

ROGERS, PEET & COMPANY BUILDING, 258 Broadway (aka 258-259 Broadway, 1-11 Warren Street), Manhattan

Built 1899-1900, John B. Snook & Sons, architects;
1909 addition, Townsend, Steinle & Haskell, architects.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 134, Lot 25

On June 22, 2010, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Rogers, Peet & Company Building and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Public Hearing Item No. 11). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Two people spoke in favor of designation, including a representative of the Historic Districts Council.¹

Summary

The Rogers, Peet & Company building is an eight-story neo-Renaissance style commercial and office building designed by the firm of John B. Snook & Sons. Constructed in 1899-1900 for clergyman Eugene A. Hoffman, the building was occupied by Rogers, Peet & Co., a well-known retailer of men's and boys' clothing, for a period of more than 70 years. The Rogers, Peet & Co. building is an early example of a steel skeleton-framed skyscraper influenced by the Chicago school of architects, and stands out among a group of important early skyscrapers located in the vicinity of City Hall, New York's original skyscraper district, for its clear articulation of the structural grid and restrained use of stylized classical ornament. Constructed using the latest in fireproofing technologies, the building expresses its structural steel framing in the wide window bays on the east and north facades that are divided by strong vertical brick piers and recessed cast-iron or brick spandrels. The building is clad in stone



and buff brick and crowned by a deep molded and denticulated copper cornice. In 1909 a three-bay addition to the building was constructed on Warren Street, executed by the firm of Townsend, Steinle & Haskell but continuing the original design. During a long and prolific career, architect John B. Snook (1815-1901) designed numerous buildings in New York City as well as several others in Brooklyn, the Bronx, Westchester County, and New Jersey. In 1887 Snook's three sons and a son-in-law joined him in practice, thus establishing the firm of John B. Snook & Sons. It remains unclear what role the elder Snook played in the design of the Rogers, Peet & Company Building, but the building nevertheless represents a culmination of the architect's 64-year career of designing and building commercial structures.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Development of the Drygoods District in Lower Manhattan²

During the 1840s, the commercial development of Broadway and the surrounding streets of Lower Manhattan increasingly displaced residents in this area as the street became the city's leading commercial artery. Alexander Turney Stewart, an Irish immigrant who became one of New York's wealthiest merchants, opened his first store at 283 Broadway in 1823, selling Irish lace and notions. As his business expanded, Stewart moved to increasingly larger quarters on Broadway opposite City Hall Park. In 1845 he acquired a site at Broadway and Reade Street, and began construction of a new store building designed by Joseph Trench and John Butler Snook that eventually occupied the entire block front between Chambers and Reade Streets. The new A.T. Stewart store was the largest retail establishment in the city and employed a novel arrangement in which different categories of merchandise were separated into individual departments, setting a precedent for the development of the American department store. While most early nineteenth-century commercial buildings had brick and stone facades, the Stewart store was faced with marble above a cast-iron store front with huge plate glass windows. Almost immediately, Stewart's new marble palace became the favored store of New Yorkers and visitors alike. Imitators soon followed and, within a few years, Broadway and its side streets from City Hall Park to Canal Street became lined with marble, brownstone, and cast-iron commercial palaces.

As the new retail district began to develop on Broadway in the late 1840s and 1850s, the wholesale dry goods merchants who had been located on Pearl Street near the South Street Seaport began to move their businesses to Broadway and the blocks to the west between Dey Street and Park Place. To a large extent this move was prompted by the growing popularity of the North (Hudson River) piers which were better able to accommodate the large steam-powered vessels used for coastal and transatlantic shipping. Two major railroads established freight depots in the area during the 1850s and several other railroads built terminals in New Jersey where goods were off-loaded for transshipment across the river to the West Side piers.

This increase in trade and relocation of transportation facilities coincided with a city project in 1851 widening Dey and Cortlandt Streets between Broadway and Greenwich Street that made large tracts of cleared land available for redevelopment. Within the space of two years, Dey and Cortlandt Streets were almost entirely rebuilt with store and loft buildings for wholesale dry goods businesses and similar buildings were going up on Park Place, Vesey Street, and Church Street. According to the *Daily Tribune*, "forthwith commenced a most astonishing migration. [The] whole mercantile community seemed to have woke from a long sleep."³ Over the next twenty years the wholesale dry goods trade continued to move northward into the blocks west and north of City Hall Park where merchants could take advantage of the new transportation facilities in the area. In the late 1860s, *Trow's New York City Directory* observed that "The drygoods dealers, who constitute the largest business district of New York, appear to have permanently settled down upon that district of the city included between Broadway and West Broadway and extending from Park Place to Canal Street. This is the great center of the wholesale jobbers, auctioneers, and importers."⁴

The history of the Rogers, Peet & Company building site, located at the southwest corner of Broadway and Warren Street, followed closely the patterns of development that shaped the dry goods district during the 19th century. In 1827 the site was purchased from Trinity Church by Garrit Storm, a wealthy grocer and descendent of an old Dutch family in New York.⁵ The

property passed in 1852 to Storm's daughter, Glorvina Russell Hoffman, whose husband Samuel Verplanck Hoffman commissioned architect John B. Snook to design and construct a five-story commercial "palace" to replace the existing three row houses. Snook's design, featuring a ground-story colonnade, pedimented window lintels, and a bracketed cornice, was directly influenced by the A.T. Stewart store, standing just a block north across Broadway. For many years after the building's completion in 1854, it was known as the home of Devlin & Co., one of the first clothing houses to locate on Broadway.⁶ In 1889 when Devlin & Co. moved to a new store on Union Square, following the northward trend of retail along Broadway, the men's clothing firm of Rogers, Peet & Company moved into the building at 258-260 Broadway (3-5 Warren Street), occupying the basement, first, and second floors.

Rogers, Peet & Company

During the second half of the 19th century, the American clothing industry underwent a dramatic shift from custom-made clothing to pre-manufactured clothing as a result of industrial expansion and the corresponding growth of urban and national markets.⁷ An important element in this change was the emergence of advertising as an industry in its own right.⁸ For most of the 19th century, bombastic or outright false ad copy had been the norm in the retail trade, and the expectation among consumers.⁹ But as mass-production of standardized goods began to take hold, and as technology improved to facilitate mass communication, companies responded by modernizing their merchandising and advertising practices.

