are recessed behind two curved panes that are joined in the middle by a metal muntin. The sides of the recess are mirrored. In the vestibule plate glass windows with metal surrounds provide additional vantage points. A variant of this style is repeated at the northern end of the façade.³⁶ Above the windows are brown painted lights with the same pattern as the classically-inspired grille in the arch. To the sides of this central massing are two pairs of double-tiered display windows set in recessed surrounds. A wide spandrel with narrow band at the top, featuring a repetitive floral motif, separates the lower and upper tiers. The upper tier windows have been covered with solid panels painted to match the façade, except that at the northern end. The main display windows on the lower tier have the same classically-inspired metal grille found over the entrance, set 2/2 with classically inspired decoration between each set of four, above a metal surround that has a denticulated molding on the lintel. Each window has a small light affixed to the center of the lintel. Taking advantage of the chamfered corner at West 38th Street, the lower window is a three-sided bay on a granite base, its metal surround topped by a cresting (here missing the central shield device). Above the bay is a recessed panel with a swag over which is a single plate-glass window. **Third through eighth floor:** Windows are double hung sash with multiple lights.³⁷ The paired windows are 8/12 on the third through sixth floors and 8/8 on the seventh and eighth. The single windows of the corner and northern end as well as those in the center section are 6/9 and 6/6. At the balcony ledge the windows are taller (8/16 and 6/12). Windows on the fourth through seventh floor have simple sills. **Ninth and tenth floor:** The tenth floor windows have wrought iron grillwork with a central ovoid motif. The windows corresponding to the ninth floor are multi-light with an exterior single plate of glass (except for the northern most which is 1/1) those on the tenth are 8/8 multi-light.

West 38th and 39th Street Façades: The cornices, string courses and brick work described for the Fifth Avenue façade continue around the corner and run the full length of the West 38th Street façade and are replicated on the West 39th Street façade (excluding the walls above the neighboring building's roof line). Each façade also has a center balcony ledge at the sixth floor. The windows on the third through eighth floor of both facades, unlike on Fifth Avenue, are uniformly paired. The openings of the first and second floor are not uniform.

West 38th Street Windows/Entrances: The **first floor** display window in the bay nearest the corner is identical to those on Fifth Avenue. The second bay has the same grille work above the lintel but houses three pairs of metal doors with opaque transoms in lieu of a window. The third through seventh bays have a smaller first floor display window which has been partially or entirely blocked; only the metal surround with cornice is exposed. At the mezzanine level is a row of ten small paired windows; the interior three pairs are blind, part of the reconfiguration of the original carriage entrance that was removed prior to 1924.³⁸ The next bay is the West 38th Street entrance with full width segmental, fabric marquee that extends to the curb, triple metal and glass paired entry doors with six light transom above and signature logo on each side. Above the metal lintel is the same grille work. The next two bays have partially enclosed display windows with grilles above the metal lintels, followed by a large entrance with metal lintel and grille over the windows, the enclosure includes a large louvered section over three solid metal doors on the left and a solid panel above a raised dock with two multi-paneled doors, its actual use is unclear. The final two bays are a small door beneath a spandrel panel with roundel, followed on the western end by a large service entrance with roll-down security gate;³⁹ both have a single small mezzanine window above with simple sill. A series of seven lights like those on Fifth Avenue are spaced down the block at mezzanine level. The **second floor** windows of the two eastern bays are three vertical sections of glass with corresponding transoms. The second floor windows for the rest of the block

include eighteen paired windows and two single windows, 1/1 sash except for the tenth one from the east which has a louvered panel over a solid one. The paired windows have shared sills; the single ones have simple sills. On the **third through eighth floors** the sashes of eighteen windows have been replaced with panels that are louvered or half-louvered/half-solid. Five of the tenth floor windows have been replaced with one or the other type of panel.

West 39th Street Windows/Entrances: The entrance in the easternmost bay on West 39th Street has a cantilevered awning over a three panel glass and metal door. The window at the mezzanine has a single pane. The second through seventh bays are identical in size and shape to the display windows on the Fifth Avenue façade with paneled lintels. The second and third bays have blocked display windows, and the grille work has been removed and replaced with glass. The fourth bay is the West 39th Street entrance with full width segmental, fabric marquee that extends to the curb, triple metal and glass paired entry doors with six-light transom above and signature logo on each side. The grille has been replaced with two louvered panels and one glass. The fifth and sixth bays have partially blocked display windows with two square openings in each. The grilles have been replaced with glass. The seventh bay has an assortment of doors, louvers and solid panels. Again the grilles have been replaced with glass. The western bays are identical to the corresponding ones on West 38th Street, an entrance with three-panel metal door and glass transom above which is a spandrel panel with roundel and a truck entrance with roll down gate. The voussoirs of the truck entrance are still visible under the paint. The mezzanine windows which are larger than those on West 38th Street are glazed with single panes of glass. The **second floor** windows have single windows at the eastern and western ends with twelve paired windows in the center identical to those on West 38th Street and glazed with 1/1 sash except one which has a louvered panel. On the **third through the eighth floor** the multi-light sashes of twelve windows have been replaced with panels that are louvered or 2:1 solid to louver. Three of the **tenth floor** windows have been replaced with one or the other type of panel. (All multi-light sashes of the side facades follow the pattern of those on Fifth Avenue. The ninth floor windows along the side streets are not clearly visible from the street and cannot be described.)

It is unclear whether the panels enclosing the display windows on the first floor on West 38th and 39th Streets are temporary or whether the plate glass has been removed. Those covering the second floor windows on the Fifth Avenue façade protrude slightly and may be temporary.

Report researched and written by
Marianne Percival
Research Department

NOTES

¹ Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration, *New York City Guide* (New York: Random House, 1939), 217.

² This information except as noted is based on *The History of Lord & Taylor, 1826-2001* ([New York?]: n.p., [2001?]), 5, 11, 13, 14, 16-17, 19, 21-23, 25, 34, 37, 39.

³ It appears from the information provided by the historical brochure that this was not a branch of Lord & Taylor but an independent operation. Lord and his family purchased 100 acres in Newton (Queens County) around 1841. Near his residence he opened a general store. This store was closed and demolished when the railroad arrived providing easier access to the city. *Ibid*, 15-16.

⁴ "City Items," *New York Times* (May 18, 1858), 4; "Marble Palaces on Bro[a]dway," *New York Times* (August 29, 1859), 4.

⁵ Lord & Taylor announced the sale of the wholesale business in November 1915. “Lord and Taylor Quit Wholesale Field,” *New York Times* (November 27, 1915), 16.

⁶ Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), *25 Park Place Building Designation Report* (LP-2223) (New York: City of New York, 2007), by Marianne Percival, 3.

⁷ Through the 1860s there were three Lord & Taylor stores in New York City, the original building at 47-49 Catherine Street, 255-261 Grand Street and 461-467 Broadway. By the early 1870s advertisements did not include the Catherine Street and lower Broadway buildings. Display advertisements, *New York Times* (October 7, 1861), 3; *New York Times* (April 13, 1863), 2; *New York Times* (June 14, 1863), 5; *New York Times* (May 1, 1864), 5; *New York Times* (October 4, 1864), 8; *New York Times* (February 26, 1872), 6; *New York Times* (October 1, 1872), 2. The store at Grand and Chrystie Streets was closed in 1902. *History of Lord & Taylor*, 39.

⁸ Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), *Ladies Mile Historic District Designation Report* (LP-1609), (New York: City of New York, 1989), 106.