Rogers, Peet & Company was founded in 1874, when Broadway clothing merchants Marvin N. Rogers and Charles B. Peet joined their respective businesses to take advantage of the growing market for ready-made men's clothing.¹⁰ The other founding members of the firm, which dealt primarily in retail but also ran a wholesale operation, were Frank R. Chambers and William R. H. Martin. Following the pioneering example of John Wanamaker's retail establishment of the 1860s and 1870s in Philadelphia, Rogers Peet early on adopted a fixed-price, quality-guaranteed policy and began to rely on truthful advertising as a primary marketing tool.¹¹ An 1876 newspaper article noted the firm's huge inventory,¹² low prices, and use of price tags, a novelty in retail at that time.¹³ The growing emphasis on honesty, respectability, and customer service in retail was reflected in the partners' decision, in 1886, to introduce an employee profit-sharing system as a means of encouraging professionalism, salesmanship, and productivity.¹⁴ By the 1890s, Rogers, Peet & Co. had gained widespread recognition for these forward-thinking business strategies, and especially for their innovative and popular advertising style.¹⁵

Partner Frank R. Chambers (1850-1940) oversaw advertising for Rogers Peet from 1880 until 1915, writing much of the ad copy himself, and gave this simple advice on advertising: "Tell the truth. Understate. Never overstate."¹⁶ The breadth, diversity, and creativity of Rogers Peet advertising demonstrated their commitment to the medium as a key to business success. In addition to publishing numerous richly-illustrated catalogs and booklets replete with detailed descriptions of clothing and accessories and advice on style,¹⁷ the firm advertised daily in newspapers, in theater playbills, on posters, and on street cars. A typical Rogers Peet newspaper ad of the 1890s featured a single column of text—conveying matter-of-fact information about the quality, style, and price of an item, delivered in an informal, upbeat tone using colloquial language and the familiar second-person mode of address—paired with a simple, eye-catching cartoon-style illustration that often played humorously on some aspect of the item being advertised. The Rogers Peet style of advertising stood out in contrast to the conventional clothing

ad of the late 19th century, which usually featured a box of declarative text and a stock illustration, if any at all, and thus was quickly established as a standard to be emulated in the nascent advertising industry.¹⁸

Many Rogers Peet ads were illustrated in-house, which was more expensive than using stock “cuts” (graphics) provided by a manufacturer, but allowed for the development of a consistent and identifiable graphic style.¹⁹ In what might be considered an early recognition of the 20th-century marketing concept of branding, a trade writer described the Rogers Peet style in 1915, writing:

Everything that goes out of the store, including the boxes, bundles and envelopes, is utilized for attractive, refined, and dignified advertising. By tricks of type and designing a certain definite individuality is given to each piece of advertising, so that, however diversified the use to which it is put, it can be recognized at a glance. This idea is one that is gradually appealing to more advertisers as time goes on.²⁰

In 1940 Joseph H. Appel, an early advertising director at Wanamaker’s, wrote a glowing appraisal (in salesman’s lingo) of Rogers Peet’s early achievements in advertising:

An interesting and outstanding example of the application by other advertisers of the Wanamaker-John E. Powers [Wanamaker’s first director of advertising] advertising copy principles has been for many years the Rogers Peet Company, New York clothiers, whose unique single-column ads have been familiar for decades... the Rogers Peet ads have caused comment for many years and have retained unchanged their typographical and advertising individuality and form for a longer period of time than perhaps any other advertising in America (about 60 years).²¹

The original Rogers Peet store was located at 487 Broadway, on the southwest corner of Broome Street. Within five years the firm had expanded to a second location on Broadway, and within ten years had opened a third Broadway location. In 1889, Rogers, Peet & Company opened their fourth store in the Snook-designed building at Broadway and Warren— thereafter known as their Warren Street store. By the 1950s, there were four Rogers Peet stores: the Warren Street store, the Union Square store, a Fifth Avenue store at 41st Street, and a second Fifth Avenue store, at 48th Street.²²

The New York Skyscraper of the 1890s²³

During the 19th century, commercial buildings in New York City evolved from four-story structures modeled on Italian Renaissance palazzi to much taller skyscrapers. Made possible by technological advances, tall buildings challenged designers to fashion an appropriate architectural expression. Between 1870 and 1890, nine- and ten-story buildings transformed the streetscapes of lower Manhattan. During the building boom following the Civil War, building envelopes continued to be articulated largely according to traditional palazzo compositions, with mansarded and towered roof profiles. New York’s tallest buildings— including the seven-and-a-half-story Equitable Life Assurance Co. Building (1868-70, Gilman & Kendall and George B. Post) at Broadway and Cedar Street, the ten-story Western Union Building (1872-75, George B. Post) at Broadway and Liberty Street, and the ten-story Tribune Building (1873-75, Richard M. Hunt), all now demolished — incorporated passenger elevators, iron floor beams, and fireproof building materials. Beginning in the later 1870s, tall buildings were characterized by flat roofs

and a variety of exterior arrangements, often in the form of multi-storied arcades. The period through the 1880s was characterized by stylistic experimentation in which office buildings in New York incorporated diverse influences. Fireproofing was of paramount concern as office buildings grew taller, and by 1881-82 systems had been devised to "completely fireproof" them. Ever taller skyscrapers were made possible by the increasing use and refinement of metal framing. In 1888-89, New York architect Bradford Lee Gilbert used iron skeleton framing for the first seven stories of the 11-story Tower Building at 50 Broadway (demolished). Beginning around 1890, architects began producing skyscraper designs that adhered to the tripartite base-shaft-capital arrangement associated with the classical column, a scheme that became commonly employed in New York. As steel skeleton framing was adopted for tall buildings in New York, architects and engineers introduced caisson foundations which carried the weight of the skeleton frame down to bedrock. Architects [Francis H.] Kimball & [G. Kramer] Thompson and engineer Charles SooySmith were leaders in this effort with the Manhattan Life Insurance Co. Building (1893-94, demolished), 64-66 Broadway, credited with being the first skyscraper with a full iron and steel frame, set on pneumatic concrete caissons.²⁴ This was followed by the American Surety Co. Building (1894-96, Bruce Price), 100 Broadway, also with SooySmith, which was the first New York skyscraper with a full steel frame, set on pneumatic concrete caissons, and is today a designated New York City Landmark.²⁵ An additional consideration in office building design was to provide maximum light and ventilation, for which contemporary architects devised several solutions, including interior and exterior light courts.

John B. Snook & Sons and Townsend, Steinle & Haskell

John Butler Snook, born in England, immigrated to the United States and by 1835 was established in New York City as a carpenter/builder, then as an architect in partnership with William Beer in 1837-40. By 1842, Snook found work with Joseph Trench, and they later formed the firm of Trench & Snook, which helped introduce the Anglo-Italianate style to New York with buildings such as the A.T. Stewart Store (1845-46, a designated New York City Individual Landmark) at 280 Broadway, the country's first department store and the catalyst and architectural precedent for commercial development of lower Broadway. With Trench's departure for California in the 1850s, Snook rose to head the firm. He became a prolific architect-builder who designed structures of all types, in virtually every revival style, and expanded his practice into one of the largest in New York. The first Grand Central Terminal (1869-71, demolished) was one of his best-known works. In 1887, Snook took his three sons, James Henry (1847-1917), Samuel Booth (1857-1915), and Thomas Edward (1864?-1953), and a son-in-law, John W. Boyleston (1852-1932), into his office and the firm's name was changed to John B. Snook & Sons. Examples of Snook's work—and that of the firm of Snook & Sons—are also located in the Expanded Carnegie Hill, Gansevoort Market, Greenwich Village Extension, Ladies' Mile, NoHo, SoHo-Cast Iron, Tribeca East, Tribeca West, Upper East Side, and Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic Districts. A handful of buildings designed by Snook still stand in the vicinity of City Hall; prominent among these are the A.T. Stewart store at 280 Broadway (1845-46, Joseph Trench & Co.; additions, Trench & Snook, 1850-51 and 1852-53; Frederick Schmidt, 1872; Edward D. Harris, 1884; 1921,) and the cast-iron commercial building at 287 Broadway (1871-72), both designated New York City Landmarks.