⁹ Arnold Constable & Co., 881-887 Broadway, was extended to Fifth Avenue in 1876-77; however, it was to house only the wholesale division of the business. The entire store was converted to a wholesale store in 1915 when Arnold Constable moved to the southeast corner of Fifth Avenue and 40th Street, now the home of the Mid-Manhattan Branch, New York Public Library. *Ibid.*, 83-84, 87.

¹⁰ Except as noted, based in part on Ronda Wist, *On Fifth Avenue: Then and Now* (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1992), 62-67; Jerry E. Patterson, *Fifth Avenue the Best Address* (New York: Rizzoli, 1998), 108-115.

¹¹ Based in part on information contained in Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), *B. Altman & Company Department Store Designation Report* (LP-1274) (New York: City of New York, 1985), by Sarah Williams, supervised by Anthony Robbins, 1.

¹² *B. Altman & Company Designation Report*, 2; *Ladies Mile Historic District Designation Report*, 7, 12.

¹³ New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Guide to New York City Landmarks*, 3rd ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2004), 98-99.

¹⁴ *History of Lord & Taylor*, 43-44

¹⁵ The building on lot 48 at the southwest corner of West 39th Street and Fifth Avenue was owned by Jacob and Michael Dreicer and at one time housed the jeweler Black, Starr & Frost. From 1936 to 1986 Lord & Taylor leased part of this building, after which the lease covered the entire building. In 1992 the building was purchased by May Department Stores Co. New York County, Office of the Register, Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 1031, 310, 314, January 13, 1986; Liber 1875, 929, June 2, 1992.

¹⁶ New York City Department of Buildings, New Building permit 44-13, February 5, 1913 was supplanted within a week by New Building permit 54-13, February 11, 1913. The owners of record are John H. and Frank V. Burton. Work commenced April 26, 1913 and was finalized June 29, 1914; “The Real Estate Field” *New York Times* (February 7, 1913), 18; “Lord & Taylor Open Fifth Avenue Store,” *New York Times* (February 25, 1914), 6.

¹⁷ “Architectural Criticism: The Lord & Taylor Store—The Anderson Mausoleum—The Southampton School House,” *Architecture* 29 (April 1914), 77.

¹⁸ Robert A. M. Stern, Gregory Gilmartin and John Massengale, *New York 1900: Metropolitan Architecture and Urbanism, 1890-1915* (New York: Rizzoli, 1983, 1995), 196.

¹⁹ The description of the original building and its features is based on “Architectural Criticism: The Lord & Taylor Store,” 77, 79 and Charles Warren Hastings, “The Lord & Taylor Building,” *Architecture and Building* 46 (March 1914), 118-127.

²⁰ Federal Writers’ Project, *New York City Guide*, 217.

²¹ Based on information in Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), *21 West Street Building Designation Report* (LP-1999) (New York: City of New York, 1998), by Virginia Kurshan, 4.

²² “Department Store for the La Salle & Koch Co., Toledo, O., Starrett & Van Vleck, Architects,” *American Architect*, 114 (October 16, 1918), pl. 112

²³ *History of Lord & Taylor*, 49; “Claflin Interests Get Lord & Taylor,” *New York Times* (June 22, 1910), 9; “Plan a \$50,000,000 Dry Goods Merger,” *New York Times* (December 4, 1915), 19; “Lord & Taylor Quit Wholesale Field: Directors Authorize Sale of That Branch of Their Business,” *New York Times* (November 27, 1915), 16.

²⁴ *History of Lord & Taylor*, 52

²⁵ A 1922 advertisement for Lord & Taylor encourages parents to “Bring the Children to see Our Christmas Windows” that included Grampas’ Toyshop and a miniature Pennsylvania Station. “Display Ad 40 – No Title,” *New York Times* (December 7, 1922), 7.

²⁶ Jewel Stern and John A. Stuart, *Ely Jacques Kahn, Architect: Beaux-Arts to Modernism in New York* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), 123-124; “Store Elects Miss Shaver: Made Lord & Taylor Vice-President – Became Director in 1927,” *New York Times* (February 28, 1931), 17; *History of Lord & Taylor*, 65-67.