The firm of (Robert Samuel) Townsend, (Charles Albert) Steinle & (William Cook) Haskell formed in 1906, and is known for having designed several large apartment buildings in the Upper West Side-Central Park West Historic District, as well as commercial buildings,

stores, lofts and offices in lower Midtown. Notably, the firm designed more than one building for, or on behalf of, the Rogers Peet Company. Apart from their 1909 addition to the Warren Street store, the architects were commissioned to design the Marbridge Building at 1328 Broadway (between 34th and 35th streets), completed in 1906 and housing a Rogers Peet store from its opening until 1922, and the building at 479 Broadway, completed in 1915 and housing a Rogers Peet store from its opening until the clothing firm's final days in 1978.

Design and Construction of the Rogers, Peet & Company Building

On December 4, 1898, a catastrophic fire destroyed the building at 258 Broadway, and severely damaged its neighbors to the south, the Home Life Insurance Company Building (256-257 Broadway, 1892-94, Pierre Le Brun of Napoleon LeBrun & Sons, a designated New York City Landmark) and the Postal Telegraph Cable Company Building (253 Broadway, 1892-94, Harding & Gooch, a designated New York City Landmark). The fire began in the basement of 258 Broadway, which was used by the Rogers Peet Company as a store room.²⁶ In the wake of the fire, critics of skyscrapers cited the extensive damage to the upper floors of the 16-story Home Life building as evidence in the case against creating tall buildings, while supporters of modern fireproofing technology argued that the Home Life building's structure, as well as that of the Postal Telegraph building, had actually withstood the fire well and indeed prevented further spread of the fire.²⁷

It was in this climate of heightened public awareness of safety concerns and general uncertainty about the future of tall buildings in New York City that the owner of the property at the southwest corner of Broadway Warren Street set out to redevelop the site.²⁸ Eugene A. Hoffman, a prominent and wealthy clergyman associated with the General Theological Society,²⁹ appropriately chose as architects John B. Snook & Sons, the firm of the man Hoffman's father had commissioned to design the first major commercial building for the site. The Snook & Sons office was located across Warren Street from the site, at 261 Broadway.³⁰ The new building at 258 Broadway was to be a retail and office building occupied by commercial and professional tenants.³¹ Rogers, Peet & Company would occupy the basement and first two floors, with the store at street-level and show rooms above. Plans submitted to the Buildings Department early in 1899 called for an eight-story, steel-skeleton framed structure with a concrete-and-steel grillage foundation, riveted steel I-beams and girders supporting brick curtain walls, floors constructed of hollow, terra cotta-tile flat arches filled with concrete, and a flat asphalt roof. The building's interior was designed to be open in plan on the ground floor, with an elevator bank and stairs along the south wall towards the front of the building, as well as an interior light court on the south wall above the fourth story to provide light to the interior offices. The upper stories were partitioned into offices accessed through a double-loaded central corridor running east-west. The main building entrance and a storefront entrance were located on Broadway, and the second-story was devoted to cast-iron show windows.

Constructed in just under a year and completed in April of 1900,³² the eight-story, steel-framed Rogers, Peet & Co. building embodied the latest technologies in skyscraper construction. Snook & Sons' completed design for the Rogers, Peet & Co. building was notable principally for a strong expression of the structural steel frame on the building's exterior, the defining characteristic of the Chicago school and comparatively rare in early New York skyscrapers.³³ The structural grid of the Rogers, Peet & Co. Building is articulated by thin projecting masonry piers rising from the second story to the cornice, and wide window bays framed by spandrels,

pilasters and thin mullions; the high ratio of window to wall area was made possible by the non-load bearing walls.

In addition to its spare appearance, the building is visually distinct from its skyscraping neighbors of the 1890s because it does not conform to the established base-shaft-capital composition. The steel columns supporting the building at the ground story were originally recessed behind the storefront (with the exception of a corner pier), giving the upper stories a floating appearance³⁴; moreover, limestone rustication at the second and third stories gave the appearance of a proper base, but the “shaft” of the fourth through eighth stories, clad in buff brick, is bisected by a substantial entablature at the sixth story. Thus, a horizontal division of one-two-three-two stories is created. A similar effect is seen on the facade of 890 Broadway, completed by Snook & Sons a year earlier than 258 Broadway, in 1899. Architecture critic Montgomery Schuyler apparently called this facade treatment “wild work,” because of how it appeared to flout the popular base-shaft-capital scheme.³⁵ At 258 Broadway, plain brick piers divide the building’s Broadway facade into two wide window bays. On the second and third stories, show windows are framed by cast-iron pilasters and divided by a deep cast-iron spandrel featuring a Greek key; the cast iron shows an unusual level of detail, giving the material a sumptuous quality. Above the third story, brick spandrels are decorated with terra-cotta plaques featuring stylized anthemia, foliate ornament, and escutcheons. The spandrels at each story accentuate the building’s horizontal framing members. Ornament is confined to the classical motifs decorating the spandrels, pilasters, mullions, and sixth-story entablature, but the main building entrance on Broadway is framed by a grand Italian Renaissance-inspired surround. Another prominent feature of the Chicago skyscraper was the flat roof, which is emphasized at 258 Broadway by a boldly projecting molded-copper cornice. A photo from c. 1938 shows a free-standing sign reading “Rogers Peet Company” on the roof of the building.

The Warren Street facade continues the rational scheme of the Broadway facade, with a slight variation in the wider window bays divided by brick piers and cast-iron mullions. The proportions of the original Snook & Sons building were altered when it was extended by three bays in 1909. Architects Townsend, Steinle & Haskell were retained to expand the existing building to occupy the three adjacent lots to the west, nos. 7, 9, and 11 Warren Street, which Rogers, Peet & Co. had leased for this purpose.³⁶ A secondary entrance in the seventh bay of the Warren Street facade was part of the new design, and the architects gave this entrance a door surround that was almost identical to the Broadway entrance, but a shade less grand.

It remains unclear what role the elder Snook played in the Rogers, Peet & Co. building project, however it is likely that his participation was very minimal given his age at the time.³⁷ Snook & Sons’ design for the new Rogers Peet building was primarily functional, defined by the parameters of the corner site, the newest construction methods then available (the steel skeleton-frame), and current standards in retail and office facilities. When compared with the original John B. Snook-designed commercial structure that stood on the site, the Rogers, Peet & Company building reflects the evolution of commercial architecture in New York, beginning with the grand “palazzi” of the mid-19th century and culminating in the modern skyscraper.

Later History

The Rogers, Peet & Company Warren Street store stayed in business from its re-opening in 1900 until the late 1970s. Rogers, Peet & Co. remained an independent retail house until 1962, when it was acquired by Cluett, Peabody & Co., Inc., manufacturers of the Arrow label in men’s clothing. The Rogers, Peet & Co. brand remained strong until the 1970s, when the urban

retail landscape began to change as a result of widespread retail consolidation, suburban growth and the increasing popularity of malls, and competition from emerging national chains. Other challenges to an old-fashioned retail house such as Rogers Peet were changing tastes in men's fashion and the increasing acceptability of casual clothing for the workplace.³⁸ The Rogers, Peet & Co. Warren Street store closed its doors c. 1976, and by 1978 no Rogers Peet stores remained in New York. By 1981 the upper floors of the Rogers, Peet & Company building had been converted into apartments, with six or seven units per floor, and during the 1980s the ground-level storefront was occupied by Strawberry, a New York-based regional chain of popularly priced women's clothing. A bank currently occupies the ground floor, which has been altered with a contemporary storefront of polished-granite veneer and plate glass.