²⁷ “New Women’s Shop Opens at Preview,” *New York Times* (March 30, 1938), 38; “New Floor Opened by Lord & Taylor,” *New York Times* (September 1, 1938), 2; “Miss Shaver Dead, Led Lord & Taylor,” *New York Times* (June 29, 1959), 29.

²⁸ The opening of the Manhasset store was during Dorothy Shaver’s term as First Vice President, Walter Hoving was President of Lord & Taylor. *History of Lord & Taylor*, 65; “Miss Shaver Stays in Store Job Here,” *New York Times* (May 16, 1942), 9; “Store Head Wins Award of Woman’s Association,” *New York Times* (November 29, 1950), 19; Thomas F. Conroy, “Lord & Taylor Store at West Harford Is Previewed,” *New York Times* (February 24, 1953), 33; “New Unit Planned by Lord & Taylor: A Fifth Out of Town Store to Be Opened in 1955 in Suburb of Philadelphia,” *New York Times* (December 29, 1953), 37; “Miss Shaver Elected,” *New York Times* (April 4, 1957), 37; “Miss Shaver Dead; Led Lord & Taylor,” *New York Times*, 29.

²⁹ Isadore Barmash, “Lord & Taylor to Remodel 5th Ave. Store,” *New York Times* (January 29, 1976), 57; Judy Klemesrud, “At Lord & Taylor, 150 Is Only the Start,” *New York Times* (September 23, 1976), 43.

³⁰ Application to remove the third floor balustrade. No mention of the balconies is made in this application. The drawing included in the file at the Municipal Archives is marked void and it is unclear if the work was completed at this time. New York City Department of Buildings, Building Notice 4819-67, “Examined and recommended for approval, February 7, 1968.”

³¹ It can not be determined when Lord & Taylor expanded into the Dreicer Building. It is assumed that it took place after the signing of the lease for the entire building in 1986. For the full history of the site see note 15.

³² By this time the lower two floors had been painted and the balconies stripped. Christopher Gray, “An 11-Story Brick and Limestone Palace of Retail,” *New York Times* (July 27, 2003), RE7. The new windows are not true divided lights and the muntins are bowing out, as noted in the above article in 2003 and at a site visit in 2007.

³³ Isadore Barmash, “Associated Accepts May’s Bid,” *New York Times* (July 17, 1986), D1; Ellen Harris, “Retailing Shake-Up: May’s Hometown: A Collective Sense of Loss, but a Feeling That It Could Have Been Worse,” *New York Times* (March 1, 2005) (online edition); Claudia H. Deutsch, “Federated Puts Lord & Taylor on Block,” *New York Times* (January 13, 2006) (online edition); Michael Barbaro, “Lord & Taylor Is Sold but Will Stay Put,” *New York Times* (June 23, 2006) (online edition).

³⁴ *The New Store of Lord & Taylor: Fifth Avenue, Thirty-Eighth Street, Thirty-Ninth Street* (New York: [Lord & Taylor], 1914), [20].

³⁵ Based on information on drawings of the elevations, New York City Department of Buildings, New Building permit 54-13, February 11, 1913.

³⁶ The pattern of smaller display windows with cresting and larger display windows with grilles now extends to the building often referred to as the Dreicer Building on the corner of Fifth Avenue and West 39th Street. It is unclear when this alteration took place; it probably occurred after Lord & Taylor signed a lease for the entire building in 1986.

³⁷ Historically correct multi-light replacements. Gray, “An 11-Story Brick and Limestone Palace of Retail,” RE7.

³⁸ The carriage entrance, which had an elaborate marquee, was enclosed and converted to show windows sometime between 1916 and 1924. New York City Department of Buildings, Alteration permit 2449-15, October 26, 1915, amended December 30, 1915, approved January 14, 1916. Engraving included in an advertisement from 1924 shows the current configuration of the West 38th Street side. Henry Collins Brown, *Fifth Avenue Old and New* (New York: Fifth Avenue Association, 1924), n.p.