Description

Broadway (east) Facade: two bays; facade clad in buff brick and stone with cast-iron and terra cotta trim; facade divided vertically by three piers rising from the second story to the cornice; piers are rusticated limestone at second and third stories, brick above; facade divided horizontally by stone entablatures at the first, third and sixth stories; main entrance with stone door surround resting on a granite plinth in first bay of the ground story, and a non-historic storefront in the second and third bays; main entrance door framed by double-surround; inner surround composed of molded returns and rosette-decorated paneling, and an entablature supported on scroll-brackets with volutes and central acroterion; decorative metal grille framed by bead-and-reel molding and eared anthemion above entablature; outer surround composed of paneled pilasters resting on plinths; pilasters have egg-and-dart molding at bases, bead-and-reel molding and stylized anthemion on shafts, and molded capitals decorated with more stylized anthemion, egg-and-dart molding and a water-leaf motif; pilasters support a molded entablature with decorative bands of raised circles with a water-leaf motif, dentils, and egg-and-dart molding; large window opening in each bay of second through eighth stories; window openings contain three windows separated by cast-iron pilasters or mullions (c. 1938 photograph shows double-hung windows); window openings have spandrels of cast-iron (at third story) and brick with terra-cotta plaques decorated with stylized classical motifs (at fifth, sixth, and eighth stories); deeply projecting pressed-metal cornice with egg-and-dart molding and dentils; possibly historic wooden water tank visible on roof from City Hall Park. Alterations: original decorative bronze gate and grille at Broadway entrance removed; non-historic bronze double-door with five-light operable transom at Broadway entrance; plastic plaque and metal clete affixed to Broadway door surround; contemporary storefront infill, including boxing-out of the ground-story structural piers (1990s); replacement window sash; non-historic metal door and metal paneling at Warren Street entrance; roof-top addition/bulkhead visible on roof from City Hall Park. *Warren Street (north) Facade:* seven bays; seventh bay, with Warren Street entrance, is slightly narrower; repeats design of Broadway facade, except for wider window bays; window openings contain two paired windows separated by brick pilasters, each pair of windows divided by a cast-iron mullion; metal grille in a scallop pattern in fifth bay of storefront, above transom bar; glass transom above Warren Street door, metal grille in a scallop pattern above entrance. Alterations: contemporary ground-story storefront continues from Broadway facade. *West facade (partially visible):* red-brick party wall with engaged piers; windows; chimney. Alterations: satellite dish, antenna, and two vent heads visible on roof towards rear of building.

Report researched and written by
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NOTES

¹ A public hearing was held on December 12, 1989 on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Rogers, Peet & Company building and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site.

² This section was adapted from LPC, *25 Park Place Building Designation Report* (LP-2217) (New York: City of New York, 2007), prepared by Marianne Percival, and LPC, *325-333 Broadway Building Designation Report* (LP-2112) (New York: City of New York, 2002), prepared by Gale Harris.

³ *Daily Tribune*, quoted in Charles Lockwood, *Manhattan Moves Uptown* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1976), 100.

⁴ H. Wilson, Ed., *Trow's New York City Directory for the Year Ending May 1, 1869* (New York: John F. Trow, 1868), 6.

⁵ Garrit Storm ran his grocer's business at no. 9 Coenties Slip, on the East River docks, until about 1824, when he presumably relocated to the City Hall area, living for many years at no. 2 Warren Street. See Helen Wilkinson Reynolds, *Dutch Houses in the Hudson Valley Before 1776* (New York: Payson and Clarke, Ltd., 1929; reprinted New York: Dover, 1965), 376-378; Walter Barrett, *Old Merchants of New York City*, 4 (New York: Thomas R. Knox & Co., 1885), 323-326; retrieved from Google Books September 15, 2010. The Storm family owned slaves as late as 1813. See Harry B. Yoshpe, "Record of Slave Manumissions in New York During the Colonial and Early National Periods," *The Journal of Negro History* (Jan. 1941): 78-107: 90.

⁶ J.B. Gibson, *One Hundredth Anniversary of the New York Stock Exchange* (New York: Jenkins & McCowan, 1892), n.p., retrieved from Google Books September 16, 2010.

⁷ For a detailed analysis of the rise of the ready-made clothing industry in America, see Rob Schorman's *Selling Style: Clothing and Social Change at the Turn of the Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).

⁸ National advertising expenditures began to increase exponentially in the late 1860s, with the 1880s and 90s seeing the most growth: Joseph H. Appel, *Growing Up With Advertising* (New York: The Business Bourse, Publishers, 1940), 103. In an 1893 business manual, advertising pioneer Nathaniel Fowler wrote that "during the last ten years, and particularly during the last five years, the quality of advertising has passed through a fiery revolution. The brilliant minds of the country are now giving attention to the preparation of advertising. Advertising has become a science": Schorman, 134. By 1890, *Clothing Gazette*, the principal trade journal for the ready-to-wear clothing industry, could declare that "...advertising is to-day one of the great forces of business. It is the foundation stone upon which rests most of the great retail clothing houses of the day": Schorman, 129.

⁹ Appel, 57.

¹⁰ Schorman, 22; 24.

¹¹ "Rogers, Peet & Co.," *New York Times*, Dec. 20, 1876, 5; Apparently, the fixed-price system was first introduced in New York by Lord & Taylor around 1835, but it was later used to greater effect by A.T. Stewart in his famous department store: Appel, 57; Schorman, 129.

¹² In 1900, Rogers Peet advertised no less than 325 different styles of sack suit, the standard, loose-fitting, ready-to-wear men's suit: Schorman, 36.

¹³ "Rogers, Peet & Co.," *NYT*; Schorman, 139.

¹⁴ The earliest recorded instances of corporate profit-sharing in New York came in 1869, with the A.S. Cameron & Co., manufacturers of steam-pumping machinery, and Brewster & Co, carriage manufacturers. Wanamaker's started a mutual benefit association for employees in 1881, and in 1886 Proctor & Gamble introduced a stock acquisition program for its employees. In 1888, Rogers, Peet & Co. had 275 permanent employees and 100 temporary employees on its payroll: Herbert B. Adams, ed. *History of Cooperation in the United States* (Baltimore: N. Murray and the Johns Hopkins University, 1888), 171-172; retrieved from Google Books August 12, 2010); Richard Robinso, *U.S. Business History, 1602-1988: A Chronology* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 116, 137. Building an image of refinement and upper middle-class respectability was an important goal of clothing retailers in the last quarter of the 19th century, as the ready-made clothing industry struggled to define itself against the traditional associations of custom-made clothing with social distinction and wealth: Schorman, 18-22.