³⁹ Drawings at the Department of Buildings indicate that the original truck entrances were arched. The current configuration may date from circa 1954 when an alteration was amended to include the enlargement of the truck entrances on both side facades by cutting back on the existing stone work. The keystone and voussoirs are visible under the paint. New York City Department of Buildings, New Building permit 54-13 and Alteration permit 108-53, February 11, 1953, as amended March 15, 1954.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this building, The Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Lord & Taylor Building has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, the Lord & Taylor Building, at 424-434 Fifth Avenue, was built in 1913-14 by the architectural firm of Starrett & Van Vleck, the first of the firm's department store commissions that would later include Saks Fifth Avenue, a designated New York City Landmark, as well as Lord & Taylor's suburban stores in Manhasset and Westchester County; that the Lord & Taylor Building's Italian Renaissance Revival design began the trend toward more evidently commercial appearances for retail buildings in the Fifth Avenue shopping district above 34th Street; that the building and its site wrap around what was historically a separate parcel at the corner of Fifth Avenue and West 39th Street; that the ten-story building with its main façade on Fifth Avenue and two developed facades on West 38th and 39th Streets owes its dignified sense of scale to the subtle treatment of its tripartite façade consisting of a two-story limestone and granite base with elegant double-height, vaulted Fifth Avenue entrance and two stories of display windows, a six-story center section of subtly modulated gray face-brick with terra-cotta and patterned brick detailing and multi-light windows, and a two-story limestone colonnade in the Corinthian order supporting a deep copper cornice; that the distinctive chamfered corner at West 38th Street bracketed by elongated molded brick columns acts as a focal point tying the Fifth Avenue and West 38th Street facades into a continuous architectural expression; that the building continues to be the home of one of New York City's oldest and most prestigious retailers, Lord & Taylor, founded in 1826 by Samuel Lord and George Washington Taylor; that in the design of the Lord & Taylor building, accommodations were made for the benefit of the employees in the form of dining, medical, dental and recreational facilities; further that Lord & Taylor played a significant role in American retailing particularly through the efforts of Dorothy Shaver who joined the company in 1924 and became the first woman to serve as president of a major retailer in 1945; that during her career Lord & Taylor sponsored an Exposition of Modern French Decorative Art, designed by Eli Jacque Kahn in 1928, promoted the careers of American fashion designers, was the first store to feature departments for junior, misses and petites as well as maternity and bridal clothes and opened the earliest of its suburban branch stores.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provision of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Lord & Taylor Building, Borough of Manhattan, and designates Manhattan Tax Map Block 840, Lot 42, as its Landmark Site.

Robert B. Tierney, Chair

Diana Chapin, Joan Gerner, Roberta Brandes Gratz, Christopher Moore,
Margery Perlmutter, Elizabeth Ryan, Roberta Washington, Commissioners



Lord & Taylor Building, view from the southeast
Photo: Carl Forster



Lord & Taylor Building, view from the northeast
Photo: Carl Forster



Lord & Taylor Building, Fifth Avenue façade
Photo: Carl Forster



Lord & Taylor Building, Fifth Avenue entrance and display windows
Photo: Carl Forster