¹⁵ Numerous references to Rogers Peet advertising can be found in the retail and advertising trade press of the late 19th and early 20th centuries: the Rogers Peet style was highlighted in D.J. McDonald, “How to Write Advertisements,” *Clothing Gazette* (July 1890): 55; *The Inland and American Printer and Lithographer*, 22 (Oct. 1898-Mar. 1899): 588; *Printers’ Ink* (Oct. 12, 1892; Dec. 12, 1918): 3; 462; and *How to Advertise: a Guide to Designing, Laying Out, and Composing Advertisements* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co. for the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World, 1919): 57, among other publications.

¹⁶ “Chairman of Board, a Member of Original Partnership, Dies at Bronxville,” *NYT*, May 1, 1940, 29.

¹⁷ Rogers, Peet & Co.’s 1898 illustrated catalog titled “Livery” contained 52 pages of items and sartorial advice for “men servants.” Rogers, Peet & Co., *Livery* (New York: H. Ingalls Kimball, 1898).

¹⁸ Schorman, 139; Bliven, 3. Fashion advertising in the U.S. can be traced to the 1830s, when women’s fashion plates appeared in fashion magazines and specialty publications: Schorman, 147.

¹⁹ Schorman, 144. Over the years, several well-known cartoonists and illustrators, such as Will Phillip Hooper, Bob Wildhack, and Forbell, created original advertising illustrations for Rogers Peet, many of them humorous or inane in character; some ads were illustrated by future actor John Barrymore: Appel, 96; Don Herold, *Humor in Advertising and How to Make It Pay* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), 104.

²⁰ Ernest Elmo Calkins, *The Business of Advertising* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1915), 292.

²¹ Appel was the director of publicity at Wanamaker’s from c. 1901 until 1936, and his book *Growing Up With Advertising* chronicles Wanamaker’s role in the invention of modern large-scale advertising; Appel, 95.

²² During its more than 100-year history, Rogers, Peet & Company had several retail locations throughout Manhattan, as well as locations in Brooklyn, Boston, Washington, D.C, and New Jersey. Charles B. Peet began his clothing retail business at 340 Broadway, moving later to two different locations on Duane Street before returning to Broadway. Marvin N. Rogers began his clothing retail business at a nearby storefront on Broadway, moving to a different location on Broadway before going into business with Charles Peet in 1876 at no. 487 Broadway, at the southwest corner of Broome Street. Between 1876 and 1882 Rogers, Peet & Co. was listed at 487 Broadway, and from 1883 to 1889 the firm was listed at 569 Broadway, at the northwest corner of Prince Street. According to one source, Rogers Peet had a presence on Broadway at 34th Street as early as 1886, and at Broadway and 32nd Street as early as 1888. In 1890, three locations were listed for Frank R. Chambers: 259 Broadway, at the southwest corner of Warren Street; 569 Broadway; and 1260 Broadway, at the southeast corner of West 32nd Street. From 1890 until 1902 (except the years 1898-1900), these three Broadway addresses were listed under Chambers’ name. By 1902, the firm also had a store located at 842 Broadway (on Union Square at the southeast corner of East 14th Street), which remained in business until the early 1950s. From c. 1906 until 1922, Rogers Peet maintained a store at 1302-28 Broadway (the Marbridge Building, Townsend, Steinle & Haskell, 1906-07), at the northeast corner of Sixth Avenue and West 34th Street. In 1915, the firm opened a store at 479 Fifth Avenue (Townsend, Steinle & Haskell, 1914), between 41st and 42nd streets. In 1922 Rogers Peet opened a new store in the Herald Building (McKim, Mead & White, 1890-95, demolished 1940), at 1350 Broadway, and by 1925 they operated a store at Broadway and Liberty Street in lower Manhattan. From c. 1952 until 1977, Rogers Peet maintained a second Fifth Avenue location, no. 600 Fifth Avenue, at the northwest corner of East 48th Street. The Rogers, Peet & Co. Warren Street store (259 Broadway) remained in business until 1976; at the time of its closure, two other Rogers Peet stores remained: 600 Fifth Avenue, which soon closed in 1977, and 479 Fifth Avenue, which closed early in 1978: New York City directories, 1851-1972; “Rogers Peet Co. Building,” *Architecture and Building*, 47 (Jan.-Dec.1915): 152-155; “Half of Herald Building Leased for 12 Years to Rogers Peet Co. at \$165,000 Annually,” *NYT*, June 18, 1921; “34th Street Corner Lease,” *NYT*, Apr. 18, 1922, 38; “Building Planned in Herald Square,” *NYT*, Feb. 24, 1940, 29; “Rogers Peet, Fourth,” *The Edison Monthly* (June, 1915): 12-14; Rogers, Peet & Co. advertisements, *NYT*, 1925, 1950, 1954, 1974, 1976.

²³ This section was adapted from LPC, *American Tract Society Building Designation Report* (LP-2038) (New York: City of New York, 1999), prepared by Jay Shockley.

²⁴ The front wall was masonry loadbearing: Sarah B. Landau and Carl Condit, *Rise of the New York Skyscraper, 1865-1913* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 224.

²⁵ The building employed both curtain walls and masonry bearing walls: Landau and Condit, 231.

- ²⁶ The basement of 258 Broadway connected with the tunnel of Alfred E. Beach's Pneumatic Railway, New York's earliest, but failed, attempt at a subway system: Clifton Hood, *722 Miles: the Building of the Subways and How They Transformed New York* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 48.
- ²⁷ Ibid. The New York City building code had been revised in 1897 to require that all buildings taller than 75' be totally fireproof: Landau and Condit, 181.
- ²⁸ Landau and Condit, 180.
- ²⁹ Burrows and Wallace, 1087.
- ³⁰ In 1897 the firm moved from 12 Chambers Street to 261 Broadway, where it remained until 1901. John B. Snook had maintained offices at 12 Chambers Street since his days working with Joseph Trench in the 1840s: Manuscript Finding Aid, John B. Snook Architectural Record Collection, PR064, Department of Prints, Photographs, and Architectural Collections, New-York Historical Society.
- ³¹ At the time of the fire, tenants of the old Snook building included Rogers, Peet & Co., the Massachusetts Mutual Life Company, an architect, a contractor, and a law firm: "Rogers, Peet & Co.'s Building," *NYT*, Dec. 5, 1898, 1.
- ³² In her Ph.D. dissertation titled "The Commercial Architecture of John Butler Snook," Mary Ann Clegg Smith explains that during the late 19th century architects were often paid considerably more for superintending a building project than for creating the architectural plans. Given this assertion, and the fact that no contractor was listed on the New Building permit, it is likely that Snook & Sons served both as architect and contractor for 258 Broadway: Mary Ann Clegg Smith, "The Commercial Architecture of John Butler Snook," PhD diss. (Penn State University, 1974), 178; NB 172-1899, New York City Department of Buildings.
- ³³ During this early period of skyscraper construction in New York, iron or steel framing for tall buildings was associated with Chicago architects and buildings; some have suggested that the Rogers, Peet & Co. building shows a more direct Chicago-school influence in its construction and aesthetic appearance: Landau and Condit, 277.
- ³⁴ This configuration was changed with the removal of an historic projecting metal-and-glass storefront; exterior masonry piers are now visible at each ground-story bay.
- ³⁵ Mary Ann Clegg Smith contextualized Schuyler's criticism when she wrote that "the arbitrary separation of stories was typical of the 1880s but considered rather retarded during the 1890s when tall buildings were more likely to have a tripartite facade design": Clegg Smith, 181.
- ³⁶ New York County, Office of the Register, Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 118, p. 484 (Feb. 3, 1909); Liber 118, p. 464 (Feb. 1, 1909). Just before the original Snook building burned down in 1898, Rogers Peet had expanded their store into the building at nos. 7-9 Warren Street by connecting the adjacent buildings at the first and second stories: Department of Buildings, New Building and Alteration applications (ALT 358-1898).
- ³⁷ Clegg Smith asserts that the younger partners in the firm would have had more familiarity with modern steel-frame construction than Snook, trained as he was in the 1830s as a builder-architect. One source states that Snook retired at the age of 80 in 1895, but an obituary implies that Snook continued to work up until his death in 1901: Clegg Smith, 163; 11.
- ³⁸ LPC, *Lord & Taylor Building Designation Report* (LP-2271) (New York: City of New York, 2007), 6, report prepared by Marianne Percival; James J. Cramer, "Bargain Basement," *New York* (Oct. 9, 1995): 30, 32, 35.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of the building and site, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Rogers, Peet & Company building has a special character, 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, among its important qualities, the Rogers, Peet & Company building is an eight-story neo-Renaissance style speculative office building designed by the firm of John B. Snook & Sons and constructed in 1899-1900; that the building was constructed for the Rogers Peet & Co., clothing merchants, whose firm was founded in 1874 and quickly became a well-respected retailer of men's and boys' clothing and gained widespread recognition for modern sales strategies and an innovative advertising style; that in 1889 the firm opened their fourth store on the southwest corner of Broadway and Warren Street, in a marble-fronted, palazzo-style commercial building designed by John B. Snook and completed c. 1854; that when this building was destroyed by a catastrophic fire in the winter of 1898, a new building was commissioned for the site; that the new building was completed in 1900 and expanded in 1909 with a three-bay addition on Warren Street, executed by the firm of Townsend, Steinle & Haskell and continuing the original design; that the building is an early example of a steel skeleton-framed skyscraper influenced by the Chicago school of architects, and that as such it stands out among a group of important early skyscrapers located in the vicinity of City Hall; that the building was constructed using the latest in fireproofing technologies; that a significant aspect of the building's design is the expression of its steel-skeleton frame in the wide window bays on the east and north facades that are divided by strong vertical brick piers and recessed cast-iron or terra-cotta spandrels, emphasizing the structural grid; that the building is clad in stone and buff brick, decorated in a restrained manner with stylized classical ornament, and crowned by a deep molded and denticulated copper cornice; that the building was designed by the firm of architect John B. Snook (1815-1901), who was responsible for numerous buildings in New York City as well as several others in Brooklyn, the Bronx, Westchester County, and New Jersey; and that the building represents a culmination of the architect's 64-year career of designing and building commercial structures.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions 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 Rogers, Peet & Company building, 258 Broadway, Manhattan, and designates Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 134, Lot 25, as its Landmark Site.

Robert B. Tierney, Chair
Pablo E. Vengochea, Vice Chair
Frederick Bland, Diana Chapin, Michael Devonshire, Joan Gerner,
Michael Goldblum, Margery Perlmutter, Commissioners



Rogers, Peet & Company Building

258 Broadway, Manhattan

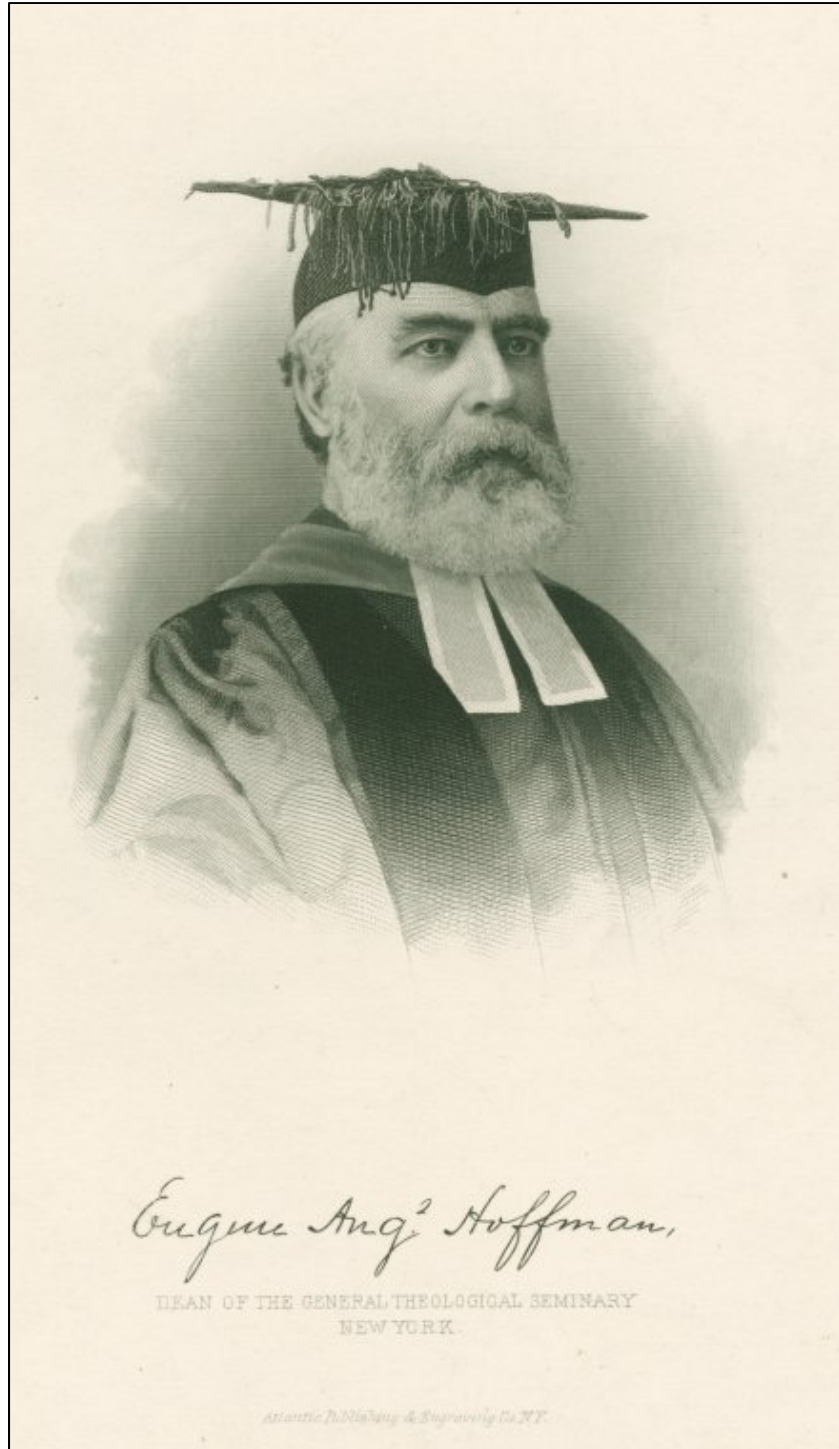
Built: 1899-1900

Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010



Rogers, Peet & Company Building
Warren Street (north) facade.