Lord & Taylor Building, Fifth Avenue display windows
Photo: Carl Forster

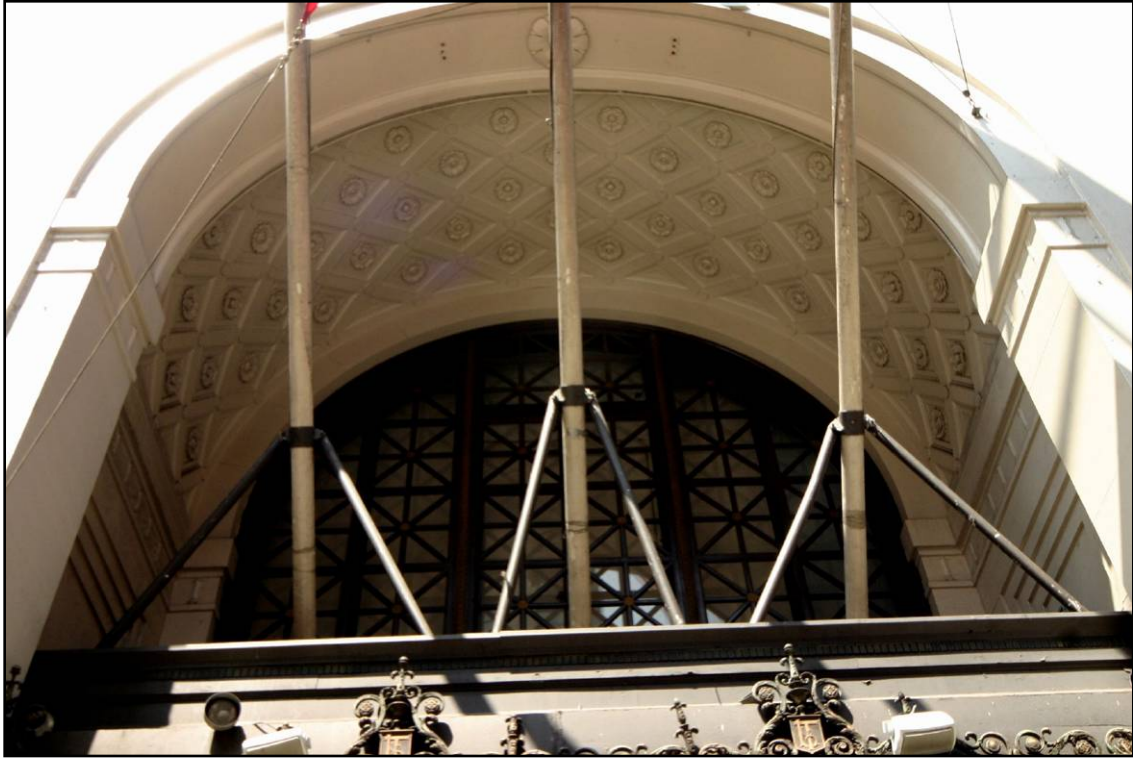


Lord & Taylor Building, Fifth Avenue façade and window details
Photos: Carl Forster



Lord & Taylor Building, Fifth Avenue entrance

Photo: Carl Forster



Lord & Taylor Building, Fifth Avenue entrance vault and keystone details
Photos: Carl Forster



Lord & Taylor Building, chamfered corner, detail
Photo: Carl Forster



Lord & Taylor Building, bay display window on the chamfered corner at W.38th Street and Fifth Avenue
Photo: Carl Forster



Lord & Taylor Building, colonnade and cornice details
Photo: Carl Forster



Lord & Taylor Building, West 38th Street façade
Photo: Carl Forster



Lord & Taylor Building, West 39th Street façade
Photo: Carl Forster



Lord & Taylor Building, West 38th Street entrance (above) and West 39th Street entrance (below)