Photo: Christopher D. Brazeel, 2010



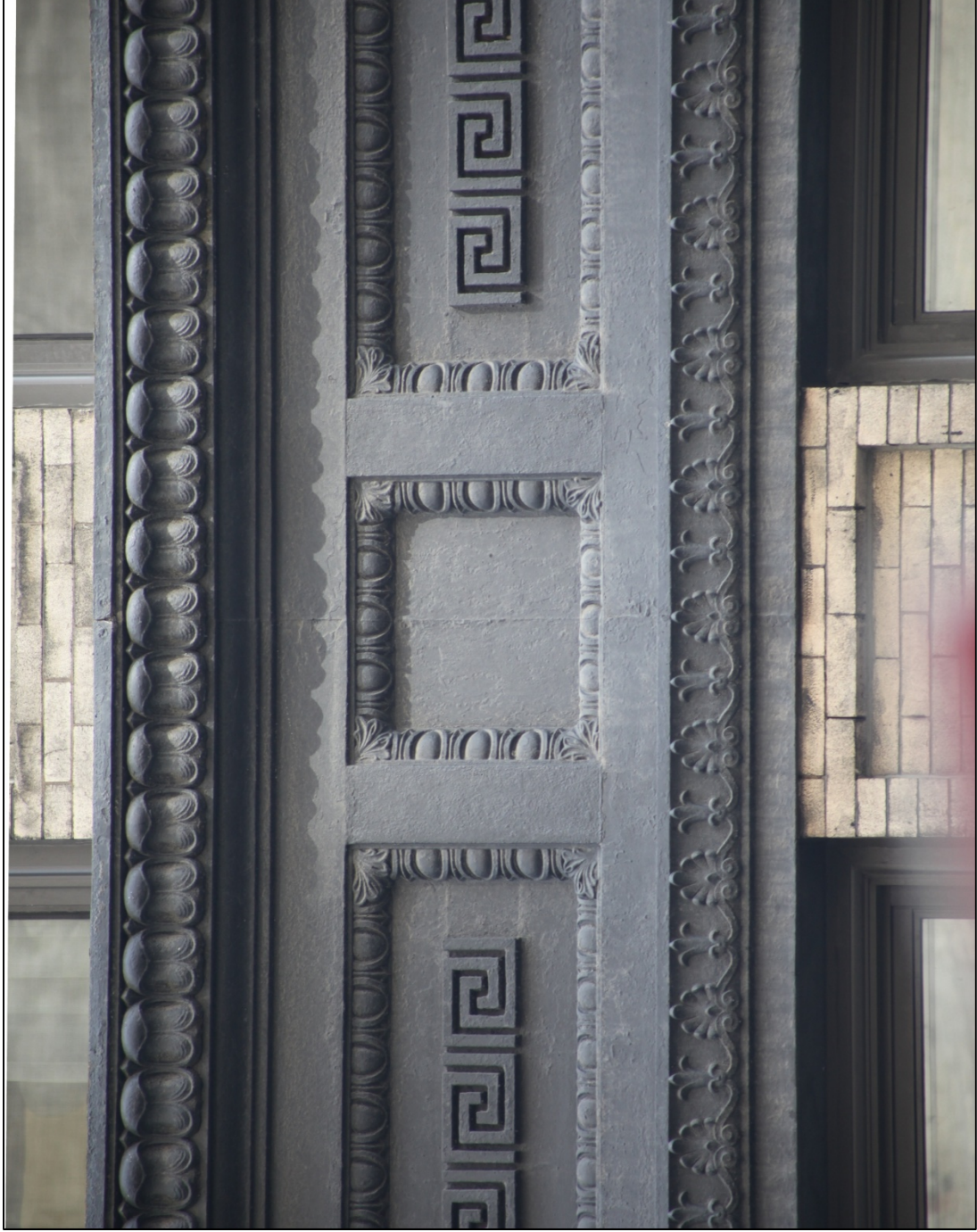
Eugene Augustus Hoffman

Undated portrait engraving.

Image courtesy of the New York Public Library (NYPL ID 1261290)



Rogers, Peet & Company Building
Stone entablature framing Warren Street entrance
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010



Rogers, Peet & Company Building

Detail of cast-iron spandrel

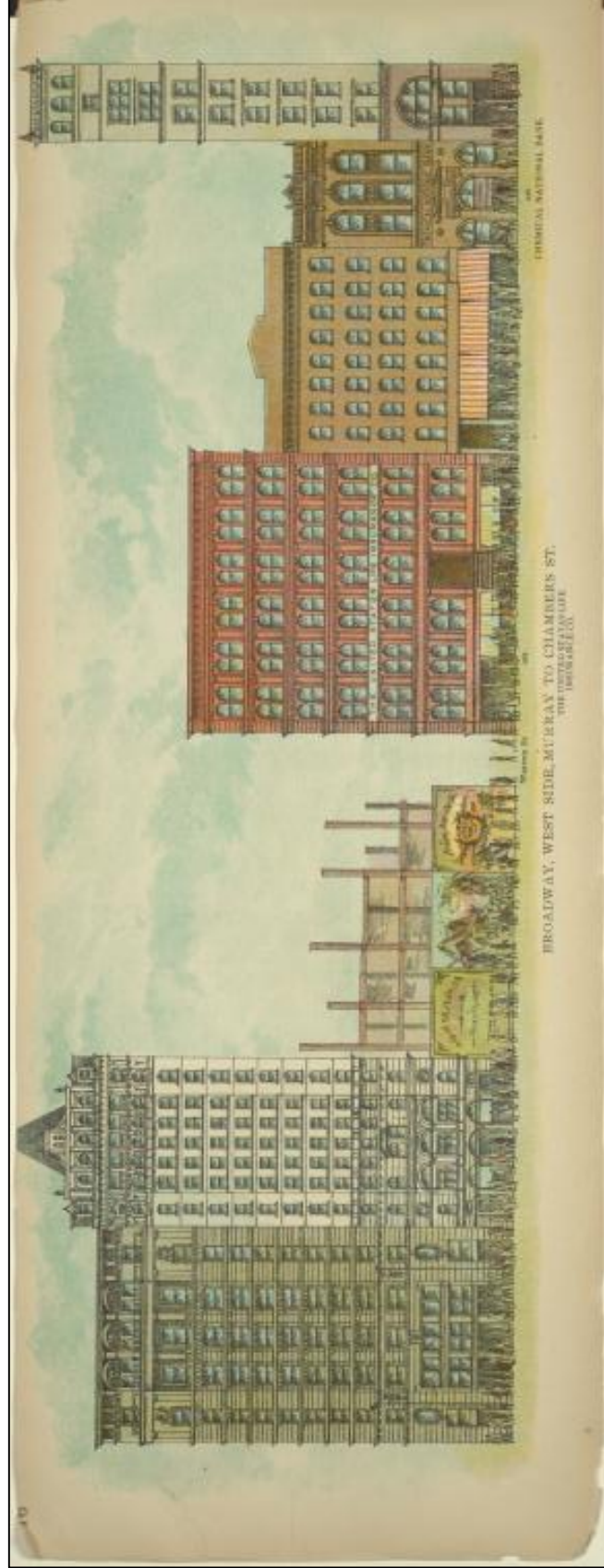
Photo: Christopher D. Brazeel, 2010



Rogers, Peet & Company Building
Detail of terra-cotta spandrel and molded cornice
Photo: Christopher D. Brazeel, 2010



Rogers, Peet & Company Building
Photo: New York City Department of Taxes (c. 1939)
Courtesy New York City Municipal Archives



Rogers, Peet & Company Building under construction

Illustration: "Broadway, West side. Murray to Chambers St."

A Pictorial Description of Broadway (New York: Mail & Express, 1899)

Courtesy New York Public Library (NYPL ID 1627852)

FRANK LESLIE'S POPULAR MONTHLY.

ROGERS, PEET & CO.,
CLOTHIERS,
487 Broadway, cor. Broome Street, New York.

SPRING FASHIONS, 1879.
We are now offering the choicest selection of
MEN'S, BOYS' & CHILDREN'S CLOTHING
For Present and Coming Wear that we have ever placed upon
our Counters.

We have not yielded to the prevalent custom of lowering the *quality* of goods to lessen their cost, but have excelled our former high standard while materially reducing the price.

OUT-OF-TOWN RESIDENTS furnished with *Samples, Fashion Plates,* and *self-measurement directions* to order from, on request, and goods forwarded by Express, C. O. D., with privilege of examination, or by registered mail, on approval, upon receipt of the price and postage.

ROGERS, PEET & CO., THE LEADING CLOTHIERS,
487 BROADWAY, COR. BROOME STREET, NEW YORK.

Poor guessers, some of you good friends of ours. Yesterday we mixed together a lot of \$5, \$4 and \$3.50 shoes, and you've gone and picked the \$3.50 and \$4 ones, and left some of the \$5 kind. Try again. **\$2.25.**

ROGERS, PEET & COMPANY,
258 Broadway, cor. Warren, and 7 and 9 Warren St.
569 Broadway, cor. Prince, 1200 Broadway, cor. 32d, and 54 West 33d St.

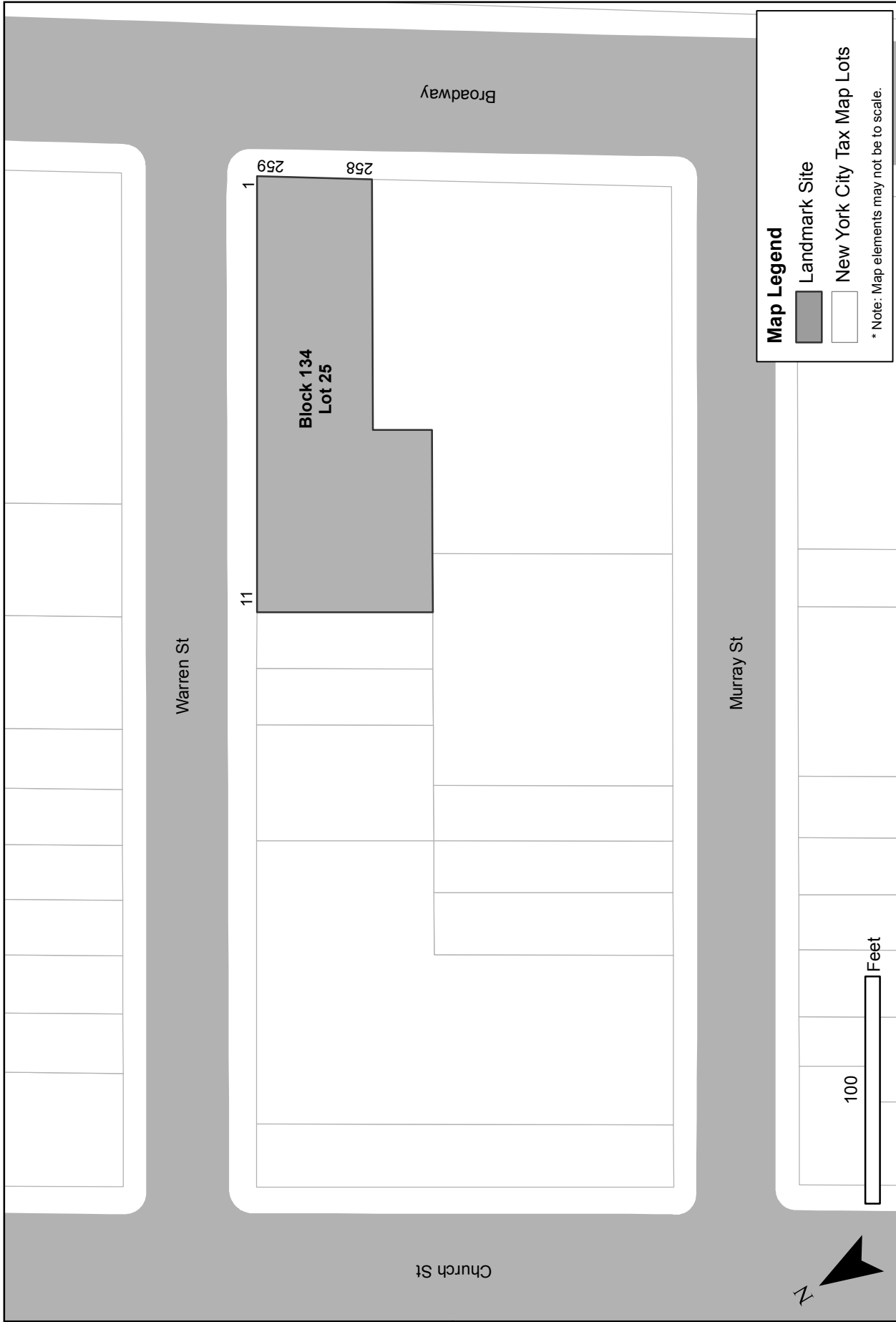
We all orders by mail.

Rogers Peet

"The European Look"...
has captured the imagination of the young-thinking, sophisticated American. Vested fashion with an eye-appealing trim silhouette tailored with side vents, 100% textured polyester poplin with shape-retaining ability. There's special comfort built into every suit. Navy or tan. In Rogers Peet's wide range of sizes. **\$155**

• 47 FIFTH AVENUE • 600 FIFTH AVENUE • 218 BROADWAY AT WARREN
• THE FASHION CENTER, ROCKWOOD/PARADISE, N.J.

Rogers, Peet & Company
Rogers Peet advertisements: 1879, 1900, and 1976
Left: Courtesy New York Public Library (NYPL ID 803834)
Middle: Courtesy Proquest Historical Newspapers (New York Times, August 8, 1900, p.12)
Right: Courtesy Proquest Historical Newspapers (New York Times, March 11, 1976, p. 2)



Map Legend

- Landmark Site
- New York City Tax Map Lots

* Note: Map elements may not be to scale.

ROGERS, PEET & COMPANY BUILDING (LP-2432), 258 Broadway (aka 259 Broadway; 1-11 Warren Street)
 Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan, Tax Map Block 134, Lot 25

Designated: December 14, 2010