Photos: Carl Forster

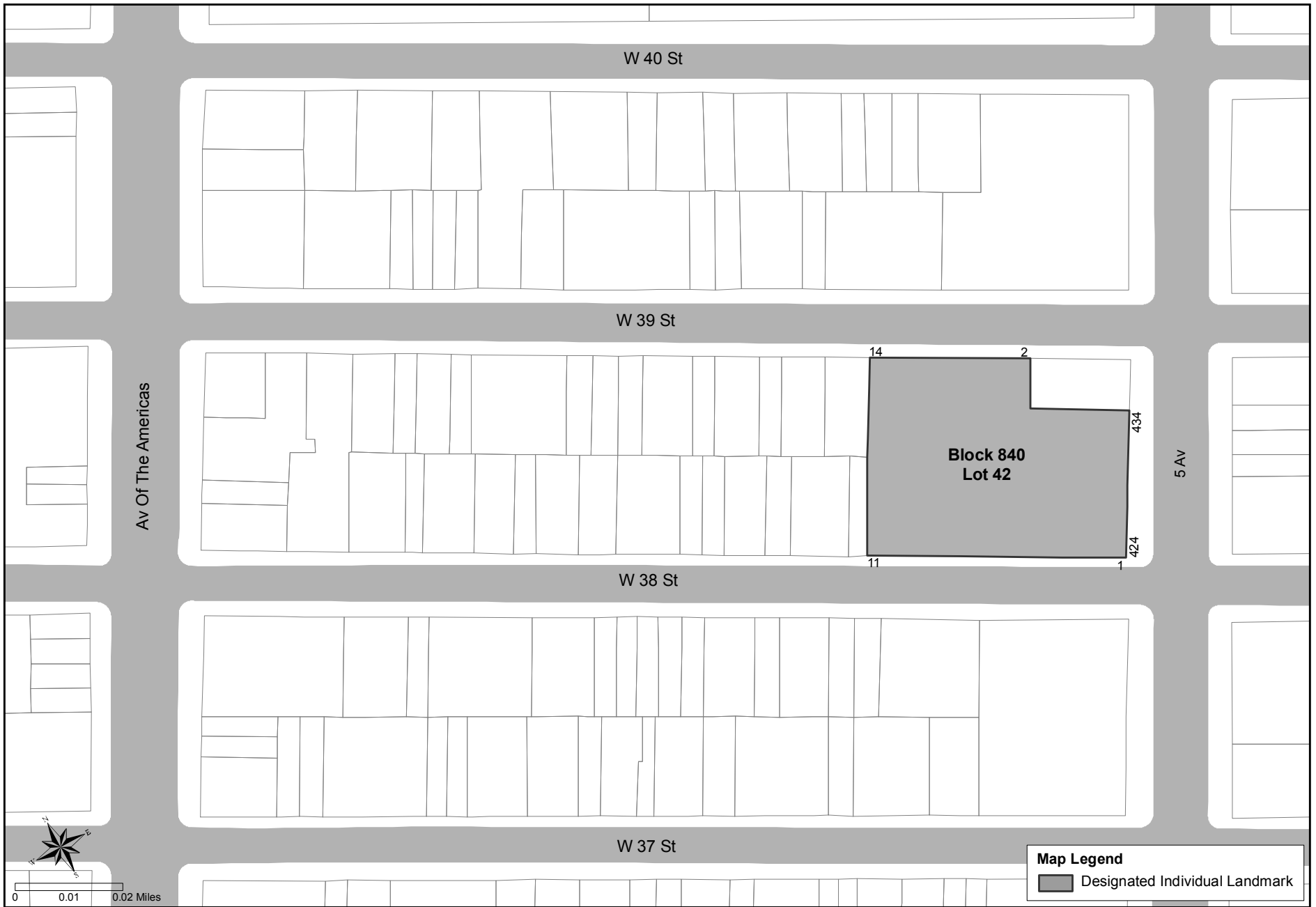


Lord & Taylor Building, façade details
Photos: Carl Forster (above), Marianne Percival (below)



Lord & Taylor Building

Photo: New York City, Dept. of Taxes (ca. 1940), Municipal Archives



LORD & TAYLOR BUILDING (LP-2271), 424-434 Fifth Avenue (aka 1-11 West 38th Street, 2-14 West 39th Street).
 Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan, Tax Map Block 840, Lot 42.

Designated: October 30, 2007

Graphic Source: New York City Department of City Planning, MapPLUTO, Edition 06C, 2006.
 Author: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, JM.